

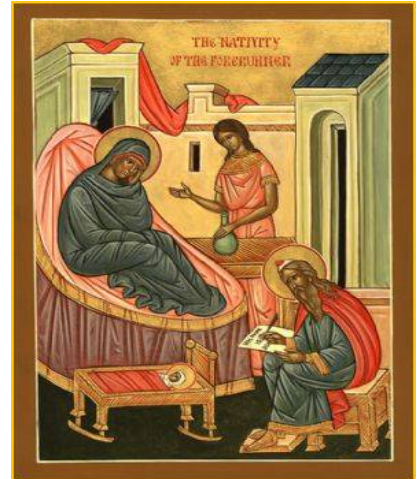
The Voice In The Wilderness

*"A voice crying in the wilderness:
Prepare ye the way of the LORD..."
Matthew 3:3*

The Newsletter of St. John the Forerunner Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church, an Orthodox Christian witness to Cedar Park and Central Texas. Saint John the Forerunner Antiochian Orthodox Church is a local parish of the Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America and is in the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America.

Volume 5 Number 10

May 2007



Christ the Lightgiver
by the hand of Fotios Kontoglou

DYNAMIS RETREAT TO BE HELD AT THE PARISH OF ST JOHN THE FORERUNNER -SAT MAY 5, 2007

The publisher and principal author of DYNAMIS, the Reader David C. Patton will be leading a retreat on Reading Holy Scripture with the Church". The retreat is Free. All are welcome. Our schedule follows:

- 10:00 REFRESHMENTS
- 10:15 OPENING PRAYERS AND INTRODUCTION
- 10:30 WHAT ARE THE HOLY THE HOLY SCRIPTURES OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS?
- 11:15 QUESTION AND ANSWER
- 11:45 LUNCH
- 1:00 WHAT ARE THE CONCEPT AND FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH'S LECTIONARY?
- 1:45 QUESTION AND ANSWER
- 2:15 BREAK
- 2:45 WHAT DO THE READINGS CONTRIBUTE TO OUR CELEBRATION OF ASCENSION AND PENTECOST?
- 3:30 QUESTION AND ANSWER

Reader David Patton is the editor of DYNAMIS, a daily scripture study in the Antiochian Archdiocese sponsored by St George Antiochian Cathedral in Kasas City, Ks is available free of charge on the web at www.dynamispublications.org. He is well prepared to lead this retreat having a Masters of Divinity

from Harvard University and a Diploma from the St. Stephen's Course in Orthodox Theology from the Antiochian House of Studies. He served 36 years as a clergyman in the Episcopal Church and converted to the Holy Orthodox Faith. He is an active member of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral, Wichita, KS where he serves as a Catechist in liturgy and worship, sings in the choir, and is a lecturer for the Adult Education programs.

We hope that you will be able to attend this special retreat and learn how to read the scriptures using the daily readings used in the Church effectively to the edification of your soul and mind. You are encouraged to bring friends who would like to learn more about the orthodox Church and our Church's use of the Bible in worship and daily life.



Easter 'Holy Fire' Ritual Draws Crowd

Worshippers filled Christianity's most revered church on Saturday, lighting rows of candles and dancing in celebration of the Orthodox Easter 'holy fire' ritual. Orthodox Christians believe Jesus Christ was crucified and buried where the Church of the Holy Sepulcher now stands, and the fire appears spontaneously from his tomb on the eve of Easter as a message that he has not forgotten his followers.

The fire ceremony started with the entrance of Jerusalem's Greek Orthodox Patriarch Theophilos III, dressed in his robes and a large gold-and-white omophorion, and carrying a large episcopal staff. He descended into the tomb of Christ to bring out the flame. When he emerged, church bells pealed and flames were passed around to the tens of thousands of faithful, filling the church with light and smoke. Worshippers quickly lit their candles — many of them carrying bunches of long tapers tied up with string and decorated with pictures of Jerusalem. Arab Orthodox Christian women ululated and others beat out drum rhythms. Youths bounced up and down on one another's shoulders, waving their candles. .

The Holy Fire was then rushed to Orthodox cathedral churches throughout the world where it was distributed to priests in time for them to give it to the faithful during the Paschal Rush Service (*al-Hajmeh*) in thousands of parish churches and monasteries. The places to which the Holy Fire was transported include St George Cathedral in Beirut, Annunciation Cathedral in Athens, Christ the Saviour Cathedral in Moscow, and St Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Sofia. It was also rushed to the port of Daphni on the Holy Mountain where representatives of the numerous Athonite monasteries and sketes were dispatched to transport it back to their communities. DOWAMA's own Schemamonk Paul was dispatched by his abbot Geronda Parthenios to carry the Holy Fire from Daphni to St Paul's Monastery where it, borne by Father Paul in a lantern upon a silver tray, was greeted with much pomp

and ceremonyThe "holy fire" is taken aboard special flights to Athens and other cities — connecting many of the 250 million Orthodox worldwide to their spiritual roots. Outside the church in Jerusalem's Old City, Israeli police helped worshippers light candles from the flame, many of the faithful stretching their arms across barricades erected to keep back the surging crowd. Tens of thousands of pilgrims packed into the walled Old City for Easter, and many said they had been unable to get past the barriers to reach the ceremony.

A local Greek Orthodox woman, Reem Carmi, 27, said she and two friends shouldered their way through police lines and into the crush of candle-waving celebrants. "This is a beautiful occasion for me," she said. "Christianity is based on light and resurrection."

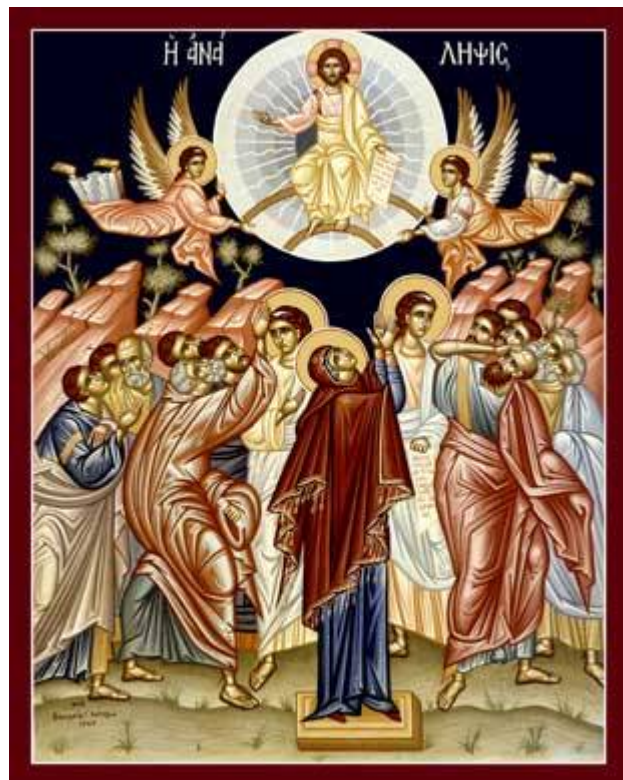
Although police could not give an exact figure, the number of Easter pilgrims in Jerusalem was higher than normal because the calendars of five major Christian faiths coincided this year, bringing Orthodox and Western Christians to the cramped Old City at the same time. This happens only once every four years. The event dates back at least 1,200 years.

For more on the Holy Fire, go to <http://www.holyfire.org/eng/>

Article was compiled from material provided by Diaa Hadid and gleaned from the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America site at www.antiochian.org.

FEAST OF THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST May 17, 2007

The Lord Jesus passed forty days on earth after His Resurrection from the dead, appearing continually in various places to His disciples, with whom He also spoke, ate, and drank, thereby further demonstrating His Resurrection. On this Thursday, the fortieth day after Pascha, He appeared again in Jerusalem. After He had first spoken to the disciples about many things, He gave them His last commandment, that is, that they go forth and proclaim His Name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. But He also commanded them that for the present, they were not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait there together until they receive power from on high, when the Holy Spirit would come upon them.



**Icon of the ASCENSION OF
OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST**

Saying these things, He led them to the Mount of Olives, and raising His hands, He blessed them; and saying again the words of the Father's blessing, He was parted from them and taken up. Immediately a cloud of light, a proof of His majesty, received Him. Sitting thereon as though on a royal chariot, He was taken up into Heaven, and after a short time was concealed from the sight of the disciples, who remained where they were with their eyes fixed on Him. At this point, two Angels in the form of men in white raiment appeared to them and said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus, Who is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven" (Acts 1:11). These words, in a complete and concise manner, declare what is taught in the Symbol of Faith concerning the Son and Word of God. Therefore, having so fulfilled all His dispensation for us, our Lord Jesus Christ ascended in glory into Heaven, and sat at the right hand of God the Father. As for His sacred disciples, they returned from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem, rejoicing because Christ had promised to send them the Holy Spirit.

It should be noted that the Mount of Olives is a Sabbath's day journey from Jerusalem, that is, the distance a Jew was permitted to walk on the day of the Sabbath. Ecumenius writes, "A Sabbath day's journey is one mile in length, as Clement says in his fifth Stromatis; it is two thousand cubits, as the Interpretation of the Acts states." They draw this conclusion from the fact that, while they were in the wilderness, the Israelites of old kept within this distance from the Holy Tabernacle, whither they walked on the Sabbath day to worship God.

Mothers in the Church

by Father John Abdallah

When we hear of Holy Mothers, we often think of the many female martyrs, teachers and leaders of the Church throughout the ages whom the Church holds up for us as examples. These women whose icons we venerate appear from time to time on bulletin covers or educational brochures. They have given us life through their example and prayer, and we are right to remember them with gratitude.



We also owe gratitude to a second type of holy mothers: the mothers, grandmothers, and Godmothers who have given us life through their nurturing efforts. These women have taught us the faith while holding us on their knees, feeding us at their tables, and talking to us when we were in need of instruction. The life they can bring is not limited to the life of this world, but is indeed living water that flows from God Himself. These women are more than baby-making machines or babysitters; they are vessels of God that God uses to nurture His own children, children He created and placed in time and space for education and protection.

The third category of holy mothers are those women in the Church whom we watch and with whom we interact, who may or may not have formal titles. These women lead by example, and share their lives as teachers, teen advisors, coffee hour hosts and ushers. Some of them have no official role in the parish, but make others feel at home in Church. These Holy Mothers belong to God because they too share in the cloud of witnesses that bring others to Christ. In our relationship with them, we receive Godly food that nurtures the soul and brings us to salvation. These Christ-bearers may never know the

role that they play in our salvation. These Godly vessels might be totally unaware of who is watching, learning and growing because of their lives, kindnesses and witness. Parenting is a holy vocation, the vocation of all the members of the Church. It is a vocation of the monastics and parishioners, of the married and unmarried, surely of everyone, because we are all called to parent by sharing the life-giving love of Christ.

When people fail to give gratitude to the holy mothers, they forget that they are connected to each other and share a common humanity. Without this holy understanding, people act and think that each person is a self-contained being. Such self-contained beings have no need for others, not even God. Unfortunately, this leads to isolation and misery, and we were not created to be in isolation. If this is what God had intended, surely we would have each been given our own galaxy. Instead, God has given us each other to nurture and challenge. He has given us each other to teach and learn from. He has given us each other to love and be loved by.

By giving thanks to God for those in our lives that bring us life, we acknowledge all that God has done. Such thankfulness brings us to discern the real relationships with which we are blessed. Through these relationships, we even discover ourselves. Yes, by looking outside of ourselves and encountering God, we discover ourselves, because we are in relationship with God; without understanding this relationship, we cannot begin to understand ourselves.

Mothers sacrifice, teach, love and give life. God sacrifices, teaches and gives life. Mothers preach God by their lives. Spiritual motherhood is the vocation of every woman in the Church. This is their vocation. This is their life.

In the United States, America celebrates Mother's Day each year on the second Sunday of May. This surely is a celebration we Orthodox can embrace. Let's pause on this day, and give thanks for mothers. Such thanks will surely bring us closer to God.

Father John Abdallah is the Editor of the *WORD* magazine of the Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America and is in the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America. This article originally appeared in the *Word Magazine*. Volume 50 number 5 May 2006.

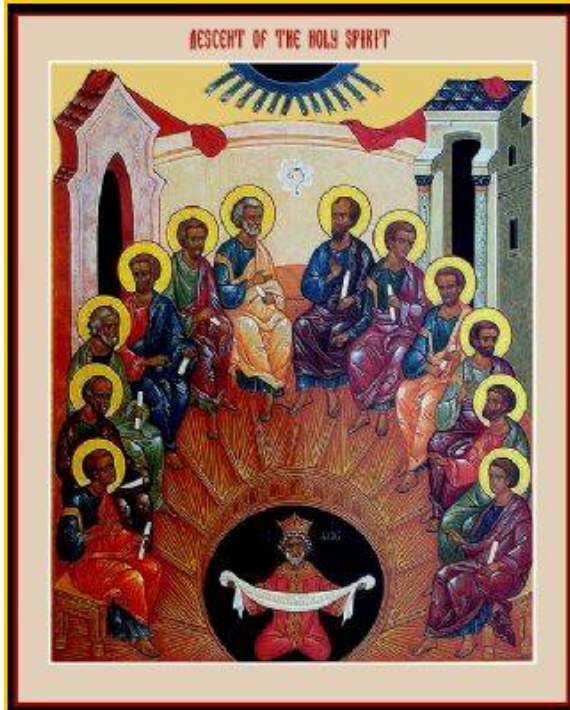
Gioles and Malta scholarship applications available on line

SYOSSET, NY [OCA Communications] — Applications are available on line for scholarships to be awarded from the George and Naouma (Gioule) Gioles Scholarship Fund of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

The Gioles Scholarship Fund was established in 1997 with a generous gift in memory of George and Naouma Gioles. At least three scholarships of \$1500.00 each will be awarded for the 2006-07 academic year. Applications and related documents are available in PDF format at www.goarch.org/en/archdiocese/administration/chancellor/giolesscholarship.pdf.

Applications also are being accepted for the Katina John Malta Scholarship Fund, a scholarship program established at the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America by means of a generous gift from the estate of Katina John Malta. The donation and the formation of the scholarship program has been done in recognition of the love Katina had for the Church and in honor of the desire she had to help others, especially children and youth of the Orthodox Christian Faith. At least two scholarships of \$2,000 each will be awarded for the 2006-07 academic year. Applications and related documents are available in PDF format at www.goarch.org/en/archdiocese/administration/chancellor/maltascholarship.pdf.

Application deadline for both scholarships is May 15, 2007.



The Feast of the Pentecost; May 27

The Feast of Holy Pentecost is celebrated each year on the fiftieth day after the Great and Holy Feast of Pascha (Easter) and ten days after the Feast of the Ascension of Christ. The Feast is always celebrated on a Sunday. This is in memory of the coming down of the Holy Spirit to spread the gospel through the apostles of Christ. The feast of Pentecost is also known as Whitsunday in many English speaking countries.

The Blessed Trinity consists of the Divine persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit who had been sent as a comforter to Christians proceeded from God the Father, and is worshipped with the Father and the Son as the One True God. As the story of Pentecost goes, when Jesus returned to heaven after his Resurrection, his disciples felt sad, lonely and helpless. God then sent The Holy Spirit to Christ's Apostles on the 50th day after Pascha (also called in the west by the name of Easter). The apostles then spread the message of love, support and guidance to the people on earth.

This great Feast of the Church is celebrated with the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom on the Sunday that is the fiftieth day after the celebration of Pascha. The Liturgy is conducted on the day of the Feast, and is preceded the evening before by a Great Vespers service and on the morning of the Feast by the Matins service. On the day of the Feast a Vespers service is conducted that includes the kneeling prayers. These prayers mark the beginning of the practice of kneeling during the Liturgy at the time when the holy gifts of bread and wine are consecrated as the body and blood of Christ. The practice of kneeling has been suspended during the Paschal season. On the Monday following the Feast, the Divine Liturgy is conducted in commemoration of the All-holy and Life-creating and All-powerful Spirit, Who is God, and One of the Trinity, and of one honor and one essence and one glory with the Father and the Son (From the Synaxarion of the Feast).

There are 3 signs of the advent of the Holy Spirit. First was the sound of the blowing wind. Second the tongues of fire, which descended on the disciples to symbolize the delegation of power from Jesus to the Holy Spirit to guide the believers. The Third is the miracle of hearing the apostles spreading the message of the gospel to each listener in his native language.

According to the story of Pentecost, the wonder of the Pentecost was experienced by a large crowd. The Holy Spirit was the translator of the preaching so that everyone understood the message of love in his or her own language. This spread the gospel to one and all. Apostle Peter explained that these divine events were predicted by Joel and the exaltation of Jesus was prophesied by David. The scriptures indicate that about 3000 of those who accepted the messages were baptized. This is the

day that the Church began to accept conversion of Jew and Gentile alike, as such it is often called the "birthday of the Church".

Scripture readings for the Feast are the following: At the Saturday Vespers: Numbers 11:16-17, 24-29; Joel 2:23-32; Ezekiel 36:24-28. At the Orthros (Matins): John 20:19-23. At the Pentecost Sunday Divine Liturgy: Acts 2:1-11; John 7:37-52, 8:12. At the Divine Liturgy on the Monday of the Holy Spirit: Ephesians 5:8-19; Matthew 18:10-20.

LETTER FROM HIS EMINENCE, METROPOLITAN PHILIP PERTAINING TO THE TRAGEDY AT VIRGINIA TECH

April 17, 2007

Beloved in Christ:

Christ is Risen!

It is with deep pain that I watched the tragic events unfold on one of our college campuses. This could have been any campus and any one of our many college students. As such, I have no doubt that our own college children and parents were affected by yesterday's events even more than the rest of us. What should be places of tranquility and peace have too often become places of tragedy. Places where parents should be able to send their teens to become educated adults and where children go to expand their minds and gain knowledge that will enable them to be productive members of society must be safe and free of evil and destruction of all kinds. The hopelessness of the man who perpetrated these senseless killings can only reinforce the need of our clergy and lay leaders to instill in our faithful, and especially in our youth, the need for strong, traditional families as well as values that are rooted in Christ and the Church.

On behalf of my brother bishops and all the clergy and faithful of our Archdiocese, we express our deepest sympathy to the families of those who were murdered or injured yesterday. In addition, we pray that our risen Lord Jesus Christ, who destroyed death, will grant the families and the entire country the peace and hope that only the empty tomb can provide.

In the Risen Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Metropolitan Philip". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

+Metropolitan PHILIP
Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America



The Orthopraxis of Entering a Church

Did you know there are traditional practices that are holy and assist us in making the transition from the secular world to the sacred when we enter the Holy Temple? Devout Orthodox Christians around the world practice these traditions with occasional personal additions that make the entrance into the Holy Temple a truly spiritual witness.

Arriving before the Service of the Church begins, one steps from the tiny narthex and on into the nave, pray the following prayer, "I will come into the house in the multitude of Thy mercy, and in Thy fear I will enter Thy holy temple;" then go to the foyer of the nave (In our parish that would be where we have three icons, The Icon and Requiliary of St. Raphael, the icons of Zacharias and Elizabeth the parents of St John the Forerunner and the icon of Sts Peter and Paul) make a metania and reverence the icons. If you like you may place a lit prayer candle in the Sandbox as a light witnessing your prayers and veneration.

1) Then walk over in front of the iconostasis and reverence the icons of the Parish. You will begin at the icon of Christ Jesus. Make three metanias before the icon of Christ, kissing the icon as you pray:

We reverence Thy immaculate icon, O Good One, and ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ our God. For of Thine own good will, Thou wast pleased to ascend the cross in the flesh that Thou might deliver from bondage to the enemy those whom Thou hadst fashioned. Wherefore, we cry aloud unto Thee with thanksgiving: Thou hast filled all things with joy, O our Savior, for Thou hast come to save the world.

You may wish to ask a prayer before the icon for a loved one or a particular need. If you like you may place a lit prayer candle in the Sandbox as a light witnessing your prayers and veneration.

2) Now going to the Icon of St John the Forerunner to the left of the icon of Christ, Make three metanias before the icon, kissing the icon as you pray say the following prayer:

The memory of just is praised, but thou art well pleased, O Forerunner with the testimony of the Lord. For thou wast found worthy to baptize in the stream Him whom they foretold. Having mightily contended and suffered for the truth, with joy thou hast preached also to those in hades, the good tidings of God made manifest in the flesh, who takes away the sins of the world and granteth His great mercy.

You may wish to ask a prayer before the icon for a loved one or a particular need. If you like you may place a lit prayer candle in the Sandbox as a light witnessing your prayers and veneration.

3) Crossing in front of the Holy Altar, cross yourself as a reverence before the most precious body and blood of Our Lord in the Tabernacle of the Altar and go to the icon of the Theotokos and Virgin Mary. Make three metanias before the icon, kissing the feet of the baby Jesus and the hand of the Virgin Theotokos and Virgin Mary, as you pray:

Forasmuch as Thou art a fountain of tenderness, O Theotokos, make us worthy of compassion. Look upon a sinful people, manifest thy power as ever, for hoping on thee,

we cry aloud unto thee, "Rejoice!" as once did Gabriel, chief captain of the Bodiless Powers.

You may wish to ask a prayer before the icon for a loved one or a particular need. If you like you may place a lit prayer candle in the Sandbox as a light witnessing your prayers and veneration.

4) You then will go to the Patronal Icon of the Temple (our Patronal Icon is that of the Nativity of St John the Forerunner). Make three metanias and pray the Troparion used by the Temple. The troparion of our Temple is:

O Prophet and Forerunner of Christ God's coming to us, all we who with longing now extol thee are at a loss to honor thee worthily, for the mother's barrenness and thy Father's long silence, by thine all-renowned and hallowed birth were ended, and the incarnation of the Son of God is preached to all the world.

You may wish to ask a prayer before the icon for a loved one or a particular need. If you like you may place a lit prayer candle in the Sandbox as a light witnessing your prayers and veneration.

5) In some Churches, on either side of the Main four Icons there may be the icons of St Gabriel and St Michael the Archangels. These may be on the Deacon's doors or on the iconostasis. You would reverence these icons when you were on the appropriate side by making three metanias before the icon, and may say the following prayer:

O Leaders of the heavenly host, Michael and Gabriel, unworthy as we are, we implore you that by your prayers you encircle us with the wings of thine immaterial glory as we fall down before you and fervently cry, "Release us from danger, O marshals of the hosts on high.

You may wish to ask a prayer before the icon for a loved one or a particular need. If you like you may place a lit prayer candle in the Sandbox as a light witnessing your prayers and veneration.

6) When you have finished with the veneration of the icons, Fold your arms as if you were about to take communion and bow to the members of the faithful in the church asking their prayers and forgiveness of any offense you may have caused. Having done this you are ready to join rest of the congregation and have spiritually prepared yourself for the Holy Things that are about to happen with in the Service.

As a final note, if one arrives after the Service of the Divine Liturgy begins, it is expected that you would venerate the icons in the foyer (in our parish at the entrance of the Temple) , and not go to the iconostasis, but rather pray in your place within the congregation.



Monastic Saints to Live By:

The Virgin Martyr Theodosia of Constantinople

Commemorated on May 29

The Virgin Martyr Theodosia of Constantinople lived during the eighth century. She was born in answer to the fervent prayers of her parents. After their death, she was raised at the women's monastery of the holy Martyr Anastasia in Constantinople. St Theodosia became a nun after she distributed to the poor of what remained of her parental inheritance. She used part of the money to commission gold and silver icons of the Savior, the Theotokos, and St Anastasia.



When Leo the Isaurian (717-741) ascended the imperial throne, he issued an edict to destroy holy icons everywhere. Above the Bronze Gates at Constantinople was a bronze icon of the Savior, which had been there for more than 400 years. In 730, the iconoclast Patriarch Anastasius ordered the icon removed. The Virgin Martyr Theodosia and other women rushed to protect the icon and toppled the ladder with the soldier who was carrying out the command. Then they stoned the impious Patriarch Anastasius, Emperor Leo ordered soldiers to behead the women. St Theodosia, an ardent defender of icons, was locked up in prison. For a week they gave her a hundred lashes each day. On the eighth day, they led her about the city, fiercely beating her along the way. One of the soldiers stabbed the nun in the throat with a ram's horn, and she received the crown of martyrdom.

The body of the holy virgin martyr was reverently buried by Christians in the monastery of St Euphemia in Constantinople, near a place called Dexiokratis. The tomb of St Theodosia was glorified by numerous healings of the sick.

ORTHODOX WORSHIP: OUR GENERAL APPROACH

By Father Matthew Thurman

There is a story in Bishop Kallistos Ware's book *The Orthodox Church* that nicely introduces what the general approach to Orthodox worship is. In the 10th Century, Vladimir, Prince of Kiev, is searching for "the true religion" for his people. He sent a number of observers to different regions in the known world to report on the worship of different faiths. So moved by their experience of Orthodox worship, they reported:

"We knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth, for surely there is no such splendor or beauty anywhere upon earth. We cannot describe it to you: only this we know, that God dwells there among humans, and that their service surpasses the worship of all other places. For we cannot forget that beauty." (p. 264)

There are four points to be drawn from this account concerning Orthodox worship in general.

(1) **Worship is nothing less than "heaven on earth."** ("We knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth.") In a very real sense, every Mass transports us to a heavenly, holy realm. As such...

(2) **Worship is one of the main, tangible places where we encounter God.** ("This we know, that God dwells there among humans.") There are definitely other places and ways that we can encounter God, but the Mass is one of the primary, most accessible means that we have. Our approach to worship should be with reverence and preparation for this encounter with God.

(3) **Worship emphasizes divine beauty.** ("We cannot forget that beauty.") Orthodox worship, by its very nature, is beautiful to the senses: sights, sounds, smells, and the actions of those participating in the services. We should offer the best that we possibly can for a divine worship that is beautiful.

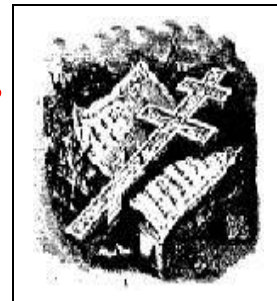
(4) **"Orthodoxy," means both "right worship" and "right belief."** What we believe is most directly shown in how we worship. One of the most direct ways that we can show visitors and inquirers what we believe is to invite them to worship with us. Prince Vladimir's observers spoke of Orthodoxy based on their experience of Orthodox worship, not on the basis of a persuasive argument, a statement of doctrine, or a book.

Stated another way by Fr. Michael Keiser in his book *Children of the Promise: An Introduction to Western Rite Orthodoxy*:

"Worship is an entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven, and Orthodox churches reflect this reality in their design and decoration: here heaven and earth meet. The altar area, especially, is made as beautiful as possible; this is the gate of heaven; but the entire interior of the church building is usually decorated in the Orthodox tradition. There will be different styles of decoration, but one reality: we worship in heaven, and the building itself proclaims this" (p. 12).

Father Matthew Thurman is an Orthodox Priest who serves at St. Columba Orthodox Church under the Western Rite Vicariate of the Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. It is located at 726 N. 119th Street in Lafayette, Colorado. Father Matthew maintains a Blog at www.homepage.mac.com/gthurman/iblog/index.html

From the Pastor's Desk



Dear Brothers and Sisters of St John

Christ is Risen!

As we near mid-pentecost, we remain within the paschal-tide of the Church. I would like to share with you the Paschal Greetings of His Grace Bishop Basil of Wichita and MidAmerica and our Arch-Pastor, Metropolitan Philip.

your unworthy priest
Aidan +

The Most Reverend
Metropolitan PHILIP

The Right Reverend
BASIL



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of All North
America

Bishop of Wichita and the
Diocese of Mid-America

The Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
OF NORTH AMERICA
The Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America

1559 N. Woodlawn, Wichita, KS 67208-2429
Telephone (316) 687-3169 * Fax (316) 687-3327
Website: www.antiochian.org * Email: bpbasil@aol.com

P A S C H A 2 0 0 7

Beloved and Christ-loving Clergy, Monastics and Laity of the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America:

I embrace and greet you with a holy kiss in the Name of the Resurrected Theanthropos Jesus Christ, and, together with you and Orthodox Christians throughout the world, I joyfully proclaim that Christ is risen! *Χριστός ἀνέστη!* *المسيح قام!* *Христос Воскресе!* *Hristos a înviat!*

As we prepare to celebrate the most glorious Feast of feasts in our beautifully adorned church temples across the Heartland of America, let us recall and be inspired by another glorious Pascha - this one celebrated in stark Block 26 at Dachau Concentration Camp in 1945:

“The room was bare, save for a wooden table and an icon of the Theotokos. A creative solution to the problem of the vestments was found. Linen towels were taken from the SS hospital. When sewn together lengthwise, two towels formed an epitachelion, and when sewn end-to-end they became an oration. Red crosses, originally intended to be worn by the medical personnel of the SS guards, were put on these towel-vestments. On Pascha, May 6th, countless Serbs, Greeks and Russians gathered in and around the barracks. In the entire history of the Orthodox Church there has probably never been a Paschal service like that one. Greek and Serbian priests together with a Serbian deacon wore the make-shift vestments over their blue and gray-striped prisoner’s uniforms. Then they began to chant, alternating from Greek to Slavonic, the Paschal Canon and the Paschal Stichera all from memory! The Gospel—“In the beginning was the Word”—from memory! And finally, the Paschal Homily of Saint John Chrysostom—also from memory! A young Greek monk from the Holy Mountain stood up in front of us and recited it with such infectious enthusiasm that we shall never forget him as long as we live. Eighteen Orthodox priests and one deacon concelebrated this unforgettable service.”

May our Paschal joy approximate in some small measure that experienced by those courageous Orthodox Christians in Dachau sixty-two years ago.

Wishing you and your families a glorious Paschal season, and looking forward to being with you all at our Diocesan Family Reunion in Topeka, Kansas (June 14th-17th), I remain

Your Father in the Risen Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bishop Basil".

+ B A S I L

Bishop of Wichita and Mid-America

“...the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.” ACTS 11:26

**Christ is Risen!
Indeed He is Risen!**



METROPOLITAN PHILIP'S PASCHAL LETTER

"To Thy Resurrection, O Christ our Savior, the Angels in heaven sing. Make us also who are on earth, worthy to glorify Thee with pure hearts."

Beloved in Christ:

Christ is Risen! Truly, He is Risen!

We greet you during this Great and Holy Pascha. "This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad therein," These are the days of renewal in which we rejoice with the Church everywhere, for Christ is Risen! Ours is the true faith which shall sustain the universe. It belongs to all who would know the Truth.

We pray that the Risen Christ will abundantly bless you with every heavenly blessing and fill your hearts with paschal joy. May the Eternal Light which shown forth from the empty tomb illumine our hearts as we proclaim the good news of Christ's Resurrection from the dead.

Yours in the Risen Lord,

Metropolitan PHILIP

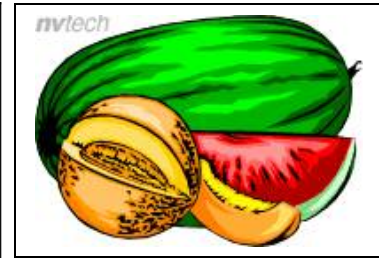
Primate

The Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

The Voice in the Wilderness is published monthly by St John the Forerunner Antiochian Orthodox Church and is free to people who wish to subscribe to the newsletter. To subscribe please contact Subdeacon Thomas Wilson, editor at soctgw@excite.com. The Voice in the Wilderness welcomes contributions from our readers. Please e-mail your articles, recipes, or news to soctgw@excite.com. Remember that the deadline for submissions is the fifteenth of every month. Articles are always accepted and may be edited for space or content. The Icons used in the Voice in the Wilderness are from the following sources: the Private Collection and Library of His Beatitude Metropolitan Theodosius, St Tikhon's Seminary, St Vladimir's Seminary, St Isaac of Syria Skete (www.skete.com), Holy Trinity Monastery (www.orders@thehtm.org). We are thankful for the beauty that they provide in illustrating our Articles. Many of these icons are available thru Christ the Lightgiver Bookstore. We also wish to thank our reference sources: the Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America (www.antiochian.org) The Orthodox Church in America (www.oca.org) and the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America www.goarch.org, as well as other resources noted after the articles.



Food for the Kingdom



Here are two nice sandwich and appetizer recipes that are tasty and fun to use if entertaining or with the family.

Hot Filled Pita Sandwiches

Combine the following in a bowl and mix thoroughly:

Ingredients:

- 1 c. mashed tofu (the firm, water-packed type works best)
- 1/2 c. tomato paste
- 1/3 c. finely-chopped onion
- 1/3 c. finely diced celery
- 2 T tahini (sesame seed butter)
- 1 t sugar
- 3/4 t salt
- 1/4 t dill weed
- 1/2 t dried oregano leaf
- 1/2 t dried basil
- 1 tsp fresh chopped parsley
- 1/4 t garlic powder

Directions:

- 1) Blend everything together, place mixture in an air-tight container and chill several hours or overnight, before serving, to blend flavors.
- 2) Split Greek-style pita bread or Arab pita pocket bread and fill with the stuffing mixture.
- 3) Place on cookie sheet and cover with aluminum foil. Bake at 350 degrees until heated through.

WALNUT SPREAD

Ingredients:

- 1 c. **DRY** bread crumbs
- 3/4 c. water
- 1/2 c. walnuts
- 1/3 c. tomato paste
- 1/2 t salt

2 T lemon juice
1/4 c. finely-chopped onion
1/4 cup finely-chopped celery.

Directions:

- 1) Take 1 cup. **DRY** bread crumbs and Place in a bowl.
- 2) Then combine the following in a blender and whiz until smooth the water, almonds, tomato paste, salt, and lemon juice.
- 3) Pour the above into the bread crumbs, onion, and celery -- mix well.
- 4) Refrigerate several hours in an air-tight container before serving.

Serve on crackers as an appetizer, on bread as a sandwich spread, or as a dip with chips or vegetables.

Yield: 1 3/4 - 2 c.



Readings from under the Grapevine: Inspirational Stories for Children of All Ages



Enjoy readings by Dr. Chrissi Hart, author of *Under the Grapevine: A Miracle by Saint Kendeas of Cyprus* (Conciliar Press, 2006). A chartered clinical psychologist from England, she now lives in York, PA with her husband and two children, where they attend St. John Chrysostom Antiochian Orthodox Church

Born in Cyprus, Chrissi now writes stories for children from her cultural heritage that are inspiring and spiritually uplifting. This program/podcast will concentrate on Orthodox Christian books and other classic literature from a variety of sources.

You can listen in on Saturdays (8:00am CT/9:00am ET and 6:00pm CT/7:00pm ET) or Thursdays (6:00pm CT/7:00pm ET) on Ancient Faith Radio.



Ancient Faith Radio is a 24 hour a day internet based radio station presenting the best in traditional Orthodox liturgical music, short quotes from the Saints, scripture readings and interviews. You can tune in on the internet at www.ancientfaithradio.com

St. John's Community News

Special Services for May

May 2 Feast of Mid-Pentecost Orthros 7am Divine Liturgy 9am

May 16 Great Vespers for the Ascension 7pm

May 17 Feast of the Ascension Orthros 7am Divine Liturgy 9am

May 26 Saturday of Souls Orthros 7am Divine Liturgy 9am Great Vespers for Pentecost 6pm

May 27 Pentecost Sunday Orthros 8am Divine Liturgy 10am Festal Potluck and Talent Show Noon

THANK YOU FOR A BEAUTIFUL PASCHA! To our Beloved Pastor, Father Aidan and our wonderful Deacon, Father Deacon Basil, our Altar Servers, Readers, Chanters, Choir, and ushers ---we want you to know how appreciative we are of the extra effort you have made to make Holy Week and Pascha special this year. We are thankful to those who donated the beautiful flowers and dyed the eggs for the Pascha Services. To those who maintained the Church and made special efforts to clean it between services, To those who participated in the Pascha Clean up on Saturday March 31. **Thank You!**

THANK YOU to all who helped with "*An Introduction to the Church*" that was held at our building on Friday, April 20, and Saturday, April 21. Your help with the set-up, hosting, and food made the event a success.

Wednesday Book Study-Every Wednesday evening we will continue our Pascha Book Study that began on Wed, April 18, the Orthodox book entitled *Hymn of Entry*. It is available in the book store. At our first meeting, we discussed the Introduction and the first chapter (pgs 11-39). This will be a wonderful way to preserve and nurture the work that we all did during Great Lent. For more information contact Father Aidan.

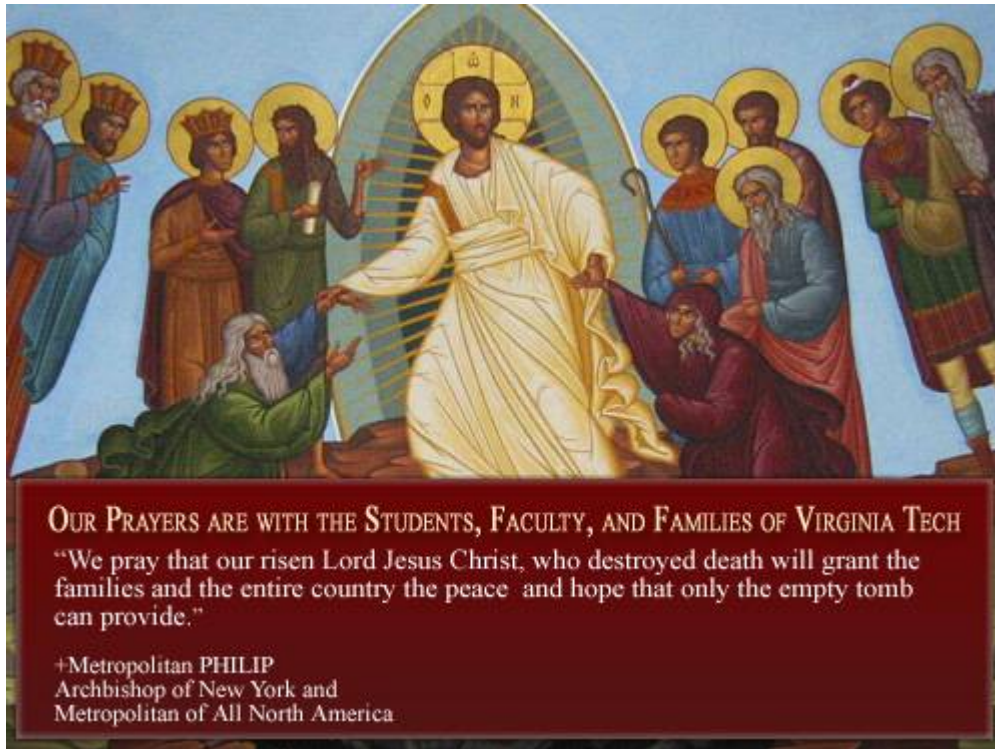
The Parish Life Conference June 14th thru June 17th in Topeka Ks.- This year the event is being sponsored by Sts Peter and Paul Orthodox Church in Topeka Ks. The parish life conference is a great time to get together with friends from around the diocese; the conference also includes wonderful workshops and beautiful services. For more information, check out this address: <http://www.peterandpaul.net/index3.shtml>

PARISH PRAYER LIST:

Pray for the Catechuminate: Carol Lockett, Gregory Parsons, Kevin Shaw, David Jenks, Mary Anne Harding, Rigel Thurson, Gregory Goecker, and Karen Roberts.

Pray for the Health of Body and Soul of those who have requested your prayers Nun SERAPHIMA, Landon Lockett, Teresa ANNA Sisko, and those who serve in the Armed Forces

Please remember in your prayers the first lay missionary of our Diocese, Miss Katie Wilcoxson of the Church of St. John the Forerunner in Cedar Park, TX, who will serve the Lord on mission for three months at Hogar Raphael Ayau Orphanage in Guatemala.



Birthdays, Anniversaries, and Special Celebrations:

May Birthdays: A Gabriel Montgomery (5/1), Todd Montgomery (5/2), Anna Macdonald (5/7), Ray Sisko (5/7), Kristi Jones (5/9), Subdeacon Thomas Wilson (5/16), Nikolaus Onjanow (5/23), Michael Montgomery (5/28) Gail Dickinson (5/30),

Names Days: NIKOLAUS Onjanow (5/9)

Slava: The Nelson family - Ss Cyril and Methodius (5/11)

Happy Anniversary: Father Deacon Basil and Shamassey Mary Long (5/7), Ray and Teresa Sisko (5/22), Todd and Hannah Montgomery (5/27)

Congratulations to the Michaelis Family, Steven MICHAEL, Kristen JOANNA, and ISSAC on the arrival of Issac's baby brother Samuel Aidan Michaelis on March 29, 2007.

Congratulations to the Easley Family. GREGORY, Gayla MACRINA, Evan JOHN, Kate CATHERINE, and Grace MARY Easley were chrismated on Great and Holy Saturday at the Vesperal Liturgy of St Basil and received into full communion in the Holy Orthodox Church. We were blessed to have their parents, grandparents, and friends support them and come for the service.

Congratulations to Karen Roberts who was made a catechumen of the Holy Orthodox Church on St Thomas Sunday, April 15.

MAY GOD GRANT YOU MANY YEARS!

ORTHODOX KID'S PAGE

The Missing Prayer

After basking in the Glow of Pascha, Alexis was settling down to the regular flow of prayer as his family said their daily prayers.

As Alexis listened to his Papa saying the prayers, he felt something was missing. Something was not right. This worried Alexis. What was missing?

As he went to bed Alexis thought, "Missing? Nothing could be missing he thought. Papa always reads his prayers from the prayer book and surely everything was as it should be." And so he lay down to sleep.

The next day Alexis ran and played at school like he always did. After Supper, he gathered with his family at the icon corner. Papa as usual started the evening prayers. But wait there it was again, the nagging thought that something was not right. Something was missing.

After prayers, Alexis came to his Papa and told him, "Papa, something is wrong but I can't figure out what it is?"

Papa took Alexis by the hand and asked Him, "What is wrong?"

"It seems that something is missing when you start our Evening Prayers, Something is not there", said Alexis.

Papa smiled and tousled Alexis' hair, "You are right! Something is missing. It is the prayer to the Holy Spirit---O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, Who is everywhere present and fills all things. Treasury of good gifts and Giver of Life, come and abide in us and cleanse us of all impurity, and save our souls. O good One."

Alexis was surprised, he said "It IS Missing? Papa, why don't we say that prayer? We always say that prayer don't we?"

"In the Bible", said Papa as he smiled, "Jesus tells His Disciples that He must leave so that the Spirit, the Comforter, can come. This is lived out in the Orthodox Church when we do not recite the prayer to the Holy Spirit between the Feasts of Pascha and Pentecost as we await the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. On the Day of Pentecost we once again pray the prayer to the Holy Spirit."

"Oh I see" said Alexis, "We don't say the prayer to remember why Jesus had to leave and that he has given us the Holy Spirit to help us and comfort us. On Pentecost, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit and we show our belief and trust in the Holy Spirit by saying the prayer to the Holy Spirit."

"That is Right Alexis!"

Papa was proud that Alexis had recognized that something was missing in his prayers and knew that Alexis would be happy once again when they began to recite the prayer to the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

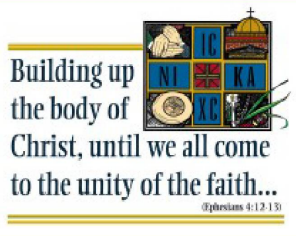
Family Helps:

- 1) Since Pentecost is the birthday of the Church it can be celebrated in the home by baking a special birthday cake for the Church and serving it as dessert. One candle may be used to represent each 100 years of the Church's existence. twenty candles may be used. The whole family can sing "Happy Birthday" to the Church and blow the candles out together
- 2) Read and discuss the Scripture lessons that are read in Church on Pentecost (**Acts 2:1-11** and **John 7:37-52, 8:12**).
- 3) As a family discuss what the Church is. It is the Body of Christ through which He continues to be present in the world today: to teach us, forgive us, guide us, bless us, and strengthen us. After Christ ascended into heaven, He established the Church to carry on His work. When we go to Church on Sunday, we are going to Christ. When we support the Church with our offerings, we are supporting Christ. When we listen to the Church, we are listening to Christ.

Our Thanks to Fr. **Anthony Coniaris**, for the inspiration of this story and its activities coming from "How to Celebrate Pentecost at Home" from his book ***Making God Real in the Orthodox Christian Home*** published by Light & Life Publishing and available at our parish Books Store Christ the Light-giver. Fr. Anthony Coniaris' ***Making God Real in the Orthodox Christian Home*** offers us many ways to enrich the lives of our families.

Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Christian Church

Rev. Fr. Joseph Longofono, Pastor



2516 SW Huntoon Street — Topeka, KS 66604 (785) 354-7718

Diocese of Wichita & Mid-America **3rd Annual Parish Life Conference**

June 14-17, 2007

Capitol Plaza Hotel

Reservations: (785) 431-7200 (800) 579-7937

Dear Friends,

It is our great pleasure and privilege to host the Third Annual Parish Life Conference of the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America. We look forward to praying, learning, worshiping Christ and conducting the business of His Church in Mid-America. We will provide an outstanding conference for you and we know that we will be enriched by your visit.

Please go to www.peterandpaul.net/index3.shtml to see hotel information and a schedule of the exciting events we have planned.

Mark your calendar now so you can attend this beautiful weekend. We are blessed to have His Grace, Bishop BASIL, as our presiding Hierarch during the conference.

Visit the hotel website at www.capitolplazahoteltopeka.com and click on the "Book Online" link to reserve your hotel room. We have secured an excellent rate for the conference, so reserve your room early as they may sell out. To secure the conference rate, type "PAUL" in the Corporate/Promotion Code Box.

We look forward to seeing you in June.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Fr. Joseph Longofono, Pastor

Jason Gilbert, Conference Chair

For more information, email Jason Gilbert at plc2007@peterandpaul.net

