



# CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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## BULLETIN OF MAY 19, 2019

### A Warm Welcome!

We warmly welcome all our visitors! It's good to have you with us!

### The Feast of Mid-Pentecost

On this feast we bless water, recalling how the Lord cried out to all in the midst of the feast, "If anyone thirsts let him come to me and drink!" The Vespers and Blessing of Water will be served on Tuesday, May 21 at 7:00pm, and the Divine Liturgy will be served on Wednesday, May 22 at 9:00am.



### SUNDAY, MAY 19<sup>TH</sup>

#### Sunday of the Paralytic

8:40a.m. Hours  
 9:00a.m. Div. Liturgy; Coffee Hour  
 Children's Egg Hunt

### TUESDAY, MAY 21<sup>ST</sup>

7:00p.m. Vespers w/ Blsq. of Water

### WEDNESDAY, MAY 22<sup>ND</sup>

8:40a.m. Hours  
 9:00a.m. Div. Liturgy

### SATURDAY, MAY 25<sup>TH</sup>

5:00p.m. Bible Study  
 6:00p.m. Great Vespers

### SUNDAY, MAY 26<sup>TH</sup>

#### Sunday of the Samaritan Woman

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

### About Holy Water

The water that will be blessed on Mid-Pentecost may be used for drinking (health of soul and body) and for blessing (homes, cars, gardens, etc.). Holy Water is grace-filled and offers health, protection, and sanctification. Often a bottle of Holy Water is kept in the refrigerator for frequent use throughout the year.



### Project Mexico: Anya and Seva Klmitchev

We are pleased to help send Anya and Seva to build homes for the poor as part of Project Mexico & St. Innocent Orphanage. Help us reach the goal of \$1,000 by earmarking your donation for "Project Mexico". We are at \$300. More info is at the candle stand and on [projectmexico.org](http://projectmexico.org). God bless you and them!

### Children's Egg Hunt

Today, during the coffee hour. Postponed from last week because of rain.



### Supporting A Local Pregnancy Center

A charitable drive, "Bottles of Blessing!", will run from Mother's Day, May 12 to Father's Day, June 16. You can pick up a Baby Bottle to take home and collect your loose change (cash / checks accepted!). To benefit The Grace Center for Maternal and Women's Health in Berlin where women are cared for materially & spiritually.

### On Charity and Gift-Giving

*It is not from your own property that you give to the poor. Rather, you make return from what is theirs. For what has been given as common for the use of all, you have appropriated to yourself alone. The earth belongs to all, not to the rich. Therefore, you are paying a debt, not bestowing a gift.*

St. Ambrose of Milan (+397)



### Annual Memorial Day Pilgrimage

The Memorial Day Pilgrimage to Saint Tikhon's Monastery in South Canaan, PA is Monday, May 27. Fr. John and his family will be going this year. For more info, please see: [memorialdaypilgrimage.com](http://memorialdaypilgrimage.com).



### Two Suggestions

1) Invite someone new to church; 2) Talk to someone new today.



### Did You Know?

Christ the Savior Mission participates in Amazon Smile, a program in which a small donation is made by Amazon to our church for every purchase you make on Amazon. Using Amazon Smile is easy, quick, and will help support your church. For more info, please see [orthodoxdelmarva.org](http://orthodoxdelmarva.org).

+	OPERATING			EARMARKED			ACCOUNTS		READER SCHEDULE	
	THRU 4/30	THIS MONTH	THIS YEAR	THRU 4/30	THIS MONTH	THIS YEAR	OPERATING			
INCOME	38,022	3,544	41,566	11,735	2,520	14,255	EARMARKED	19,394	5/19	Rdr. Nicholas Borodulia
EXPENSE	37,044	9,261	46,305	800	0	800	SAVINGS	12,000	5/26	Megan Wilkinson
NET	+978	-5,717	-4,739	+10,935	+2,520	+15,055	BUILDING	5,000	6/2	Beth Dunbar
									6/9	Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones

## 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 25<sup>th</sup> 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:

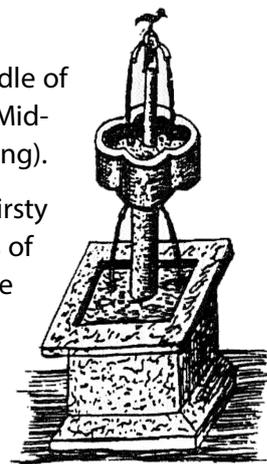
### Troparion

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 so as to bring the newly-blessed waters to our homes.



## THE ICON OF MID-PENTECOST

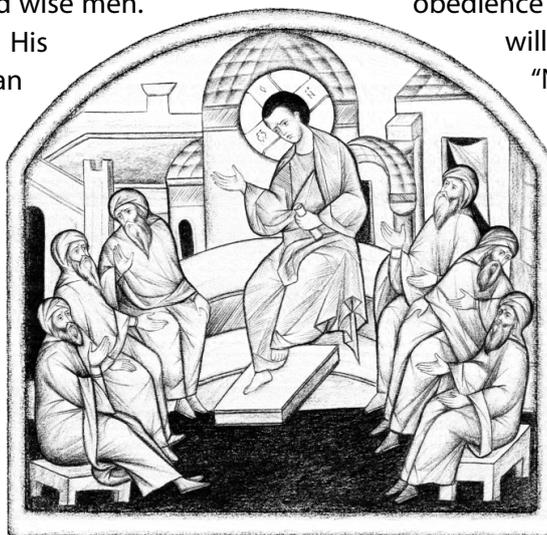
*From the Incarnate God – Volume 2*



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" (From Matins of Pascha).

## WHY DOES GOD HIDE?

Fr. Stephen Freeman

God hides. God makes Himself known. God hides.

This pattern runs throughout the Scriptures. A holy hide-and-seek, the pattern is not accidental nor unintentional. It is rooted in the very nature of things in the Christian life. Christianity whose God is not hidden is not Christianity at all. But why is this so?

In a previous article, I wrote:

Our faith is about learning to live in the revealing of things that were hidden. True Christianity should never be obvious. It is, indeed, the struggle to live out what is not obvious. The Christian life is rightly meant to be an apocalypse.

God is not obvious. That which is obvious is an object.

Objects are inert, static and passive. The tree in my front yard is objectively there (or so it seems). When I get up in the morning and take the dog outside, I expect the tree to be there. If it is autumn, I might study its leaves for their wonderful color change (it's a Ginkgo). But generally, I can ignore the tree – or not. That's what objects are good for. They ask nothing of us. The freedom belongs entirely to us, not to them.

This is the function of an idol – to make a god into an object. He/she/it must be there. The idol captures the divine, objectifies it and renders it inert and passive.

The God of the Christians smashes idols. He will not stay put or become a passive participant in our narcissism. He is not the God-whom-I-want.

Christ tells us, "Ask, and you will receive. Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened." The very center of the life promised us in Christ requires asking, seeking and knocking. The reason is straightforward: asking, seeking and knocking are a mode of existence. But our usual mode of existence is to live an obvious life (a life among objects).

Have you ever noticed that it's easier to buy an icon and add it to your icon corner than it is to actually spend time and pray in your corner? There is a kind of "Orthodox acquisitiveness" that substitutes such actions for asking, seeking and knocking. Acquisition is part of our obvious form of existence. We have been trained in our culture to consume. We acquire objects. On the whole, we don't even have to seek the objects we acquire, other than to engage in a little googling. We no longer forage or hunt. We shop.

But we were created to ask, seek and knock. That mode of existence puts us in the place where we become truly human. The Fathers wrote about this under the heading

of eros, desire. Our culture has changed the meaning of eros into erotic, in which we learn to consume through our passions. This is a distortion of true eros.

Christ uses the imagery of seeking or true desire (eros) in a number of His parables: The Merchant in Search of Fine Pearls; The Woman with the Lost Coin; The Good Shepherd and the Lost Sheep; The Father in the Prodigal Son; The Treasure Buried in a Field...

But how does seeking (eros) differ from what I want? Are these parables not images of consuming? Learning the difference is part of the point in God's holy hide-and-seek. The mode of existence to which He calls us must be learned, and it must be learned through practice.

Objects are manageable. They do not overwhelm or ask too much of us. Consumption is an activity in which we ourselves always have the upper hand. St. James offers this thought:

You desire and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. (James 4:2-3)

What we seek (eros) in a godly manner, is something that cannot be managed or objectified. It is always larger and greater than we are. As such, it even presents a little danger. It may require that we be vulnerable and take risks. We are afraid that we might not find it while also being afraid that we will.

The parables are not about a merchant with a string of pearls, or a woman with a coin collection. The merchant risks everything he owns just for the chance of buying this one pearl. The woman seeks this coin as though there were no other money in the world. When I was nearing the point of my conversion to Orthodoxy, a primary barrier was finding secular employment. It's hard for someone whose resume only says, "priest," to get a job or even an interview for a job. That search had gone on, quietly, for nearly two years. It was not an obsession – rather, more like a hobby. But one day, a job found me. The details are not important here. But the reality is. The simple fact that a job was likely to happen, that I only had to say, "Yes," was both exciting and frightening in the extreme. If I said yes, then everything I had said I wanted would start to come true (maybe). And everything I knew as comfortable and secure would disappear (with four children to feed). And if everything I said I wanted began to come true, then the frightening possibility that I might not actually want it



would also be revealed! I could multiply all of these possibilities many times over and not even begin to relate everything that was in my heart.

But the point that had found me was the beginning of the true search. The risk, the reward, the threat, the danger, the joy and the sorrow, all of them loomed over me, frequently driving me to prayer. I made the leap and began a tumultuous period in my life. But my life, like most, eventually settled down and slowly became obvious.

St. Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, one of the great monastic heroes of the Celtic lands, had a way of dealing with the obvious. He would walk into the North Sea from the island where he lived, and stand in the waves up to his neck. It was a dangerous sea, not like an American beach. He stood there at the point of danger – and prayed. St. Brendan crossed the Atlantic with his monastic companions in a boat made of animal hides. Countless thousands of monastics wandered into deserts, forests, holes in the ground, islands, all in order to place themselves at that point where God may be found. Seeking God is not done in the place of safety, though it is the safest place in all the world.

Eros does not shop. True desire, that which is actually endemic to our nature, is not satisfied with the pleasures sought by the passions. It will go to extreme measures, even deep into pain, in order to be found by what it seeks.

All of this is the apocalyptic life of true faith. The question for us is how to live there, or even just go there for once in our lives. I “studied” Orthodoxy for 20 years. All of my friends knew (and often joked) about my interest. Many said they were not surprised when I converted.

I was. I was surprised because I know my own cowardice and fear of shame. If you liked Ferraris, your friends wouldn’t be surprised if you had photos and models, films and t-shirts. But if you sold your house and used the money to make a down payment on one, you’d be thought a fool, possibly insane. Seeking God is like that.

There are quiet ways that do not appear so radical. The right confession before a priest can be such a moment. Prayer before the icons in the corner of a room can become such a moment, though it takes lots of practice and much attention. They cannot be objects and the prayer cannot be obvious.

All of this is of God, may He be thanked. We do not have to invent this for ourselves. It is not “technique.” The God who wants us to seek is also kind enough to hide. Finding out where He is hiding is the first step. Finding out where you are hiding is the next. But the greatest and most wonderful step is turning the corner, buying the field, selling everything that you have, picking up the coin, making that phone call, saying “yes” and “yes” and “yes.”

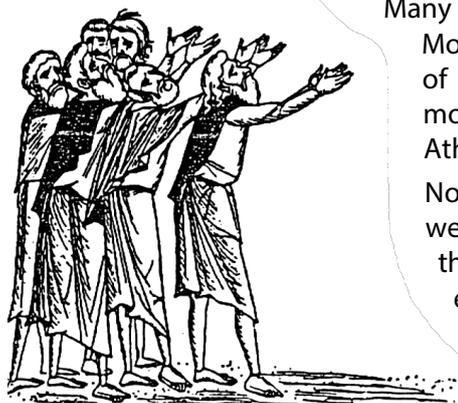
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## SAINTS ON HOW TO COME TO KNOW GOD

If a person wants to get an idea about the pyramids of Egypt, he must either trust those who have been in immediate proximity to the pyramids, or he must get next to them himself. There is no third option. In the same way a person can get an impression of God: He must either trust those who have stood and stand in immediate proximity to God, or he must take pains to come into such proximity himself. (St. Nicholas of Serbia, Thoughts on Good and Evil)

As it is impossible to verbally describe the sweetness of honey to one who has never tasted honey, so the goodness of God cannot be clearly communicated by way of teaching if we ourselves are not able to penetrate into the goodness of the Lord by our own experience. (St. Basil, Conversations on the Psalms, 29)



Many rich and powerful men would pay dearly to see the Lord or His Most Pure Mother, but God does not appear in riches, but in the humble heart... Every one of the poorest men can be humbles and come to know God. It need neither money nor reputation to come to know God, but only humility. (St. Silouan the Athonite, Writings, I.11,21)

No matter how much we may study, it is not possible to come to know God unless we live according to His commandments, for God is not know by science, but by the Holy Spirit. Many philosophers and learned men came to the belief that God exists, but they did not know God. It is one thing to belief that God exists and another to know Him. If someone has come to know God by the Holy Spirit, his soul will burn with love for God day and night, and his soul cannot be bound to any earthly thing. (St. Silouan the Athonite, Writings, VIII.3)

