



# ΛΥΧΝΟΣ

A GREEK ORTHODOX PERIODICAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

«Λύχνος τοῖς  
ποσὶ μου ὁ  
νόμος σου καὶ  
φῶς τῶν τριβῶν  
μου»

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SAVIOUR

Teacher

Rabbi

Counselor

Way

WORD

Messiah

## Who do you say that I AM?

Lamb

Prophet

Son of Man

Redeemer

LIGHT

Life

**W**ho do you say that I am? There is no dispute about the historical figure of Jesus of Nazareth. The most important question every human is challenged with is who is Jesus: man, prophet, or God?

In each of the four Gospels, an important climax is reached when Jesus asks His followers, and by extension all mankind, “Who do you say that I am?” (Matthew 16:15).

For the Orthodox, the Word of God is not a book. It is this Person, the crucified, resurrected and glorified Jesus Christ. The New Testament gives us the key to understanding Jesus. Yet this revelation of Christ commences even earlier, in the Old Testament. Saints Paul, Peter and Stephen in the book of Acts preached of Jesus as the fulfilment of the Old Testament. “I am” (Genesis 1:8) is revealed as “the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last” the origin and destiny of all things (Revelation 1:8, 22:13).

The more we read the scriptures, the more our relationship with God becomes illumined. Our Lord Jesus speaks to us directly. We come to personally know who He is.

St Seraphim of Sarov said that we have to swim in the scriptures, like a fish in water. Once immersed, we develop a scriptural mindset. Without this understanding, everything is distorted.

So how should we read the scriptures? It is helpful to begin reading the Bible with the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. John’s Gospel is more suitable for us when we have accepted Christ. We can read entire chapters, Gospels, or Epistles, but for us to profit even more we need to ensure that we are consistent and spend time to carefully read a

short passage every day. At times when we do not feel like reading we should not excuse ourselves. Rather, we should remind ourselves to not approach reading out of a sense of “duty”, but because we are hungry!

The parts we understand, we should try to put into practice into our life: do unto others as you would have them do unto you; give without expecting anything in return; and don’t judge others. The parts

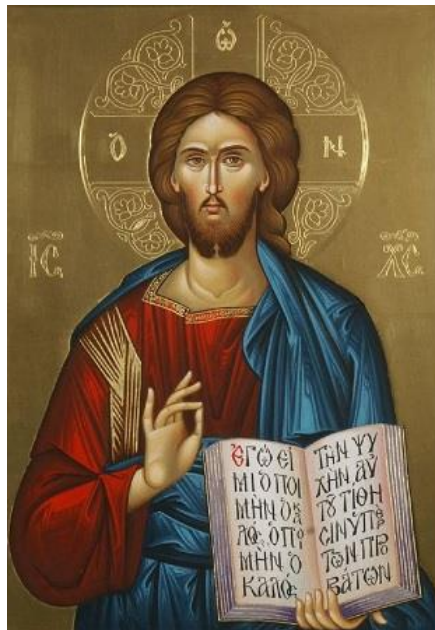
we don’t understand will work in our heart with the aid of the Holy Spirit. Make a note and later ask someone more spiritually advanced.

We need to read the entire New Testament several times, not just the parts we like. Critical study is immensely important in understanding. Understanding comes when we approach Christ with an open mind and commune with Him in the Eucharist. In the Gospel of Luke, the risen Christ appears to Cleopas and Luke, walking to Emmaus. Jesus said, “O foolish ones, slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that

the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?’ Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He began to interpret the scriptures Himself” (Luke 24:25-27). Then He breaks bread with them (eucharistic image). Finally, the disciples understand, “Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked to us on the road while He opened to us the scriptures” (Luke 24: 32).

Jesus Christ is our life. Everything starts and finishes with Him. How will we answer Christ when He asks each of us, “Who do you say that I am?”

*(Aspects of this article have been sourced from various Fr Thomas Hopko podcasts.)*





## Η Ζ' ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΗ ΣΥΝΟΔΟΣ

**Τ**ον Οκτώβριο, στην τέταρτη Κυριακή του Λουκά, η Ορθόδοξη Εκκλησία μας έχει θεσπίσει να γιορτάζουμε τους θεοφόρους πατέρες της **7ης Οικουμενικής Συνόδου**. Η Σύνοδος αυτή έλαβε χώρο το 787μΧ, στη Νίκαια και είναι η τελευταία στη σειρά των Οικουμενικών Συνόδων, όπου παρευρέθηκαν, για τελευταία φορά, αντιπρόσωποι απ' όλες τις Χριστιανικές Εκκλησίες.

Κάθε Σύνοδος υπήρξε ένας σπουδαίος σταθμός στην ιστορία της Εκκλησίας. Μέσα απ' αυτές αποκρυσταλλώθηκαν οι αλήθειες της πίστης μας, θεμελιώθηκαν τα δόγματα, επικυρώθηκαν οι βασικές διδασκαλίες της Εκκλησίας μας.

Ιδιαίτερα, η 7η Οικουμενική Σύνοδος, κατεδίκασε την εικονομαχία που είχε ταλαιπωρήσει βαρύτατα την Εκκλησία για μεγάλο χρονικό διάστημα. Το βασικό πρόβλημα ήταν η διαστρεβλωμένη θεολογία των εικονομάχων στα βασικά θέματα της πίστεως – πχ. την θεία ενανθρώπηση, την άσπορο σύλληψη του Κυρίου, των δύο φύσεων του Χριστού, των δύο θελήσεων του Χριστού, κτλ.

Κατηγορούσαν οι εικονομάχοι πως οι εικόνες είναι είδωλα. Επέμεναν ότι η Παλαιά Διαθήκη απαγόρευε τη κατασκευή και τη χρήση εικόνων «ού ποιήσεις σεαυτώ είδωλον, ουδέ παντός ομοίωμα...» (Έξοδος, κ' 4). Δηλ. η 2η εντολή του Δεκαλόγου μιλούσε ρητά να μην φτιάχνει είδωλα ή ομοιώματα ο λαός του Θεού.

Ο ιερός Δαμασκηνός όμως, λίγα χρόνια πριν την 7η Σύνοδο είχε τονίσει ότι οι απαγορευτικές διατάξεις του Μωσαϊκού Νόμου είχαν σκοπό να προλάβουν κάθε ειδωλολατρική διάθεση του εκλεκτού λαού του Θεού, που εύκολα παρεσύρετο στην ειδωλολατρία. Και συνεχίζει ο Άγιος αυτός πατήρ να επεξηγεί με σοφία για τους Χριστιανούς όλων των αιώνων ότι, από τότε που ο Λόγος του Θεού έλαβε σάρκα και ανέλαβε την ανθρώπινη φύση, οι Χριστιανοί μπορούμε να εικονίζουμε και να περιγράφουμε εξωτερικά την Αγία Του μορφή. Επομένως, μπορούμε να εικονίζουμε τη γέννησή

Του, τη βάπτισή Του, τη μεταμόρφωσή Του, τα σεπτά πάθη Του, τη σωτήρια ταφή Του, την ένδοξο ανάληψή Του. Συνεχίζοντας, συμπληρώνει ότι κατά συνέπεια και οι ιερές εικόνες της Θεομήτορος και των Αγίων, και η τιμητική προσκύνησή τους είναι τιμή και δόξα των Αγίων που ανακλάται και κατ'επέκτασιν στον δεδοξασμένο Κύριό τους.

Έχοντας αυτά υπόψιν τους, οι 367 πατέρες της 7ης Οικουμενικής Συνόδου δίδαξαν με το φωτισμό του Αγίου Πνεύματος «η της εικόνας τιμή επί το πρωτότυπον διαβαίνει και ο προσκυνών την εικόνα προσκυνεί εν αυτή του εγγραφομένου την υπόστασιν». Δηλ. η τιμή της εικόνας πηγαίνει σ'αυτόν που εικονίζεται, και αυτός που προσκυνεί την εικόνα, προσκυνά(τιμητικά) αυτόν που είναι

ζωγραφισμένος πάνω της, ως πιστό υπηρέτη του Χριστού. Οι ίδιοι πατέρες σ'αυτή τη Σύνοδο επίσης θα μας πουν πως αυτό που η Αγία Γραφή μας λέει με το λόγο, η εικόνα μας το αναγγέλλει με το χρώμα και με τη γραμμή και μας το κάνει προσιτό και κατανοητό.

Αφού κατατρόπωσαν τους φοβερούς και αιρετικούς εικονομάχους, οι

πατέρες της 7ης Οικουμενικής Συνόδου αποφάσισαν την αναστήλωση των εικόνων στις Εκκλησίες μας. Αυτή η απόφαση πραγματοποιήθηκε – μετά από δεκαετίες – με πανηγυρικό τρόπο αρχίζοντας από το Ναό της Αγίας Σοφίας το 867. Από τότε, επαναλαμβάνεται στις Ορθόδοξες Εκκλησίες μας κάθε χρόνο την Κυριακή της Ορθοδοξίας.

Καθώς θυμόμαστε τους αγώνες των Αγίων πατέρων μας για την αναστήλωση των εικόνων, ας μην ξεχνάμε πως υπάρχει μια άλλη εικόνα που είναι η βάση και η αρχή όλων των εικόνων. Είναι η δική μας, η προσωπική εικόνα. Είμαστε εμείς, ο καθένας μας που μας έπλασε ο Θεός «κατ' εικόνα» δική Του, με προορισμό να φτάσουμε και στην «ομοίωσή» Του. Με τις πρεσβείες των Αγίων πατέρων μας, είτε να το κατορθώσουμε και να τηνβάλουμε στη θέση που της αξίζει.





# Current Issues

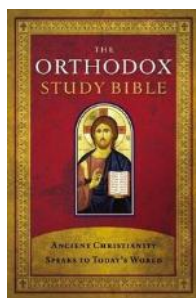
## SACRED TRADITION - The Pillar of the Orthodox Church

**T**he Orthodox Church believes that Sacred Tradition is the inspired revelation of God accepted and taught throughout the Church, and not merely an independent source of dogmatic authority to be regarded as a supplement to biblical revelation.

Tradition is understood as the deposit of faith given by Jesus Christ to the Apostles, as expounded by the Church Fathers, and expressed in the world by the practices of the Church. It is not a principle striving to restore the past, using the past as a criterion for the present. Further, Tradition is the constant abiding of the Holy Spirit and not the memory of words. It is a charismatic and not a historical event.

Since Sacred Tradition is a vast topic, it is usually divided into:

1. Biblical - This comprises the canons (book collections) of the Old and New Testaments. As the last book of the New Testament was written about 90 AD, until then the teachings of the Lord and the Apostles were transmitted by word of mouth.



2. Apostolic - The teachings of the Apostles were passed to their immediate successors, the bishops, who were called Apostolic Fathers, and to the other members of the Church, mostly orally, except for the epistles they themselves had written to the various local



Churches. However, Apostolic Tradition also considers expressions of faith that were left to us by the Apostles, such as the fifty days celebrations for Easter, prayers for the departed, for the Passion of Jesus and His Glorious Resurrection.

3. Patristic - After the passing of the Apostles, the Fathers of the Church collected carefully all the Traditions and customs left by them, wrote them down in a systematic manner, added their own teachings, and these writings formed the definitions and canons of the Ecumenical Councils, the decisions of which are accepted and obeyed by all members of the Orthodox Church. This prevented the dissemination and survival of erroneous teaching (heresies), and maintained the purity of divine revelation and Tradition.



4. Ecclesiastical - Ecclesiastical Tradition includes all teachings, dogmas and practices of the Church, from the time of the Apostles till the present.



The Sacred Tradition of the Orthodox Church was completed and sealed by the Seventh Ecumenical Council. It is only the Orthodox Church which has as a source of its teaching the Sacred Tradition, which is genuine and of equal value to the Holy Scriptures.

Whereas Sacred Tradition includes all that Holy Scripture contains and teaches, it also contains certain teachings and practices not found in Scripture. Some examples of such apparent differences are mentioned below, so that people can see and understand the reasons for their existence.

Buildings of Churches should face east, and when praying we should try to face east. In so doing we are facing the Rising Sun, the Light of the World, Jesus Christ.



Also, we make the sign of the Cross by joining three fingers (thumb, index & middle fingers) – denoting the Holy Trinity, whilst the ring and little fingers are bent into the palm, denoting the Divine and Human nature of Jesus Christ.

We light candles when in the Church, an offering to the Light of the World. Nearly all the Sacraments of the Church use prayers, actions and procedures, as decided by the Church, so as to make them both relevant and meaningful to the people.

In Baptism, the child is immersed in the water three times, indicating the three days Jesus spent in the Tomb. The way we confess, the prayers during the offering of the Holy Gifts (Anaphora) in the Divine Liturgy, prayers and actions during Baptism, Holy Unction, Weddings, Funerals, Memorial services, tonsuring for Holy Orders, are some of the common ways that the Church has established so as to facilitate the accessing of these spiritual blessings, by God's grace, through the reality of the material world.



The list is too long to be included in this publication, but each Christian should search and compile one for himself, to include as many as possible Sacred Customs used by the Church and derived from Sacred Tradition. May we all strive to preserve the traditions handed down to us by the Church.

## Από Τους Αγίους Της Εκκλησίας Μας

**Ο Άγιος Ανδρέας ο Πρωτόκλητος**  
(Η μνήμη του τιμάται στις 30 Νοεμβρίου)

**Α**πό τους όλους τους πρώτους Αποστόλους και μαθητές του Κυρίου, στον Άγιο Ανδρέα μόνο δόθηκε ο τίτλος «Πρωτόκλητος». Ήταν πρώτα μαθητής του Αγίου Ιωάννη του Βαπτιστή. Αφού άκουσε τον Βαπτιστή να αναφέρεται στον Χριστό, λέγοντας «ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ» (Ιωάν. 1'29), τότε ο Άγιος Ανδρέας ακολούθησε τον Χριστό, και έγινε ο πρώτος μαθητής Του.

Ο Άγιος Ανδρέας ήταν αδελφός του Αγίου Πέτρου και οι δύο ήταν ψαράδες και γιοί του Ιωνά. Ο Άγιος Βασίλειος, Επίσκοπος Σελευκείας, αναφέρεται στη σημασία του Αγίου Ανδρέα ως τον Πρωτόκλητο μαθητή και μας λέει: «Παίρνοντας τον Πέτρο μαζί του, ο Ανδρέας έφερε τον αδερφό του στον Κύριο, και έτσι τον έκανε συμμαθητή του. Αυτό ήταν το πρώτο επίτευγμα του Ανδρέα: αύξησε τον αριθμό των αποστόλων, φέρνοντας τον Πέτρο στον Χριστό, με το αποτέλεσμα να είναι ότι ο Χριστός βρήκε στο πρόσωπο του Πέτρου τον αρχηγό των μαθητών. Όταν αργότερα η ομολογία του Πέτρου εγκρίθηκε από τον Κύριο, ήταν χάρη στον σπόρο που είχε σπείρει ο Ανδρέας» (από Ομιλία για τον Απ. Ανδρέα).

Κατά παρόμοιο τρόπο, το «εὕρηκαμεν τὸν μεσσίαν» (Ιωάννης 1'42) που αναφώνησε ο Άγιος Ανδρέας στον Άγιο Πέτρο επαναλήφθηκε από τον ίδιο τον Άγιο Πέτρο: «σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος.» (Ματθ. 16'16). Η δεύτερη ομολογία δεν θα υπήρχε χωρίς την πρώτη.

Στα ιεραποστολικά του ταξίδια, Ο Απόστολος Ανδρέας ταξίδεψε σε όλα τα μήκη και πλάτη τῆς γῆς, από το σύγχρονο Αφγανιστάν μέχρι τη Ρωσία, από τη Βόρεια Αφρική μέχρι τη νότια Φινλανδία και στη Ρουμανία μέχρι τελικά κατέληξε στην Ελλάδα όπου μαρτύρησε για τον Χριστό. Είναι επίσης ο προστάτης Άγιος της Σκωτίας.

Στο τέλος, ο ζήλος του για τον Χριστό δεν εξασθένησε ποτέ, ακόμη και όταν θυσιάσε τη ζωή του για τη πίστη του Χριστό σε πολύ προχωρημένη ηλικία: «Εσύ που δίδεις την αιώνια ζωή, ο αγαπημένος μου Διδάσκαλος που Τον ομολογώ Σταυρωμένο, που Τον γνωρίζω, που Τον κατέχω, δέξαι με Δέσποτα. Και όπως εγώ Σου έκανα υπακοή και Σε ομολόγησα, έτσι τώρα άκουσε το αίτημά μου και πριν αποκαθλωθεί το σώμα μου, πάρε με κοντά Σου. Ωστε με την έξοδό μου από αυτή την ζωή, όλοι οι δικοί μου να συναχθούν σε Εσένα, αναπαυόμενοι στο μεγαλείο Σου» (Από το Μαρτυρολόγιο του Αποστόλου Ανδρέα, στην γιορτή του τις 30 Νοεμβρίου).

## From the Saints of our Church

**St Andrew the Apostle, the First-Called**  
(Commemorated on 30 November)

**O**f the original twelve disciples of Jesus Christ, Saint Andrew has been granted the title of "First Called." He had first been a disciple of John the Baptist. Upon hearing the Baptist referring to Christ saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29, 36), St Andrew immediately followed Christ and became His first disciple. St Andrew was St Peter's brother. Both were fishermen and sons of Jonas.

St Basil of Seleucis refers to the significance of St Andrew being the First Called, because of his responsiveness to Christ in his actions that followed: "Taking Peter with him, Andrew brought his brother to the Lord, thus making him his fellow-disciple. This was Andrew's first achievement: he increased the number of the apostles by bringing Peter to Christ, so that Christ might find in him

the disciples' leader. When later Peter won approval, it was thanks to the seed sown by Andrew."

In a sense the "we have found the Messiah" (John 1:41) exclaimed by St Andrew to St Peter was to be repeated by Saint Peter himself: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). The second confession could not have happened without the first.

Saint Andrew's far and wide missionary journeys took him as far as modern day Afghanistan, up through to Russia and as far as Northern and sub-Saharan Africa, into southern Finland and Romania, before travelling to Greece where he martyred for Christ. He is also the patron saint for Scotland.

At the end, his enthusiasm for Christ never waned, even as he gave up his life for Christ as a very old man: "But You Yourself, O Christ, Whom I desired, Whom I loved, Whom I have known, Whom I hold, Whom I now love, Who I belong to, receive me so that through my own death, many of my own fellow people will be able to come to You, finding comfort in Your majesty" (From the Martyrdom of Apostle Andrew, Feast Day, 30th November).





# Questions & Answers

A clergyman of our Archdiocese answers ...

## *How was the common cup for Holy Communion instituted?*

**T**he profound Sacrament of Holy Communion was instituted by Jesus at the Last Supper and is recorded in all the gospels. As Jesus and His twelve disciples were consuming the traditional Jewish Passover meal, Jesus took bread, broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying, "Take, eat; this is My body" (Mark 14:22). He then took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and gave it to His disciples who all drank from the one cup, saying, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many" (Mark 14:24). Therefore, it is Christ Himself who instituted the Holy Eucharist, so that those who believe in Him with their whole being and receive the Holy Gifts, receive Christ inside of them and become one with Him.

Through the prayers of the Divine Liturgy, the bread and wine are mystically transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ which deify us, that is, make us godly and divine. As one of the preparation prayers for Holy Communion states:

"Tremble, mortal, as you behold the deifying Blood; For it is a burning coal consuming the unworthy. The Body of God both deifies and nourishes me; It deifies the spirit and wondrously nourishes the mind."

After the Last Supper, the Apostles of Christ continued to practice what Jesus instituted and instructed, as the breaking of bread on the first day of the week (Acts 2:42).

One of the very early Church Fathers, St Justin Martyr (approx. 155 AD) gave an account of how Holy Communion was distributed at that time:

"There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water;

and he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands."

In the Divine Liturgy of St James, one of the most ancient Divine Liturgies, the Body of Christ is handed out individually by the priest to the faithful, who then all drink the Blood of Christ from the common cup. This method of receiving Holy Communion continues to be practiced in all other Divine Liturgies by the clergy in the sanctuary.

The spoon was introduced towards the end of the first millennium. As St Nicodemus the Hagiorite writes, the spoon was introduced as there were less deacons to assist with the administration of Holy

Communion, and to curb abuses and avoid spillage when drinking from the Cup.

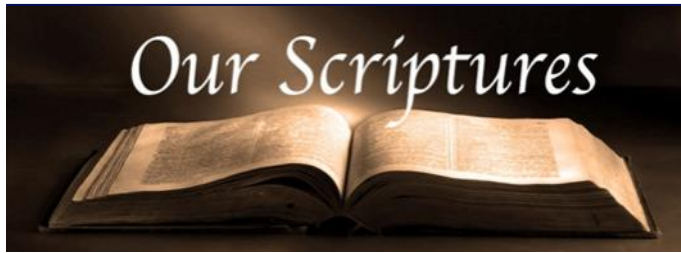
In the current circumstances of COVID-19,

people have questioned whether the virus can be transmitted through the common cup. As Orthodox Christians, we believe that it cannot. The common cup, from the time of Christ Himself, contains His Body and Blood which is life-giving, not life-taking or life-destroying. In almost 2,000 years of Church history, including numerous pandemics and infections such as tuberculosis and leprosy, there has never been a single instance of transmission of diseases through the common cup!

May we, therefore, continue to approach the common cup with the same fear of God, faith and love that has both nourished and deified Orthodox Christians throughout 2,000 years of the life of the Church.

† Fr G. L.





### The Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31)

**T**he Lord said that “there was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously each day” (v19). This man possessed every known comfort. Many would say he was successful and had made it. Poor Lazarus “full of sores, lay abandoned at his gate” (v20). Lazarus was consumed with thirst at the very edge of the spring.

The two men then died. The theatre performance, being their lives on Earth, abruptly ended. The masks that they both wore were removed and the truth revealed. The rich man, who wore a kingly mask in this life, was revealed to be poor and empty of all virtue. He was relegated to eternal darkness and torment, not because he was rich but because he was unloving and did not share his blessings with Lazarus.



In contrast, Lazarus, who wore the mask of poverty and suffering in this life, was revealed to have true riches. Lazarus was placed in Abraham's bosom, not because he was poor, but because he endured his sufferings with patience.

The Lord in His mercy gave both men the opportunity for salvation: the rich man through sharing his abundance, and Lazarus through enduring his suffering.

The parable continues with the plight of the rich man who missed his opportunity. Although on Earth he had every comfort, he now pleads with Abraham to send Lazarus “to dip the end of his finger in water and cool [his] tongue” (v24). But in words that should motivate each of us to repentance, Abraham said that there is a “great chasm” (v26) between heaven and hell that cannot be crossed for the rest of eternity. This chasm means that the time for repentance and good works is in this life, and not the next.

Let us embrace our sufferings with patience. Let us share our blessings with those in need. Let us always give thanks to the Lord for all that He has done for us.

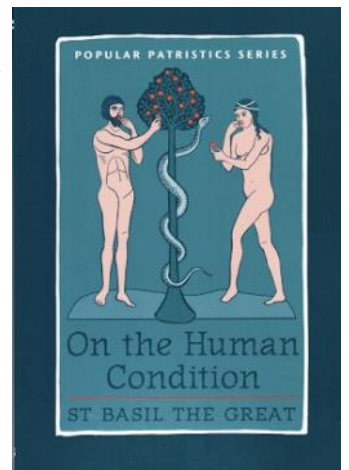


## From the Holy Father\$...

### St Basil the Great on Attentiveness

**S**t Basil's sermon on attentiveness is based on Deuteronomy 15:9: “Be attentive to yourself, lest an unlawful word be hidden in your heart”. It can be found in the book titled *On the Human Condition*, which contains a collection of St Basil's homilies and writings published by St Vladimir's Seminary Press.

Focusing on the first phrase, St Basil discusses the usefulness of attentiveness and explains that it is a God-given gift for our protection. Just as animals have the abilities required to defend themselves in the wild, so we have attentiveness. But against what do we need to defend ourselves? These are the “hidden traps” set by the enemy seeking to make us his prey.



“Be attentive, then, to yourself ... neither to what is yours nor to what is around you.” In this saying, St Basil directs the listener's focus to the one thing needful. Specifically, St Basil calls on us to know the deeper motions of our heart, casting aside fleshly things where possible and focusing on adorning the soul. Just as a sick man is directed to be attentive to his health, so we must attend to the illnesses of the soul.

St Basil highlights that attentiveness requires a struggle and warns us against losing it through laziness and vain thoughts. Daydreaming and concentrating on others is a constant temptation, but attention should instead turn inward to one's internal life. Being attentive to yourself is a reminder of what really matters, and guards against the passions of the soul.

Relevantly for our postmodern age, St Basil considers that awareness to oneself makes one attentive to God without needing “to trace your understanding of the Fashioner from the structure of the universe.” We can see God's wisdom residing in ourselves through the union of body and soul with each impacting on the other.

St Basil's teaching is beautifully summarised by the concluding verse and reminds us of our heavenly calling: «Πρόσεχε σεαυτῷ, ἵνα προσέχης Θεῷ», that is “be attentive to yourself that you may be attentive to God.”





# THE ORTHODOX ICON



## Entrance of the Theotokos

**O**n November 21 our Church commemorates the Entry into the Temple of the Most Holy Theotokos. This event is not mentioned in the Holy Gospels, so our source is Holy Tradition, being drawn from the hymnology and iconography of the feast, as well as the writings of the Fathers.

When the blessed Virgin was three years old, Joachim and Anna fulfilled their promise to dedicate their child to the Lord. Her father gathered a procession of young pure virgins, each carrying a lit candle. The holy Maiden outran her attendants in her great zeal to enter the Temple, and reached the top of the fifteen steps where the high priest Zacharias, the future father of the Forerunner, waited for her. Zacharias led Mary into the Holy of Holies, which was the innermost part of the Temple that only the high priest could enter once a year. The Theotokos danced with joy when she entered this holy place. She remained there for the next nine years until her betrothal to the righteous Joseph. Whilst there she was visited daily by the Archangel Gabriel who nurtured her with heavenly food, and through ascetic struggle she reached the most pure level of prayer and contemplation.

The icon of the feast is rich in its imagery and tells the entire story of the Virgin's entry into the Temple. We see the procession of lamp-bearing virgins, the Righteous Forebears in a stance of

offering their daughter to God, and the Holy Virgin herself before the archpriest who stands before the temple. The temple itself is often portrayed with elements of a Christian church, and in a background scene we see the Virgin in prayer within the inner sanctuary, being visited by a winged angel who offers her divine bread.

This scene is described in the hymns of the vespers service for the feast: "Into the Temple of God the all-holy Virgin is admitted, being herself the temple which contains God. She is preceded by maidens in procession, with their lamps in hand. Her parents Joachim and Anna, that

excellent couple, dance with joy, exulting indeed, for they bore the one who would bear the Creator. The all-blameless one danced around within the divine abodes, and she was fed by an Angel, being shown forth as the Mother of Christ, who is granting great mercy to the world."



It is important to remember that there is always a mystical dimension in the poetry of our Church hymnology and the imagery of our sacred art. Thus we see the fulfilment of the Old Testament images in the young Virgin, who entered the physical Holy of Holies but was to become herself the very Temple of the incarnate Word of God. This mystical understanding of the Orthodox icon takes us beyond the mere events which we commemorate. It lifts up our minds to contemplate the divine, and to engage in an active synergy with God on our path to salvation.

# ΥΠΟΜΟΝΗ

**Η** σκάλα που μας ανεβάζει προς τον Δημιουργό μας (όπως πολύ σωστά μας διηγείται ο Άγιος Ιωάννης ο Σιναΐτης), έχει πολλά σκαλοπάτια - αρχίζοντας με την μετάνοια. Όμως αν δεν έχουμε καλλιεργήσει το όπλο της υπομονής, δεν πρόκειται να ανεβούμε πολύ ψηλά.

Οι Άγιοι Πατέρες της Εκκλησίας μας διηγούνται ότι ο καλύτερος τρόπος που μπορούμε ν'αποκτήσουμε την υπομονή είναι με την σιωπή και την προσευχή, έτσι ελκύοντας το έλεος του Κυρίου.

Ο Άγιος Παΐσιος ο Αγιορείτης μας λέει: Ο Θεός την σωτηρία των ανθρώπων, την κρέμασε στην υπομονή. «Ο υπομείνας εις τέλος, σωθήσεται». Γι'αυτό δίνει δυσκολίες, διάφορες δοκιμασίες, για να ασκηθούν οι άνθρωποι στην υπομονή.

Την υπομονή πάντα να την κρατάς, γιατί είναι το μεγαλύτερο φάρμακο, που θεραπεύει τις μακροχρόνιες δοκιμασίες, διότι πολλές δοκιμασίες, μόνο με την

υπομονή περνούν, όπως και τα χιόνια και οι παγωνιές, περνούν μόνο με την υπομονή, να έρθει η άνοιξη, για να λειώσουν με τις λιακάδες. Με την στενοχώρια, οι πάγοι και τα χιόνια δεν λειώνουν, αλλά με την υπομονή. Η μεγάλη όμως υπομονή, ξεδιαλύνει πολλά και φέρνει Θεϊκά αποτελέσματα - εκεί που δεν περιμένεις την λύση, δίνει ο Θεός την καλύτερη λύση.




Άλλος Πατέρας, ο Άγιος Μακάριος ο Αιγύπτιος λέει: Μήπως εκείνος που φυτεύει αμπέλι, παίρνει αμέσως και τον καρπό; Ή εκείνος που σπέρνει, θερίζει αμέσως; Ή μήπως το νεογέννητο βρέφος γίνεται αμέσως τέλειος

άνδρας;

Με το στεφάνι της υπομονής, λέει ο άγιος Κύριλλος Ιεροσολύμων, «ο Ιησούς συνήθως στεφανώνει τους αθλητές Του».

Ας ευχόμαστε επίσης ο γλυκός Ιησούς να μας στεφανώνει στην καρδιά κάθε μέρα με το δικό Του «Στώμεν καλώς».



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## From The Old Testament



### Psalm 140

In his *Letter to Marcellinus*, St Athanasius states that within the Psalter you will find “all the movements of your soul, all its changes, its ups and downs, its failures and recoveries.” How blessed then are we that the Orthodox Church has enriched its services by use of the psalter. The vespers service in particular includes the chanting of psalm 140 in its entirety. It begins with the pleading words “Lord, I have cried out to you, hear me. Receive the voice of my prayer when I cry out to you”, and is chanted according to the tone of the week.

As the second verse is chanted “Let my prayer be set forth as incense before you, the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice”, the priest incenses the whole church and all the faithful. This creates the ideal environment for us to pray with the psalmist and make our own the petitions to God in this psalm. Incense is also revealed to be the visible sign of God's throne in Revelation (5:8, 8:3-4). The “lifting up of my hands” captures the intimacy of a child reaching out and lifting up its hands to be taken up by the parent. Taken with verse 8 “do not leave my soul destitute”, this intimacy is clearly between the soul and its creator and the aim is to lift our mind (nous) up to the throne of God as the incense rises.

Psalm 140 goes on to ask the Lord for the purification of our hearts and thoughts, to guard our mouth and lips from uttering evil things and to protect us from those who work iniquity. Furthermore, it asks for our correction by righteous people in quite a violent way, stating that their strikes are a kindness and their rebukes as anointing oil, teaching us that the path of righteousness is a struggle, but one that we must overcome with much sweat and blood so that we too may be anointed with the grace of the Holy Spirit. In this trial we are beaten down all day as though “our bones are scattered by the mouth of the grave.” The psalm concludes by re-affirming that our eyes must remain upon the Lord who is our refuge, and our deliverer from the snares and traps which are laid around us.



## Holiness In Our Times

### Elder Evmenios The Hidden Saint of our Times

St Porphyrios had asked for a confessor one time and requested Elder Evmenios from the Leprokomeio (Hospital of Infectious Diseases) in Athens. So greatly was he impressed that he would send people to him saying “you should go and receive the blessing of Elder Evmenios, he is the hidden saint of our time. Saints like this come along only once every two hundred years.”

The young Konstantinos Saridakis was born in 1931. He was the eighth child of a poor family in Ethia of Crete. He was brought up with little schooling but with a good foundation in the faith. At thirteen, sitting near the fire place in his house, he was enveloped and filled by a fiery light which gave him so much joy that he immediately jumped up shouting, “I will become a monk.” This joy remained with him all his life, becoming his most notable characteristic. Four years later he went to the Monastery of St Niketas nearby where he was tonsured with the name Sophronios in 1951.



In those days monks were not exempted from being shorn and serving in the army. It was there that he contracted leprosy which, by God's providence, led him to the Leprokomeio in Athens. Here he was acquainted with St Nikephoros who he cared for and became his spiritual child.

Renamed Evmenios at his ordination in 1975, he was sent back to serve in the Leprokomeio's chapel dedicated to the Holy Unmercenaries Sts Kosmas and Damianos. It was here that innumerable witnesses to his gifts of prophecy, miracles, healings, visions and foreknowledge surfaced. He also had the gift of tears, often emerging from the altar during a liturgy with his beard completely soaked after praying for all those suffering.

This hidden saint of our times reposed on 23 May 1999 and was laid to rest in his home village where he began his service to Christ. Here as a young boy after lighting the church's oil lamps, a woman wearing black clothing approached him and told him that he would become a priest. This was the Theotokos, and he chose this to be his final resting place, overwhelmed that the Mother of God had honoured him there. May his memory be eternal in the choir of the saints.



## What we Hear in Church



### Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent

«Σιγησάτω πᾶσα σὰρξ βροτεία, καὶ στήτω μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου, καὶ μηδὲν γήινον ἐν ἑαυτῇ λογιζέσθω· ὁ γὰρ Βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλευόντων, καὶ Κύριος τῶν κυριευόντων, προσέρχεται σφαγιασθῆναι, καὶ δοθῆναι εἰς βρώσιν τοῖς πιστοῖς· προηγουμένοι δὲ τούτου, οἱ χοροὶ τῶν Ἀγγέλων, μετὰ πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας, τὰ πολύορματα Χερουβὶμ, καὶ τὰ ἑξαπτέρυγα Σεραφίμ, τὰς ὄψεις καλύπτοντα, καὶ βοῶντα τὸν ὕμνον· Ἀλληλούϊα, Ἀλληλούϊα, Ἀλληλούϊα.»

“Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and stand with fear and trembling, and take no thought for any earthly thing; for the King of kings and Lord of lords comes to be slain and given as food for the faithful. Before him go the choirs of Angels, with every Principality and Power; the many-eyed Cherubim and the six-winged Seraphim covering their faces and crying out the hymn: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.”

This is a liturgical hymn chanted in lieu of the cherubic hymn before the Great Entrance in the Liturgy of Saint James and also in the Liturgy of Saint Basil celebrated on Holy Saturday. The idea of holding silence for the arrival of someone or something of importance, however, predates this hymn. Indeed, every four years an ancient hymn which invoked these same sentiments was recited at the lighting of the Olympic flame at Ancient Olympia in honour of the Sun-God Apollo: “Hush! Be silent! May all the air, the earth, the sea and all winds, mountains and vales, be still!” (Mesomedes, Hymn to the Sun).

It would appear there exists a need in the human soul to look towards something higher, something or someone Divine. But, whereas the Ancient Greeks called upon a god whom they understood to be in the natural world surrounding them, the Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity took on mortal flesh to be “slain and given as food for the faithful.”

The enormity of this reality is brought to the fore in Orthodox worship in the Liturgy of Holy Saturday where this hymn is chanted instead of the usual cherubic hymn.

The 18th century monk and preacher, Father Athanasios Varouchas, poses the question in his sermon on the Passion of Christ, “[w]hat is this great silence which makes people fearful and the angels to stand aside? Since you ask, listen so that you may understand. The reason is that the Great King, Christ sleeps and no one is bold enough to speak lest He be woken. For today, my beloved brothers and sisters, the prophecy of Jacob the Patriarch is completed where he said, “He bows down, he lies down as a lion; And as a lion, who shall rouse him?” (Genesis 49:9-12).

Our tradition tells us that this sleeping lion symbolises the three-day burial of Christ, who resurrected His own body with His divine power, and which is now food for the faithful, His Holy Body and Blood.



### On becoming a mature adult Christian by Fr Thomas Hopko

In his podcast on *Who is the Theotokos*, Father Hopko advises us to read the entire New Testament several times and to pray to God to illumine our understanding, “Holy Spirit enlighten me, guide me.” We need to set aside our prejudice, anger and hang ups.

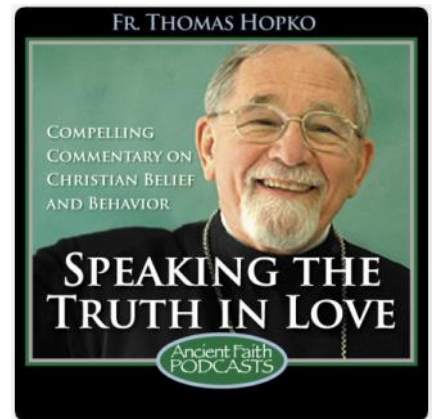
If we don’t believe in God, pray to whom it may concern. If we are not sure, pray “God, if you are there, please help me. I want to know. Illumine my heart.

Show me your way. I am ready to follow if I can be convinced. I’m not just here to chit chat. I’m not here to hear a word to discuss it. I’m here to hear a word and to do it, if I am convinced that it is God’s word.” Pray every day. Pray the Lord’s prayer.

Fast Wednesday and Friday every week. Share some of your goods with a poor person. Share some of your time with others, 2 hours every week at a shelter. Try to sit every day in total silence for 15-20 minutes, before the face of God. If addicted to food, alcohol or sex, seek help from a professional programme.

Find a confessor, one human you can tell everything to without editing. God will provide a trustworthy confessor if you are really serious about confession. There has to be one person who knows everything about you: your thoughts, temptations and dreams. This is the humility that opens you up to reality and saves you from the lie. Most of the lies are unconscious at first because you are so used to lying that you don’t even know you are lying.

Beware that sometimes the addiction can be religion itself. Go to church. Stand in the back. Do nothing but listen. Don’t judge the people who are there. Don’t criticise the reading, chanting and icons. Just leave yourself open. If someone has the courage and desire to do these things, God will reveal Himself. These things lead a person to become a mature, adult, spiritual Christian person.







*The series on our Creed continues*

**I** believe in one God, Father Almighty. Our Creed proclaims our faith in the Trinitarian God. It does so in an eloquent, specific, yet far from exhaustive manner. The fathers of the First and Second Ecumenical Councils (325, 381 AD) did not set out, through sheer curiosity, to create a sophisticated philological text espousing the Christian faith. Rather, they responded to the theological provocations of their time, setting forth the Truths of the Christian faith, as illumined by the Holy Spirit. They dogmatised out of necessity to safeguard the Apostolic Faith in the pure form it was handed down from the time of Christ.

The Creed consists of three main parts, progressing from a confession of God the Father, to God the Son, to God the Holy Spirit.

At the very beginning of the first article, we find the first of only three verbs mentioned in the Creed: “I believe...” Originally the plural “we believe” was used, indicating the unanimous declaration of the Church faith shared by the fathers of the First Ecumenical Council. The singular form was adopted once the Creed became established in the liturgical use of the Church, emphasising the personal nature of the confession of faith.

“In one God”, expresses the Church’s perception of God as One and Three at the same time. The One Godhead is united in essence and distinguished as Trinity in Three Persons (Hypostases): Father, Son, Holy Spirit. This distinction does not signify separation or inequality amongst the Three, but rather denotes their exclusive hypostatic attributes (the Father as unbegotten, the Son as eternally begotten, the Holy Spirit as eternally proceeding).

By naming God the Father first, the Creed emphasises the Father as the sole cause (μόνη ἀρχή / αὐτία) of the existence of the Son and the Holy Spirit, all of Whom share the same divine essence and are co-eternal.

The title, “Father”, refers directly to the relationship between God the Father and God the Son - a unique relationship by all means. “Father” in the Holy Trinity does not correspond to the human reality where the attribute of fatherhood is linked to temporality, that is, a transition of time from one status to another. Regarding

God the Father, there was never a time when He was not Father, as there was never a time when the Son was not. They are Co-eternal. This was one of the main points the heretic Arius argued against at the time of the First Ecumenical Council.

Christ Himself speaking to His apostles on how to pray, teaches us to call God, “our Father.” Through the Mystery of Baptism we all become potential sons of God by the grace of adoption.

God our Father is “Almighty”, All-Powerful, exercising total authority over all things. Everything is dependent on God the Creator, whereas He Himself is absolutely independent of any creation. This is why any form of idol-worship of this world is a painful distortion of God’s creation. The

person glorifying God advances his life in harmony, liberated from every dependence. Whereas the person inclining towards created things and influences (which are themselves dependent on God), is easily enslaved and limited. He becomes dependent on the dependent - whatever this may be - from material things to his own self-love.

*We will continue to explore the first article of the Creed in the next edition of Lychnos.*



# NEWS and VIEWS



## 65 Year Celebration of the Greek Orthodox Christian Society

To celebrate the 65th anniversary of the Greek Orthodox Christian Society, a series of spiritual events has been held at the Orthodox Mission Centre at 217 Bexley Rd, Kingsgrove.

The overarching theme for these talks has been “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”

Presenters have included His Grace Bishop Aimilianos who spoke in Greek on the topic of Prayer, and Fr Dimitri Kokkinos who spoke on Unseen Warfare.

Forthcoming presentations will include:

- ✝ **Bear one another's burdens** in English  
by His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia
- ✝ **Family and Mission Work** in English  
by Mrs Kathryn Stavropoulos
- ✝ **The Relevance of the Church Fathers in Today's World**  
in English by Fr Anastasios Bozikis
- ✝ **Moses: The Divinely Inspired Law Giver** in Greek  
by Mrs Helen Abouyianni
- ✝ **A Talk for Couples and Parents** by Gerondas Stephanos  
of Pantanassa Monastery
- ✝ **Mission Work: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow** in Greek  
by Professor Michael Anthony



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