

# CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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## BULLETIN OF OCTOBER 8, 2006

### SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8<sup>TH</sup>

#### FATHERS OF THE 7<sup>TH</sup> ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

8:40a.m. Hours  
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy  
Coffee Hour

### MONDAY, OCTOBER 9<sup>TH</sup>

#### SAINT TIKHON OF MOSCOW

9:00a.m. Akathist

### THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12<sup>TH</sup>

7:00p.m. Compline

### SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14<sup>TH</sup>

6:00p.m. Vespers

### SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15<sup>TH</sup>

#### 18<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF PENTECOST

8:40a.m. Hours  
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy  
Coffee Hour

### Traveling Bible Study

During the month of October, a sign-up sheet will be posted in the back of the church with the hope of beginning a *Traveling Bible Study*, to be led by the priest in the homes of interested parishioners. This study can help us increase our love for and knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, as well as introduce, in a non-threatening way, our non-Orthodox friends and family to the Orthodox Faith. For questions, please see the sign-up sheet in the back of the Church or speak with Fr. John.

### Remember in Prayer

On the morning of Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup>, Katherine Krynitsky reposed in the Lord. Her funeral was held this past Thursday at St. Nicholas Cathedral in Washington DC. She was buried at Rock Creek Forest Cemetery. Please keep Katherine and her family in your prayers. May her memory be eternal!

### Thank You

to the person(s) responsible for cleaning and reorganizing the all purpose room. Your efforts are greatly appreciated. May the Lord bless you!

## WHAT IS A FIRST-PORTION GIVER?

A First-Portion Giver is a believer who offers a first-portion of his time, talent, and financial resources out of grateful recognition of the fact that all he has, he holds in trust from God.



TIME

A First Portion Giver offers a first portion of his *time*.

"Let us spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing. But let us encourage one another..."

Hebrews 10:24-25



TALENT

A First Portion Giver offers a first portion of his *talent*.

"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men."

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

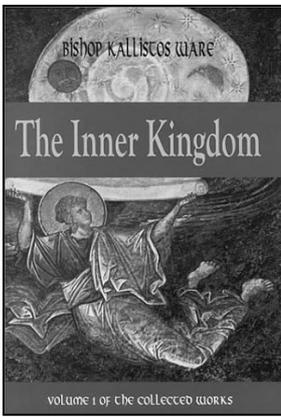


RESOURCES

A First Portion Giver offers a first portion of his *treasure*.

"Concerning the collection for the saints..., on the first day of the week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in proportion to the income God has given you..."

1 Corinthians 16:2



## THE GIFT OF TEARS from "The Inner Kingdom" by Bishop Kallistos Ware

The gift of tears, prominent in the contemporary charismatic movement, has also an important place in the spiritual tradition of the Christian East. The "theology of tears" plays a particularly significant role

in the teaching of St. John Climacus, St. Isaac the Syrian, and St. Symeon the New Theologian. For Climacus, tears represent a renewal of the grace of Baptism:

*The fountain of tears after Baptism is greater than Baptism itself, although this may seem a bold thing to say... Our first Baptism we received as babes, but we have all polluted it; through tears we regain the purity of our first Baptism.*

St. Isaac regards tears as the crucial boundary between the "bodily" and the "spiritual state," as the point of transition between the present age and the Age to come, which may be entered by anticipation even in this life. The newborn child weeps as it is born into the world; similarly, the Christian weeps as he is reborn into the age to come. St. Symeon insists that we should never receive Communion without shedding tears. And according to St. Symeon's disciple, Nicetas Stethatos, tears can even restore lost virginity.

There are many kinds of tears, and it is important to discriminate between them. The crucial distinction lies between sensual or natural tears and spiritual tears (there is also a third possibility: tears may be demonic). Sensual tears are emotional; spiritual tears are ascetic. In the case of sensual tears the face is often contorted and flushed, and the whole body may shake with uncontrollable sobbing; but in the case of spiritual weeping the tears flow gently and peacefully, without facial contortion or bodily shuddering. Sensual tears are usually bound up with the passions; they are often the result of anger, frustration, envy, self-pity, or simply nervous excitement. Spiritual tears, as their name indicates, are a gift of grace from God the Holy Spirit, not just the result of our own efforts, and they are closely linked to our prayer. Sensual tears express our earthly sadness, living as we do in a fallen world of corruption that is moving relentlessly towards death; spiritual tears lead us to the new life of the Resurrection.

It would be misleading, however, to make a radical and clear-cut division between these two types of tears. Natural or sensual tears may sometimes have a positive and purifying effect, as when we weep out of loving compassion for the suffering of others, or when we mourn for the dead. Grace cooperates with nature and builds upon it; and so natural tears, when purged of sinful self-centeredness and of disordered emotionalism, can lead us to the threshold of spiritual weeping. Moreover, because grace often works within us in a secret and unnoticed manner, we ourselves may not always be aware whether our tears are natural or spiritual. To keep us in simplicity God may hide our spiritual progress from us, and it is not for us to measure ourselves. Nonetheless there is in principle an important distinction to be made between the levels of sensual and of grace-given weeping, even if in practice the two may sometimes overlap.

Spiritual tears, so the Fathers teach, are of two main types. On the lower level they are bitter; on the higher level they are sweet. On the lower level they are a form of purification; on the higher level,



of illumination. On the lower level they express contrition, sorrow for sin, grief at our separation from God – Adam lamenting outside the gates of Paradise; on the higher level they express joy at God's love, thanksgiving at our undeserved restoration to sonship. The lower level is exemplified by the prodigal, still in exile, weeping for his lost homeland; the higher level, by the prodigal weeping for joy at the feast in the father's house. On the lower level tears are like "blood from the wounds of the soul," to use a phrase of St. Gregory of Nyssa; on the higher level, they signify the spiritualizing of the senses, and form an aspect of the total transfiguration of the human person by deifying grace.

Yet, as with the distinction between natural and spiritual weeping, so here with the two levels of spiritual tears, we must be on our guard against making too emphatic a contrast. The one level of spiritual tears leads gradually into the other. What begins as tears of sorrow for sin are changed by degrees into tears of gratitude and gladness. And so, in this gift of tears, we see illustrated the point on which we have constantly insisted: that repentance is not negative but positive, not destructive but life-giving, not despondent but full of hope.



**ON READING THE GOSPEL**  
by *St. Ignatius Brianchaniov*

While reading the Gospel do not seek enjoyment; do not seek ecstasies; do not seek glittering thoughts; seek to behold infallibly Holy Truth.

Do not be content only with fruitless reading of the Gospel; strive to fulfill its commandments; read it through deeds. This is a book of life, and one must read it through living.

Do not think that without reason the most sacred of books, the Four Gospels, begins with the Gospel according to Matthew and ends with the Gospel according to John. Matthew teaches more how to fulfill God's will, and his precepts are especially suited for those starting on God's path; John expounds the way of God's uniting with man renewed by the commandments, which is accessible only to one who has been successful along God's path.

Opening the book, the Holy Gospel, for reading, remember that it will determine your eternal lot. We will be judged according to it, and depending upon what we were here on earth with respect to it, we will acquire either eternal blessedness or eternal punishment (John 12:45).

God revealed His will to an insignificant speck of dust - man! The book in which this great and all-holy will is set forth is in your hands. You can accept and you can reject the will of the Creator and your Savior, just as you please. Your eternal life and eternal death are in your hands; consider, then, how careful, how prudent, you should be. Do not play with your eternal destiny!

In contrition of heart pray to the Lord, that He may open your eyes to behold the wonders concealed in His law (Ps. 118:18), which is the Gospel. As your eyes are opened, a miraculous healing of the soul is perceived, accomplished by the Word of God. The healing of bodily illnesses was only an evidence of the healing of the soul, evidence for carnal people, for minds made blind by sensuality (Luke 5:24).

Read the Gospel with the greatest reverence and attention. Do not consider anything in it of little importance, little worthy of consideration. Every iota of it emits a gleam of life. Neglect of life is death.

Reading about the lepers, paralyzed, blind, crippled, and demon-possessed whom the Lord healed, consider how your soul, bearing many various wounds of sin and being in captivity to the demons, is like these sick ones. Learn from the Gospel to have faith that, having healed them, the Lord will heal you also, if you will diligently ask Him for your healing.

Acquire such a state of mind that you may be capable of receiving healing. Those capable of receiving it are aware of their sinfulness and have determined to abandon it (John 9:39, 41). The righteous man who is prideful, i.e. the sinner who does not see his own sinfulness, has no need and no use for the Savior (Mat, 9:13).

Seeing one's sins, seeing that fallen state in which the entire human race is found, is a special gift of God. Solicit this gift for yourself, and the book of the Heavenly Physician, the Gospel, will be more understandable for you.

Truly strive that the Gospel might be adopted by your intellect and heart, that your intellect, so to say, might swim in it, live in it, and then your activity also will easily come into accord with the Gospels. One can attain to this by unceasing, reverent reading and study of the Gospel.



In this way the Gospel accompanied them everywhere, constantly guided them.

Even at the present, what reason could there be for the Christian educator not to beautify the memories of innocent children with the Gospel rather than duller it with Aesop's fables and other trivialities.



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What happiness, what richness - committing the Gospel to memory! One cannot foresee the upheavals and calamities which can happen to us during the course of our earthly life. The Gospel, committed to memory, is read by the blind, accompanies the prisoner to jail, speaks with the laborer in the field watered by his perspiration, directs the judge at the very time of his officiating, guides the merchant in his marketing, cheers up the sick in times of wearisome sleeplessness and distressing loneliness.

Do not dare to interpret the Gospel and other books of Holy Scripture yourself. The Scriptures



were uttered by the holy Prophets and Apostles, uttered not at their own will, but by me inspiration of the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:21), Is it not foolish then to interpret them at your own will?

The Holy Spirit, speaking the Word of God through the Prophets and Apostles, interpreted it through the Holy Fathers. Both the

Word of God and the interpretation of it are gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Orthodox Church accepts only this one interpretation! Her true children accept only this one interpretation!

He who explains the Gospel and all Scriptures at his own will by this very act rejects its interpretation by the Holy Fathers, by the Holy Spirit. He who rejects the interpretation of Scripture by the Holy Spirit, beyond all doubt, also rejects the Holy Spirit itself.

And so the word of God, the word of salvation, becomes, for audacious (fearless) interpreters, the stench of death, a two-edged sword with which they slay themselves unto eternal ruin (II Peter 3:16; II Cor. 2:15,16). With this sword Arius, Nestorius, Eutyches, and the other heretics slew themselves for eternity, having fallen into blasphemy through willful and audacious interpretation of Scripture,

*But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word (Isaiah 66:2), saith the Lord. Be such in regard to the Gospel and the Lord Who is present in it. Abandon sinful life; abandon earthly inclinations and delights; deny your own soul; then the Gospel will become intelligible and accessible for you.*

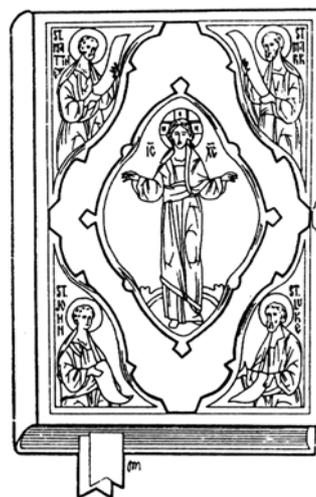
*He that hateth his soul in this world, said the Lord - the soul, for which, since the fall, devotion to sin has become as if natural, as if its way of life - shall keep it unto life eternal (John 12:25). For the one who loves his soul, who does not decide on denial of self, the Gospel is closed: he reads the words, but the word of life, as Spirit, remains behind an impenetrable veil for him.*

When the Lord was on the earth in His all-holy flesh, many saw Him and at the same time did not see. What use is it when a man looks with his bodily eyes, which he has in common with the beasts, but does not see anything with the eyes of the soul, with the mind and heart? And even now many read the Gospel every day and at the same time have never really read it, do not know it at all.

The Gospel, said a certain holy desert-dweller, is read by a pure mind; it is understood in the measure of fulfillment of its commandments in one's very deeds. But it is impossible to obtain for oneself a precise and perfect opening up of the Gospel by one's own efforts: this is a gift of Christ.

The Holy Spirit, having taken up His abode in His true and faithful servant, makes him into both a perfect reader and true doer of the Gospel.

The Gospel is the portrayal of the nature of the new man, who is *the Lord from heaven* (I Cor. 15:47). This new man is God in his nature. His holy generation of men believing on Him and transfigured according to Him, He makes into gods by grace,



You, who wallow in the stinking, filthy swamp of sin, rejoice in it! Raise up your heads; look at the clear sky: there is your place! God gives you the dignity of gods; you, rejecting this dignity, chose for yourselves another: the dignity of beasts - even the most impure ones. Come to your senses! Abandon the stinking swamp; cleanse yourself with

confession of sins; wash yourself with tears of repentance; beautify yourself with tears of compunction; raise yourself from the earth; ascend into heaven: the Gospel will lift you up there. *While ye have light - the Gospel, in which Christ is hidden - believe in the Light, that ye may be the children of Light, of Christ (John 12:36).*