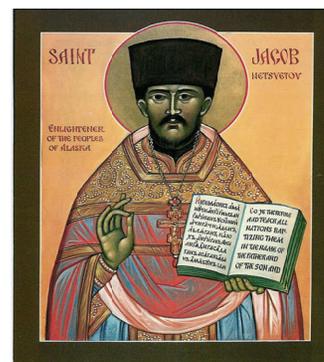
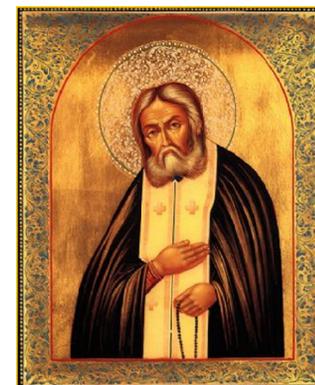
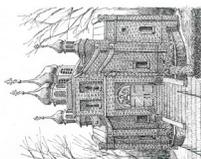




HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH



HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH
305 Washington Street
P. O. Box 2876
New Britain, CT 06050-2876



JULY 2019

HÖLY TRINITY ÖRTHÖDÖX CHURCH

JULY 2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 Unmercenaries Cosmas & Damian	2 St. John, Abp. of Shanghai	3	4 <i>Independence Day</i> 	5 St. Sergius of Radonezh	6 Great Vespers 5:00 P.M. CONFESSION
7 3rd after Pentecost Divine Liturgy 9:00A.M. Coffee Hour – Koles / Wagner	8 Icon of our Lady of Kazan	9	10	11 St. Olga, Princess of Russia <u>Visitation:</u> 1:30 P.M. JEROME HOME	12	13 Panikhida for Ed Bichun 4:30 P.M. Great Vespers 5:00 P.M. CONFESSION
14 4th after Pentecost Frs. of 1st Six Ec. Councils Divine Liturgy 9:00A.M. Coffee Hour – ? ? ? ? ? Family Summer Picnic & Pool Party @ Labas home 12:00 P.M.	15 St. Vladimir	16 <u>Visitation:</u> 1:30 P.M. GRANDVIEW REHAB. CENTER	17 Royal Martyrs & Confessors of Russia	18 New Martyrs Elizabeth & Barbara	19 St. Seraphim of Sarov	19 Martyr Maria 20 (Skobtsova) Great Vespers 5:00 P.M. CONFESSION
21 5th after Pentecost Divine Liturgy 9:00A.M. Coffee Hour – ? ? ? ? ?	22 St. Mary Magdalene	23	24 Great Martyr Christina	25	26 St. Jacob Netsvetov of Alaska	27 Greatmartyr & Healer Panteleimon Baptism of Stella Boruch 11:00 A.M. Great Vespers 5:00 P.M. GENERAL CONFESSION
28 6th after Pentecost St. Irene Chrysovolantou Divine Liturgy 9:00A.M. Coffee Hour – Mabry	29	30 <u>Visitation:</u> 11:00 A.M. MSGR. BOJNOWSKI MANOR	31 New Hieromartyr Benjamin of Petrograd	<u>Cleaners:</u> 7/7: Santoro's / Stock 7/14: C Dresko / Kaplan 7/21: Clark / Bress 7/28: Cabrera / Burrill	<u>Greeter:</u> Ellen Santoro	<u>Charity:</u> 

2	Dimitry & Raissa Shafran	1957
5	Dan & Elizabeth Bradanini	1970
6	Joseph & Alicyn Pulcini	1997
10	Alex & Diane Polzun	1971
12	Francis & Irene Ferrandino	1980
25	Nicholas & Mallory Kokus	2009
28	Adam & Danielle Salina	2000



“WHEN I WAS SICK YOU CAME TO ME”

The following parishioners (and friends) are now home-bound or in long-term care facilities. If there are any names missing, please inform Fr. David. The regular schedule of visitations is included on the monthly calendar. Parishioners are welcomed and encouraged to make regular visitations to nursing homes and shut-ins. Our loved ones **NEED** to feel connected to their parish family.

Jerome Home, New Britain
Sadie Albino
Alexander Dubnansky

Monsignor Bojnowski Manor, New Britain
Mary Camarata

*Grandview Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center
[Walnut Hill Care Center], New Britain*
Martha Cherpak

At Home: Betty Beck, Jim Dounouk, Joseph Kowar, Stella Liwen, Jennie Pich, Antoinette Rudy, Katherine Szestakow and Nicholas Tabakow.

ALSO don't forget about **Meals for our Homebound** PLEASE find the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board and add your name to help bring a little love & joy to those at home. Meals are delivered on the last Sunday of every month. We need volunteers for July & August. Please see Ellen Santoro, Nadine Cabrera or Rosemary Delaney if you have questions.



PARISH DIPTYCHS

Please remember our departed brothers and sisters in your prayers.

Moisey Rostella	54	July 1 1941
Michael Fetzko	75	July 1 1955
Peter Shevchuk	68	July 1 1957
Ruth Lucas	85	July 1 2012
Samuel Sopko	67	July 2 1955
Mary Labas	78	July 2 1970
Child (No name) Ladutko	1 day	July 3 1928
Jennie Mandro	30	July 3 1959
Donna Stelman	77	July 3 1962
George Liwen	94	July 3 2014
Nicholas Cherpak	63	July 4 1931

Pauline Gregorowich	77	July 4 1977
Andrew Truhan		July 5 1944
Diomid Gel	75	July 5 1972
Edward Bichun	75	July 5 2017
Child Vladimir Martinchuk	4	July 6 1903
Peter Petrioka	24	July 7 1903
Natalie Mikuno	36	July 8 1914
Mary Garlewsky	57	July 8 1942
Prohor Novosett		July 8 1944
Evan Panysh	77	July 8 1979
Walter Tynik	94	July 8 2010
William Aduskevicz		July 9 1981
Catherine Rusinovskiy	79	July 10 1970
Alexander Stepanec	59	July 10 1971
Paul Lechowicz		July 10 1976
Nadia Dwyer	63	July 10 1982
Nicolai Sotirov	54	July 10 1999
Alexander Alexieff	70	July 11 1962
Vera Martinook	73	July 11 1966
Aleksandra Lashenka	87	July 11 1981
Katherine Kolveka	23	July 12 1911
Walter Waskiewicz		July 12 1980
Child Anastasia Vilenin	10 days	July 13 1913
Child Sophie Panasevich	7 mo	July 14 1917
Michael Belomyzy	79	July 14 1964
Alexander Pyzow	87	July 14 1979
Andrew Bogdan	67	July 15 1940
Daria Dalidovich	55	July 16 1953
Paul Kislicki	67	July 16 1965
Melania Hamilla		July 16 1983
Anne Hamilla Christien	81	July 16 1993
Helen Roberts	91	July 16 2012
Anthony Moskoluk	66	July 17 1952
Nicholas Romanuk	65	July 17 1953
Mary Zuk	62	July 17 1961
Ajanas Ludko	84	July 17 1979
Alexy (Al) Rudy	92	July 17 2011
Child Alexander Martinchik	1	July 18 1911
Child Alexander Kinon	6 mo	July 18 1913
Thaddeus Konstanchuk	77	July 18 1949
Mary Zuk	68	July 18 1962
Elbert Everson	55	July 18 1985
John Horbal	78	July 18 2003
Child Sergei Stankevich	2 mo	July 20 1909
Nadezhda Matyschsyk	68	July 21 1966
Anna Colwick	80	July 21 1969
Sophie Comba	75	July 21 1990
Child Vladimir Kasperovich	2 mo	July 22 1916
Michael Roman	84	July 22 1957
Child Mary Perut	9 mo	July 23 1905
Elena Tabakow	59	July 23 1997
John Colwick, Sr.	76	July 24 1960
Antony Srogi	83	July 24 1965
Sophie ?		July 25 1914
Nina Cenewicz		July 25 1963
Child Paul Zhojka	7 mo	July 27 1909
Wasil Danilevich	63	July 27 1953
Nicholas Steffick	67	July 27 1975

Helen Lechowicz	92	July 27 1996
Child Anna Stankevich	4 mo	July 28 1908
Nicholas Trubeev	36	July 28 1917
John Tavorons	59	July 28 1932
Andrew Panasevich	54	July 28 1949
Sophie Novick	89	July 28 1986
George Augustinovich	58	July 29 1968
Olga Makula	65	July 30 1927
Isidore Prigodich		July 30 1960
Alexander Gregorowich	75	July 30 1963
Jean Janusonis	62	July 30 1996
Olga (Alice) Wilczek	81	July 30 1998
Anna Lewchik	78	July 31 1976
Arthur Pobrezny		July 31 1984

ВѢЧНА ПАМЯТЬ

St. Jacob Netsvetov, Enlightener of the Alaskan People - July 26th (155th anniversary of repose)

Our righteous Father Jacob Netsvetov, Enlightener of Alaska, was a native of the Aleutian Islands who became a priest of the Orthodox Church and continued the missionary work of St. Innocent among his and other Alaskan people. His feast day is celebrated on the day of his repose, July 26.

Father Jacob was born in 1802 on Atka Island, part of the Aleutian Island chain in Alaska. His father, Yegor Vasil'evich Netsvetov, was Russian from Tobolsk, Russia, and his mother, Maria Aleksceвна, was an Aleut from Atka Island. Jacob was the eldest of four children who survived infancy. Although not well off, Yegor and Maria did all they could to provide for their children and prepare them to live their lives. Jacob chose a life with the Church and enrolled in the Irkutsk Theological Seminary.

On October 1, 1825, Jacob was tonsured a sub-deacon. He married Anna Simeonovna, a Russian woman perhaps of a Creole background as was he, and then in 1826 he graduated from the seminary with certificates in history and theology. With graduation he was ordained a deacon on October 31, 1826 and assigned to the Holy Trinity-St. Peter Church in Irkutsk. Two years later, Archbishop Michael ordained Jacob to the holy priesthood on March 4, 1828. Archbishop Michael had earlier ordained John Veniaminov (St. Innocent) to the priesthood. With his elevation to the priesthood, Father Jacob began to yearn to return to his native Alaska to preach the Word of God.

Upon departing, Archbishop Michael gave Father Jacob two antimensia, one for use in the new church that Father Jacob planned to built on Atka, and the other for use in Father Jacob's missionary travels. After a molieben, Father Jacob and his party set off for Alaska on May 1, 1828. The travelers included Father Jacob, Anna his wife, and his father Yegor who had been tonsured reader for the new Atka Church. This journey, which was always hard, took over year to complete, which was completed on June 15, 1829.

Father Jacob's new parish was a challenge. The Atka "parish" covered most of the islands and land surrounding the Bering Sea: Amchitka, Attu, Copper, Bering, and Kurile Islands. But, he was to meet the challenge as clothed in his priestly garments;

he actively pursued his sacred ministry. To his parishioners, his love for God and them was evident in everything he did as he made his appearances while enduring the harsh weather, illness, hunger, and exhaustion. For him life was Christ. Being bi-lingual and bi-cultural, Father Jacob was uniquely able to care for the souls of his community.

Since St. Nicholas Church was not yet available, Father Jacob built a large tent in which to hold his services, and after the church was completed he took the tent with him on his missionary travels. By the end of 1829, six months after arriving at Atka Father Jacob had recorded 16 baptisms, 442 chrismations, 53 marriages, and eight funerals.



With the completion of the church on Atka, Father Jacob turned to education of the children, teaching them to read and write both Russian and Unangan Aleut. Initially the Russian-American Company helped support the school, but in 1841 the school was re-organized as a parish school. Many of his students would prove to be distinguished Aleut leaders. He corresponded with St Innocent on linguistics and translation matters. He worked on an adequate Unangan-Aleut alphabet and translations of the Holy Scriptures and other church publications. In addition to praises from St. Innocent he began to receive awards for his services. In time he was elevated to Archpriest and received the Order of St. Anna.

Father Jacob's life was not without its personal sufferings. 1836 and 1837 were to bring successively the death of his beloved wife Anna in March 1836, the destruction by fire of his home in July 1836, and the death of his father, Yegor, in 1837. After considering the message of these misfortunes, he petitioned his bishop to return to Irkutsk so that he could enter a monastic life. A year later he request was granted contingent on the arrival of his replacement. But none came. Soon Bishop Innocent arrived and invited Father Jacob to accompany him on a trip to Kamchatka. During the voyage Bishop Innocent seemed to have accomplished three things with Father Jacob: with the healing salve of the Holy Spirit provided words of comfort, dissuaded Father Jacob from entering a monastery, and revealed to the saintly priest the Savior's true plan for his life that was for him to preach Christ to those deep in the Alaskan interior.

On December 30, 1844, St. Innocent appointed him head of the new Kvikhpak Mission to bring the light of Christ to the people along the Yukon River. With two young Creole assistants, Innokentii Shayashnikov and Konstantin Lukin, and his nephew Vasili Netsvetov, Father Jacob established his headquarters in the Yup'ik Eskimo village of Ikogmiute. From there, now known as Russian Mission, he traveled to the settlements for hundreds of miles along the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers, visiting the inhabitants of settlements along the way. For the next twenty years he learned new languages, met new people and cultures, invented another alphabet, and built more churches and communities. At the invitation of the native leaders he traveled as far as the Innoko River baptizing hundreds from many, and often formerly hostile, tribes. He continued even as his health deteriorated.

Yet the devil's presence came to stir up spurious and slanderous charges against him in 1863. To clear the air his Bishop Peter called him to Sitka where he was cleared of all the charges. As his health and mammography worsened he remained in Sitka

-serving at the Tlingit chapel until his death on July 26, 1864. He was 60 years old.

During his last missionary travels in the Kuskokwim/Yukon delta region he is remembered for baptizing 1,320 people and for distinguishing himself as the evangelizer of the Yupik Eskimo and Athabascan peoples.

Troparion - Tone 4

O righteous Father Jacob,
Adornment of Atka and the Yukon Delta;
You offered yourself as a living sacrifice
To bring light to a searching people.
Offspring of Russian America,
Flower of brotherly unity,
Healer of sickness and terror of demons:
O Holy Father Jacob,
Pray to Christ God that our souls may be saved.



WHY IS THE VENERATION OF SAINTS' RELICS SO IMPORTANT TO ORTHODOXY?

1) The relics are a means of grace for us, the living

Why do we venerate saints and their relics? Certainly, the saints do not *NEED* to be glorified by us as saints. The only reason the Holy Orthodox Church glorifies saints is to help *us*. The Lord's saints manifest themselves to us who are still on earth in order to assist us. The Lord gives to us the relics of His saints as a means of grace for us — a visible and tangible means of contact, and as a vehicle of innumerable miracles — just as He gives to us icons and the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments) as vehicles of Divine Grace.

2) The relics bear witness to the validity of the purpose of the Orthodox spiritual life, and Orthodox theological and spiritual principles

- (a) Saints' relics and their veneration are very closely related to the concept of holiness and why there **MUST** be saints and **MUST** be icons. (See the other Articles on this website, Why Icons?, Prayers for the Journey along the Way, especially #4, "Holiness," and most particularly, Why Saints?) Relics affirm every single assertion made in the Why Saints? article.
- (b) The veneration of saints is vital to the life of the Holy Orthodox Church, because the existence of saints affirms that it is truly possible to fulfill the Christian vocation — to become conformed to the image of Christ — because every Christian is called to be a saint, for Christ commanded us to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect.
- (c) The theology of the icon is in part also the theology of the veneration of saints' relics and their frequent incorruption — in essence, that the body participates in the process of transfiguration / sanctification / deification / theosis — different words for the same process of salvation.
- (d) The veneration of saints' relics and their frequent incorruption affirm that the physical world indeed does have the potential for being transfigured and resurrected, as it participates in the restoration of humanity to the beauty of the Divine Image and Likeness. That the physical world participates in the process of sanctification is a fundamental element of Orthodox spiritual theology and is an underlying

principle in both the theology of icons and the theology of the veneration of saints' relics. In this, Orthodoxy diverges to some extent from Roman Catholic theology, and diverges enormously from Protestant theology, which vehemently denies the possibility of the deification (theosis) of humans or the sanctification of the material world. However, it is exactly these very principles (of theosis and sanctification of the physical world), that are manifested and achieved during the years of ascetic and spiritual experiences practiced by so many of the saints, that accounts for the widespread occurrence of the incorruption of saints' bodies. Basically, the saints bodies were so transfigured and deified by their sanctity, that even after their souls separated from their bodies, the elevated sanctity of their bodies remained, so that their flesh did not decompose, and their bodies exude a sweet fragrance. However, even for most of the saints, to whom the gift of incorruption was not given, their bones still exude the miraculous power of the first-fruits of the resurrection and of the Kingdom of God.

- (e) Incorruption of relics, like icons, affirm that the physical world indeed **DOES** have the potential for being transfigured and resurrected, as it participates in the restoration of humanity to the beauty of the Divine Image and Likeness. The sanctified and transfigured bodies of the saints, (whether or not they are incorrupt), are so powerful that numerous miracles occur by means of the saint's relics, or even by being anointed with oil from the lamps burning by their relics, or from soil from the ground where the saints are or were buried. Of course, most of the saints were also vehicles of miracles while they were yet in their bodies, and this miraculous grace continues to flow from them after their repose.
- (f) The physical world was created good and the process of the transfiguration of the world, which is the end purpose of the Orthodox Christian life and struggles, is part of the process of the transfiguration and salvation of each person. The incorruption of saints' bodies and the miracles performed through the relics of saints is a foretaste or first-fruits of the restoration of the world to the way in which God created it.

HOW DO WE EXPERIENCE AND ENCOUNTER THE SAINTS THROUGH THEIR RELICS?

Having briefly considered a few of the spiritual and theological principles that form the basis for the Orthodox veneration of relics, let us now briefly explore and describe the practical experience that Orthodox Christians have or may have with the saints by means of their relics.

1) Antimension/Antimins

First, all Orthodox Christians have a very close experience with the relics of the saints, except that they usually are not aware of it. From the very earliest Christian times, the Divine Liturgy has been celebrated on the tombs of the martyred saints, (those who bore *witness* to the Faith), where, on the anniversary of the saint's martyrdom, the faithful would go to the catacombs (in Rome) or other place of burial, and celebrate the Divine Liturgy. This earliest Orthodox Christian tradition has been maintained by the Church — with a certain variation. Since we cannot usually go to the martyred saints' graves, one might say that the Church brings the martyrs' relics to us. How is this done? By means of an *Antimension* or *Antimins*. All Orthodox Divine Liturgies **MUST** be served on top of a special cloth, called an *Antimins* or *Antimension*, which



is signed by the bishop and given by him to each church under his jurisdiction (and occasionally to an individual priest). Upon each *antimension* is a representation of the Entombment / Lamentation of Christ, and into the *antimension* are sewn small particles of the relics (bones) of martyr-saints. Every church has at least one *antimension*, which permits the Liturgy to be served, under the authority of its bishop. (Our Antimins has the relic of the New Martyr Ignatius of Mt. Athos, May 1st and was given on the day of the 100th Anniversary of laying of the cornerstone.) Furthermore, when the full consecration of a temple and its altar is performed by the bishop, relics of martyr-saints are always placed into the altar (holy table) itself. Thus, every person present at each Divine Liturgy is actually participating in the veneration of relics, whether or not the person is aware of it.

2) Encountering the saints through their relics

a) Pilgrimages to venerate a saint's relics

The lively and awesome, even mind-boggling experience of encountering the saints by means of their relics is actually the crux of the whole question of the practical experience of the veneration of saints' relics. When one journeys as a pilgrim to the places where the bodies of the saints are buried, and approaches with faith, one can truly encounter the saint, and feel the saint's holiness and close presence. Generally, the saints' relics are miraculous, and very often they are *incorrupt*. (*Incorrupt relics* means that the skin has not decomposed, but is still present around the bones, and usually there is a sweet fragrance around the body, rather than the stench of putrefied flesh. In other words, the saint's body is not just a skeleton, but a whole body, with all the skin still there. However, these are not "mummies," for there has been no embalming whatsoever, which has never been an Orthodox practice. There are enumerable examples of incorrupt relics of the saints.) Customarily, after a holy person has been glorified as a saint, either locally or universally, the relics of the saint are placed in a large coffin or casket-like reliquary, which sometimes can be quite ornate, and carried in a grand procession to a new place of honor, often in the main cathedral, that is readily accessible to people so that they may venerate the saint's relics. (This "*transferring of relics*" is commonly translated in English as the "*translation of the relics*.") Frequently, it has been the many miracles that occur at the site of a holy person's relics, sometimes combined with their incorruption, that creates the impetus to initiate the recognition of the holy person as a saint and leads to their universal glorification, often following long-time local veneration.

It has been a very strong and ancient Orthodox tradition for the faithful to go on a pilgrimage at least once a year to a holy place (*holy*, usually because a saint lived and was buried there, or where there is a miraculous icon). Frequently the pilgrimage is made for the saint's feast day, when many thousands may come for the celebration. Usually there is the Vigil for the saint the evening before the feast day, and then the Divine Liturgy is served on the feast day, followed by a *Molieben* or *Akathist* to the saint, frequently in conjunction with a procession with an icon of the saint. At the burial-site of specially beloved saints, it is common to sing an *Akathist* to the saint weekly, as is also done sometimes in parishes when they are blessed to have a small particle of a saint's relics, especially if it is the parish's patron saint, or a saint of the region.

b) What does one do when one venerates a saint's relics?

People venerate a saint's relics in much the same manner as on Holy and Great Friday/Saturday, when one venerates the Holy Shroud of Christ's Entombment (the *plashchenitsa* [Slavic] or *Epitaphion* [Greek]): one makes three complete prostrations, and

kisses the feet and the hands, and either the Gospels book (on the Holy Shroud), or the mitre or cloth over the head. Usually people venerate a saint's relics through a protective metal and/or



glass cover of the reliquary; sometimes this interior cover is all glass, and at other times the interior cover over the lower part of the body is metal, with glass over the head. It is an extraordinary and rare blessing to have the interior cover opened up so that one is able to kiss a saint's holy

body itself. There are numerous places throughout Orthodox lands where thousands of pilgrims journey to venerate their local saint or other specially beloved saint. By venerating the saint, not only does one convey one's love for the saint, but also, one may bring into oneself and one's life the holiness and the blessing of the saint, dependent on one's faith and receptivity; and at times various miracles may occur. To be able to venerate the full body relics of the saints where they are buried is an awesome, overwhelming and mind-boggling experience, and an incomparable blessing that words cannot begin to describe.

c) If we can't go to the saints, the saints may come to us

Now, what about the veneration of saints through their relics for all those who cannot go to where the bodies of specially beloved saints are located? In a way similar to the *Antimensia*, when we cannot go to the saint's relics, the Holy Church helps us by allowing the relics to be brought to us. This is usually done by the bishop in whose diocese a saint's relics are located, who takes a small particle of the saint's bones, and puts it into a specially prepared wax mixture which both protects and preserves the bone, and then places this relic-in-wax into a small round mini-reliquary, usually metal with glass. This mini-reliquary can then be brought to a local church as a special blessing for that church and its people. (Relics are not to be kept in people's homes, but only at a church or a monastery.) It is very common that such small mini-reliquaries will be attached to an icon of the saint (as we have in the icon of St. Raphael of Brooklyn), although sometimes they are put into a glass-covered case.



Certainly, it is true that it is more awesome, overwhelming and mind-boggling to be present by the saint's full-body burial casket-reliquary to most fully encounter the presence of the saint. We see a similar phenomenon in daily life, where people go the grave of a loved one to especially communicate with the person and feel the loved one's presence. But if we cannot go to the grave, we might gaze at a photograph of the loved one. Similarly, if we can't go to the beloved saint's burial casket-reliquary, we can gaze at an icon of the saint, through which we can encounter the saint, and we can venerate a little particle of the saint's relics, as though it were the entire body of the holy one, and encounter the entire presence of the saint. Yes, it takes a little more effort on our part to realize that the saint's entire presence is truly in the small particle of his body, but the reward is more than worth the effort.

Perhaps we can understand this more vividly, if we reflect how there is a parallel to the experience of receiving Holy Communion: no matter how small a piece of the Body of Christ that we receive in Holy Communion, Christ's Presence exists fully and completely. And thus, in a similar way, if we are blessed to have available to us even the smallest particle of a beloved saint's relics, we can make the conscious choice to approach

with faith and venerate that particle as though we were venerating the saint's full body in the saint's casket-reliquary. Furthermore, just as we must neither refuse to approach at all, nor to approach the chalice of Christ's Body and Blood and receive Holy Communion with indifference, so likewise, we must neither refuse to approach at all, nor to approach with indifference the precious relics (and icons) of Christ's Friends, His Holy Ones, His Servants — the Saints. Let us take full advantage of all the grace which Christ and His Saints offer to us by means of the relics of Christ's Holy Saints, by approaching with reverence, faith and love, and venerating the relics of Christ's Holy Saints, no matter how large or how small the relics may be.

THROUGH THE PRAYERS OF YOUR HOLY SAINTS,
LORD JESUS CHRIST OUR GOD,
HAVE MERCY UPON US AND SAVE US.

*By Sister Ioanna, St. Innocent Monastic Community,
Redford, Michigan*

<https://www.stinnocentchurch.com/whyrelics.html>



EUCCHARISTIC DISCIPLINE IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

By Very Rev Thomas Hopko



People of whatever convictions -- theistic or atheistic, Christian or non-Christian -- who behave in an orderly and respectful manner may attend liturgical services in an Orthodox church, and participate, as possible, in the prayers and rituals (such as singing psalms and hymns, and venerating icons and relics).

But only members of the Orthodox Church who practice a specific spiritual discipline may participate in the Church's sacraments and receive Holy Communion at the Orthodox Divine Liturgy. The essential elements of eucharistic discipline in the Orthodox Church may be simply stated in five points.

Participation in Holy Communion in the Orthodox Church requires first of all that a person be a baptized, chrismated member of the Orthodox Church who fully accepts the conditions and demands of his or her baptism and chrismation. Eucharistic discipline in the Orthodox Church demands that communicants in the eucharistic sacrifice understand themselves at all times and in all circumstances as having died and risen with Christ, as sealed by the Holy Spirit, and as belonging to God as His bonded-servants and free-born sons in Jesus.

Baptism and chrismation, and so, participation in holy communion, require a person to believe in the Word of God, the Gospel of Christ, and the Christian Faith summarized in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed, as these are proclaimed and interpreted in the Orthodox Church. Members of the Orthodox Church who question biblical or churchly doctrines may participate in Holy Communion if they are praying and working to come to an enlightened understanding of the Faith under the guidance of their pastors and teachers. But those who have been baptized and chrismated in the Orthodox Church who publicly express doubt

and disbelief about the faith as confessed and lived in the Orthodox Church, or secretly harbor such doubt and disbelief, may not partake of holy communion at an Orthodox divine liturgy.

Confessing the Christian faith as understood and practiced in the Orthodox Church is to identify fully with Orthodox Church history and tradition, and to take full responsibility for it. It is to accept and defend the dogmas and canons of the councils accepted by the Orthodox Churches, to worship according to Orthodox liturgical rites, to venerate those who are glorified as Orthodox saints, and to struggle to practice the ethical and moral teachings of Christ and his apostles as recorded in the holy scriptures and elaborated in Orthodox Church tradition. Because participation in the holy Eucharist is not only a sacred communion with God through Christ and the Holy Spirit, but also a holy communion with Orthodox believers of all times and places, responsibility for the whole of Orthodox Church history and tradition is an absolute condition for partaking in the holy communion of Christ's body and blood at the Church's divine liturgy.



Identifying fully with Orthodox Christian teaching and practice requires a communicant in the Orthodox Church to strive to put the Church's biblical, evangelical and apostolic teachings into practice in their everyday lives. No one can believe and do everything perfectly. Eucharistic discipline, however, demands that a communicant struggles to do so, admitting when he or she fails, and repenting without self-justification over one's failures and sins. This means, concretely, that eucharistic discipline requires a communicant to study God's Word in scripture, to pray and fast and give alms as one can, to attend church services as regularly as possible, and to live according to God's commandments in all aspects of one's life and work, regularly giving an account of one's behavior to one's pastor and spiritual guide, repenting of one's sins, and struggling by God's grace to change and improve. Persons rejecting such a disciplined life may not partake of Holy Communion in the Orthodox Church.

Eucharistic discipline in the Orthodox Church finally requires that a communicant be in constant repentance, realizing that he or she is never worthy of receiving holy communion, and knowing that the heartfelt confession of one's unworthiness is an absolute condition for partaking in a worthy manner. The essential expression of one's unworthiness to receive Christ's body and blood in Holy Communion, with the admission of one's sins, is the forgiveness of others. Eucharistic discipline demands that communicants of Christ's body and blood be at peace with everyone as far as they can be, even when others are unwilling to forgive and be reconciled. At least within themselves, partakers of Holy Communion at an Orthodox Divine Liturgy must be in a union of love with all people, including their worst enemies.

Acceptance of one's baptism and chrismation in the Church, responsibility for the Church's faith and life, the struggle to put the faith fully into practice, accountability for one's personal belief and behavior, constant and continual repentance, and peace with all people in the union of love commanded and given by God in Christ and the Holy Spirit -- these are the requirements for participation in holy communion in the Orthodox Church. They are, ultimately and essentially, what Holy Communion itself is all about.

