

Year 2: Using Our Senses in Worship

## February: Things we SMELL in church

- Incense and holy oil
- Candles and oil lamps
- Flowers and herbs

## Saints and Feasts this Month:

The Saints of North America  
St. Raphael Hawaweeny of Brooklyn  
February 29

## Memory Verse:

“Blessed are the pure in heart,  
for they shall see God. “

Monthly packets are also available online at:  
[www.saintalexis.org/youthministry.html](http://www.saintalexis.org/youthministry.html)

www.saint-spyridon.com

## MY ORTHODOX NOTEBOOK

### ANSWERS TO PRACTICAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ORTHODOX WAY OF LIFE

#### No. 17 - OFFERING INCENSE IN THE HOME

*Lord, I have cried unto Thee, Hearken unto me.  
Attend to the voice of my supplication, when I cry unto Thee.  
Hearken unto me, O Lord.  
**Let my prayer be set forth as incense before Thee,  
The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.**  
Hearken unto me, O Lord.*

- from Psalm 140, sung at Vespers (the *Kyrie ekekraksa*)

For two thousand years, the Church has chanted these psalm verses every day at Vespers, and for nearly a thousand years before that, the Church of the Old Testament, the Israelites, chanted them at the evening offering of incense in the Temple at Jerusalem, and in the daily prayers of the synagogue. This verse, like many others in the Holy Scriptures, indicates the **central role that INCENSE has in the true worship of God.**

#### Do we offer incense at home as well as in Church?

**YES!** It is important to realize that not only do we offer incense in Church, but we also offer incense **in our homes**, to sanctify our homes and daily activities, to lift up our minds to God, to calm family members when they are upset by problems and disagreements, and to drive off the influence of demons.

If you talk with an older person who grew up in a pious household in Greece, he can tell you how the frequent censuring (*livanizi*) of the home affects one's spiritual attitude and mental well-being. It is traditional that the head of the house - the father, or the mother of the family when the father is not home - cense the house daily, indeed three times daily - morning, noon, and evening. This creates a holy, sanctified atmosphere of peace and prayer in the home, lifting up the minds of the family members to God, to the Mother of God, to the saints, to the life of Paradise where our true life is and of which our home is to be both an image and a portal. If we cannot manage to cense several times a day, we can certainly manage to cense our homes once a day, either before we go off to school and work, or at the end of the day, before we retire. The important thing is to get started!

#### What does the incense symbolize?

Incense, like many symbolic things and actions of our faith, has **several layers of meaning and purpose**. The meaning of the incense is summarized beautifully by the prayer the priest says in the altar every time he blesses the incense when the altar server brings him the censer:

**Incense we offer unto Thee, O Christ our God, as an odor of spiritual fragrance. Receiving it upon Thy most heavenly altar, send down upon us in return the grace of Thine All-Holy Spirit.** (from the *leratikon* - the Priest's Service Book).

1. Incense is an **offering** to Christ our God - Incense traditionally is from **precious spices**. It is a **precious gift** we offer to the Lord like the pure spikenard the repentant woman poured out on his feet before His Passion. Traditionally, this precious gift was offered to **honor** important people - incense was once carried before kings and important nobility in public, for example. When we cense the holy gifts, an icon, or a person, we are showing **honor** and **respect**.

2. Incense is a spiritual **fragrance** - A sweet fragrance fills the Church or the home when we burn incense. This makes mind and body happy; it immediately creates a holy and calm atmosphere. You see how *wise* and *simple* the Church's understanding of human nature is: by this simple act affecting what is perhaps our most sensitive sense - the sense of smell - our mind is instantly lifted up from earth to heaven. Cares melt away, and we can pray better.

3. Incense **goes up**, which signifies our prayer **going up to the heavenly altar of God**; in return, God **sends down** the **grace** of His Holy Spirit. The going up of the incense signifies our prayers as they go up; the fragrance of the incense signifies the sweetness of God's grace as it comes down. Such a perfect and simple action, signifying and effecting such an awesome exchange!

#### **What does one need?**

You need three items: a hand censer (*thimiato*), charcoals or charcoal dust (*karvounakia*), and incense (*livani*). Our church bookstore at St. Spyridon carries all of these things. Ask the priest or a "veteran" parishioner how to light the coals and how much incense to use. Once you get started with this holy habit, you will never want to stop - when you don't do it, you will really miss it!

#### **How exactly does one cense the house?**

After the incense is "going," we take the hand censer and make the sign of the cross with it over the icons in each room, starting with our family *ikonostasio*. We can also make the cross in the four directions (East, South, West, North, East) of each room; at night, we can also make the cross over the beds in the bedrooms before we retire, or over our children after they are in bed. Traditionally we say the psalm *Eleison me, o Theos* ("Have mercy on me, O God..." - Psalm 50) as we cense. If we have not memorized this psalm (which is a good thing to get started on, by the way!), we can say the Jesus Prayer (Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me), or any favorite psalms or Church hymns we know. The important thing is to perform the censuring, with prayer.

# Liturgy and Life: The Use of Incense in Church

by Rev. Fr. Theodore Ziton

During our Church Services, the priest burns incense in a censer, which is a metal vessel suspended on three chains about two feet long, and provided with a cover to regulate the burning of a small disk of charcoal placed therein. On the chains are twelve small bells, signifying the voice of the twelve Disciples of our Lord. Grains of incense are placed on the burning charcoal.

Incense is a material used to produce a fragrance when burned. It is a mixture of spices and gums burned during religious rites to produce a fragrant smoke. These grains of spices are obtained from trees in Eastern and tropical countries.

The priest places incense on the burning coals in the censer which the server swings to and fro. . . causing clouds of smoke to go heavenward. The ascending clouds of an incense in the Old Testament made up of fragrant gums and spices is an offering of earth's treasures to their Creator, symbolizing prayer. "Let my prayer be counted as incense before thee, and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice. . . ." (Psalm 141: 2) Accordingly, the people would pray before the Holy of Holies while the priest within was making the sacrifice. "And the whole multitude of people were praying outside at the hour of incense." (Luke 1: 10) The prayers went up to heaven unto God as the smoke of the incense does leaving behind the sweetness of the odor of it all the sweetness of the Holy Spirit.

So, too, in the New Testament does it have a prayerful meaning as St. John the Divine Disciple beheld how in heaven "an angel came and stood at the altar, with a golden censer; and he was given much incense to mingle with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden Altar before the Throne of God; and the smoke of the incense rose with the prayers of the Saints from the hand of the angel before God." (Revelations 8: 3-4), but it has a much deeper meaning; the transformed ideal. The burning coal is the burning ember. Christ, Who takes away the sins of the world as we behold in Isaiah at the calling of the prophet Isaiah, "then flew one of the Seraphim to me, having in his hand a burning coal which he had taken with tongs from the Altar. And he touched my mouth, and said: 'Behold, this has touched your lips: your guilt is taken away, and your sin forgiven.'" (Isaiah 6:6-7)

Incense used at the Divine Services represents:

a. Adoration or the worship paid to God alone, present in the Eucharist. The burning of the fragrant spices shows the unimportance of all creatures before their Creator.

b. Prayer, which rises to God like smoke.

c. Grace, which God pours into our souls as incense pours fragrance throughout the Church.

The Church incenses relics, ikons and Holy things:

- a. To honor God who crowned the saints in heaven, who worked wonders through them here on earth, who sanctified and glorified their bodies.
- b. To show respect and devotion to the special friends and servants of the Almighty.

The Church incenses her ministers, her bishops and priests, in order to honor in their person Jesus Christ, whom they represent and with whose sacred character they are clothed.

The Church incenses the faithful in order to honor in them the likeness to Christ which was imprinted upon them in Baptism . . . to show them forth as the temples of the Holy Spirit. At the censuring of the parishioners make the sign of the cross upon their bodies in respect to this meaning.

The Church incenses the bodies of the departed to honor the bodies which were sanctified and made holy by Baptism, and to beg God to receive the prayers and petitions we offer for the repose of the soul of the departed in the Faith.

Incense shows forth several things:

Its burning represents zeal in the service of the Lord. Think of that as you see the sacred smoke rising in the Sanctuary. Recall that you are to give of your time and talent, your service and means to the worship of God. Are you going to let a mere material creature like incense outdo you in divine service? The incense is burnt for the glory of God. How about you?

Its fragrance represents virtue, pleasing to God as it always is. How pleasing is your life and your service? Can you feel that your devotion in Church, your thoughtfulness of God, your keeping of His law, is of a kind that will please Him?

The rising smoke represents prayer and shows that your prayers are rising too. The smoke reminds you to pray, if you are not praying. The fragrance of the smoke shows that our prayer and service are pleasing to God.

God commanded Moses and His chosen people to use incense. The Church uses it in her service. Think of what all this means and it will be a source of grace and spiritual strength to you.



**Questions and  
Answers about  
Orthodoxy**

**Address:**  
PO Box 675  
Syosset, NY  
11791-0675

**Office:**  
516-922-0550

**Fax:**  
516-922-0954

**Email:**  
info@oca.org

**Web:**  
www.oca.org

© OCA  
All rights reserved.

## Beeswax Candles

### QUESTION:

Is there anything in the canons that say that candles used in churches must be white and 100% beeswax? Or is that just a preference? There are now various colored candles on the market made with recycled wax. Could these be used in churches?

### ANSWER:

Traditionally tapered candles were made of pure beeswax or, in many cases, 51% beeswax seems to be more readily available. Also, lights in glass holders traditionally employ oil rather than wax candles, although today many parishes use candles in glass holders rather than oil. It seems that in most cases what is used is whatever is most readily available.

Many of the non-beeswax candles made today are not made of wax at all, using instead a kind of petroleum product. These are especially pernicious in that they often give off an oily odor and the always create a horrid amount of soot on walls. I am not familiar with recycled wax candles, although many of the places that do produce pure beeswax candles buy back candle stubs from their clients.

One of the monasteries that make especially nice candles -- we use them in our parish -- is Saint John Monastery in Hiram, OH. The candles are 100 pure beeswax and are very reasonable in cost.

### COMMENT:

From another reader

I was reading the Q&A page on the OCA website and thought you might be interested in a little beeswax information. Beeswax is naturally colored in a range of pale yellows to deep tan, depending on the nectar that the bees were gathering at the time. White clover produces the palest honey and beeswax, clover a golden yellow, and canola (rapeseed) a darker product. It takes 4 pounds of hive honey to produce a pound of honey. White beeswax is made that way by bleaching it. I recycle the candle wax for my parish and use 50/50 old/new wax. I buy the new wax locally in 25# blocks from the beekeeper when I buy my honey.

### ANSWER:

Thank you for your most informative e-mail concerning beeswax.

It was really interesting, especially since just about the only thing I had ever heard about beeswax -- which was obviously not accurate -- is that the darker the color, the longer it had been boiled. Obviously this is not the case. I will see what we can do about adding this information to the Q&A section.

# Flowers, Herbs and Fruit on Special Days

## The Blessing of Seed, Herbs and Flowers at the Feast of the Dormition

From ancient times we have been taught that when Mary, the Mother God, fell asleep the whole company of the Apostles - except Thomas - was miraculously brought together in Jerusalem. Amid divine and heavenly praises they commended her soul into the hands of God and placed her body in a little tomb in Gethsemane. For three days a choir of Angels continued to sing above her tomb. And on the third day Thomas arrived. So that he could venerate the body that had given birth to Christ God, the Apostles opened the tomb. They found not the body of the Mother of God but the winding sheet and the most beautiful and sweet-smelling flowers. Mary's body had been taken up into the heavens by her Son. Flowers were blessed on the feast of Dormition from the earliest times in both East and West. Over time seeds and herbs used for medicinal purposes were also blessed, in commemoration of the many healings and blessings that were bestowed upon the pilgrims at Mary's tomb.

## Blessing of First-Fruits at the Feast of the Transfiguration

On the feast of the Transfiguration the Church blesses the first-fruits of the harvest both as a giving back to the Lord what is His and has come from Him (1 Chronicles 29:14) and as a celebration of the promise of the final transfiguration of all things in Christ. The Divine Light glimpsed by the Apostles on Mount Tabor will transform all creation to its most perfect flowering and fruitfulness.

In Constantinople and the Greek world grapes were placed on a table in the center of the temple and offered and blessed at the end of the Divine Liturgy and then partaken of by the faithful. Over time this blessing was extended as other first-fruits were brought to be offered and blessed.

From: [www.byzcath.org](http://www.byzcath.org)

## Elevation of the Holy Cross

For the feast, the Cross is placed on a tray surrounded by flowers or branches of basil, and placed in the center of the Church for veneration. On the spot where the Cross was discovered, St. Helen had found a hitherto unknown flower of rare beauty and fragrance, which has been named "Vasiliko", or Basil, meaning the flower of royalty. Note that the word "Vasiliko" means "of the King," since the word "Basileus" in Greek means "King"; so, the plant Vasiliko, Basil, is tied to the Precious Cross of the King of Glory, our Lord Jesus Christ.

From: [http://orthodoxwiki.org/Elevation\\_of\\_the\\_Holy\\_Cross](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Elevation_of_the_Holy_Cross)

# Pentecost

For the feast of Pentecost the icon of the Holy Trinity, the three angelic figures who appeared to Abraham, is placed in the center of the church for veneration. This icon is used with the traditional Pentecost icon. The church building is decorated with flowers and the green leaves of the summer to show that God's divine breath comes to renew all creation. Green vestments and coverings are also used.

## The Sacrament of Marriage

The second part of the marriage service is the ceremony of coronation, in which the heads of the bridegroom and bride are crowned by the priest. In the Russian tradition, the crowns are gold or silver, while the Greek tradition uses crowns of leaves and flowers. The crowns are crowns of joy, but also crowns of martyrdom, since marriage involves a self-sacrifice on both sides.

At the end of the service the newly married couple drink from the same cup of wine. This common cup is a symbol of the fact that after this they will share a common life with one another. This also recalls the miracle at the marriage feast of Cana in Galilee.

From : [Orthodoxwiki.org](http://Orthodoxwiki.org)

## Other Uses of Flowers, Fruits, and Herbs

**Grapes:** A bunch of grapes signifies the Sacrament of the Holy Communion. It also is a symbol of Christ the Fruit of Life.

**Lily:** This is a symbol of Easter and immortality. The bulb decays in the ground, yet from it new life is released.

**Olive Branch:** The olive branch is the symbol for peace, harmony and healing.

Excerpt taken from "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.

## **BIBLICAL FRAGRANCES AND THEIR SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

**Frankincense:** used on the Altar of Incense in temple times, one of the 3 gifts brought to Messiah (intercession) Song of Songs 3:6, Isaiah 53:5, Hebrews 3:24

**Myrrh:** Queen Esther bathed in oil of myrrh for six months before her presentation to the King (purification, dying to self, and preparation for the KING) Esther 2:12, Song of Songs 1:13

**"Holy Fire"/Hyssop:** exotic Biblical plant used in cleansing rituals and in certain sacrifices of the Hebrews (cleansing, purification) Psalm 51:7

**Cedars of Lebanon:** fragrant wood used to build Temple and also to anoint a restored leper's house (strength, permanence, wholeness, restoration) Psalm 92:12

**Pomegranate:** highly prized fruit from ancient times, its motif was used to decorate the temple and was embroidered on high priest's garment (fruitfulness, abundance, blessings, favor of God) Numbers 13:23

**Spikenard:** fragrant oil used by Mary to anoint head & feet of Jesus (intimacy, extravagant worship) John 12:2-3

**Rose of Sharon:** flower depicting the beloved (beauty of the bride) Song of Songs 2:1

**Lily of the Valley:** white delicate flower (honor & purity of heart) Song of Songs 2:1

**Cassia:** one principal spice of the Holy Anointing Oil used to anoint priests, kings and their garments. The coming King Messiah's robes will smell of cassia (humility, being stripped of pride, set apart or holy with a servant's heart) Psalm 45:8

**Ketubah:** a special blending of the fragrances of the Bridegroom (Frankincense & Myrrh), the Bride (Spikenard) and the Spirit of G-d (Hyssop/Holy Fire) (*marriage covenant in Hebrew*) Ex 24:1-8

**Henna:** shrub producing small, heavily fragrant flowers; root word means "emotional tenderness" (broken spirit/repentance) Song of Songs 1:14, Psalm 51:17

# The Beatitudes.



## The Sixth Beatitude

Blessed are the Pure in Heart  
for they shall see God.

How can we be pure in our hearts  
and clean of filth and sin?



The truth is that we are unable to be good on our own. Our human nature is to be selfish and sinful. In the Bible we read what Jesus told the religious leaders:

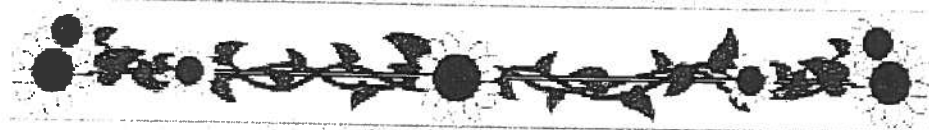
"It is the thought life that pollutes. For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts of lust, theft, murder, adultery, wanting what belongs to others, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, pride, and all other folly. All these vile things come from within; they are what pollute you and make you unfit for God." Mark 7:20-23



How can we think what God thinks,  
desire what God desires,  
hate what God hates,  
and love what God loves?

How can our hearts be pure hearts,  
free from sins like pride and envy,  
free from evil thoughts and evil deeds?

In other words how can we know  
"What Would Jesus Do?"



The way to a pure heart begins by realizing that we have impure hearts. The Bible tells us that God looks at the heart of a person and not at the way we look on the outside. We cannot pretend to have a good heart because God can see straight through to how we really feel inside our heart. God is the only one who can clean our hearts and make it pure. The pure heart is one that is free from evil desires and evil purposes.



God has a plan to save us from sin infected hearts. God wants to make us holy in thoughts, words and what we do. God wants us to be like his Son, Jesus Christ. God's plan is to give us a pure heart just like Jesus'. And the reward of having a pure heart is that you will see God!

When we completely surrender ourselves to God and put our entire faith and trust in Him, God will give us a brand new nature, a new self. We become a brand new creation. When this happens a person becomes BORN AGAIN. You become a brand new person who is walking arm and arm with Jesus Christ every day.

*"It is no longer I that live,  
but it is Christ that is  
living in union with me".*

**Galations 2:20**





# Beatitude 6



## PURE IN HEART

We cannot pretend to have a good heart because: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

### Meditation:

Bible Reading: MARK 7: 20 - 23 (NIV)

List 5 evil thoughts that come out of men's hearts: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---





# Beatitudes 6



## JOURNALING



When we completely surrender ourselves to God and put our faith and trust in Him, God will: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

*My Little Bible Storybook on the 8 Beatitudes. 2006.  
Mauri Davenport Gandy. RainbowCastle.org.*

Psalm 19: 8-11

8. The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. 9. The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the Lord are sure and altogether righteous. 10 They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.



Lord, help me to have a pure heart and complete faith and trust in Jesus Christ. Amen



**P  
R  
A  
Y  
E  
R**



**SAINT**  
**BISHOP**

**RAHAEL**  
**OF BROOKLYN**



# **St. Raphael Hawaweeny**

## **Bishop of Brooklyn**

### **Commemoration Date: February 29th**

On November 20, 1860, Rafla Hawaweeny was born in Damascus, Syria. He was baptized in Beirut, Lebanon on the Feast of Theophany, the same day the church celebrates the Baptism of Jesus Christ. As an elementary student, he worked very hard and received very good grades. This helped him to receive a scholarship to study at the School of Theology in Halki Island, Turkey.

After Rafla was ordained a deacon on December 8, 1885, he wanted to learn even more about the church, so he continued his studies at the Theological Academy in Kiev, Ukraine. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1889. Six years after his ordination, he arrived in Brooklyn, New York.

In the summer of 1896, he began traveling across the United States. While traveling 3,000 miles between New York and California, he visited people in thirty different cities. At each place he visited, he talked about God. During the visits, he also performed many Sacraments of the church.

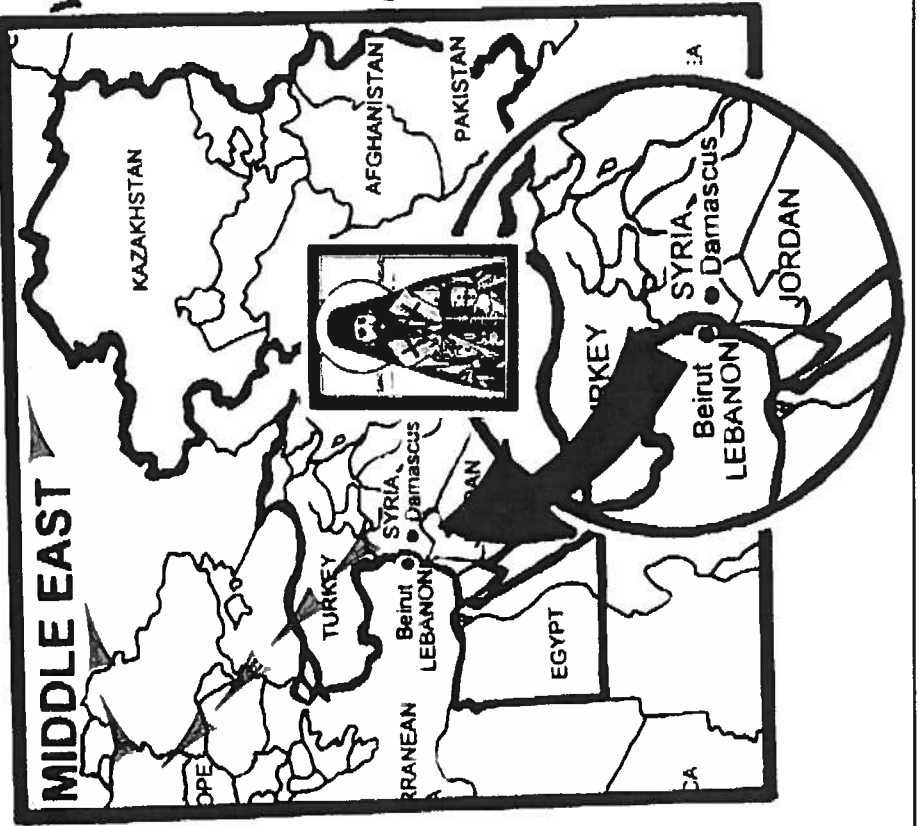
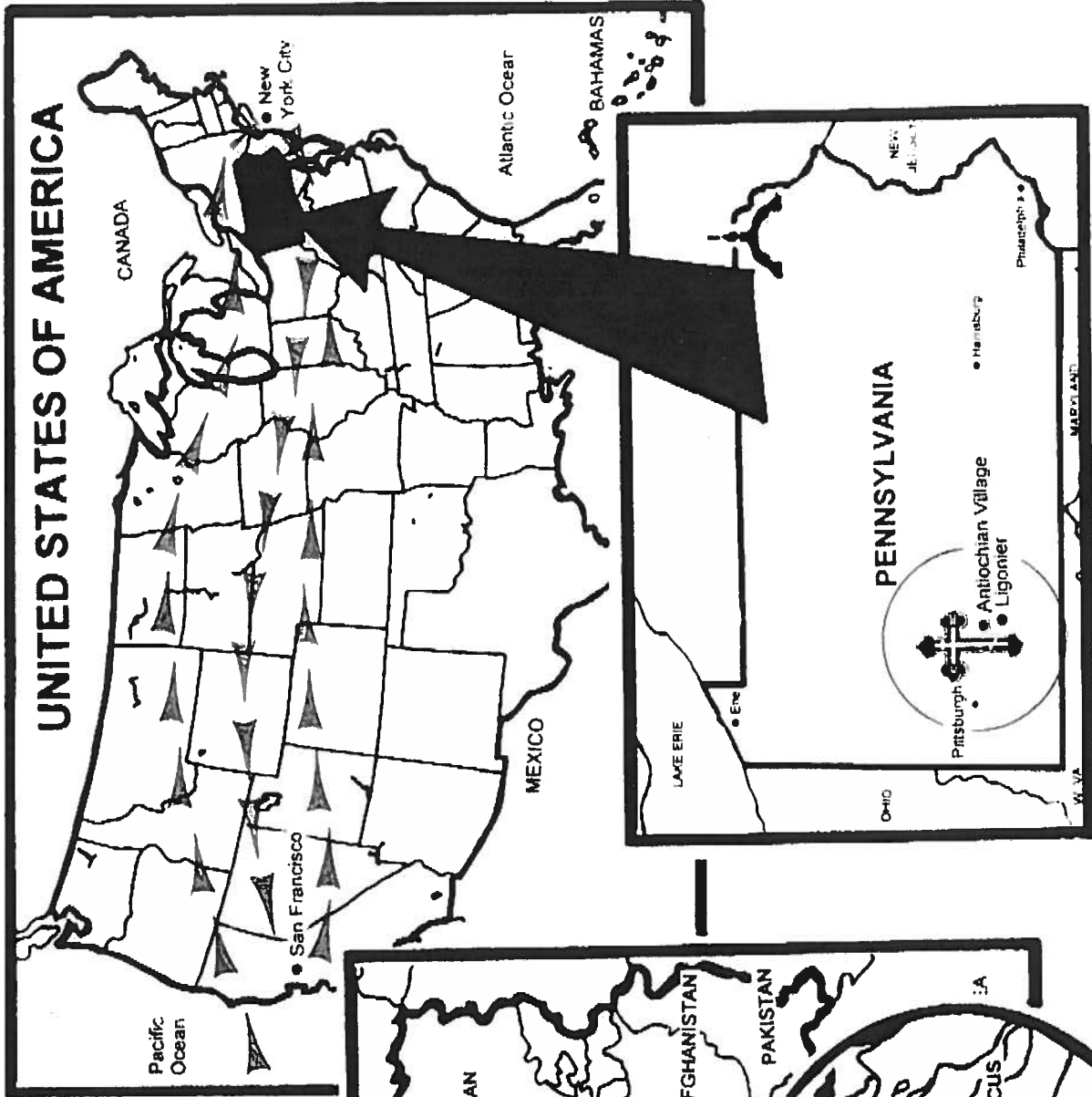
In 1904, on the third Sunday of Great Lent, the Sunday of the Cross, Saint Raphael became the very first Orthodox bishop to be consecrated in North America. Both Archbishop Tikhon of Moscow (St. Tikhon) and Bishop Innocent performed the consecration of the new Bishop in New York City.

Bishop Raphael thought it was very important for children to learn about the church and he established evening schools for children. In order for church services and church books to be easier to understand, St. Raphael believed English should be the language used in those books.

While he served as Auxiliary Bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church in America, he helped establish thirty parishes across the country and in July of 1905 he blessed the land on which St. Tikhon's Monastery is located.

On February 27, 1915, at the age of 55, St. Raphael died. In 1989, his relics were taken to the Antiochian Village in Ligonier, Pennsylvania. In March 2000, the Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America canonized St. Raphael. On Memorial Day weekend of May 2000, his glorification services were held at St. Tikhon's Monastery, South Canaan, Pennsylvania.

# St. Raphael Hawaweeny's Travels



# Coloring Puzzle

St. Raphael, Bishop of Brooklyn

Color red all the blocks that have an odd number (1,3,5,7,9,11,13,15,17,19).  
After all of the odd blocks have been colored, fill in the spaces with the remaining letters, in order, to reveal the message.

3 G	2 H	5 Y	1 M	8 O	11 A	2 L	7 W	11 H	8 Y
14 F	3 A	4 A	9 M	16 T	13 E	12 H	1 D	6 E	12 R
7 S	8 R	1 E	2 A	6 P	17 C	18 H	20 A	6 E	12 L
19 A	7 Z	5 J	14 P	9 H	5 E	6 R	13 L	4 A	4 Y
5 B	10 T	3 R	7 V	1 X	4 O	9 O	11 A	5 D	13 V
6 C	10 H	1 W	15 P	16 R	9 N	8 I	13 C	2 S	4 T
9 L	3 R	17 Y	19 B	18 O	9 X	4 U	5 A	15 A	10 R
7 Z	3 K	9 J	4 G	1 V	8 O	11 A	3 S	9 U	20 D
6 F	7 P	5 J	7 J	11 S	12 O	3 L	6 R	11 R	5 Z
15 Y	19 H	8 U	17 I	3 O	5 U	4 S	15 F	5 W	9 M

-----  
-----

## Jumbled Numbers and Words

St. Raphael Hawaweeny, Bishop of Brooklyn

What a mess! We have a bunch of mixed up numbers and words that do not make any sense. To read the Gospel verse, match the numbers (with their matching words) on the spaces below, starting with the odd (1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15) numbers. After the number 15, continue on using the even (2,4,6,8,10,12,14,16) numbers.

9 shepherd	5 the	6 his	10 for
8 life	2 lays	3 am	12 the
14 sheep	4 down	7 good	15 shepherd
13 good	11 The	1 I	16 John

\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_

1
3
5
7

\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_

9
11
13

\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_

15
2
4

\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_

6
8
10
12

\_\_\_\_\_

14

\_\_\_\_\_
10:11

16