



*Holy Forefathers of Christ*

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup>**

**SUNDAY OF HOLY FOREFATHERS**

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

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup>**

7:00p.m. Orthodoxy 101

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20<sup>TH</sup>**

**ST. JOHN OF KRONSTADT**

6:00p.m. Great Vespers

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup>**

**SUNDAY BEFORE NATIVITY**

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

As long as food is being boiled on the fire, flies will not approach it, but as soon as it is taken off they cluster round it. Likewise as long as our hearts are fervent in the Spirit, impure thoughts will not approach us, but if we are negligent and concern ourselves with worldly things, then they will then gain dominion over us.

*Abba Poemon*

**READER SCHEDULE**

**Sunday, Dec. 21<sup>st</sup>**

Kathy Parrish

**Sunday, Dec. 28<sup>th</sup>**

Sandy St. Germain



**CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH**

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**BULLETIN OF DECEMBER 14, 2008**

**Please Remember in Prayer**

Jane Koshutko (recovering with family in Baltimore, MD) Bill Parrish, Robert Evanusa, Olga Leisure, Valentina, Nina Gordon, Fr. Christian, Carole Boris, Constantina & Christos, Alicia & Susannah. If you have a prayer request, please let Fr. John know.

**A Brief Choir Practice – Today, December 14<sup>th</sup>**

There will be a short choir practice today, Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, following the Coffee Hour, to go over music for Christmas.

**Orthodoxy 101 – Monday, December 15<sup>th</sup>**

The third and final session of our class on the Divine Liturgy will be offered tomorrow night at 7:00pm. There will be a quick recap for those who missed the first two sessions.



**Compline Canceled this Week**

Due to work going on in the church, Compline, originally scheduled for Wednesday at 7:00pm, has been canceled.

**The Final Draft Copy of the 2009 Directory**

is in the back of the church for review. Please take a quick glance to make sure that your information is correct. If not, please let Fr. John know as soon as possible. The Directory will be printed and distributed for Sunday, December 28<sup>th</sup>.



**The 2009 Calendars**

from St. Tikhon's are in. If you ordered a calendar, please pick it up in the back. Calendars are \$3.50 a piece. The Pocket Planners are not in yet because there was a problem with the printing (not just of our parish's planners but all them). The planners should be in soon.

**A Reading Group**

is now being offered at our parish. This group will meet once a month to discuss a book on the spiritual life. The readings will be short, only a chapter or two at most, and will be made available in advance as photocopies in the back of the church. This group will be added to our educational opportunities currently offered on Monday nights: Orthodox Movie Night, Bible Study, and Orthodoxy 101. All are invited!



**Annual Meeting**

The 2009 Annual Meeting of the Parish will be on, Sunday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, following the Coffee Hour. The main task of the Annual Meeting is to pass the 2009 Budget and to elect the new Parish Council. All full-time and part-time members, as well as visitors and contributors to the Mission are encouraged to attend. If you have any questions regarding the meeting or are interested in serving on the Council, please speak with Fr. John.



## THE PARENTING VOCATION: LIVING THE LIFE OF CHRIST

by Fr George Morelli from the March 06 issue of *The Word* magazine

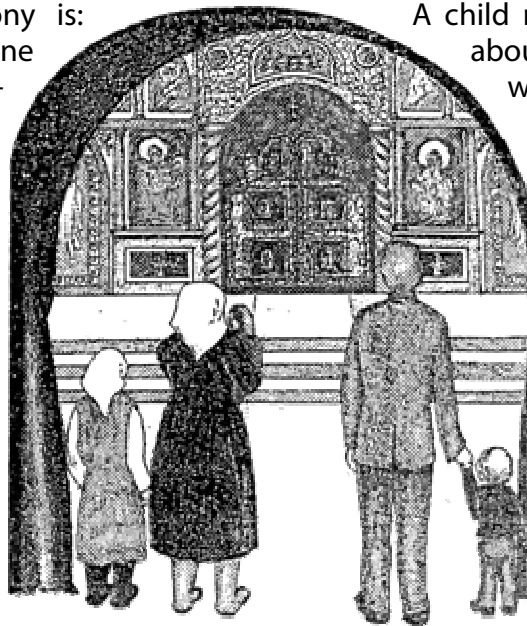
Consider Our Lord's words on the importance of how children are influenced: "And he said to his disciples, ... woe to him by whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung round his neck and he were cast into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin" (Lk. 17:1-2). Parents and any caretakers of children have one of the most important vocations in the Church, namely to teach their children about Our Lord Jesus Christ and His message. Teaching may take many forms.

The place to start is with those who care for children themselves. Parents are the primary teachers of children by the blessed marriage they possess. One of the blessing prayers said by the priest in the Holy Mystery of Matrimony is: "Unite them in one mind and one flesh, and grant them fair children for education in thy faith and fear" (acknowledging the awesome, transcendent God).

If parents and others who teach or care for children are not keeping a "life in Christ," how can children be expected to follow Christ and His teachings? Psychologists have long emphasized the powerful effects of modeling on children (Bandura, 1986). Recently, news media have even reported that a gene for imitation has been discovered. Children have a propensity to make a neural copy of a behavior modeled and to repeat it (Milner and Goodale, 1996).

I remember when I was first in clinical-pastoral practice. Parents would come to me and present a behavioral problem. For example, their ten-year-old was smoking. Inside the shirt pocket or hanging out of the pocketbook of the parent would be a pack of cigarettes. This was and still is hypocrisy. It is nearly impossible to change the child's behavior. Parents, guardians, and others who have children in their care are supremely powerful models. I have never met one child in my pastoral or clinical career who bought into the usual "lame" explanations: "Well I can do it, and when you get to be my age then you can make up your own mind," or "You are not old enough yet." Children are bright enough to see right through such explanations.

The Holy Spirit imparts grace in the sacraments. The parents have to bring their children to their parish church where the Holy Spirit is sacramentally imparted. If a child is not brought in to be baptized, the child is not an Orthodox Christian. If the parents do not bring their children to attend Divine Liturgy, they do not receive the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. If the parents bring the child to church but do not go themselves, children see right through such hypocrisy, just as in the cigarette example above. The message is: "Grown ups do not have to go to church." So the child is no longer getting the grace of Christ. Often the greatest teaching, or, in this case, scandal, is teaching by what is not done.



A child may hear a family conversation about a nasty neighbor or relative in which a parent says, "That no good for nothing @\$%^&," yet in church the child hears preached from the altar our Lord's words of love, forgiveness, and not holding anger against a brother. If they then see and hear their mothers or fathers doing just the opposite, does this add to the child's faith and commitment to Christ? It destroys it! And we wonder why morality and values are breaking down in modern times?

On the other hand, no one is perfect — parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, bishops, priests, teachers. We all sin and fall short. What a beautiful lesson could be taught to a child we care for, when we do fall short, if we go to the child and say, for example: "You know, I lost my temper today. It was not right, I am sorry and I will try to do better. This is what Jesus would want me to do." No one may speak exactly like this, using such words. However, using their own words parents will get across the substance of the message: I did wrong, I will try to do better and I want us all as a family to follow our Lord's teachings.

Thus, the first and most important lesson in Orthodox Christian parenting is to live the life in Christ as thoroughly as can be done. Despite our failings, we must remember the words of Jesus: "He said to them: The things that are impossible with men are possible with God" (Luke 18:27).

## RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH PATRIARCH ALEXY II DIES

By Jim Heintz, Associated Press Writer – Fri Dec 5, 3:23 pm ET

AP Associated Press

MOSCOW – In his nearly two decades at the head of the world's largest Orthodox church, Patriarch Alexy II oversaw a religious revival in Russia and healed a major church rift, but his death leaves a long-running dispute with the Vatican unresolved.

Alexy's death Friday at age 79 deprives the Russian Orthodox Church of its dominant figure, whose stern, bearded mien gave him an almost medieval aura of inflexible righteousness. He often complained that Roman Catholics were poaching adherents among a people who traditionally would have been Orthodox if atheistic Soviet rule had not impeded them. Yet he and the church held many discussions with the Vatican, aiming to reach an agreement that would allow the church to accept a papal visit to Russia.

Without Alexy at the helm, the church's initiatives on that question may go dormant for several months. The church's Holy Synod is to choose a placeholder leader on Saturday, but election of a new patriarch is likely to take six months. Metropolitan Kirill, the church's foreign relations chief who has had extensive contact with the Vatican, appears to be one of the top candidates.

The Moscow Patriarchate said Alexy died at his residence outside Moscow, but did not give a cause of death. Alexy had long suffered from a heart ailment, although on Thursday he had appeared comparatively well while conducting services.

His funeral was tentatively slated for Tuesday, according to Russian news agency Interfax, which cited his spokesman Vladimir Vigilyansky.

Alexy became leader of the church in 1990, as the officially atheist Soviet Union was loosening its restrictions on religion. After the Soviet Union collapsed the following year, the church's popularity surged. Church domes that had been stripped of their gold under the Soviets were regilded, churches that had been converted into warehouses or left to rot in neglect were painstakingly restored, and hours-long services on major religious holidays were broadcast live on national TV.

By the time of Alexy's death, the church's flock was estimated to include about two-thirds of Russia's

142 million people, making it the world's largest Orthodox church.

But Alexy often complained that Russia's new religious freedom put the church under severe pressure and he bitterly resented what he said were attempts by other Christian churches to build their flocks. These complaints focused on the Roman Catholic Church.

Those tensions aside, Pope Benedict XVI praised Alexy on Friday. "I am pleased to recall the efforts of the late patriarch for the rebirth of the church after the severe ideological oppression which led to the martyrdom of so many witnesses to the Christian faith. I also recall his courageous battle for the defense of human and Gospel values," the pope said in a message of condolence to the Russian church.

Alexy lived long enough to see another major religious dispute resolved. In 2007, he signed a pact with Metropolitan Laurus, the leader of the breakaway Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, to bring the churches closer together. The U.S.-based Church Outside Russia had split off in 1927, after the Moscow church's leader declared loyalty to the Communist government.

Alexy successfully lobbied for the 1997 passage of a religion law

that places restrictions on the activities of religions other than Orthodoxy, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism. Under his leadership, the church also vehemently opposed schismatic Orthodox churches in neighboring Ukraine, claiming the Ukrainian church should remain under Moscow's control.

A top representative of Russia's Muslims praised Alexy's efforts to restore religion's prominence in post-Soviet Russia.

"All the activities of this man were devoted to unifying our country, developing state-religion relations and the dialogue of Russia's traditional faiths," said Albir Krangov, a deputy chairman of the Muslim Central Spiritual Administration, according to the RIA-Novosti news agency.

In a demonstration of the close relations between church and state, President Dmitry Medvedev canceled plans to travel from India to Italy, so he can return for the funeral.



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"He was a great citizen of Russia. A man in whose destiny the whole difficult experience of our country's changes in the 20th century are reflected," Medvedev said.

Under Alexy, the church's influence grew strong enough that public schools instituted mandatory religion courses - a move that human rights advocates criticized as likely to increase xenophobia.

"The church strengthened nationalism, without a doubt," said Alexander Verkhovsky of the Moscow human rights group SOVA. But he also gave the church under Alexy credit for speaking out against violent, radical nationalists.

The patriarch was born Alexei Mikhailovich Ridiger on Feb. 23, 1929 in Tallinn, Estonia. The son of a priest, Alexy often accompanied his parents on pilgrimages to churches and monasteries, and he helped his father minister to prisoners in Nazi concentration camps in Estonia. It was during those visits that Alexy decided to pursue a religious life.

Under Soviet rule, this was not an easy choice. Lenin and Stalin suppressed religion and thousands of churches were destroyed or converted to other uses, such as museums devoted to atheism or, in some cases, stables. Many priests and parishioners were persecuted for their beliefs. The persecution eased somewhat during World War II, when Stalin discovered that the church could be used as a propaganda tool in the fight against the Nazis. But the Soviet authorities never fully loosened their grip, penetrating the church at the highest levels.

Alexy was ordained in 1950, progressed through the Orthodox hierarchy, and was consecrated Bishop of Tallinn and Estonia in 1961.

The British-based Keston Institute, which monitors religious freedom in former Communist countries, cited research suggesting that Alexy's career may have been aided by assistance he gave the KGB while a young priest in Tallinn. Orthodox Church officials vehemently denied the allegations.

## FROM THE WRITINGS OF ST. JOHN OF KRONSTADT *Commemorated December 20<sup>th</sup>*

- ❖ The enemy of our salvation especially strives to draw our heart and mind away from God when we are about to serve Him, and endeavors to adulterously attach our heart to something irrelevant. Be always, every moment, with God, especially when you pray to Him. If you are inconstant, you will fall away from life, and will cast yourself into sorrow and straightness.
- ❖ Prayer is a golden link connecting the Christian man, the wanderer and the stranger upon earth, with the spiritual world of which he is a member, and, above all, with God the source of life. The soul came forth from God, and to God may it ever ascend through prayer.
- ❖ Watch yourself continually, in order that the spiritual life and spiritual wisdom should not be dried up within you. Meditate oftener upon what you read, or sing, or hear in church, or sometimes at home. Live as the saints lived: by their prayers, wisdom and virtues; in meekness, humility, and gentleness, not sparing yourself, but renouncing yourself, your rest, ease and enjoyment for the love of God and your neighbor, in patience, courage and struggle - have their faith, hope, and love. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding." (Luke 12:35-36)
- ❖ The tree firmly fixed in the earth by its roots grows and brings forth fruit. The soul of a man firmly fixed in God by faith and love, as by spiritual roots, also lives, grows spiritually, and brings forth the fruits of virtue pleasing to God, through which the soul lives now and shall live in the future world. The tree, when uprooted from the ground, ceases to live by the life which it received from the heart through the roots. Similarly, the soul of the man which has lost faith and love to God and does not dwell in God, in Whom alone it can live, spiritually dies. What the earth is to the plants, God is to the soul.
- ❖ Begin to fulfill the commandments relating to small things, and you will come to fulfill the commandments relating to great things: small things everywhere lead to great ones.

