



St. Michael the Archangel Eastern Orthodox Mission

Newsletter

August 2009

Christ is in our midst!
He is and ever shall be!

Divine Liturgy 10:00 A.M.

Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.

- Ephesians 6:17-18

Important Upcoming Church Dates:

Aug 9th – St. Panteleimon – St. Peter walks on the water (*Matthew 14:22-34*)

Aug 14th – **Dormition Fast Begins** (Aug 14 – 27)

Aug 16th – Ven. Isaac – Healing of an epileptic (*Matthew 17:14-23*)

Aug 18th – **Tuesday Evening – Vespers 6:00 pm**

Aug 19th – **TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD**

Aug 23rd – St. Lawrence – The unmerciful servant (*Matthew 18:23-35*)

Aug 27th – **Thursday Evening – Vespers 6:00 pm**

Aug 28th – **DORMITION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD - Friday Morning – Divine Liturgy 10:00 am**

Aug 30th – Martyr Myron – The two great commandments (*Matthew 19:16-26*) – After Liturgy, the blessing of church school children

Note that August includes two of the 12 Great Feasts of the Church year – The Transfiguration of the Lord, and the Dormition (or Assumption) of the Mother of God.

Father Benedict's contact info:

Home: 205-856-0154. Cell: 205-441-7118

E-mail: fatherbenedict@charter.net

Coffee Hour:

Aug 2nd – Harouff

Aug 9th – Jokich

Aug 16th – Patterson (*fasting*)

Aug 23rd – Pastrick (*fasting*)

Aug 30th – Platt

Sept 6th - Zarzaur

Sept 13th - Bergantz

Sept 20th - Branham

Sept 27th – Buksa (*fasting*)

August Birthdays:

God Grant Them Many Years!

Aug 1st - Nicholas Crawford

Aug 14th - Abby Catherine Patterson

Aug 19th - Mary Kochoff

Aug 24th - Michele Jokich

Aug 24th - Steve Demora

Aug 28th – Cathy Patterson

August Anniversaries:

10th - Peter & Irena Buksa

Church Outing: Plan to attend the Stars game for the last weekend game of the season, Saturday August 22nd. The game **starts at 6:00PM**. RSVP to Hal Pastrick or Rick Kaiser so we know to wait for you.

Church Cleaning:

Aug - Branham

Sept - Ellis

This is your Church – help keep it clean!

News Items? Please send church news items to the Newsletter editor Rick Kaiser at rkmk2001@bellsouth.net.

Prayer Requests: Please remember in your prayers: Steve Demora (traveling), and his friend Ray Montgomery (in New Jersey); Child Jovana (2 years old – leukemia); Antonia with child; Katarzyna Bazylewicz; Tatiana Kukhtareva; Mariam & Tom Calache; Mary Kochoff; Glenn Dengler (friend of Jokich family) and daughters Haley (7) and Nicole (3); Dessie Jokich (mother of Mike Jokich); Sandy & Roger Ellis; Daniel Ellis (brother of Roger); Ted Gulas; Edythe Hales; Markela Hatzakis; Brian Jokich; Dessie Jokich; Elena Meagher; Daniel & Anne Kobasa (parents of H. Bergantz); Rhonda Lovette; Tim & Ron Waskerwitz; Evangeline Pamfilis; Pat Darzy; Mary Zarzaur; and Natalie (niece of Rick Kaiser).

HUMILITY – this is something great and divine, and the path to it is to consider yourself below everyone. What does it mean, to consider yourself lower than everyone? Not to notice the sins of others. Look at your own sins. Pray unceasingly.

St. Nikon of Optina

Many people are under the impression that the Saints are far from us. They are indeed far from those who have, of their own will, withdrawn themselves, but they are very near to those who keep the commandments of Christ and have the grace of the Holy Spirit. In the heavens, all live and all are sustained by the Holy Spirit; but the Spirit is the same also upon the earth. The Holy Spirit unites all men and that is why the Saints are near to us. When we pray to them, by the Holy Spirit they hear our prayers and our souls feel that they are praying for us.

Saint Silouan of Mount Athos (+1938)

Know your saints . . .

Saint John of Kronstadt (1829 – 1908)

whom the Orthodox Church
remembers on January 15



ONE of the most beloved Orthodox saints of the early 20th century, St. John of Kronstadt was born into a poor family in 1829 in the little village of Soura. He considered being a missionary to Siberia, but instead he came to the conclusion that there were many people around him who were as unenlightened as any pagan. So he decided to work for their salvation, after a dream in answer to prayer, in which he saw himself officiating in some unknown cathedral.

He was ordained priest on the 12th of December 1855. Appointed as assistant priest at Saint Andrew's Cathedral, Kronstadt, when he entered it for the first time he recognized it as the church he had seen in his dream; and there, first as assistant priest, and afterwards as rector, he served throughout the fifty-three years of his ministry.

The inhabitants of Kronstadt, a naval base situated on an island at the mouth of the Neva, not far from Saint Petersburg, were in 1855 drawn largely from the very worst elements of the population of the capital, and much of the place was a festering sore of sin and filth, of poverty and misery, of disease and starvation. Father John, whose predecessors, apparently, had hardly even dared to penetrate the worst parts of the town, spent much of his time there, striving to heal bodies and souls alike, attracting to himself first the children, and then, through them, their parents. Often he found no time to eat until the late evening, and even then he would sometimes be summoned out again, and not return before the small hours; he gave away his own shoes, he gave away the housekeeping money: his wife gradually accustomed herself to it, and finally became something like his keeper.

Early each morning, after a period of intense prayer before an icon at home, he would go to church and there sing the Liturgy in a deep, clear, and powerful voice. He usually celebrated the Divine Liturgy or at least received Communion every day. His church was packed to the doors, Sundays and weekdays alike. The great cathedral of Saint Andrew at Kronstadt could hold **seven thousand people**, and when Father John celebrated the liturgy it was so crowded that, as the Russian saying has it, "even an apple could not have found room to fall to the ground."

An object of Father John's concern and labor was the removal of the widespread poverty that afflicted Kronstadt. At first he gave these beggars money for food and shelter, but he soon came to see that this was not merely useless, but positively harmful. In 1868 he conceived the idea of founding a House of Industry, comprising a number of workshops, a dormitory, a refectory, a dispensary, and a primary school. He formed a committee, and appealed for funds. His appeal was answered by rich and poor from all over Russia, and the House of Industry was founded in 1873. Father John administered a total of over \$25,000 a year in numerous charities, half of it in Kronstadt.

Father John's health began to decline in 1906, and towards the end of 1908 he became very ill, and was unable to get any rest from his sufferings, except during his daily Liturgy, which he continued to celebrate as long as possible, doing so for the last time on December 10. Having with great difficulty received Communion for the last time, he died on the morning of the 20th of December. His body was taken solemnly to Saint Petersburg, and there interred in the great church of the convent of Saint John, which he had founded. At least sixty thousand people attended the funeral.

He who in this life cared so much for his children, and interceded for them so powerfully, has not abandoned them: the stream of healing, both bodily and spiritual,

through his prayers, has not ceased to flow. During the few years between his death and the catastrophe of the Communist revolution, which he foretold, pilgrims journeyed to his tomb. Now the pilgrims come in even greater numbers.

From the writings of St. John of Kronstadt

- When you are praying alone, and your spirit is dejected, and you are wearied and oppressed by your loneliness, remember then, as always, that God the Trinity looks upon you with eyes brighter than the sun; also all the angels, your own Guardian Angel, and all the Saints of God. Truly they do; for they are all one in God, and where God is, there are they also. Where the sun is, thither also are directed all its rays. Try to understand what this means.

- There is nothing impossible unto those who believe; lively and unshaken faith can accomplish great miracles in the twinkling of an eye. Besides, even *without* our sincere and firm faith, miracles are accomplished, such as the miracles of the sacraments; for God's Mystery is always accomplished, even though we were incredulous or unbelieving at the time of its celebration. "Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?" (Rom. 3:3). Our wickedness shall not overpower the unspeakable goodness and mercy of God; our dullness shall not overpower God's wisdom, nor our infirmity God's omnipotence.



- Oh, what great happiness and bliss, what exaltation it is to address oneself to the Eternal Father. Always, without fail, value this joy which has been accorded to you by God's infinite grace and do not forget it during your prayers; God, the angels and God's holy men listen to you.

- Prayer for others is very beneficial to the man himself who prays; it purifies the heart, strengthens faith and hope in God, and arouses love for God and our neighbor.

- When you read a worldly magazine or newspaper, it is light and agreeable reading, you easily believe in everything in it. But if you take up a religious publication or book to read, especially one relating to church matters, or sometimes when you begin reading prayers - you feel a weight upon your heart, you are tormented by doubt and unbelief, and experience a sort of darkness and aversion. Many acknowledge this. From what does it proceed? Of course, not from the nature of the books themselves, but from the nature of the readers, from the nature of their hearts, and - chiefly - from the Devil, the enemy of mankind, the enemy of everything holy: 'he takes

away the word out of their hearts' (Lk. 8:12). When we read worldly books, we do not touch him and he does not touch us. But as soon as we take up religious books, as soon as we begin to think of our amendment and salvation, then we go against him; we irritate and torment him, and therefore he attacks us and torments us on his side. What can we do? We must not throw aside the good work, the reading or prayers that are profitable to our souls, but we must patiently endure and in patience save our souls."

- The Lord said of His Church: 'I will build My Church and the gates of hell

shall not prevail against it' (Mt. 16:18). This is said of the pastors of the Church and of all true believers, as well as of all the Sacraments, all the dogmas and commandments of the Holy Orthodox Faith, and of all the offices of the Sacraments; for instance, the Liturgy, Holy Orders, Matrimony, Baptism, Chrism, Holy Oil, which have been established unto all the ages, and have already been in existence unchanged during many centuries. See how firm is the Church, founded by the Lord! Remember these words of the Lord and do not waver in the slightest degree when celebrating any of the Sacraments. Be firm and adamant.