

CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF APRIL 29, 2007

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

A Parish Council Meeting

will be held on Sunday, May 6th, following the Divine Liturgy.



Donors Sought

Frs. Daniel and John are in the process of building five new wooden icon stands for the church. Materials are needed for the project. Please see Fr. John if you would like to make a donation.



Pictures from Holy Week and Pascha

have now been posted on our parish website, as well as the OCA website. A special thank you is offered to those who took photographs during the festivities, may God bless you for your efforts. If anyone has any additional pictures which you would like to share please see Fr. John as soon as possible. Thank you!

Order Delivery

The orders for the Cookie Lee Jewelry Fundraiser will be delivered to the church on May 4th. If you will not be here on Sunday May 6th, your order may be picked up the next Sunday. For questions, please see Fr. John or Alice.

Appreciation is Expressed



to those who helped plant Paschal flowers outside the church. May we take the joy that blossoms from the Feast to those outside the Church, so that all may share in the beauty of Pascha!

Bible Studies

During the next few months we will have Bible Studies at the church at 7:00 in the evening on the following three topics:

Sunday, April 29

The Resurrectional Appearances of the Lord

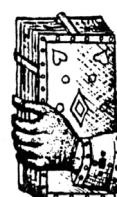
Monday, May 21

The Ascension of the Lord

Tuesday, June 19

The Descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost

Don't forget: bring your Bible and bring a friend!



Bible studies formally end 8:30pm, but are usually followed by profitable discussion on a variety of topics. Come and see!

SUNDAY, APRIL 29TH

PARALYTIC SUNDAY

- 8:40a.m. Hours
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour
7:00p.m. Bible Study

TUESDAY, MAY 1ST

- 7:00p.m. Vespers
Blessing of Water

WEDNESDAY, MAY 2ND

MIDFEAST OF PENTECOST

- 8:40a.m. Hours
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY, MAY 5TH

- 6:00p.m. Vespers; Confessions

SUNDAY, MAY 6TH

SAMARITAN WOMAN SUNDAY

- 8:40a.m. Hours
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour
Parish Council Meeting

DIRECTORY UPDATES

Please make the following updates to our Directory of Parishioners and Friends:



Nikolas Gvosdev, Heidi Kranz, and Adrian Gvosdev Kranz

In Virginia
1530 Key Blvd. #332
Arlington, VA 22209

In Delaware
4307 Captiva Sands
4300 Sandpiper Unit 7
Rehoboth Beach, DE 19971

Email
gvosdev@nationalinterest.org

If you know of any other additions and/or corrections, please speak with Fr. John.



IN THE NEWS – REPOSE OF BORIS YELTSIN

Russian Orthodox Church prays for Boris Yeltsin's soul

Moscow, April 24, Interfax - The Russian Orthodox Church will be praying that the Lord may rest the soul of the first president of Russia, Boris Yeltsin.

'His presidency was a time when new opportunities became open to the Church. Once confiscated churches and monasteries returned to the believers; new opportunities to use media for Christian witness appeared; religion became a frequent issue on TV. We cannot be unthankful to our first president for this chance alone, the chance to witness Christian truth before the secular world,' Fr. Mikhail Dudko, the secretary of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, told Interfax.



A REFLECTION

From the St. Nikolai's Prologue – April 16th

A story of the Elder Barlaam. A certain man had three friends. Two of them he loved sincerely, but avoided the third because he found him boring. It so happened that the king summoned this man before him to render account and to repay his debt. He turned for help to his first friend who rejected him and departed. He then turned to his second friend but even he did not help him. With shame, he then turned to the third friend and he joyfully accompanied him before the king.

The interpretation is this: the first friend is wealth; the second friend is family; the third friend is the good works of men in this world. The king is God Who, through death, sends summons and seeks payment of debt. A dying man seeks help in his wealth, but it turns away and passes on immediately into the hands of another owner. He then turns to his relatives, but his relatives send him off alone and they remain. Then, he reminds himself of his good works, which he carried out with boredom and these immediately accompany him on the path in the presence of the King and Judge. He, who has ears to hear, let him hear. The only companions of the soul to the other world are the works of man, be they good or be they bad. All of that which was dear and precious to man, leaves him and turns from him. Only his works, to the very last one, accompany him. He, who has a mind to understand, let him understand.

'I am sure that he as well as many other political leaders, including some Soviet ones, will be in our prayers,' he added. He said it was symbolic that Russia's first president three weeks ago visited the site of our Lord's baptism on the River Jordan, which was so dear to every Christian heart. 'In our lives things seldom happen by chance... Neither it is by chance that God chooses particular people to lead nations through various historical periods,' the priest said. 'He committed sins as we all do. But I don't think that now is the best time to recall them. Now is the time to pray that God may have mercy and salvation for his soul. We believe that the Almighty God can do that,' Fr. Mikhail added.

Yeltsin was active Orthodox believer

Moscow, Apr. 24, 2007 (CWNews.com) - Former Russian President Boris Yeltsin, who died on April 23 at the age of 76, was the first Russian leader since the fall of the Tsars to be a practicing member of the Russian Orthodox Church.



Yeltsin, who came to power with the fall of the Soviet regime, often visited the largest church in Russia, Christ the Savior in Moscow, as well as the churches of St. Michael the Archangel in Tropariev and Sts. Boris and Gleb in Rublowce, located near his country residence. In 2000, Yeltsin was an honorary guest (along with other heads of state from Orthodox countries) at Orthodox Holy Year celebrations in Bethlehem.

While he maintained close contact with Patriarch Alexy II and was generally supported by the Russian Orthodox Church, in 1996 Yeltsin vetoed legislation that the Moscow patriarchate supported, because he feared it would curb religious freedom.

MIDFEAST OF PENTECOST

The time of Pentecost is 50 days. Indeed, the word Pentecost, means "fifty." In the middle of the feast, that is on the 25th day, always a Wednesday, we celebrate the feast known as Mid-Pentecost. The feast unites and connects Pascha (the beginning) with Pentecost (the ending).

The symbol of water provides the theme for the feast of Mid-Pentecost. "Whoever is thirsty should come to Me and drink." As the Scriptures says, "Whoever believes in Me, streams of life-giving water will pour out from his heart." Christ said this about the Spirit which those who believe in Him were going to receive (John 7:37-38). This passage is also part of the Gospel reading for the Sunday of Pentecost.

Anticipating the gift of the Holy Spirit by Christ, the Troparion and Kontakion of Mid-Pentecost express the yearning of the believer with these words:

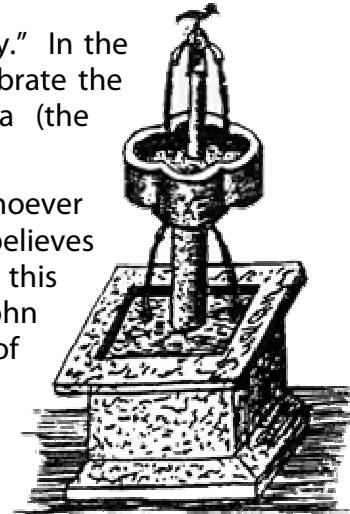
Troparion

In the middle of the Feast, O Savior, fill my thirsting soul with the waters of godliness, as Thou didst cry to all: If anyone thirsts let him come to Me and drink! O Christ God, Fountain of our life, glory to Thee!

Kontakion

Christ God, the Creator and Master of all, cried to all in the midst of the feast of the law: Come and draw the water of immortality! We fall before Thee and faithfully cry: Grant us Thy bounties, for Thou art the Fountain of our life.

A Blessing of Water takes place on this feast. We may bring vessels to church the next time we come for services so as to bring the newly-blessed waters to our homes.



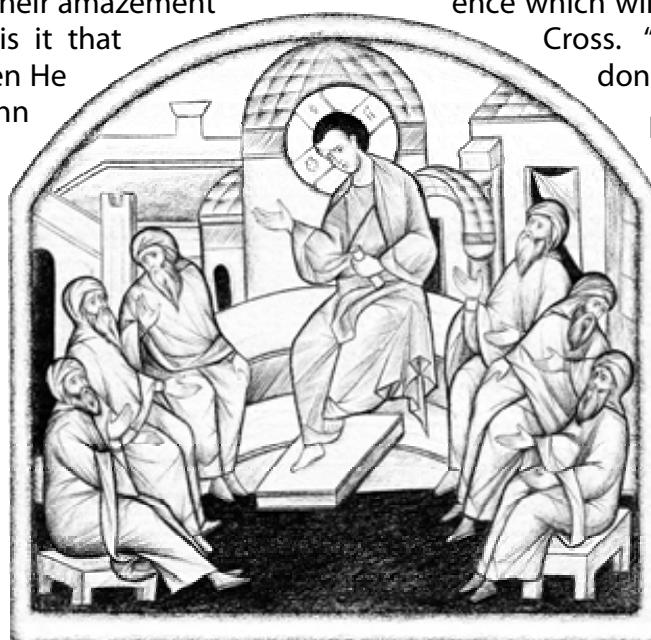
THE ICON OF MID-PENTECOST *From the Incarnate God – Volume 2*



The iconography adopted by the Church to illustrate Mid-Pentecost shows us Jesus Christ teaching in the Temple, just as in the Gospel. Christ is sitting at the center of a circle of Jewish scholars and wise men. These express their amazement at His knowledge: "How is it that this Man has learning, when He has never studied?" (John 7:15). In answer to this question, Jesus speaks of His connection to the Father, of His divine origin.

Most often, the icons of Mid-Pentecost represent Christ's first encounter in the Temple with the doctors of the Law – this is the episode described by St. Luke, when Jesus was twelve years old (Luke 2:41-50). "Did you not know that I must be in My Father's house?" He says to His worried parents, thus openly declaring that He is the Son of God and that He must carry out His mission. On

that day, Christ declares His independence from Joseph and Mary, escaping their tutelage. He tells them about His unique link with God the Father. He accepts filial obedience to the end, an obedience which will lead Him all the way to the Cross. "Not My will, but Thy will be done!" (Luke 22:42).



Divine Wisdom is revealed to the doctors of the Law who admire the wisdom of the Child, revealing Jesus as the Child-Emmanuel announced by the Prophets (Isaiah 7:14). The authority of His teaching is already confirmed during His infancy, for "He is before all things," He precedes creation (Colossians 1:17 and Proverbs 8:22-30), "He is begotten, not made, of one essence with the Father" (the Creed). He is "the Wisdom, the Word, and the Power of God" (Matins of Pascha).



ON THE STATE OF THE SOUL AFTER DEATH

The state in which the soul finds itself from its departure from the body in biological death to its reunion with the body at the Second Coming of the Lord is called the intermediate or middle state. This condition, brought upon by death, is not natural to man as it temporarily disrupts his unity of body and soul. However, it was permitted by God so that sin would not reign forever and so that man's body could be created anew in a spiritualized fashion in the Age to come.

During this time, the souls of the departed do not wander the earth but instead immediately enter into either Paradise or Hades, where they experience a foretaste of Heaven or Hell. Neither Paradise nor Hades should not be thought of as a physical place since they are experienced without

the body, instead we should understand them as spiritual states of being which reflect one's relationship to God.

In Paradise, the righteous live a comfortable and free life, with God and His angels, in eager expectation of their future glory when they are reunited

with their bodies. Here they live in communion with each other constantly praising the Lord. And since neither the personality nor the memory is destroyed by death, the souls of the righteous are able to recognize and communicate with each other. St. Simeon the New Theologian writes,

"even those who never knew each other in the flesh in this world will know each other there, for as it is impossible for the Father not to recognize the Son or the Son the Father, likewise the saints too, when they have become gods by grace, by having God indwelling within them, in no way will be unable to recognize each other ..."

While, on the other hand, in Hades the unrepentant sinners live in grief and affliction, like those already condemned who await the judge's final decision. Those in Hades are unable to recognize each other. This is not because their personhood or memory was destroyed by death, but because they chose to live without unity and loving communion with God and their fellow man. St. Macarius the Great writes figuratively that those in this terrible place cannot even look one another in



ST. BASIL THE GREAT ON THE DEFEAT OF DEATH

Christ was born of a woman to regenerate those who are born... He died willingly to raise those who died unwillingly. He, who is not susceptible to death (as God), accepted to die (as a man) in order to give life to those who are under death. Death swallowed Christ unknowingly, but as soon as it did, death knew Whom it had swallowed. Death swallowed Life and was defeated by Life. It swallowed the One after the many and it lost the many through the One. Death snatched as a lion and its teeth were smashed. This is why death is ignored by us as something weak. We are no longer afraid of death as a lion, instead we walk on death as a skinned hide on the ground!



the face because "the back of one is attached to the back of another."

Therefore the souls in the intermediate state not only live in a state of conscious expectation of their final sentence at the Dread Judgment but they also already partake in part of the joys of Heaven and the torments of Hell. In this sense Paradise and Hades are considered the antechambers of Heaven and Hell respectively, since in them souls experience a foretaste of the Age to come. Those in Paradise partake in part of the joys of Heaven and those in Hades partake in part of the sufferings of Hell. This experience is partial or incomplete because reunion with the body has not yet taken place.

St. John Chrysostom teaches that until the general resurrection the righteous souls in Paradise will remain "uncrowned" because the crowning of the soul must take place together with the body. Here he cites St. Paul, who in Hebrews, writes that the righteous of the Old Testament, even though they had received a good report through faith, had not yet received the promise, and would not be made perfect apart from us.

In Revelation, St. John the Theologian writes that those souls who had been slain for the Word of God and for the witness they had borne cry out to the Lord for their blood to be avenged. But the Lord gave them white robes and told them to rest a little longer, until the number of their servants and their brethren should be complete.

Thus the middle or intermediate state is one of expectancy and anticipation for the righteous in Paradise, but one of fear and trembling for the unrepentant in Hades.

