

THE MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH:

The Savior testified about himself that he “conquered the world.” And his victory, his redemptive achievement is included in the fact that he created his Church, the beginning of the “new creation.” Beginning with the holy apostles, ancient Christians called themselves the “people of God,” a new nation, the “chosen people,” “a holy people.” And in truth the Holy Church is the “House of God,” the City of God, “of which the artist and builder is God,” the “Kingdom of God,” “the New Jerusalem from above.” Already in the name itself—*ekklesia*—the idea of the Church is contained and is carried on, as a City or Kingdom of God. *Ekklesia* is like a never-dispersing national convocation of new people born in grace, the “summoned” citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem. And it is namely this concept which is disclosed even now by the Orthodox Church, when before Holy Baptism it demands from the “enlightened” to confess faith in Christ,” “as *King* and God” and in baptismal prayers it prays for them, “and they will honor the higher calling and be numbered among the first born written in the heavens.” In Holy Baptism man leaves “this guilty world,” leaves “hostile work” as if entering or being released from the natural order of things, from the order of “flesh and blood,” and passes to the order of grace—and, according to the mysterious and solemn words of the Apostle Paul, “approaches Mt. Zion and the city of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and the host of angels, and the solemn council, and Church of the First-Born, written in the heavens, and the Courts of all—God, and the souls of the righteous, having achieved perfection.” The entire meaning and strength of the sacrament of Holy Baptism is that the baptized enters into the *one* Church, “the one Church of angels and men,” taking root and growing into the one Body of Christ,” and becomes a “fellow citizen of the saints and friends of God,” for “we are all one Spirit baptized in one body.” Holy Baptism is like a mysterious initiation into the Church, as into the kingdom of grace. ... The Church is the new people in grace, not coinciding with any natural or earthly people... a people having been formed according to another principle entirely—not through the necessity of natural birth, but through the “mystery of water,” through the mysterious union with Christ in the “mysterious font,” “through freedom, deed and gift of adoption by God.” —Fr. Georges Florovsky +1979

ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



May 10, 2020 ~ Sunday of the Paralytic



- TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Three:

Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; for the Lord has shown strength with His arm; He has trampled down death by death; He has become the first-born of the dead. He has delivered us from the depths of hades, and hath granted the world great mercy.

- KONTAKION OF THE PARALYTIC, Melody *On This Day*:

As of old Thou didst raise up the paralytic, O Lord God, by Thy God-like care and might, raise up my soul which is palsied by diverse sins and transgressions and by unseemly deeds and acts, that, being saved, I may also cry out: O Compassionate Redeemer, O Christ God, glory to Thy dominion and might.

- KONTAKION OF PASCHA, Tone Eight:

Though Thou didst descend into the grave, O Immortal One, yet didst Thou destroy the power of Hades. And didst arise as victor, O Christ God, calling to the Myrrh-bearing women: Rejoice; and giving peace unto Thine apostles, O Thou who dost grant resurrection to the fallen.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, May 9: 5 PM, Great Vespers
- Sunday, May 10: 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy
10:45 AM, Giving of Holy Communion
11 AM, Church School Online
3 PM, Women's Online Fellowship
- Tues., May 12: 5 PM, Vespers for Mid-Feast
- Wed., May 13 8:30 AM, Liturgy for Mid-Feast
9:45 AM, Giving of Holy Communion
5 PM, Vespers
5 PM, Redwood Empire Food Bank
7 PM, Online Study of Acts

• A MOTHER'S BEATITUDES:

Blessed is the mother who understands her child, for she shall inherit a kingdom of memories. Blessed is the mother who knows how to comfort, for she shall possess a child's devotion. Blessed is the mother who guides by the path of righteousness, for she shall be proud of her children.

Blessed is the mother who is never shocked, for she shall receive and know confidence and security. Blessed is the mother who teaches respect, for she shall be respected. Blessed is the mother who emphasizes the good and minimizes the bad, for her children shall follow her example.

Blessed is the mother who answers questions honestly, for she shall always be trusted. Blessed is the mother who treats her children as she would like to be treated, for her home shall always be filled with happiness.

• GIVING OF HOLY COMMUNION:

On Monday, an email was sent to the Parish GROUPS email forum advising that our Archbishop Benjamin has blessed us to start giving Holy Communion—**not during, but only at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy**. Please read the following points carefully. Vladyka Benjamin has been very clear about all this, and I am going to be diligent in keeping his directives. The Church in Russia was late in applying measures to deal with the virus, and they are now suffering because of it. I apologize for the detail of the following instructions, but right now, everything is out of the ordinary, and we are just trying to adjust. Please keep the following steps when coming to receive Communion:

- 1) Those who are sick, with a higher temp than normal, who have compromised immune systems, must not come to the Church.
- 2) During the Divine Liturgy the only people allowed in the Church are the one singer, two altar servers (and in this case, also the wife and mother of the priest).
- 3) There will be no opportunity to light candles. Come another day to do that, when there is no Service. Doors are open Tues-Sun, 9–5.
- 4) Those who are preparing to receive Holy Communion should make a confession (by phone) prior to coming to church, unless they have confessed in the last two weeks.
- 5) Those who are preparing to receive Holy Communion must tell me at **least a day before** the Service so I can be prepared.
- 6) On Sunday, arrive at Church no later than 10:40 AM. On weekdays, arrive by 9:40 AM.
- 7) You will be ushered in to the Church, 3 or 4 people at a time, receive Holy Communion (each person with a separate spoon and separate cloth), and exit by the door on the north side.

Many of us, understandably, will not yet feel comfortable coming in to church—it's best to be safe. We hope, God willing, for a normal Church life in due time. —*Fr Lawrence*

• CONFESSION WITHOUT COMMUNION?

We rightly consider Confession as part of our preparation for Holy Communion—yet it also stands on its own as a Holy Mystery: an encounter with and embrace by the Living God. There may be times when a person will confess frequently, in order to come to Christ for healing of the soul and to receive counsel from the spiritual father. I would suggest that now, when our Church life has been disrupted, would be a good time to discover an appreciation for Confession on its own. We confess to God, and it is He Who gives the forgiveness through our prayer to Him. I invite you to call either Fr. John, Fr. Nicholas or me to arrange a confession. Don't delay. Life offers many surprises, and it's always good to have a conscience washed clean by the grace of the Holy Spirit when our lives are shaken by outward circumstances, otherwise we become liable to be shaken by temptation and doubts. —*Fr. Lawrence*

• SEEK YE FIRST..

Everything is for man to love Christ and all the other problems are taken care of. —*Elder and Saint Porphyrios +1991*