



The CANADIAN ORTHODOX MISSIONARY

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RIVER JORDAN FLOWS IN B.C.



On the feast of Theophany this year, when, as Orthodox Christians say, "We go to the River Jordan," a small group of the faithful gathered for the blessing of the waters at the Monastery.

Since the full service had been served earlier in the day at each parish, the service at the Monastery was for those who live nearby, some of whom will constitute the new Mission, B.C. parish.

The day was clear and bright, and a special fragrance of spring filled the air. The clear water of the small lake, fed by a waterfall just beyond the monastery property, reflected the glory of God's creation, mingling the reflection of the faithful with the beauty of nature around us.

This was not the only time "the River Jordan" flowed in our midst in the Nativity/Theophany season, however. The baptisms of new parishioners at both St Nicholas and St Tikhon's parishes brought new life and joy to the period, already resplendent with the feasts of Christ's Nativity and the Theophany. (See page 2: NEWS FROM THE DIOCESE).

Editorial

ZEALOUSNESS FOR ORTHODOXY AS AN ACT OF LOVE

The highest good for humanity, the goal to which each person must direct all the powers of his spirit and body, is salvation. From this, it follows that the highest act of love for one's neighbours is to aid their salvation. In the Orthodox Christian Church—Christ's Kingdom, the kingdom of love—every member must be concerned first of all about his own salvation, and then about the salvation of all others.

Attaining to salvation is the true "reason for being" of all humanity. To this end, Christ our God has established and ordained His Church upon the earth and made Her the custodian of salvation, the guide and maintainer of the truth which leads to salvation.

Love for one's neighbour must consist first of all in striving for one's own salvation, for in doing this, one is able to reflect the truth and prepare oneself to witness it to others. Moreover, it is a direct deceit of Satan which leads many who are not struggling for their own salvation to begin trying to save others. Witnessing of Christ and His Holy Church is not, after all, an aggressive act, but is primarily an act of example, of striving with one's whole soul to fulfil the commands of the Orthodox Christian Church — which are precisely the commands of the Holy Scripture — and to save one's own soul. Our holy and God-bearing father, St Seraphim of Sarov has taught us, "*Acquire the spirit of peace and a thousand will be saved around you.*"

Thus, striving diligently for one's own salvation is a great act of love for neighbour, for it helps him in his own salvation.

Zealously maintaining that truth which is vital to man's salvation, and proclaiming that truth, is an act of great love for one's fellow humans. This too is primarily an act of striving to live that truth so that it will be manifested in oneself. Yet, we must realize that Satan is most anxious to pervert and destroy that truth so that no one will be saved. This is why the preservation of Orthodoxy is such a vital act of love — probably the most vital act of love which one can perform. It is love first of all for God (love demonstrated by humble obedience), and love for one's neighbour (love demonstrated by witnessing to the truth which is necessary for the salvation of his soul).

To undermine Orthodoxy, to lower it, to name it as "just one among the Christian denominations," to try to justify ecumenism in the name of an imaginary "unity of all mankind," is disdain and hatred. It is disdain for God demonstrated in self-willed disobedience and hatred of one's neighbour demonstrated by seeking to deprive him of the truth which leads to salvation.

Let us, Orthodox people, love God according to the way He has given us and love our neighbours with a godly love, according to the Scripture, disdaining the idle inventions of man's pride about a philosophical and worldly form of love which, as being of this world, destroys men's souls.

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESE:

BAPTISMS

LANGLEY, B.C., ST NICHOLAS CANADIAN ORTHODOX PARISH:



The baptism of the Sword family brought joy to the Canadian Orthodox of St Nicholas. The Sunday before Nativity, Neal, Kim Andrea and Kyra Sword were born again of water and the Spirit during the Divine Liturgy. Neal was named for the holy New Testament prophet Neil of Mt Athos, Andrea was named for the holy "first-called" apostle, Andrew and Kyra was baptised with the name of the Holy Martyr Kyriaki. God-parents were Nikodemos and Eleanor Morgan.



She who was born of the flesh is now born anew of water and the Spirit. The child of the flesh now becomes a child of God, a daughter of the Holy Church.



The joy of new life, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of regeneration. She who was buried with Christ also arises with Him in newness of life, in the joy of the Holy Spirit.



Having received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, the newly illumined offers the vow of tonsure of the hair of his head as a first offering to God.

CHILLIWACK, B.C., ST TIKHON'S CANADIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH:

The baptism of 81 year old Joseph Stams was a special blessing which will never be forgotten in this parish. Joseph has been a much-loved "regular" at the Divine Liturgy at St Tikhon's for some time. Joseph came to Canada from The Netherlands to join his son Joseph, Jr., and daughter-in-law Marina. Marina's kindness, love and sincere Christian life was instrumental in leading Joseph to convert to the Orthodox Christian faith.



"The servant of God Joseph is anointed with the oil of gladness." Godfather Gilles Parent stands beside his godson, 81 year old Joseph Stams.

MARRIAGE IN GREECE:

St Tikhon's parishioner Nektaria Irene Diamantis was married on the island of Kos in November. Nektaria's parents, George and Magdeleni Diamantis own the "Minos" restaurant in Chilliwack, B.C. and the family have been members of St Tikhon's parish for many years.



Nektaria, with husband Giannis Ikospentakis and wedding party in the "Panaghia" church in Kos.

SERMONS ON MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

by Bishop Lazar Puhalo

MATTHEW 7:7-8

{Seeking Jesus and finding paradise}

"Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. For, everyone who asks receives; and he who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, it shall be opened."

These words of our Saviour bring hope and expectation to our souls. He promises us that those who ask for and seek after the Heavenly Kingdom will truly receive it. Whoever will knock at the gates of paradise, with faith and love will have the doors opened to them.

In our coarse and materialistic age, many people have come to think that they should be able to ask for material, worldly things, and that, because of this verse of Scripture, they should receive them. With such false expectations, one can become completely lost. We have, however, examples in Scripture which clearly explain these words of our Saviour. The magi, not having the law and being strangers to the chosen nation, nevertheless sought the messiah and the Kingdom of God, making diligent inquiry for Him. When their hope, illumined by grace, blossomed into faith, they knocked at the door of the manger cave, only to find the door of paradise opening to them. They sought, they asked, they knocked and they worshipped. They departed Bethlehem with the Kingdom of God in their hearts, and the King and Saviour enthroned therein, abiding forever.

Zacchaeus, the publican of Jericho, only desired to see Jesus and learn who He is, and the gates of paradise were opened to him. The thief on the cross but acknowledged the righteousness of Christ and the truth of His Kingdom, and became a citizen of paradise.

Earlier, our Saviour taught us to "seek first the Kingdom of God," and not concern ourselves with worldly desires. In chapter seven of Matthew's Gospel, Christ is talking specifically about the path to the Heavenly Kingdom. He tells us that we ourselves must, with open hearts, exert effort to inherit that kingdom. We must not only desire it, but inquire and diligently seek after it, knocking on the door and patiently beseeching the good things of His Kingdom.

LIVES OF SAINTS

{The terrible persecutions of Orthodox Christian Serbs by a joint Roman Catholic, Fascist task force in Yugoslavia during the first years of the 1940's, is not well known among Orthodox Christians. The fury of Satan in Serbia in that era was as great as it was in Russia after the Communist takeover there. Serbia was the last truly Orthodox kingdom, the last genuine remnant of Orthodox Byzantium, and the malice of the evil-one was turned against Orthodox Christian Serbs with a vengeance that literally stuns the senses. We intend to present a brief history of these demonic persecutions, led by the same Roman Catholic order which was responsible for the martyrdom of St Peter the Aleut in America, and by the same Papacy which Bartholomew of Constantinople is now so rapturously embracing. We wish to present this story so that every one may know of the tragic glory of the Serbs which has vested the Church of St Sava in the scarlet robes of the royal path of martyrdom for all eternity.}

THE HOLY NEW MARTYR
VUKASHIN

(+1941)

The servant of God Vukashin was adorned with the grandeur of many years. All his long life, he lived simply and piously, serving God and his neighbours with the fulness of his strength. In his old age, he well remembered the long struggle of his people for the "honourable Cross and golden liberty."

In the fall of 1941, in the autumn of his own years, the godly Vukashin was arrested by the Roman Catholic "Ustashe" and led away to the horrifying Croatian concentration camp at Jasenovats.

At that time, tens of thousands of Orthodox Christian Serbs were arrested and commanded to renounce the Orthodox faith and accept Papism or be tortured to death. St Vukashin was among those who boldly stood forth, confessing Christ.

Late in the fall of 1941, the Roman Catholics organized a competition in those lands which Hitler had placed under Croatian occupation, to see who could slaughter the largest number of confessing Orthodox Christians. Like the Spanish monarchs during the famous inquisitions of old, the Croatian government was only

too glad to serve Rome in this matter.

At the beginning of the slaughter, a chosen executioner passed through the congregation of God's people in the Jasenovats concentration camp to select a victim. St Vukashin was standing, softly praying to Christ. The executioner was greatly angered by the old man's peacefulness and saintly composure. He had the old man seized and led forth to be tortured.

St Vukashin was given the usual charge, "Accept the Pope or die a most terrible death!"

The blessed old man signed himself with the seal of the honourable Cross and peacefully said to the executioner, "Just do your job, my son."

The executioner trembled with anger. He brutally slashed off one of the saint's ears, repeating the charge. The holy martyr again peacefully replied, "Just continue to do your job, my son." And so the irrational persecutor continued: first the other ear, then the nose, and then the fingers, one by one. Like a new James of Persia, St Vukashin was "pruned as a sacred grapevine for God."

With each grisly and bloody cut, the noble Vukashin, filled with peace and joy by the Holy Spirit, calmly replied to the executioner, "Just continue to do your job, my son."

At length, the vicious torturer gouged out the eyes of the martyr, and the saint once more replied, "Just continue to do your job, my son." With that the executioner flew into a rage and slew the holy martyr.

Almost immediately, the executioner lost his mind and went completely mad.

As the blood of Christ's holy martyr sanctified the earth, his radiant soul ascended in glory to the heavenly tabernacle to rejoice for all ages at the throne of Christ, Whom he loved and for Whose sake he willingly laid down his life.

Through his holy prayers, may we be ever mindful of the glory of holy martyrs, and receive strength to carry on their sacred witness in this wicked and ungodly world around us.

Amen!

Troparion, Tone 8

Thou, O wondrous martyr and confessor Vukashin,/ witnessing the faith of Christ, thou wast pruned like a sacred olive tree./ And richly budding forth with the glory of thy holy suffering,/ thou wast transplanted to the garden of paradise./ Wherefore we venerate thy sacred memory in hymns of praise.



St Vukashin was not martyred alone. Many other Orthodox Christian Serbs were killed at the same time, most of them children. In the ikon "type" above, the holy martyr is shown holding a child, representing the tens of thousands of Orthodox Christian babies and children massacred by the Roman Catholic Croats in the first years of the 1940's. Recently, the mass graves of the Orthodox martyrs have begun to be excavated. Most of the remains are those of children.

THE BISHOP'S PAGE

by Bishop Lazar of Vancouver.

THE IKON AS SCRIPTURE

FOREWORD

Many things have been written about Orthodox Christian ikons. They have been called "windows to heaven," "mystic realities," and many other exotic things. All these words are true, and the explanations given for them are reasonable and sound. Nevertheless, I want to explore with you what I believe to be the most fundamental meaning of the ikon. Critics of ikonography often condemn it as "pagan," "idolatrous," and worse. They do so from ignorance, yet in North America many Orthodox people fall for these criticisms and end up rejecting the Apostolic faith. One reason for this is that the explanations of ikons all begin at far too esoteric a level and neglect to relate ikonography more fully to the Holy Scripture.

Ikonography is a form of the Holy Scripture. It is nothing else but the Bible, and the correct interpretation of the Bible, transferred to paint and mosaic.

When sectarians speak of a "Bible only" religion, and express the idea that one must read and study the Bible personally in order to find salvation, they condemn generations of deeply believing Christians and holy martyrs. In past centuries, the Bible did not even exist as a single book. It was almost impossible for the average person to ever own a copy of the various Scriptures. They had to be hand copied on vellum, and they were expensive beyond the hope of an ordinary person. Moreover, until fairly recently, the literacy rate in most countries was not high enough for the broad masses to even read the Scripture. The Orthodox Church met this problem very early by adapting the ikonography, already developed in the first century, to a teaching use. Almost the entire Bible would be painted in a manner which was strictly regulated so that it correctly portrayed the Scripture. After all, no one would be allowed replace the Holy Scripture with their own bible, so no one would be permitted to paint their own bible and replace the Scripture with it. Ikonographic art was purposely regulated and structured so that it would honestly and accurately present the Holy Scripture and a sound interpretation of it.

In time, a large portion of the Scripture would be set to paint on the walls of churches and in many cases, there would be no bare spots left on a church wall. Every nook and cranny would be filled with sound portrayals of the Scripture. Ikonography became another language into which the Scripture was accurately translated, and in which it was accurately interpreted.

It is in this context that we now wish to explore the meaning of ikonography. We will later refer you to other books in which other aspects and contexts of ikonography are explored.

{The following material is the complete text from which Vladika Lazar took his lectures on ikons which were given in universities, parishes and art museums since 1973. The occasional repetition of concepts and information occurs because certain portions of this material were given only for Orthodox groups, and other portions were used for every group.}

I. INTRODUCTION:

When we enter an Orthodox church, the first thing we do is reverence and kiss the ikons. What does this signify; what does it teach us? We know that we are not reverencing the object itself, the wood and the paint; we understand that our reverence is being shown for the person portrayed in the ikon and that the reverence we show to the ikon passes over to the prototype, to the one portrayed. Since a saint has become a saint because he or she truly has Christ dwelling in them, and since they are glorified by the fulness of Christ in them, and by their own life in Christ, the reverence we show to any ikon, no matter who is portrayed in it, passes to Christ, the source of holiness.

Let us pause for a moment and think: the veneration and reverence we show to an ikon passes over to the prototype. Mankind is created in the ikon (image) of God. This, then, is the first lesson which we must learn from the veneration of ikons. If each human being is created in the ikon of God, and the reverence we show toward the ikon passes over to the prototype, what should our relationship with our neighbour, with each other human being be? If we reverence an ikon, we reverence the prototype; if we hate or disdain an ikon, does this not also pass to the prototype of the ikon?

Brothers and sister, each human being is an image of the Living God. Are we not taught by our reverence of ikons that the way in which we treat any other human being is the manner in

which we are treating God? If we have love and reverence for another person, does that love and reverence not pass over to the prototype — to God? And if we have hatred, malice or disdain for another person, does not that also reflect to the prototype — to God? This is just what Jesus Christ told us when He said, "As you have done it unto the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto Me" (Mt.25:40).

Therefore, the first lesson we learn from the ikon and the veneration of ikons is that our disposition toward our fellow humans reflects our true disposition toward God. We are taught by our reverencing of the ikon to carefully guard ourselves against hatred, malice and disdain of our neighbour. Every human being, regardless of race, gender or even religion, is created in God's image. That image may have become darkened by sin, by separation from a living relationship with God, but it is there nonetheless. We must learn to love and reverence our fellow human beings, openly and without reservation, for only then can we truly come to love and reverence God. The fact that we are taught this through the reverencing of ikons, which are dogmatic, also teaches us that we must have this love and reverence without any compromise of the faith. In this way, our very first approach to the ikon opens to us a more clear and certain understanding of the message of Christ's Gospel.

II. THE ORIGIN OF IKONS

The history of Ikonography really begins with the creation of mankind. For humanity is created, "In the Ikon (image), and likeness of God" (Gn.1:26). But God had not become Incarnate, and he had no visible, physical form. That man was created in his ikon, or image, has deep meaning which transcends ordinary human understanding. It has reference to intellect, free-will and the virtue of self-less love. Moreover, the creation of man is, in itself, a prophecy about the incarnation — that God would become man in the person of Jesus Christ. We see, then, that the ikon, in the sense of true religion, has two levels: what first strikes the eye, and what strikes the soul of the spiritual person.

The concept of man as an Ikon of God (no matter how faded and soiled that image has become since the fall), is of great moral value. For, we know that when we reverence and venerate an Ikon, we do not venerate its physical substance, we do not venerate wood and paint, but we distinctly venerate the prototype, and our reverence passes over to the prototype. Thus, our disposition toward our neighbour, toward our fellow-humans, also passes over to the prototype of the Ikon. If we love our neighbour, we demonstrate a love toward God, if we have reverence to our neighbour, we have a reverence toward God. If we hate our neighbour, we hate God. For, our Saviour said, "In as much as you have done it unto the least of these, you have done it unto me" (Mt.25:40).

There are many "Prefigurations" and "Types" used in the Old Testament prophecies, such as the Altar, the journey through the Red Sea, the occasions upon which Moses made the figure of the Cross, and so forth, but these are not Ikons. The first examples of Ikons as we know them, were made upon the express command of God were for his temple and as a testimony of his covenant. Everyone is familiar, with the Ark of the Covenant and the images, or ikons of the invisible, bodiless angels which were made for the tabernacle (Ex.25:17-22) and, with God's blessing, later placed on the walls of Solomon's temple, evidently in 'low relief' form (2Chron.3:7, eg.). Angels had been sent to man in a visible form, as messengers from God, and thus, they could be portrayed in a ikonographic form. The very reason why they are portrayed with wings is because they did not appear in a material form (the angels are bodiless and immaterial) but in the form of a vision and revelation which appeared to have a physical presence. The wings indicate the immaterial nature of angels. God gave very precise instructions and details for the forms of the first man-made ikons, including the Holy of Holies, which was an Ikon of heaven itself, and He sharply distinguished the ikons of true worship (Orthodoxia), from pagan images, which are idolatrous. For, while commanding ikons to be made for use in the worship and service of His Church, he sharply forbade the making of idolatrous images — that is, images which were used in false worship, in the worship of other, false gods (Ex.20:4).

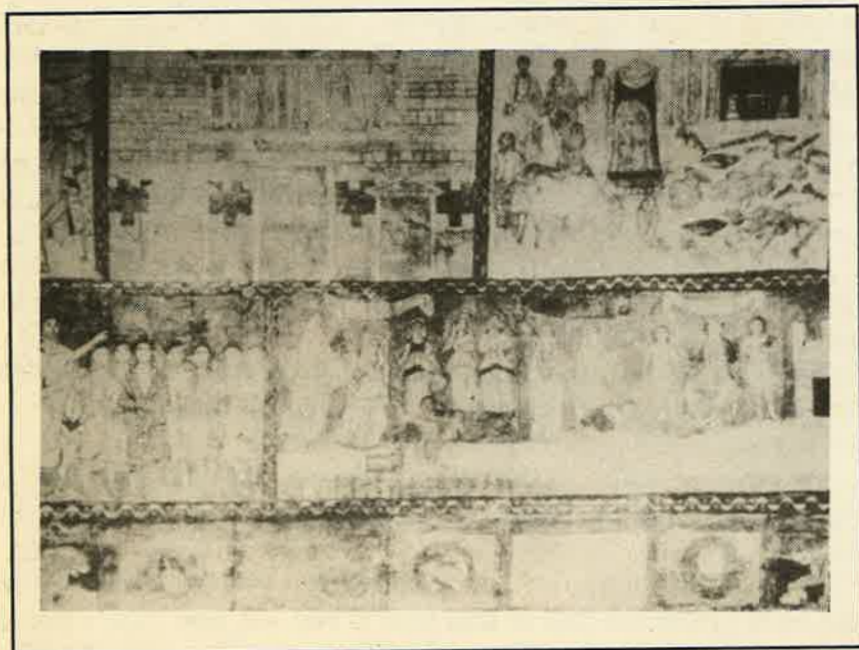
Ikons correctly made and correctly used in True Worship, give a greater understanding and awareness of *Spirit and Truth*, and lead the soul upward in true adoration of God. Images falsely made and wrongly used serve to distort truth and lead man away from God. True ikons are made in obedience to God through his

{IKONOGRAPHY, cont. from P. 4}

Holy Church. False images are made in self-will and upon the inspiration of the evil-one.

Aside from the tabernacle and temple of the Old Testament, what other examples of ikonography might have been used in the Old Israel in ancient times, we do not know. We do, however, have some examples of later Jewish Ikonographic art.

Shown below are two examples, both from murals in the great synagogue at Dura-Europos. In both of these, we see clear types of the Ikonography of the New Israel, the Orthodox Christian Church.



Scenes from the Old Testament on the wall of the synagogue of Dura-Europos.

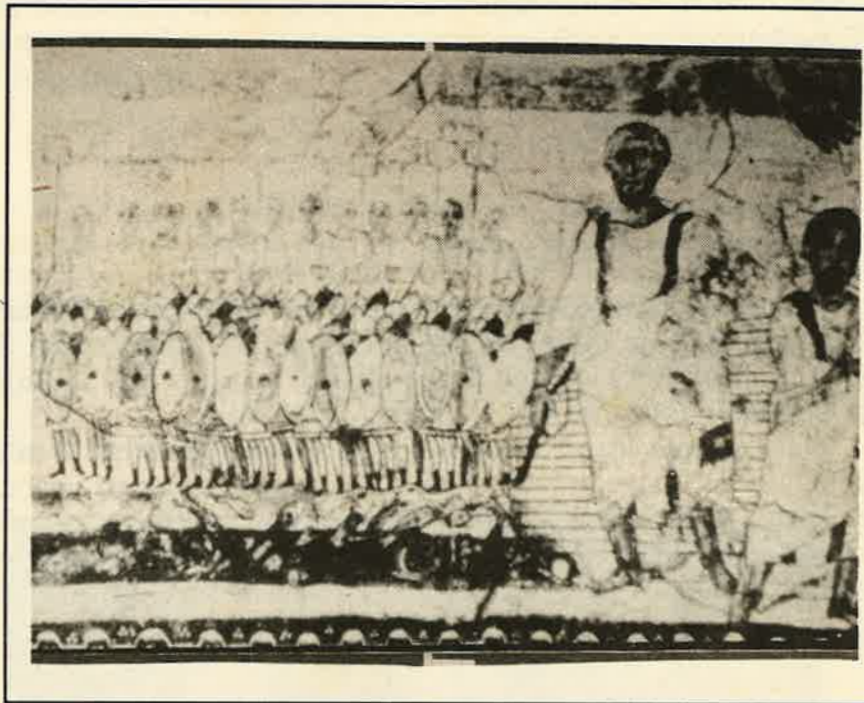


Ezekial's vision (Ex.37:1) of the General Resurrection.

The elements in the development of ikonographic art, reflected here, are more certainly understood. Helen Gardner, the noted art historian, makes a very cogent observation on the principles of ikonography, which gives an insight into the difference between the ikon and mere religious art. In her standard text, *Art Through the Ages*, she says: "It became apparent that two distinct ways of looking at man and his universe were struggling for supremacy. One, predominantly Hellenic in origin, sought to represent visual appearance of natural forms in space and the actuality of man's experience. The other, basically Semitic in origin, sought the abstract representation of ideas, through symbols and the direct, simple narration of events, which were given form by rhythmic ornamental surface designs..."¹

Ikonography developed on the basis of the Semitic principles, such as those demonstrated in the Dura-Europos synagogue paintings, namely, showing things in a perspective which clearly placed God over all, and which related everything to God, elevating everything toward God and using a powerful symbolism in the rhythmic flow of design to bind the ikon to the Holy Scripture, and indeed, make it a visual form of the written Scripture. Into this structure, deeply symbolic tomb art from various cultures was adapted. These principles were not compromised by the enhancement of the forms with a certain grace and beauty in Byzantium. Religious art in the West, after Orthodox times there, began to develop on the principles of pagan Greece, in which everything relates to the physical, carnal man, and the divine is lowered to the perceptible level of fallen human nature.

This can be seen if we compare the Hebrew painting of Moses and the crossing of the Red Sea, two Orthodox Christian ikons of Moses (one from the East and one from the then Orthodox West), and a Western post-Orthodox representation.



Moses closing the Red Sea. Note the 'hands of God' outstretched over him.

In the first, the Hebrew painting, as Gardner observes, the scene is "presented with a minimum of detail. The major interest is in the [spiritual] concept of the event, which needed only to be evoked in order to be a source of inspiration. No attempt was made to create natural forms in space..."

There is something very striking in this painting, which passes directly into Orthodox Christian ikonography. Notice the hands of God spread out and overshadowing the scene, and especially Moses and Aaron. For, Moses did not act in his own power, but in the Grace and power of God. As Christ said, "Without Me, you can do nothing" (Jn.15:5). We shall see this verse of Scripture manifested often in Orthodox ikons.

Here is an Orthodox Christian Ikon of Moses, from the West. It is from a mosaic in the Sixth century church at St. Vitale in Ravenna, Italy.



Prophet Moses on Mt Sinai, in the Orthodox Church at Ravenna.

Note the spiritual qualities and disposition of Moses in both the Hebrew and Orthodox Christian representations. They are both scriptural, for in the Divine Scripture, God calls Moses, "...very meek, beyond all the men on earth" (Nu.12:3). The strength of Moses was his meekness, and because of his extreme meekness, God called him to his service. Moreover, in both it is clear that Moses has no power of his own and does nothing of himself, for here too, we see the hand of God bestowing Grace upon the submissive and obedient servant. Note also the peacefulness and love on the face of the man who was trembling in fear — this is peaceful fear, a love-filled fear. This is what is meant by "Fear of God" — a loving awe, filled with a spirit of peace and hope, assured that God, in all His awesome might, is also a loving Father.

We can see all these qualities more clearly in this more correct

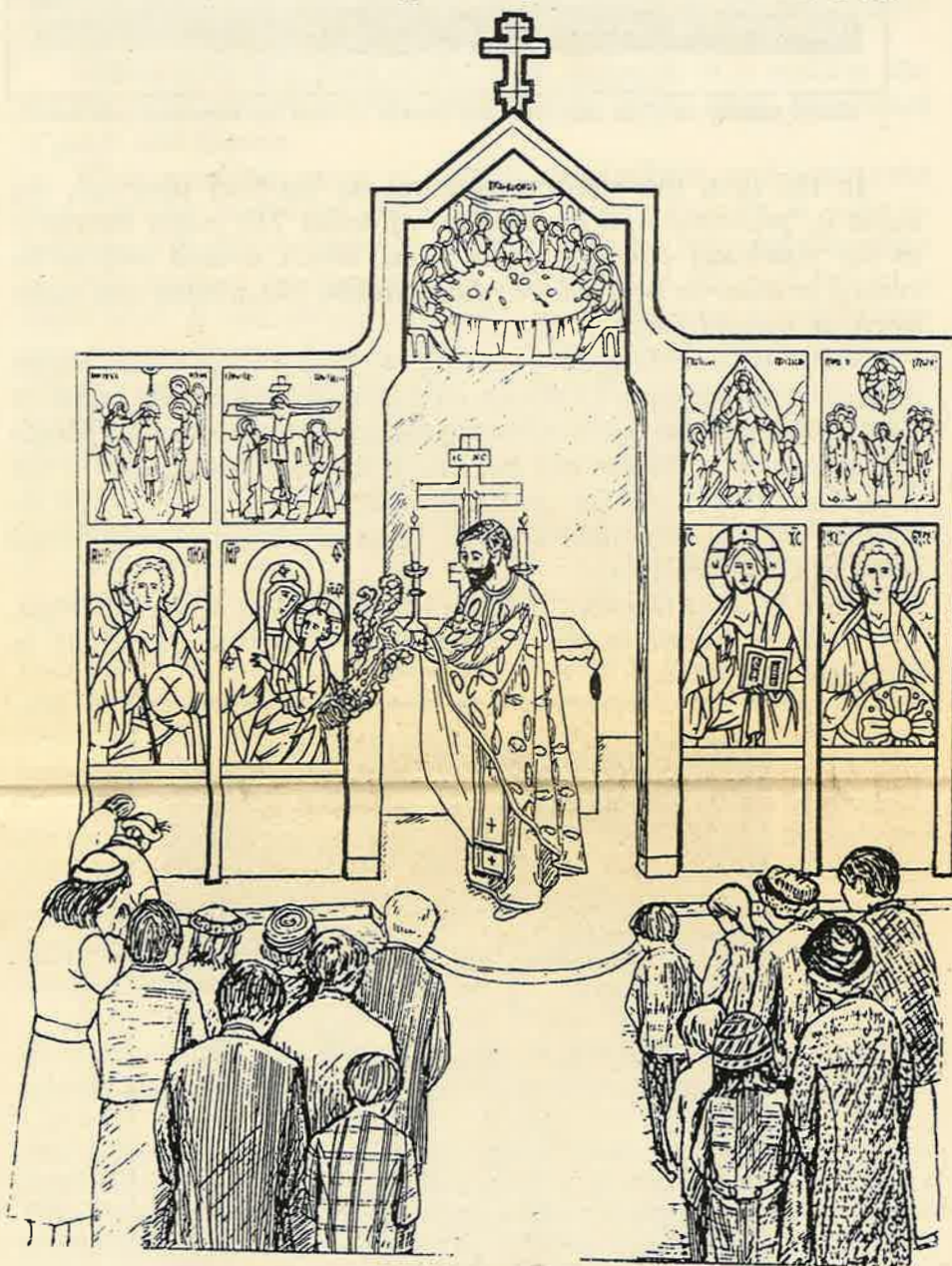
{Continued on Page 7: "IKONOGRAPHY"}

CHILDREN'S CORNER:

Fr Moses Armstrong,
Children's Editor.

In the November/December issue of the Orthodox Missionary, we looked at some things we see in church. We talked about the many kinds of ikons we find in the church, and that also included the moveable ikons we use in church processions.

Many people forget that we are also ikons. We were created by God in his image or ikon. This is the reason the priest honours the ikons in the church by swinging incense at them; he also honours us as ikons by incensing us during the divine services. We accept this honour by bowing to the priest when he incenses us.



It is important for Orthodox people to understand that the church is an ikon of the Heavenly Kingdom. In the church we see beautiful things which are dedicated to God. Just the way God taught the Old Testament people of His church to build a beautiful place to worship him, so we are taught to build proper churches today. In the church we have beautiful holy things that are used for worshipping God. These holy things are gifts to God and so we try to make them to honour God. We love God and want to give Him the best of what we have. God's churches are made to be as beautiful as we can make them, so that all who come there to honour God can get an idea of the Heavenly Kingdom; so they can get an idea of what it is like to live with God.

Jesus Christ prayed in the beautiful temple in Jerusalem and went to the services with His followers. Jesus taught us that the temple was a "house of God". God knows that we are living on this earth and understand earthly things. God has blessed all of creation and taught us to use earthly things in the proper way. One way we use earthly things is by giving part of them for the service to God; this is called a sacrifice or an offering.

There are many kinds of offerings we can give to God. Many people know about offering money to support the Church and its work but people often forget about other offerings people can make. We offer our time as a gift to God by going to church, by saying prayers at home, by reading the Bible and lives of saints and other holy books. We can offer our talent by singing in church, cleaning ikons or doing other jobs that help keep God's house clean and neat. If we are good at other things, we can offer them also to God. If we think we have no talent, we can always offer our

sincere prayers for our parish and all the Orthodox people in the world who are trying to live the Orthodox Christian Faith. Our prayers are important and a holy offering to God.

Let us now look at some of the holy things we see in the sanctuary of our church.

[1] In the picture below, we see the place where the bread and wine are made ready for the Divine Liturgy. There is a little service served at this table and it is called, "Liturgy of Preparation". Around the table of preparation we see more pictures that show the holy things used for the "Liturgy of Preparation"; let's look at them in the picture below.

[2] First, we see the censer which we already talked about. Not only is it used for incensing ikons, it is also used for incensing other holy things, including the bread and wine and the Holy Table.

[3] Now, we see the lance or spear. The priest uses it to cut the bread that is being made ready for the Holy Communion. The spear is very sharp and only used for cutting the bread in the sanctuary, during the Liturgy of Preparation.

[4] This picture shows us the spoon. When we come to receive Holy Communion, the priest uses the spoon to feed us the Holy Communion of Jesus Christ.

[5] This is the "star" or "asterisk". It is two pieces of metal which are hinged at the top. The star is set on the diskos (#6) to keep the cloth cover from touching the bread.

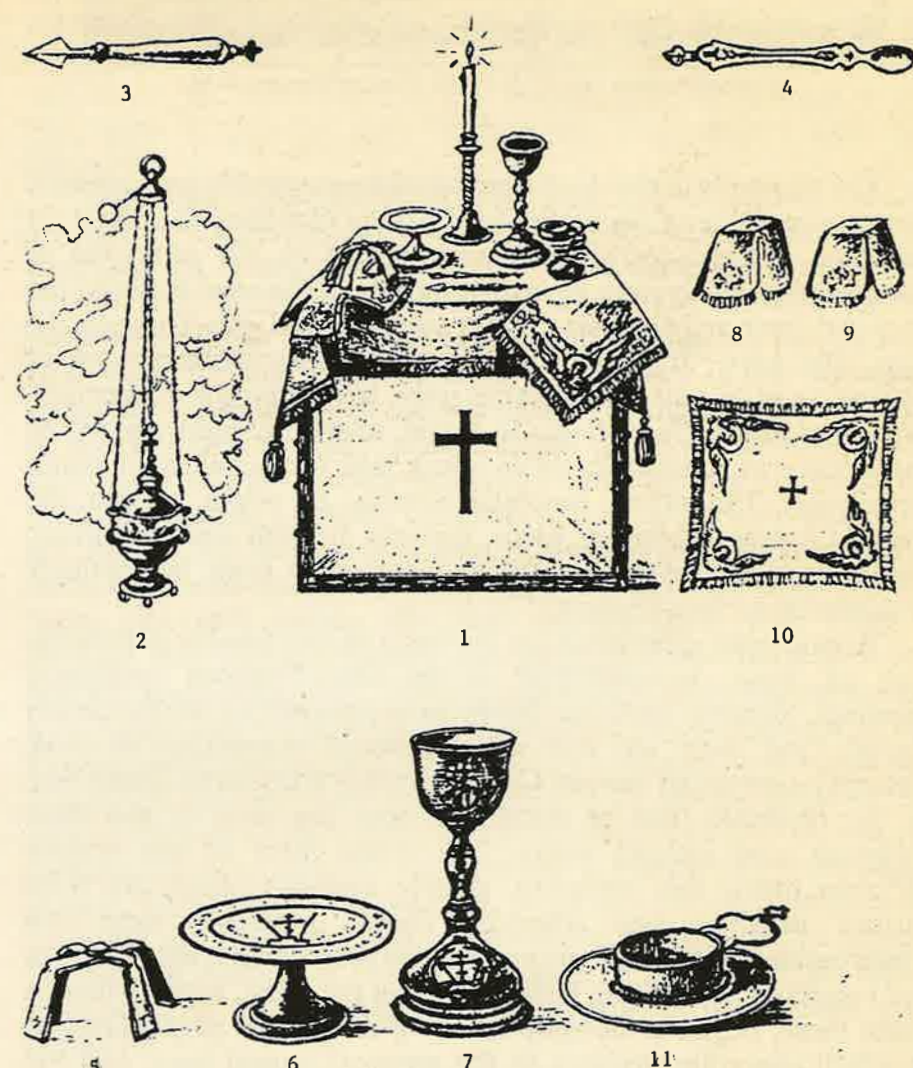
[6] Now we come to the diskos. We see that it is a metal plate on a stand and that it is here we put the bread that is used for the Divine Liturgy.

[7] In this picture, we see the holy cup or chalice. The priest takes bread from the diskos and puts it into the holy cup. The holy cup has wine in it also. The priest then asks the Holy Spirit to change the bread and wine into the Holy Communion.

[8 & 9] The diskos and holy cup are covered by these two cloths and then the large cloth [10] covers both of them.

[11] This is a little metal cup sitting on a matching metal tray and is for the hot water the priest pours into the holy cup during the Divine Liturgy. The church name for the little cup is "zeon" and rhymes with neon.

In the next edition of *The Orthodox Missionary*, we will look at some of the important holy things which are on the Holy Table in the sanctuary.



portrayal of Moses in an ikon of St Catherin's Monastery on Mt Sinai. In the following ikon, study the face and the disposition of Moses. Is this not a Scripturally correct portrayal of the man of whom God testifies, "he is the meekest man on earth." Study the tenderness and love on the face of Moses, as he trembles in godly fear before the presence of his Creator and Lord.



Now let us take a look at a typical post-Orthodox Western representation of Moses.



The pagan Moses of Western humanism. Michaelangelo's famous sculpture.

This is certainly not the Moses of the Divine Scripture. Indeed, this is just Jupiter or Zeus with a different name. In the Western representation, Moses is shown not as the meek, receptive servant of God, but as if he were himself a god. Here he is a stern, harsh, all-powerful, brooding figure, who teaches in his own name, not in God's name. This is a pagan god, the sort of image that God forbade us to make. Judge for yourselves which of these is an Ikon according to the Divine Scripture, and which is just a pagan image.

In this comparison which we have just made, we have resolved the question, "why did God command images to be made for His tabernacle, and yet a few verses later, forbid the making of graven images?" We have also abolished the sectarian arguments against ikons which they base on their misunderstanding of the "ten commandments." God did indeed command that ikons be made fi

the decoration of His temple, but images which were un-Scriptural in nature, which could lead to pagan and false understandings, He strictly forbade.

{Continued in the next issue}

Below: the Bible translated into ikons. The paintings are Scripturally and doctrinally correct. In these ikons, the Scripture is properly interpreted. In the first illustration, we see the interior of the church of High Dechani in Serbia. Here, both the Scripture and the living history of the Church are composed together. We have a chronicle of God's Church in all ages, binding the viewer together with the life of Christ, the witness of the holy martyrs and the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church from the creation to the Second Coming. In the second illustration, we see the Bible and the life of Christ's Church painted ikonographically on the exterior walls of the church of Suchevisita Monastery in Romania.



Sermons of Vladika Lazar:

Sermon on the Sunday of THE PRODIGAL SON Ascending Toward Great Lent {Luke 15:11-32/1Cor.6:12-20}

"By the waters of Babylon, we sat down and wept when we remembered Zion. We hung our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. Those who had taken us captive demanded of us a song, and those who had led us away asked of us a hymn, saying: Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?..." (Psalm 136).

Last Sunday, we learned of humility; not the false, fawning humility which people sometimes display before those of higher rank or greater power, nor that supposed humility which is really cowardice. We learned of that pure humility which comes from self-realization and self-knowledge. We learned of a two-fold humility: that of an offender who is forgiven with tender love by the one he had offended, and the majestic humility of the One Who forgives every offence with tenderhearted mercy. We realized that we were too small of spiritual stature to see God and know Him, and so we lifted ourselves up the best we could to try to see Him. He saw our desire and called us down from our "sycamore tree," so that He Himself could lift us up. As with Zacchaeus, He did not offer us judgment or condemnation, but healing.

We saw the awesome humility of God when Christ entered the home of the offender and dined with him. We saw how Christ bestowed the transforming power of Divine Grace by means of compassionate love.

On the second Sunday, we beheld the beauty of humble repentance. On this third Sunday, the Sunday of the Prodigal Son, we will bring the message of these first two steps together and gain a deeper understanding of God and our relationship with Him.

Today, we hear of a son who grew weary of working in his father's fields and vineyards. "Give me my share of the inheritance," he demanded. "I am weary of you and your house. I am bored and I want to seek the excitement and thrills of the world out there, beyond your domain."

The father, because of his love and righteousness, respected the free choice of his son, though with great sorrow. He had no obligation to give the son a share of the inheritance, but love moved him, for he did not want to see his son go empty and naked into the world. He humbly bestowed gifts upon the rebellious son, desiring to give him the means to survive until, perhaps, he would come to his senses.

Beloved of Christ, we also become rebellious children through our weaknesses, sinful desires and conceit. We turn and depart from our Father's house, for we are weary of the constraint and weak in hope, and desire some excitement from the allure of worldly things. But here is an amazing thing: though we turn away from God because of the conceit of our hearts, He does not allow us to depart empty. Even as we depart from Him, His love accompanies us and humbly urges us to return.

So the prodigal son set out, bearing his share of the inheritance, or rather a gift bestowed upon him by his father. He wandered to a far land — far from the paradise of his father's love-filled home and well-tended fields. There, still bound by conceit, he squandered his father's wealth on the empty vanity of this world, with debauchery and wild living. At last, he had absolutely nothing, and he stood empty and alone. Only when he ended up tending swine, an animal unclean to the Jews, and even eating swill from their troughs, did his conceit weaken. He began to realize the true inheritance of his father was not worldly wealth, but love and mercy.

He desired to be saved.

When his conceit was broken and his soul touched by humility, repentance began to take root in his heart. He realized what and who he had become, and he longed to turn his life around, to return to the father's house and be, if possible, at least one of his servants. When repentance started to take hold, he began to hope on his father's mercy.

Behold the wonder of the majesty of God's humble love. The son, seeking mercy that he might become at least a slave, found a joyful forgiveness and was received as a beloved son. He did not even arrive at the father's house and express his repentance with his lips, for the father saw him a long way off and rushed down the road to meet him.

Looking down at the dust of the road, unable even to lift his eyes to meet the eyes of his father, the wretched son stammered, "Father, I...I..." But the father did not wait for him to finish. With tears of joy welling from his

eyes, he embraced the son, "O my son, my son, you are alive. My dear, beloved son, you have returned to me. Come, let us celebrate and rejoice together, for this my son was lost and has been found; he was dead and is alive again."

Brethren, behold the wonder of the love and mercy of our God. For, the son was already forgiven in the father's heart the very day he departed in all his conceit. The father did not spend all these days and years in spiteful disdain of the son; he spent them in a daily concern for the son's well-being, a prayerful longing for his return. The father's forgiveness was always there, waiting for him. He had only to desire to turn his life around, go back to the father and partake of that forgiveness and love.

We depart from our Father through our own conceit and spiritual laziness also, and we go away and become exiles from paradise. Following in the footsteps of Adam and Eve, of Cain, of Ham, the sons of Jakob and the people of Israel, we depart from the Father's house, we go off into exile, or are carried away in exile and bondage by satan, through the conceits and delusions of the world, and of our own hearts. It is for this reason that, on this day, we chant the hymn of the exiles, the 136th Psalm, "By the waters of Babylon."

But our father also waits for us daily. He stands outside the house, daily looking down the road with longing, desiring to see us returning home again, finding our way through repentance.

In the parable, the son came to his resolve to repent and return home when he was brought to an involuntary fasting. The forty day fast of Great Lent is given to us that we might, through voluntary fasting, with prayer, search our hearts and minds and come to a firm desire to return home from exile. Great Lent represents for us that very road upon which the prodigal son walked back home.

Here is the great mystery of our road, of Great Lent: at the end of our road home, we find the crucified and resurrected Christ. You see, God was not content only to stand at the gates of paradise and watch for us to return (which we could not have done by ourselves), but He sent the Only Begotten One out to search for us and lead us home once more. Jesus Christ is the Father's "search party," sent out to seek and to find, and to bring us lost children home again. He even gave His life for us so that we might know the greatness and power of His love.

Since we desire to see Christ and to know Him, and having learned of humble repentance, let us now resolve to turn our lives around, and with hope on the love and mercy of God, walk the path of Great Lent back to our Father's house.



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