

Do not let pass any opportunity to pray for anyone, either at his request or at the request of his relatives, friends, of those who esteem him, or of his acquaintances. The Lord looks favourably upon the prayer of our love, and upon our boldness before him. Besides this, prayer for others is very beneficial to the one himself who prays for others; it purifies the heart, strengthens faith and hope in God, and enkindles our love for God and our neighbor. When praying, say thus: 'Lord, it is possible for Thee to do this or that to this servant of Thine; do this for him, for Thy name is the Merciful Love of Men and the Almighty.'

Saint John of Kronstadt



**Sunday 26 October 2014 is the Sixth Sunday of Luke**

**Matins Gospel:** John 20:19-31

**Epistle:** Timothy 2:1-10

**Gospel:** Luke 8:26-39

**Resurrectional Apolytikion:**

Let everything in heaven rejoice, let everything on earth be glad, for the Lord has shown strength with His arm; by death He has trampled on death; He has become the first-born from the dead; from the belly of Hades He has delivered us, and granted the world His great mercy.

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### ***Readings and saints for this week:***

**Monday:** Philippians 4:10-23; Luke 10:22-24  
Great Martyr Nestor; Cyriacus, Abp. Of Constanstinople

**Tuesday:** Luke 1:39-49, 56; Hebrews 9:1-7; Luke 10:38-42, 11:27-28  
Holy Protection of the Theotokos; Martyrs Terrence & Eunice

**Wednesday:** Colossians 1:18-23; Luke 11:9-13  
Martyr Anastasia; Abramius the Recluse

**Thursday:** Colossians 1:24-29, 2:1; Luke 11:14-23  
Cleopas & Artemas of the 70; Martyrs Zenobius & Zenobia

**Friday:** Colossians 2:1-7; Luke 11:23-26  
Stachys and Companions of the 70; Epimachus of Alexandria

**Saturday:** 1 Corinthians 12:27-31; 13:1-8; Matthew 10:1, 5-8  
Unmercenaries Cosmas & Damian



## ***Evangelion***

*A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith*

26 October 2014

### **What is Your Name?**

Today we hear Saint Luke's account of how Jesus Christ cast many demons out of a man in the territory of the Gerasenes. They had reduced this man to a pitiable state and when Jesus confronted them they begged Him to allow them to enter into a herd of pigs. The man was freed of his possession, and when the townspeople arrived they found him fully clothed and in his right mind, sitting at the feet of Christ.

This dramatic incident teaches us important truths about the power of evil in our world, and how Christ comes to free us from it. The possessed man was living among the tombs, which signify death and corruption. He was naked, signifying the loss of his nature and virtue. He was divided within himself, for we are told there were many demons in him – indeed, he was so possessed by them that when Christ asked him his name he replied "Legion."

This dramatic incident presents us with an extreme example of the human condition that we all face in one way or another. Since the fall, our human nature has been corrupted by the power of death. We have all become naked to some degree, because the Image of God in us has become blurred. We have all become divided within ourselves as we find ourselves at the mercy of conflicting desires.

In asking this man his name, Jesus Christ seeks to bring him back to himself and to restore him to the person he was created to be, free from the influence of the demonic powers. At Pascha we sing that Christ has given life to "those in the tombs." He has come to us to restore God's Image within us, to free us from our divided desires and to restore our inner unity so that we are able to serve Him.



Why do you increase your bonds? Take hold of your life before your life grows dark and you seek help and do not find it. This life has been given to you for repentance; do not waste it in vain pursuits.

Saint Isaac the Syrian

# Joining Heaven and Earth

*An Introduction to the Orthodox Understanding of Icons*

We have seen in this series that the icon belongs to the Church. It expresses the truth of our faith, witnesses to God's coming among us in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, and invites us to participate in the reality of Christ's great work of salvation, by coming to share in His transfiguring Light. This means that the icon's true home is not in the art gallery, but rather the place of prayer. Iconography is a fundamentally liturgical art, for the icon forms part and parcel of the Church's divine worship.

We all know that one finds icons in an Orthodox Church, but it is important to underline that they are not simply there for decoration, nor is their arrangement accidental. Rather, they create a liturgical space that expresses in visual form the history of salvation and makes the Kingdom of Heaven present to us, even as we journey towards it. Here we can note a few key features of the placement of icons in the church building.



## The Dome

In most Orthodox churches the dome of the church contains an icon (usually a mosaic or a fresco) of Christ the Pantocrator in the centre of the dome and at its highest point. He is the Ruler of All and the One who joins heaven and earth together through His Incarnation. Under Him one usually finds the Old Testament prophets and then the Evangelists, who wrote the four Gospels. This arrangement reminds us of the history of our salvation and that, as Saint Paul tells us, our faith is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. (Ephesians 2:20)

## The Iconostasis

If the dome depicts the joining of heaven and earth in a vertical fashion, then the iconostasis depicts their joining in a horizontal way. This icon screen, which separates the sanctuary or altar area from the nave or body of the church, can in a deeper sense be said to unite them. By coming among us, Jesus Christ has joined heaven (represented by the sanctuary) and earth (represented by the nave). His



Incarnation enables us to ascend with Him to His Kingdom, which is precisely what we do every time the Divine Liturgy is celebrated.

The icons on the iconostasis are also arranged in a particular way. At the centre are the royal doors, through which the priest enters and exits the sanctuary at specific times during the Liturgy. Their opening represents the opening of heaven which Christ accomplished through His Incarnation, Death and Resurrection. The icon of the Annunciation is usually depicted on these royal doors, for it was by the Virgin Mary's assent to God's plan of salvation that heaven was opened. Often the Evangelists are also depicted on them, and sometimes Saint Basil and Saint John Chrysostom, as authors of the liturgies most commonly used. On the one side of the doors we find an icon of the Mother of God pointing to the Infant Christ, and on the other side an icon of the glorified Christ. These icons represent the two comings of Christ – His first as an infant and His second in glory – and remind us that everything that happens to us in the Church occurs between these two "comings." We usually find an icon of the patron saint of the particular church next to the Mother of God and an icon of Saint John the Baptist next to Christ, while above them are found icons of the Twelve Apostles.

*To be continued...*

## Question Box

If you have a question about the faith and teaching of the Orthodox Church, you can send it to [evangelion@goarch.co.za](mailto:evangelion@goarch.co.za)

### How is oil used in the Orthodox Church? Is it possible to anoint someone with oil?

The use of oil has a rich meaning in Christian tradition and is associated with light, blessing and healing. It symbolises God's mercy towards us. The Apostle James describes the life of the early Church when he writes:

*Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. (James 5:14)*

This apostolic practice of anointing the sick is continued in the Church today in the Sacrament of Holy Unction. This is celebrated on Wednesday evening of Holy Week and is usually administered to all Orthodox Christians present, for we are all in need of healing, whether of soul or body. However, it can also be administered to sick individuals and to those facing death.

In addition to this healing action, oil is also used in the Sacrament of Chrismation, in which the gift of the Holy Spirit is bestowed on the person being chrismated. The transmission of the gift of the Holy Spirit to the newly baptised was originally given by the laying on of hands by the Apostles. (Acts 8:14-17) However, as the Church spread and the number of those being baptised increased, the Apostles began to sanctify oil, which was known as Chrism, and which was used instead of the apostolic laying on of hands. This anointing with Chrism is usually administered immediately after baptism, although it is sometimes also used to receive Christians from heterodox traditions into the Church as well as to reconcile those who have left the Church and seek to return to it. Chrism is also used in consecrating a Church.

These Mysteries of Holy Unction and Chrismation are sacraments of the Church and are administered by her bishops and priests. In addition to this sacramental anointing, oil is also used in broader ways in the Church. At the service of Lity, usually celebrated during Vespers on the eve of a feast, oil is blessed together with bread and wine. The faithful are sometimes anointed with oil, especially during an all-night vigil. This is not the sacramental anointing of Holy Unction, but is rather a blessing and is often done with oil that has been blessed during the Lity earlier. Moreover, oil taken from oil lamps that burn in holy places, or in front of miraculous icons, is also considered to be blessed by God. Sometimes Orthodox Christians will keep a small bottle of holy oil in their icon corner and use it to anoint themselves or other family members with the sign of the Cross on their foreheads.