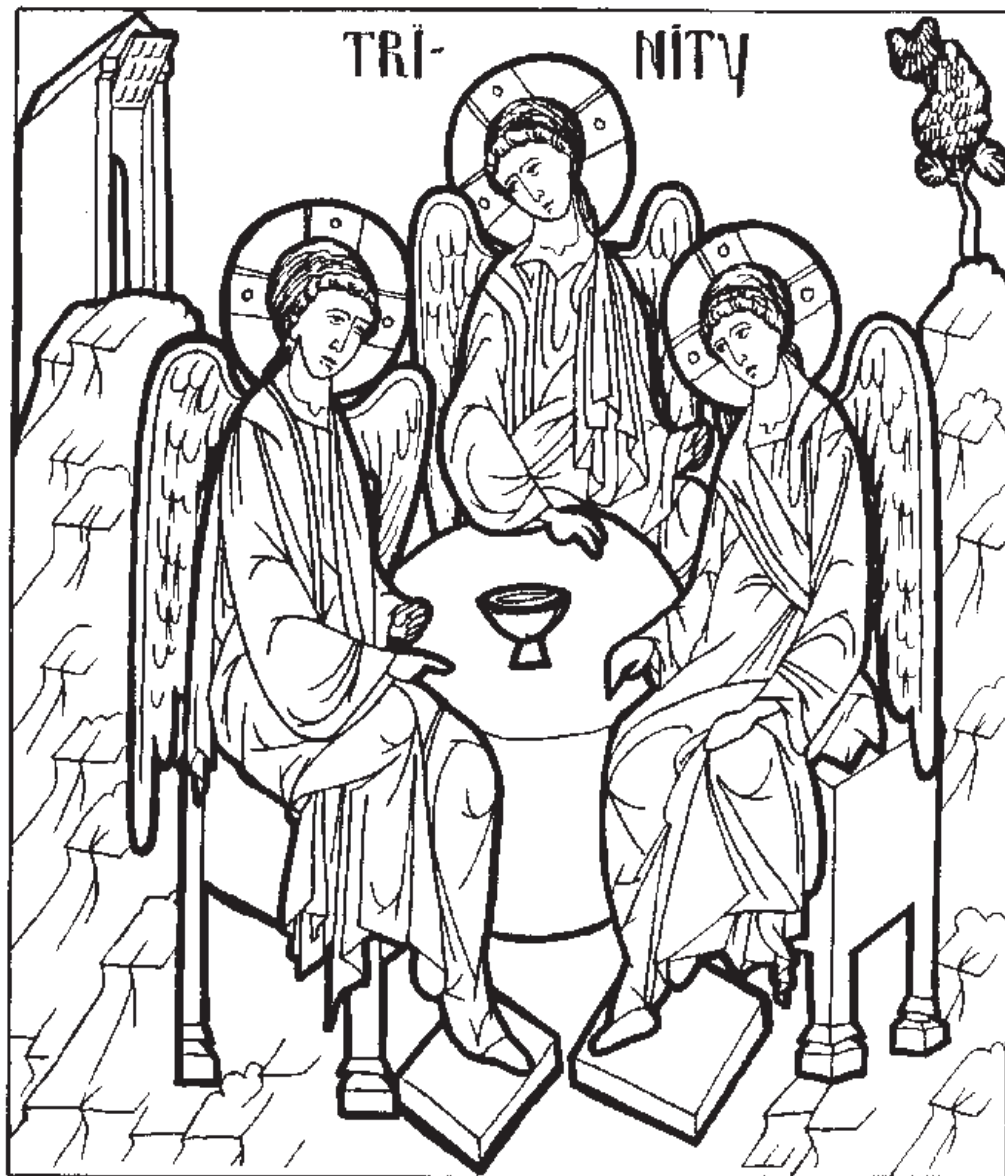


# Building a Life of Faith Through Prayer



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# Faith



**Camp St. Raphael 2007**



# The Blueprint for Life

## Day One

### The Foundation of the Heart

It is no accident that we begin our lessons on constructing a heart turned toward God with the Holy Trinity. God is the beginning and the end (Alpha and Omega). He is the source of all things. We are made in His very image, and our every inspiration and aspiration comes from Him. Whenever we make the sign of the cross, we are recognizing all three persons, and proclaiming to the world the truth that God is One, by asking His blessing. This simple and single gesture is our agreement to the fact that God is three distinct persons, yet one God.

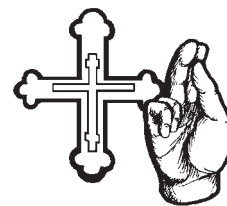
## What does God Say...

<sup>45</sup>A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil <sup>46</sup>treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

<sup>46c</sup>But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say? <sup>47</sup>Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: <sup>48</sup>He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was <sup>49</sup>founded on the rock. <sup>49</sup>But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it <sup>50</sup>fell. And the ruin of that house was great." *Luke 6:45-49*

## Memory Verse

"Peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." *John 14:27*



## A Prayer to The All-Holy Trinity

The Father is my hope; the Son is my refuge; the Holy Spirit is my protector. O All-holy Trinity, glory to You.

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy God, visit and heal our infirmities for thy Name's sake. Amen

## Wisdom from the Saints: Gregory the Wonderworker

"There is one God. . . . There is a perfect Trinity, in glory and eternity and sovereignty, neither divided nor estranged. Wherefore there is nothing either created or in servitude in the Trinity; nor anything super-induced, as if at some former period it was non-existent, and at some later period it was introduced. And thus neither was the Son ever wanting to the Father, nor the Spirit to the Son; but without variation and without change, the same Trinity abides ever" (Declaration of Faith [A.D. 265]).

# The Holy Trinity

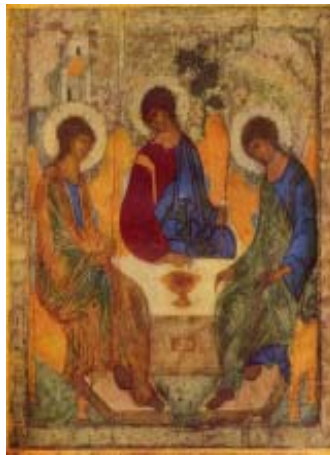
## The Perfect Beginning

### Introduction

To Orthodox Christians, the Holy Trinity is not a thing, but rather, three distinct persons, one in essence; our God. The Holy Trinity is held together as one by the love each person of the Trinity has for the others. God the Father loves God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, and, in like manner, that love extends from all three to all three. There is never jealousy nor, fighting over who is the best or the least. No, the Holy Trinity exists eternally in a bond of perfect and lasting love. This is how God loves us, too. So powerful is the bond of love that exists between the three persons of the Trinity, that God desired to send it into the world to share. This is how we are to love one another--as God loves us!

There are two Saints that we will focus our attention on in this lesson. St. Patrick and St. Andrei Rublev. Each Saint lived a life of prayer and ministered to those around him, loving all people. They both found their greatest comfort and inspiration in God. Both Saints suffered loss of family when they were young; one by hardship and one by choice. This void was filled by a relationship with God--a total dependence on God. Both Saints used their gifts to teach others about the Holy Trinity. St. Patrick taught about the nature of the Trinity by using a shamrock to explain that God is three persons, and yet one God. St. Andrei taught about the relationship that each person of the Trinity<sup>3</sup>

has for the others, and the way that they exist in perfect unity. St. Patrick taught his lessons using words, while St. Andrei wrote an Icon, using images to teach. Both are remembered to this day for these lessons, which are still fresh and alive.



### St. Patrick

The great Apostle and Enlightener of Ireland, St. Patrick, was born to a noble Roman family of Gaul or Britain in the year 387. He was the son of a deacon and the grandson of a priest. His mother was a close relative of St. Martin of Tours.

At the age of 16 he was carried off by Irish marauders and sold as a slave to an Irish chieftain, who put him in charge of his sheep. Six years later, after the prompting of an angel, the saint fled to Gaul where he placed himself under the spiritual direction of St. Germanus of Auxerre. For 18 years he prayed and struggled and studied and was often granted a vision of Irish children calling out to him: O holy youth, come back to Erin, and walk once more amongst us.”

Celestine I, the Bishop of Rome, commissioned St. Patrick to bring the people of Ireland into Christ’s one, true fold, and so during the summer of 433 he and his companions arrived in Ireland. They were immediately persecuted by the Druids and other pagans, but the saint’s meekness and wonderworking, as well as his God-inspired ability to preach the Gospel, resulted in the conversion of many thousands.

In particular, St. Patrick had to do spiritual battle with the Arch-Druid, Lochru, who, by the power of demons and through many incantations, tried to maintain his influence on the Irish. On one occasion Lochru, like Simon Magus, was able to levitate himself high into the air in a display of sorcery; but the moment St. Patrick knelt in prayer, Lochru fell to his death. This was the beginning of the end for paganism on that island. The Orthodox Faith was victorious on that Easter Sunday when the saint explained the doctrine of the Holy Trinity using a shamrock with its single stem and three leaves.

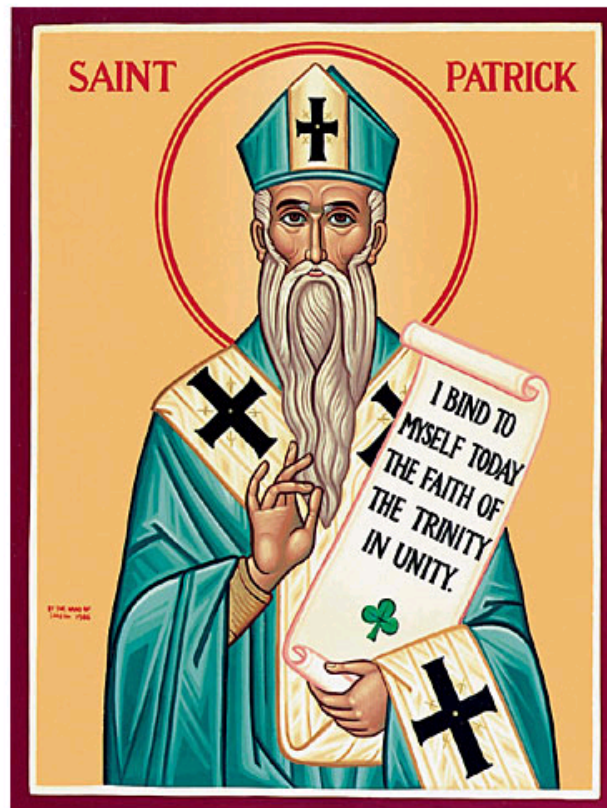
After receiving Holy Anointing, St. Patrick departed to the Lord on March 17, 493. As he lay in state for several days, a heavenly light shone around his body. St. Patrick was diligent until the day he died. He dispelled iniquity. He preached, he baptized, he prayed, he constantly praised God with Psalms, he sang one hundred Psalms every night, he slept on bare flagstone with a wet quilt about him, and his pillow was a pillar stone. *Compiled from [www.orthodox.net](http://www.orthodox.net), and an article by Fr. Kristopher and Matushka Elizabeth Dowling [www.celticchristianity.org](http://www.celticchristianity.org)*



## Troparion for St. Patrick

### (Tone 3)

Holy Bishop Patrick, Faithful shepherd of Christ's royal flock, You filled Ireland with the radiance of the Gospel: The mighty strength of the Trinity! Now that you stand before the Savior, Pray that He may preserve us in faith and love!



## St. Andrei Rublev

St. Andrei was born ca. 1360. Descended from educated stock, he was distinguished by exceptional wisdom, demonstrated in his creative work. He studied the art of painting in Byzantium and Bulgaria. For some time, St. Andrei worked with Theophanes the Greek, and perhaps was one of his students.

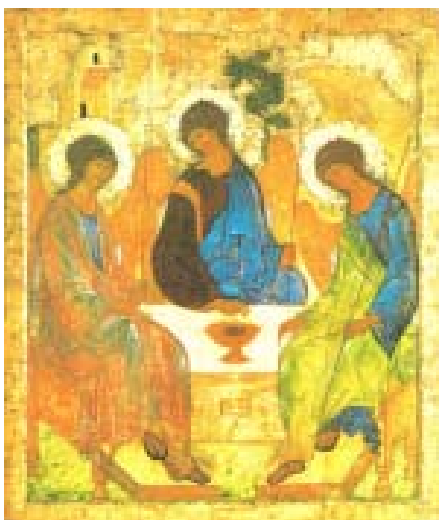
The Venerable One's life is involved with two monasteries: The Holy Trinity - St. Sergius Lavra, and the Holy Savior - St. Andronicus of Moscow Monastery, where the Saint received monastic tonsure. In a spiritually lofty milieu, surrounded by an atmosphere of sanctity, Monk Andrei learned both from historical examples of holiness and from the living images of sanctity manifested by the spiritual strugglers around him.

4

For almost 20 years, and right up to

his very death, he lived the life of an iconographer and spiritual struggler, together with his “fellow-faster,” Daniel Chorny. It was already after St. Andrei’s death that Daniel, who, inseparable from him in heart even after death, received a death-bed revelation that his spiritual brother had been glorified in the Heavenly Kingdom.

The renowned, marvelous Icon of the Holy Trinity, which to this day remains an incomparable model in the realm of iconography, was the work of St. Andrei Rublev. He wrote the icons on the walls of the Annunciation Cathedral in the Moscow Kremlin, and throughout the Dormition Cathedral and on its iconostasis in the city of Vladimir (1408). St. Andrei Rublev wrote an Icon of the Vladimir Mother of God for the Dormition Cathedral in Vladimir, the Icons for the iconostasis and the Icons covering the walls of the Dormition Cathedral in Zvenigorod (end of the 14th - beginning of the 15th C.); the Deisis Row in the iconostasis of the Cathedral of the Nativity of the Most-holy Theotokos in the St. Savva-Storozhevsky Monastery. He also did, *inter alia*, the wall painting and the iconostasis for the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in the Holy Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra. *from The Lives of Saints.*



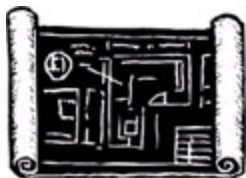
## Troparion for St. Andrei Rublev (Tone 3)

Shining with the rays of divine light, O venerable Andrew, You knew Christ the wisdom and power of God. By means of the image of the Holy Trinity You preached to all the world the Holy Trinity in unity. And we, with amazement and joy, cry out to you: As you have boldness before the Most Holy Trinity Pray that the Uncreated Light May illumine our souls!



## Questions

- 1) What is the Theology (message) behind crossing ourselves?
- 2) How did St. Patrick rely on God during his time as a slave? How is it evident that he live this way for the rest of his life? How do you know?
- 3) How did St. Andrei rely on God during his time as a slave? How is it evident that he live this way for the rest of his life? How do you know?
- 4) The Church proclaimed that “only a Saint of the Church could have written such a beautiful icon.” Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?
- 5) What evidence is there in your life that you rely on God?
- 6) Are You teaching the Trinity to others with your life? How do your actions prove or disprove this?



# The Blueprint for Life

## Day Two

### The Frame of the Heart

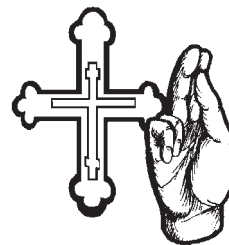
We continue to build our heart today with a study of the Liturgy. The Divine Liturgy is the framework for our heart. Everything that we believe is spoken and prayed during the Liturgy. We are able to stand in the world because of our connection to God. This connection is both physical, in that we have God inside of us, and spiritual, in that we have a relationship with God, whom we cannot see. The more time we spend with God, the stronger our heart will grow. Our life in the Liturgy really is our life's true work!

### What does God Say...

<sup>26</sup>And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, <sup>ε</sup>blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." <sup>27</sup>Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. <sup>28</sup>For this is My blood of the <sup>ε</sup>new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. <sup>29</sup>But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."<sup>30</sup>And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. *Matthew 26:26-30*

### Memory Verse

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee."*Isaiah 26:3*



### Prayers Before Receiving Communion

I believe and confess, Lord, that You are truly the Christ, the Son of the living God, who came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the first. I also believe that this is truly Your pure Body and that this is truly Your precious Blood. Therefore, I pray to You, have mercy upon me, and forgive my transgressions, voluntary and involuntary, in word and deed, known and unknown. And make me worthy without condemnation to partake of Your pure Mysteries for the forgiveness of sins and for eternal life. Amen

Of thy Mystic Supper, O Son of God, accept me today as a communicant; for I will not speak of thy Mystery to thine enemies, neither will I give thee a kiss as did Judas; but like the thief will I confess thee: Remember me, O Lord, in thy Kingdom. Not unto judgment nor unto condemnation be my partaking of thy Holy Mysteries, O Lord, but unto the healing of soul and body.

### Wisdom from the Saints: St. John Crysostom

"And since we are speaking of this Body, whoever among us shall partake of this Body and drink of this Blood, let them bear in mind that in nothing does it differ from that Body which sits on high, Which is adored by the Angels, seated close to the Unclouded Glory: it is of This we taste." *on Ephesians 1: 15-20*

# The Holy Eucharist: Uniting our Heart with God

## Introduction

The very word for liturgy in Greek is *leitourgia*, which means the work of the people. Our work is prayer in several forms. Thanksgiving, praise, petition, confession, and finally, communion. It is during the Divine Liturgy that we are actually united with God in a most intimate fashion. When we enter the Church, we leave this world and enter into the next. We are lifted up and drawn into the Holy Presence of God. And this is so in *reality*, not just because we hope, believe or wish it to be true. God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is really there with us. In fact, the host of Heaven are there, too--singing, chanting and praying with us.

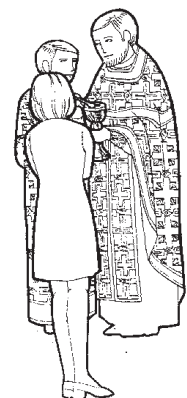
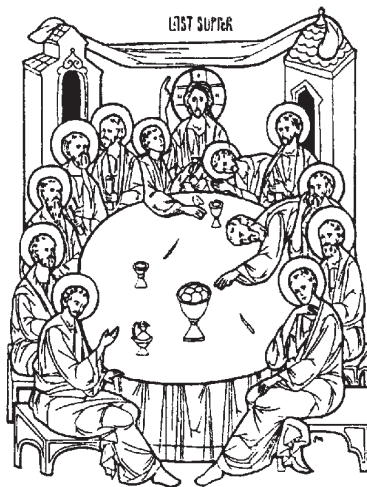
We are joined in a mysterious way both to God, Himself, and to all of Heaven. When we receive the Body and Blood of Christ, we are joined mystically to God. Christ's blood flows through our veins, and we become part of His body. Our prayers extend across the whole of creation, on earth and in Heaven, independent of physical space and nature. They are also independent of time. Our prayers are joined to those of all that have gone before us, and all those to come. We are like a link in a chain that extends back to the beginning and forward to the second coming. This is why the Fathers describe our time in Liturgy as a foretaste of Heaven. 7

Not only do we become united with God, but we are truly in His presence. We are surrounded and filled with God through our prayers and participation in the mystery of Holy Communion. Listen to the words of Fr. Anthony Coniaris: "At the Liturgy, we cannot help but practice the presence of God. We are bathed in God's presence. We are present as Jesus

teaches. We are present at the Last Supper. We are present at the Crucifixion. We are present at the Resurrection. And, we take that presence with us as we leave the Church." To be bathed in God's presence is to be fully immersed into the union with God. We are spiritually enlivened by our participation in the Liturgy. Fr. Coniaris concludes that "it is no wonder that those who cease to participate in the liturgy die spiritually.

They're dead to God and His presence. Those who maintain their connection to God through the liturgy experience the fullness of God's presence in their lives." That is, they remain united to God always and everywhere. This is the framework of our heart--our house for God.

Our Saints for today are St. John Chrysostom and St. Gregory the Dialogist.



Both Saints went to school, studied hard. They were both raised in strong Orthodox Christian homes. In fact, they had friends and family members who also were Saints! They could have lived very well and happily as laymen, but God's call was strong, and they chose to become Priests. Both loved to pray! So much so that they wrote many prayers, hymns and sermons. The ideas for these beautiful words came from their relationship with God. The more they prayed, the more they read and meditated on the scriptures, and the more they participated in the Liturgical life of the Church, the more beautiful thoughts came to them to share! We can still enjoy their work today! And more, we can build up the walls of our hearts strong and sure by participating in the Liturgy often.



the important theological controversies of his day, and suffered unfair exile. He bore all this patiently and meekly. On September 14, 407, St. John Chrysostom (then in exile) received Holy Communion while wearing his white baptismal garment and spoke these last words: "Glory be to God for all things. Amen." Almost immediately after his death

he was hailed as a saint by the Christians of his time. For his defense of the Orthodox faith and his profound interpretations of Scripture, he is known as one of the great "Three Hierarchs" of the Church, together with his older contemporaries, St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory the Theologian (their memory is celebrated together on January 30). He edited and handed down the text of the Divine Liturgy,

which is still known by his name.

## Saint John Chrysostom

St. John, called "Chrysostom" or "Golden Mouth", was born in Antioch, the city where the followers of Christ were first called Christians, in 347. After completing his education, he entered the practice of law and then, in his early twenties, became a catechumen. After three years of preparation he was baptized-an event that was the turning point of his life, leading to a complete renunciation of his former ways, even to the point of almost continual silence, so as to avoid the temptation to indulge in gossip or slander.

Becoming a monk, Chrysostom preached every Sunday, and sometimes two or three times during the week. When he was not preaching to great multitudes, he composed commentaries on Scripture. But in 397 he was chosen Patriarch of Constantinople, became involved in some of 8

## Troparion to St. John Chrysostom (Tone 8)

Grace like a flame shining forth from thy mouth has illumined the universe, and disclosed to the world treasures of poverty and shown us the height of humility. And as by thine own words thou teachest us, Father John Chrysostom, so intercede with the Word, Christ our God, to save our souls.

## St. Gregory the Dialogist

This Father of the Church was born in Rome around 540 A.D. It was said that his education was that of a "saint among saints" because his mother, Sylvia, and all four aunts all became saints. At the age of 30 he served as prefect of the city of Rome-an important civil responsibility-but in

the year 574 he underwent a total conversion of life, sold his estates, and used the money for the Church. As his biographer wrote: "He who had been wont to go about the city clad in silk and jewels now was clad in a worthless garment and serving at the altar of the Lord."

After serving for some years as a representative of the Church of Rome in Constantinople, where he became well acquainted with the life of the Eastern Church, in 590 he was elected bishop of the city of Rome, and from this great position was able to greatly expand the missionary activities of the Church, including the sending of a mission to England under St. Augustine of Canterbury. In spite of constant ill health, his 14 years as Pope of Rome were extraordinarily fruitful and energetic.

As bishop of Rome, he promoted the evangelization of England through Saint Augustine, writing to him and to other of his clergy on practical matters of pastoral care, concerns that prevail in most of his writings. These can be broadly divided into two groups: the Homilies and The Dialogues. Thanks to the latter, wherein Saint Gregory sets forth the lives and virtues of the Italian saints, he is also known as "The Dialogist."

When he died on March 12, 604, he left behind a body of writings consisting of the celebrated "Dialogues" on the saints of Italy, a renowned handbook of "Pastoral Care", homilies on the Gospels and on the book of Job, as well as letters, prayers, hymns, and sermons. He carefully preserved and handed down the Church's liturgical tradition; to this day in the Orthodox Church the liturgy of the Presanctified

Gifts (celebrated on weekdays of Great Lent) bears his name, and the ancient liturgical chant of the West is still known as "Gregorian Chant". *from www.orthodox.net*

## Troparion for St. Gregory

(tone 4)

Receiving divine grace from God on high, O glorious Gregory, And strengthened with its power, You willed to walk in the path of the Gospel, O most blessed one. Therefore you have received from Christ the reward of your labors! Entreat him that he may save our souls!



## Questions

- 1) What does leiturgia mean?
- 2) How do we "work" in Liturgy?
- 3) How is Liturgy both the anchor of our faith and the fulfillment of our faith?
- 4) How do the lives of St. John and St. Gregory show us that we cannot be just "Sunday Christians"?
- 5) Of what affect on us is our life Monday-Saturday? How does the Church help us to stay on the path?
- 6) The Fathers have said that life in the Church is all about relationships. Of what relationships were they speaking?
- 7) Did St. John and St. Gregory have a strong relationship with God? With those around them? How can you tell?
- 8) How is Your relationship God? With those around you?



# The Blueprint for Life

## Day Three

### The Walls of the Heart

Once the framework of a building has gone up, the solid walls and insulation are installed. And so it was for the Apostles. They had learned all that they knew directly from Jesus. His charge to them was to live the Faith everyday and to teach it to all the world unchanged. They could not do this mighty work alone, and that is why the Holy Spirit was sent to them. Not like in the Old Testament, where the Spirit would descend and rest on a prophet for a time, no, this time the Spirit came to live inside God's people. And the Church, faithful to the blueprint that Christ had given to the Apostles, grew one heart at a time.

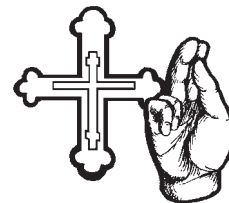
### What Does God Say...

<sup>42</sup>And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. <sup>43</sup>Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup>Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, <sup>45</sup>and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

<sup>46</sup>So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, <sup>47</sup>praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added <sup>ε</sup>to the church daily those who were being saved. *Acts 2:42-47*

### Memory Verse

"My Presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." *Exodus 33:14*



### O Heavenly King

O heavenly King, O Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who art in all places and fillest all things; Treasury of good things and Giver of life: Come and dwell in us and cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O gracious Lord.

### Troparion of the Feast of Pentecost

Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God, Who hast revealed the fishermen as most wise, having sent upon them the Holy Spirit, and through them Thou hast fished the universe, O Lover of Mankind, glory to Thee.

### Wisdom from the Saints-St. Irenaeus

"For the Church, although dispersed throughout the whole world even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and from their disciples the faith in one God, the Father Almighty . . . and in one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became flesh for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit" (*Against Heresies 1:10:1 [A.D. 189]*). 10

# Pentecost: Spreading the Love of God to All People

## Introduction

Pentecost is the Church's Birthday! It is the day that marked the beginning of the spread of Christianity from a small geographic area in the middle east to all the world. Gregory the Theologian teaches that "with the Ascension 'the works of Christ while in the flesh finish, or rather the works relating to His physical sojourn on earth; and the works of the Spirit commence". Jesus had promised to send the Comforter to the Apostles when He ascended. And ten days later, the Comforter came.

It must have been something to have been in that upper room that day. The Apostles were all together, waiting. Suddenly, a great wind, and tongues of fire...but they were not afraid.

## Jesus Sends the Holy Spirit

After Jesus Christ ascended into heaven, the disciples went back to Jerusalem. They stayed there all together, and some of the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, were with them. They were all waiting for the Comforter that Jesus had promised them.

One day Peter stood up and said: "Let us choose someone who was with us from the day that Jesus Christ was baptized until His death. Let us make him one of the Twelve to replace Judas, who betrayed ourll

Lord." The other disciples agreed. They chose two names among those of Jesus' friends who had always been with Him.

They prayed and asked God to show, which one of the two He wanted to be chosen. Then they drew lots, and the good lot was drawn by a man called Matthias. From that day on Matthias became one of the twelve apostles in the place of Judas. "Apostle" is the name given to Jesus' twelve closest friends and disciples. In Greek, it means "one who is sent."

A great holiday was approaching. The city of Jerusalem was crowded with people who had come

there for the holiday. The twelve apostles and Mary, the mother of Jesus, were all together in the upper room of their house. Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as if a mighty wind were rushing through the entire house. A flame of fire appeared over the head of each one of the apostles. And through these flames of fire a great and mysterious strength came down on them. This was the Comforter, God the Holy Spirit, entering into the disciples.

Suddenly the apostles felt that they had become quite different from what they had been before. They knew now what they had to say to people about the things Jesus had taught them. They knew how to say these things so that people would believe them.

Many people who were in Jerusalem for



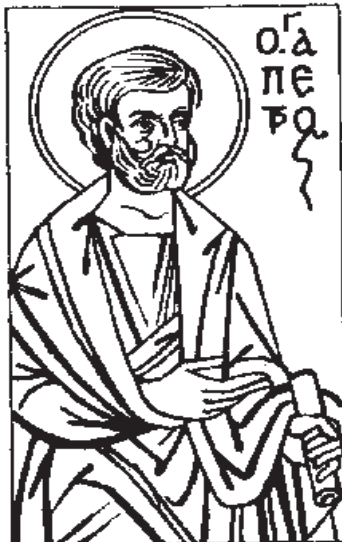
the holiday, heard the rushing noise made by the wind. They gathered before the house. They had come from many different countries and spoke many different languages. Then they heard the apostles speaking to them in their own languages and telling them the story of Jesus Christ, who was the Savior promised from olden days. The Apostle Peter told the people how He was crucified and arose from the dead and ascended into heaven and how He had promised that a special Comforter, God the Holy Spirit, would come down to His disciples and give them special strength and wisdom.

The people who listened to Peter believed him and said: "What shall we do then?" Peter said: "Be sorry for all the bad things you have done. Come and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." *from the OCA website. By Sophie Koulomzin*

## St. Peter the Apostle

This great man of the Church was born in Bethsaida, in Galilee. He and his brother Andrew were fishermen, as their father Jonah was. They were poor, and did not have much schooling.

Named Simon when he was born, he was called Simon by everyone as he was growing up. But one wonderful day, our Lord Jesus Christ looked at this strong, active man. Jesus said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah; you shall be called Cephas." Cephas is the same name as Peter, and from that day the fisherman was called Peter by everyone. Peter became the Lord's faithful follower.



In John 21:15-19, we read: <sup>15</sup>So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." <sup>16</sup>He said to him again a second time, "Simon, *son* of

Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." <sup>17</sup>He said to him the third time, "Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep. <sup>18</sup>Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself

and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish." <sup>19</sup>This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me."

Acts 9:32-43 tells this story of Peter's work tending and feeding God's sheep. "Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all *parts of the country*, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda. <sup>33</sup>There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. <sup>34</sup>And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed." Then he arose immediately. <sup>35</sup>So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord."

12 <sup>36</sup>At Joppa there was a certain disciple

named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did. <sup>37</sup>But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid *her* in an upper room. <sup>38</sup>And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring *him* not to delay in coming to them. <sup>39</sup>Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought *him* to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them. <sup>40</sup>But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise."

And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. <sup>41</sup>Then he gave her *his* hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. <sup>42</sup>And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord. <sup>43</sup>So it was that he stayed many days in Joppa with Simon, a tanner."

Peter spent the rest of his life preaching in Judea, Antioch, and certain parts of Asia, and finally came to Rome, where he was crucified upside down by Nero, about the year 66. *adapted from GOARCH site-lives of Saints.*

## St. Paul The Apostle

St. Paul's significance in the history of Christianity can hardly be underestimated: a tireless missionary, the first interpreter of the Good News of Jesus Christ to the Gentile world, and the author of more New

Testament books than any other writer.

St. Paul made three journeys preaching the Gospel. On the second journey, Paul travels as far west as Greece. In Phillipi, Acts 16:25-34 tells the story of Paul teaching his fellow prisoners in the Phillipian jail.

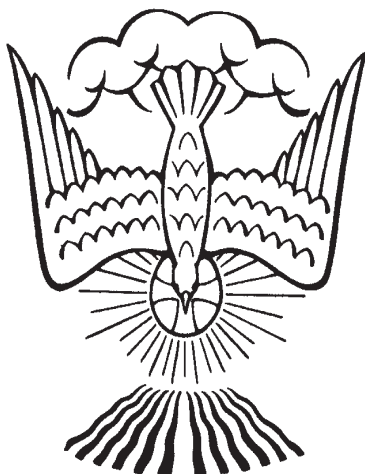
<sup>25</sup> But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. <sup>26</sup> Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. <sup>27</sup> And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. <sup>28</sup> But Paul called

with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here." <sup>29</sup> Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. <sup>30</sup> And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." <sup>32</sup> Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. <sup>33</sup> And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. <sup>34</sup> Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household. <sup>5</sup> And when it was day, the magistrates sent the officers, saying, "Let those men go" <sup>6</sup> So the keeper of the prison reported these words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go. Now therefore depart, and go in peace.



During his thirty-year ministry as an apostle Paul suffered many things for the sake of the Gospel. Paul describes in second letter to the Church in Corinth some of what he endured to preach the Good News of Jesus risen from the dead: "Five times I have received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received a stoning. Three times I was shipwrecked. For a night and a day I was adrift at sea. On frequent journeys, I was in danger from rivers, from bandits, from my own people, from Gentiles, in danger in the city, in danger in the wilderness, in danger at sea, in danger from false brethren; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, hungry and thirsty, often without food, cold and naked. And, besides other things, I am under daily pressure because of my anxiety for all the churches" (2 Cor 11:24-29).

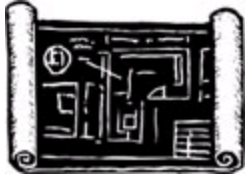
The apostle Paul was executed in Rome during the persecution of the emperor and madman, Nero. Nero's persecution of Christians lasted for four years, from 64 to 68AD. It was also during this persecution that the apostle Peter was executed. As a Roman citizen entitled to a quick death, Paul was beheaded. *from* [www.stpaulsirvine.org](http://www.stpaulsirvine.org)



## Questions

- 1) What is Pentecost?
- 2) What happened at Pentecost?
- 3) How were the lives of Apostles Peter and Paul changed by the Holy Spirit?
- 4) What is the difference between God being *around* us and God being *inside* us?
- 5) How is Your life changed by the Holy Spirit?
- 6) Are you living like God is *around* you or *inside* of you?





# The Blueprint for Life

## Day Four

### The Roof of the Heart

The roof of a building is a protective covering for the structure and its contents. This is exactly the care and protection that our clergy give us. The Deacons, Priests and Bishops are spiritual guides for the building up of our hearts. We cannot be our own guide; for sometimes we would be too easy on ourselves, and sometimes we would be too harsh. We could never be sure, left on our own that God forgives us, and loves us. We need spiritual fathers to help us to grow. We need the protection of the clergy to preserve the Holy Orthodox Faith, unchanged forever.

### What Does God Say...

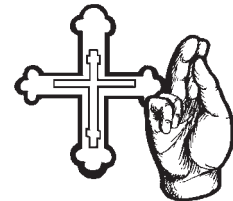
About a Deacon: <sup>3</sup>Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; <sup>4</sup>but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” (*Acts 6:3-4*)

About a Priest: <sup>2</sup>Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but <sup>4</sup>willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; <sup>3</sup>nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; (*1 Peter 5:2-3*)

About a Bishop: <sup>7</sup>For a <sup>6</sup>bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, <sup>8</sup>but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, <sup>9</sup>holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict. (*Titus 1:7-9*)

### Memory Verse

“Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; fret not thyself.” *Psalm 37:7*



### A Prayer for the Clergy and People

Almighty and everlasting God, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift; Send down upon our Bishops, and other Clergy, and upon the Congregations committed to their charge, the healthful Spirit of thy grace; and, that they may truly please thee, pour upon them the continual dew of thy blessing. Grant this, O Lord, for the honour of our Advocate and Mediator, Jesus Christ. Amen. *from St. Dunstan's Psalter*

### The Wisdom of the Saints--St. John Chrysostom

“For transparent madness it is to despise so great a dignity, without which it is not possible to obtain either our own salvation, or the good things which have been promised to us. For if no one can enter into the kingdom of Heaven except he be regenerate through water and the Spirit, and he who does not eat the flesh of the Lord and drink His blood is excluded from eternal life, and if all these things are accomplished only by means of those holy hands, I mean the hands of the priest, how will any one, without these, be able to escape the fire of hell, or to win those crowns which are reserved for the victorious?” “*On the Priesthood.*” *St. John Chrysostom, N&PNF, First Series, Volume IX. p. 47*

# The Clergy: The Sacred Priesthood

## Preserving the Faith & Teaching Us to Pray

### The Sacred Priesthood

Major Orders in the Orthodox Church refers to the three degrees of ordained clergy: bishop, presbyter, and deacon. Persons who hold these offices are charged with the celebration of the divine services and the administration of Church life. They have received the grace of the Holy Spirit to perform these jobs through the mystery of Holy Orders.

The first and highest degree of the clergy is the bishop (episkopos in Greek, which means overseer). He is the successor to the Apostles in the service and government of the Church. A bishop is responsible for and the head of all the parishes located in his diocese. All authority of the lower orders of clergy is derived from the bishop.

The second degree of the clergy is the priest. The priest governs a particular parish by the authority and with the blessing of his bishop. The priest blesses all of the divine services conducted in his parish and is authorized to celebrate all of the mysteries (sacraments) of the Church, with the exception of ordination, which is reserved to the bishop. The priest supervises all persons holding any office in his parish, including a deacon.

The third and lowest degree of the major orders of clergy belongs to the deacons. The word deacon means server and originally it referred to a person who waited on tables. The deacon ministers to

the priest and bishop in the Divine Services and assists in the celebration of the mysteries of the Church. A deacon may not, however, celebrate the mysteries by himself. *from orthodoxwiki*



### St. Stephen, Deacon

According to the Acts of the Apostles, during the early years of the Christian church in Jerusalem, Stephen was one of seven men, probably Hellenistic Jews, chosen to attend to the distribution of aid to elderly widows within the church community. This role came to be known as deacon. Stephen was also recognized for his gifts as an evangelist, preaching the teachings of Jesus to the people of Jerusalem, including members of the place of the Hellenistic synagogues.

Acts tells the story of how Stephen was tried by the Sanhedrin for blasphemy against Moses and God (Acts 6:11) and speaking against the Temple and the Law (Acts 6:13-14) (see also Antinomianism) and was then stoned to death (c. A.D. 34-35) by an infuriated mob encouraged by Saul of Tarsus, the future Saint Paul: "And Saul entirely approved of putting him to death" (8:1). [2].

Stephen's final speech is presented as making an accusation against the Jews of continuing to persecute prophets who spoke out against their sins:



**“Which one of the Prophets did your fathers not persecute, and they killed the ones who prophesied the coming of the Just One, of whom now, too, you have become betrayers and murderers.” (7:52)**

**Saint Stephen’s name is simply derived from the Greek Stephanos, meaning “crown”, which translated into Aramaic as Kelil. Saint Stephen is traditionally invested with a crown of martyrdom for Christianity and is often depicted in art with three stones and the martyrs’ palm. In icons he is shown as a young beardless man with a tonsure, wearing a deacon’s vestments, and often holding a miniature church building and censer.**

**As he was dying, Saint Stephen experienced a theophany, which is a vision of God.. “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.” (Acts 7:56) From the OCAwebsite lesson “Defenders of the Faith”**

## **St. Herman of Alaska, Priest**

**St. Herman was born in the town of Serpukhov in the Moscow Diocese around 1756. At 16, he entered the Russian Orthodox monastic life at the Trinity-St. Sergius Hermitage near St. Petersburg.**

**While there he developed a severe throat infection or abscess. After fervent prayer before an icon of the Theotokos, he collapsed into a deep sleep. During this sleep, He was greeted by the Virgin Mother of Lord Jesus and healed. Upon waking the next day, there was no trace of the past infirmity. Approximately five years later he transferred from Trinity-St. Sergius Hermitage to Valaam Monastery. While at Valaam, he was under the spiritual guidance of Abbot Nazarius who had played a 17**

**significant role in the revitalization of spiritual life in Russia. During this time, the head of the Golikov-Shelikov Company, Gregory Shelikov, visited Valaam and made a request for several monks to begin a mission into the Alaskan territory. Father Herman was selected, along with seven other monks.**

**Father Herman and the other monks arrived on Kodiak Island on September 24, 1794. The monks educated and converted the native Aleuts, and as time progressed they found themselves protecting the natives from exploitation and abuse. Because of this moral stance the monks themselves were abused, arrested and physically threatened. In time, enduring hardship, inclement weather, illness and more, Father Herman stood as the only remainder from the original band of missionaries.**

**Father Herman felt it his duty to protect the Aleuts from exploitation. He defended them against the often cruel treatment of those who controlled the colony. His concern for their needs have been documented, expressed in letters sent to the former administrator of the colony, Simeon Yanovsky. Father Herman also would intercede before the governors on behalf of the oppressed. He helped those in need in whatever way he found possible.**

**Between the years of 1808 and 1818, Father Herman traveled to Spruce Island. Spruce Island is almost completely covered by forest and is separated by a strait about a mile and a quarter wide from Kodiak Island. Selecting this island for the location of his hermitage he called the land there “New Valaam” after the monastery from which he had left to come to America. He dug a cave in the ground and lived out his first full summer there. To**





endure the harsh winters he constructed a cell in which he lived for more than forty years.

A small chapel was built as well, along with a school and

guest house. The local people would visit him often. Food was produced from an experimental garden he planted for himself and the orphans of the land. He devoted his life to prayer.

His love for the people of Alaska was sincere and he found happiness in being around the children. An epidemic plagued Alaskans when an American ship made land at Kodiak. Fr. Herman remained with the ill and dying, offering them constant comfort and ceaseless prayer. It is said that his love was so genuine that he could see into the hearts of his spiritual children and help them.

The natives regarded him as their intercessor before God. When there was a tidal wave on the Island, Fr. Herman took an icon of the Theotokos, placed it on the beach and assured the people that the water would not rise beyond the place where the icon was, and it did not. When there was a great fire on the island, it is said that he dug a trench and stayed the flames. Prior to his death he foretold that there would be no priest to bury him and that he would be forgotten for 30 years. He died on December 13, 1837, and was forgotten until the first investigation of his life in 1867 by Bishop Peter of Alaska. This investigation was followed by publications of his life in 1894, 1900, and 1952. In 1952 an Akathist Hymn (Devotional song, prayer or chant) was composed in his honor. *from wikipedia*

## St. Raphael of Brooklyn, Bishop

St. Raphael (Hawaweeny), the first Orthodox bishop consecrated in the New World, was born in Beirut, on November 8, 1860, to pious Orthodox parents, Michael and Mariam Hawaweeny. Due to the violent persecution of the Christians of Damascus in July 1860, which saw the martyrdom of the Hawaweeny family's parish priest and hundreds of their neighbors, Michael and his pregnant wife Mariam fled from Damascus to Beirut. It was here that the future saint first saw the light of day. Indeed as the child's life unfolded, it was evident that he would have no continuing city in this world, but would seek the city, which is to come (Hebrews 13:14).

He received his primary and secondary education in the parochial schools of Damascus, and his first theological training at the Ecumenical Patriarchate's Theological School at Halki in Constantinople. He later studied at the Kiev Theological Academy in Imperial Russia, served as the Rector of the Metochion of the Patriarchate of Antioch in Moscow and taught at the Theological Academy of Kazan.

During this time, the Syro-Arab community in the United States was growing at an increasing rate. A Syrian Orthodox Benevolent Society was organized in New York City and the president, Dr. Ibrahim Arbeely, contacted St. Raphael, then a priest in Russia, about coming to



the United States. In 1895 he came to the United States and was placed in charge of the entire Syrian Orthodox Mission. He was assigned to New York City and organized the parish, which later became St. Nicholas Cathedral in Brooklyn. He supervised the development of other Syrian communities, traveling widely through the United States in 1896 to organize parishes. By 1898, St. Raphael published a large Arabic Service Book for use in his churches.

In 1898 St. Raphael was the ranking representative of the American Mission to greet St. Tikhon (Bellavin), the new diocesan bishop. At the Liturgy on December 15, 1898, he spoke of St. Tikhon's mission in his sermon. "He has been sent here to tend the flock of Christ—Russians, Slavs, Syro-Arabs, and Greeks—which is scattered across the entire North American continent." St. Tikhon recognized his qualities of leadership tempered by piety and wanted St. Raphael to be one of his vicar-bishops. The Holy Synod of Russia approved and he was consecrated bishop at St. Nicholas Cathedral in Brooklyn on March 13, 1904.

For the next sixteen years St. Raphael continued his work among the Syrian Orthodox and also helped St. Tikhon and his successors to administer the North American Mission. He consecrated the grounds of St. Tikhon's Monastery in South Canaan, Pennsylvania, the first Orthodox monastery in the New World. Author of many books, articles and translations of Greek liturgical books into Arabic, he also founded the journal *al-Kalimat* in 1905 to spread the "word" to places he could not himself be. *Al-Kalimat*, now renamed *The Word*, is the official publication of the Antiochian Arch-

diocese. After twenty years of service in North America, at the age of 55, St. Raphael fell asleep in Christ on February 27, 1915. At the time of his repose, he administered thirty Syrian Orthodox congregations with 25,000 faithful.

St. Raphael's sacred relics were first interred in a crypt beneath the holy table at his St. Nicholas Cathedral (March 7, 1915), later buried in the Syrian Section of Brooklyn's Mt. Olivet Cemetery (April 2, 1922), and finally were taken to the Holy Resurrection Cemetery at The Antiochian Village near Ligonier, Pennsylvania (August 15, 1988). His sanctity was officially proclaimed on March 29, 2000, and his glorification celebrated on May 29, 2000, at St. Tikhon's Monastery. *From the OCA website*



## Questions

- 1) What is the job of a Deacon? How does this relate to the story of St. Stephen?
- 2) What is the job of a Priest? How does this relate to the story of St. Herman?
- 3) What is the job of a Bishop? How does this relate to the story of St. Raphael?
- 4) How are our lives affected by the clergy in our Church?
- 5) How would you describe our Bishop? What is our relationship with him?
- 6) How would our life in the Church be different if we had no Clergy? No Bishop?



# The Blueprint for Life

## Day Five

### The Furnishings of the Heart

Once the roof is on the building, it has a final shape and look from the outside. If it is a place where people will live, it is a house. It is not yet a home. A home needs people to live there, and some furnishings. In the Church, the laity are the people and their love for God and each other are the furnishings. Our heart, once built, must be furnished with love, for only then can we live and share our Faith. This is the purpose for which we were made and no other--to love God and our neighbor every day of our life. The Church helps us to do this by providing us the Sacraments, Tradition and the Clergy to support us. But we can do nothing apart from God. Our hearts must be built and maintained so as to always be soft and turned toward God. This is the ultimate freedom--to choose to have a close relationship with God.

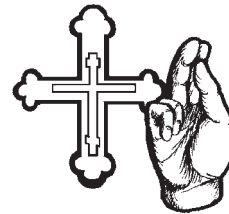
### What Does God Say...

"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of the darkness into His marvelous light." *1 Peter 2:9*

Hear what the Orthodox Study Bible says as a comment on this passage: "In baptism we are all anointed with grace as priests in the Kingdom of God; for the spiritual Kingdom is also the spiritual priesthood. Moreover, as the body of Christ, we have a priestly ministry to the world, fulfilling the very priesthood and intercession of the Lord Himself, so that to the whole universe we may proclaim the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light." *(pg553; 2:9)*

### Memory Verse

"Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." *Matthew 11:28*



### Troparion to St. Artemius

By the command of the Most High, the sky was darkened with rain clouds, lightning flashed, threat'ning thunder clashed, and you gave up your soul into the hands of the Lord, O Artemius most wise. Now as you stand before the Throne of the Lord of All, you grant healing unfailingly to those who come to you with faith and love, and you pray to Christ our God that our souls may be saved.

### The Wisdom of the Saints--St. Seraphim of Sarov

"When mind and heart are united in prayer and the soul is wholly concentrated in a single desire for God, then the heart grows warm and the light of Christ begins to shine and fills the inward man with peace and joy. We should thank the Lord for everything and give ourselves up to His will; we should also offer Him all our thoughts and words, and strive to make everything serve only His good pleasure."

# The Laity: The royal priesthood

## Living As One Body

### The Meaning of "Lay"

The laity comprises all lay persons collectively. This means any person who is not a member of the clergy or of any monastic order.

In the Orthodox Church, the laity are the people of God and are responsible for preserving the integrity of the faith as much as the bishops. The example for this that is often given is that of bishops being refused entrance to their cities after the Council of Florence until they recanted of their signatures. The laity refused to accept that the Council's decisions were in accord with the Orthodox faith.

The laity are called to live by the same Christian moral standards as the clergy. They both are expected to participate in all the worship services and keep the various days and seasons of fasting and feasting. The clergy are the sacred priesthood, where the laity are among the royal priesthood. The clergy cannot conduct formal worship services without the participation of the laity, and the laity can not perform the same services without the clergy to lead them. Each play a very important role in the liturgical and administrative life of the Church.

The words lay, laity, layman come

from the Greek word *laos* which means people. "Laikos," layman, is the one who belongs to the people, who is a member of an organic and organized community. It is, in other words, not a negative, but a highly positive term. It implies the ideas of full, responsible, active membership as opposed, for example, to the status of a candidate.

Yet the Christian use made this term even more positive. It comes from the Greek translation of the Old Testament where the word *laos* is applied ordinary to the *People of God*, to Israel, the people elected and sanctified by God Himself as *His* people. This concept of the "people of God" is central in the Bible. The Bible affirms that God has chosen one people among many to be His particular instrument in history, to fulfill His plan, to prepare, above everything else, the coming of Christ, the Saviour

of the World. With this one people God has entered into "covenant", a pact or agreement of mutual belonging. The Old Testament, however, is but the preparation of the New. And in Christ, the privileges and the election of the "people of God" are extended to all those who accept Him, believe in Him and are ready to accept Him as God and Saviour. Thus, *the Church*, the community of those who believe in Christ, becomes the true *people of God*, the "laos"



and each Christian a *laikos* — a member of the People of God.

The *layman*, is the one, therefore, who shares in Divine election and receives from God a special gift and privilege of *membership*. It is a highly positive vocation, radically different from the one we find defined in Webster. We can say that in our Orthodox teaching each Christian, be he a Bishop, Priest, Deacon or just member of the Church is, first of all, and before everything else a *layman*, for it is neither a negative nor a partial, but an all-embracing term and our common vocation.. Before we are anything specific we are all laymen because the whole Church is the laity — the people, the family, the community — elected and established by Christ Himself.

We are accustomed to think of “ordination” as precisely the distinctive mark of clergy. They are the ordained and the laity, the non-ordained Christians. Here again, however, Orthodoxy differs from the rest of Christendom. If ordination means primarily the bestowing of the gifts of the Holy Spirit for the fulfillment of our vocation as Christians and members of the Church, then, each layman becomes a layman — *laikos* — through ordination. We find it in the Sacrament of Holy Chrism, which follows Baptism. Why are there *two*, and not just one, sacraments of entrance into the Church? Because if Baptism restores in us our true human nature, obscured by sin, *Chrismation* gives us the positive *power* and *grace* to be Christians, to act as Christians, to build together the Church of God and be responsible participants in the life of the Church. In this sacrament we pray that the newly baptized be:

“an honorable member of God’s Church

“a consecrated vessel

“a child of light

“an heir of God’s kingdom,

that “having preserved the gift of the Holy Spirit and increased the measure of grace committed unto him, he may receive the prize of his *high calling* and be numbered with the first borne whose names are written in heaven”. *from Orthowiki*

## St. Artemius of Verkola

St. Artemius is a child saint of the

Orthodox Church, often referred to as “the Righteous

Child Wonderworker.” He was

born in 1532 to Cosmas “the

Lesser” and Apollinaria, peasants in the Russian village of

Verkola. Cosmas and

Apollinaria raised their son

within a life of Christian piety,

and at the early age of five

his behavior was already

based on Christian virtues. He

was quiet, meek, God-fearing,

and obedient to his parents. At

the age of twelve, while help-

ing his father till the fields, a sudden thunder

storm broke overhead. Before he could

move, Artemius was struck dead by a bolt

of lightning. The date was June 23,

1545. Superstition about the bad omen of

such an untimely death kept Artemius

from being granted a proper funeral and

burial. Many years later, however, his body

was discovered lying in a clearing covered

only by tree branches. It was found not to

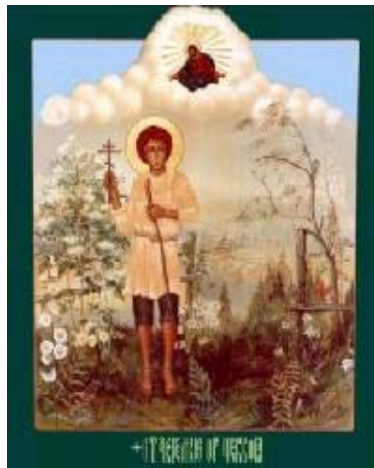
have grown corrupt. In the Orthodox

church, the miracle of a person’s body not

returning to dust is viewed as a one sign

that the person lived a holy life in the sight

of God.



In 1648, a monastery was built and placed under Artemius' protection. His relics, as the earthly remains of a saint are referred to in official Church language, were enshrined there for veneration by the people. Over the centuries many miracles were attributed to these relics by people who have approached them with true faith in Christ. Sadly, in the summer of 1918, as the Bolsheviks began their savage persecution of the Orthodox Christian Church, St. Artemius' relics were among those destroyed. As Orthodox Christians we believe that God ultimately wins out over all evil. So though his earthly remains may have vanished, St. Artemius lives on eternally with God. As a sign of this victory, Philip Zimmerman, an iconographer living in Johnstown, PA, was granted a vision of St. Artemius. Phil was told to paint his icon "for all children." With the blessing of Fr. John Namie, the Director of the Antiochian Village at the time, a site was selected on which to build a rock shrine to house the finished icon. The shrine stands to the right of the entrance to the St. Ignatius Church. *from the Antiochian Village site.*



## St. Elizabeth the New Martyr

As a lovely young German princess who was the granddaughter of Queen Victoria of England, Elizabeth seemed to "have it all." She was considered to be one of the most beautiful women in Europe, and lived her life in splendid surroundings. But there

was tragedy in her family—she lost her mother and a brother early in life, and she was well aware of those who were poor and suffering in the world. As wealthy and beautiful as she was, Elizabeth had a loving and tender heart. Elizabeth married the Russian Grand Duke Sergei, a cousin of Tsar Nicholas II. As his wife, she discovered and "fell in love with" the Orthodox faith.

She sent letters to her Protestant grandmother, the Queen of England, explaining her decision to become Orthodox. She went to church regularly, and grew in her faith. Some years later, when her husband was brutally assassinated, that faith was her rock and support. She offered her husband's assassin her forgiveness, visiting his jail cell to urge him to pray and ask for God's mercy.

Later, Elizabeth became a nun and opened a monastery in Moscow to serve the most needy, ignored, and desperate people of the city's terrible slums. Among the monastery's activities were regular Sunday afternoon gatherings for poor working women. The women were invited to hear concerts or interesting speakers, and the nuns showed them love and respect, serving them tea and sweets.

As revolutionary fever grew in Russia, members of the royal family became targets for hatred and violence. Elizabeth continued her life of prayer, her work with the poor, and her deep and loving concern for Russia. But now, some of the revolutionaries saw her as a German "alien" and an "enemy of the people" simply because of her birth as a royal person.

There is a lot we can say about this

saint of the Church. But let's take one story about her that tells us a lot about what it means to be a defender of the faith. It is something that happened at the very end of her life, after she had been threatened several times by the revolutionaries. They had come more than once to the monastery to arrest her, but turned away when she politely but firmly stood up to them.

Finally, though, she was taken away. Her companion, the nun Barbara, insisted on going with her, and later with some other royals they were killed in a terribly brutal way. They were thrown alive down a mine shaft, and large logs were thrown down on top of them to make sure they would die, if the fall had not already killed them.

Yet for many hours afterward, voices were heard coming from the mine shaft. They were singing hymns and prayers. The voices grew fainter as time went on, but the impression they left could never die: Even as a hideously painful death approaches, people can pray and show their faith in God and His promise of life forever in His Kingdom. *Learn more about Saint Elizabeth in the book Ella's Story, by Maria Tobias.*

## Troparion for St. ELizabeth

### Tone 4

You rejected worldly vanity and glories, having chosen the way of the ascetics, and you were guided by Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, how to unite the teachings of Christ with good deeds. Together with Barbara, your fellow-struggler, you also received a martyr's death. Wherefore, Christ crowned you with a two-fold crown, O humble and wise Abbess Elizabeth.

## Questions

- 1) What is the royal priesthood?
- 2) How is the royal priesthood different from the Sacred Priesthood? How is it the same?
- 3) What is the *real* job of the laity in the Orthodox Church?
- 4) What are some things that lay people do in our Churches?
- 5) How does the laity affect the spread of the Church?
- 6) How would our life in the Church be different if the Clergy had to do every job in the Church?
- 7) How does St. Artemios' life reflect his royal priesthood?
- 8) How does St. Elizabeth's life reflect her royal priesthood?
- 9) How does YOUR life reflect your royal priesthood?



# **Autographs From My Friends At Camp St. Raphael**

## **Troparion for St. Raphael, Bishop of Brooklyn (Tone 3)**

**Rejoice, O Father Raphael, Adornment of the Holy Church! Thou art Champion of the true Faith, Seeker of the lost, Consolation of the oppressed, Father to orphans, and Friend of the poor, Peacemaker and Good Shepherd, Joy of all the Orthodox, Son of Antioch, Boast of America: Intercede with Christ God for us and for all who honor thee.**

# **Autographs From My Friends At Camp St. Raphael**

**O give thanks unto the Lord for He is good Alleluia. For  
His mercy endureth forever Alleulia.**



**Lift Up Your Hearts  
Unto The Lord!**