



CHRIST THE SAVIOUR ORTHODOX CHURCH

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 7TH

Announcements

- Starting this week, weekday Liturgies will now be on Thursday mornings at 9:30 AM preceded by a Vespers Service on Wednesday evenings at 5:00 PM.
- The Beheading of St. John the Baptist is commemorated on Thursday September 11th. This day is observed with strict fasting (no meat, no dairy)
- Our Catechumen Eduard will be baptized Sunday, September 28th the day after the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross
- Attached is a copy of the sermon given by Bishop Vasily on our Patronal Feast last Saturday. The Russian version will be posted to the website.



Donate

Contact Fr. Philip
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This Week's Schedule

Mon Sep 8

6:30 PM Catechumen Class
(Zoom)

Tue Sep 9

6:30 PM Building An Orthodox
Marriage Class (Zoom)

Wed Sep 10

12:00 PM Saint Syphrony Book
Club (Zoom)

5:00 PM Vespers

7:00 PM Bible Discussion Group
(Zoom)

Thur Sep 11

9:30 AM Liturgy

6:00 PM Jesus Prayer

Fri Sep 12

7:00 PM Movie in the Trapeza

Sat Sep 13

5:30 PM Vigil

Sun Sep 14

10:00 AM Liturgy

1:30 PM Study Group

SERMON

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. "We venerate thy most pure image, O Good one, and ask forgiveness of our transgressions, for of thy good will thou wast pleased to ascend the cross in the flesh..." This troparion is said by the priest and the deacon each time they prepare to celebrate the divine liturgy, as they venerate the icon of Christ our Savior upon the iconostasis after entering the church. But in the books of hymnography, this hymn was originally intended to be sung today, for the feast of the image of Christ, not made by hands, celebrated immediately after the feast of Dormition. This feast, the patronal feast of this church, remembers the translation, transfer of this miraculous icon of our Lord from Edessa to Constantinople, from its original place where it was kept, according to tradition, since the 1st century, to the imperial city where it became an object of ardent veneration, capturing the imagination of pious Orthodox Christians, becoming copied and reproduced in other icons and artistic images. A few centuries, however, after this solemn translation which left its mark in our calendar, the icon disappears - allegedly, being transferred to France after the Latin conquest of Constantinople and finally disappearing during the French revolution. If this image of Christ our God, however miraculous it was, is now gone, perhaps lost or even destroyed, along with many other holy relics, holy buildings or holy sites, why do we still continue to remember this day, why do we still continue to celebrate liturgically that which no longer exists? In the epistle to Colossians, holy apostle Paul calls Christ himself "the image [ikon] of the invisible God" (1:15). As emphasized by the church fathers, the true natural image of one true God, the true icon of God is his only-begotten Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the eternal Word of God and God himself who became one of us, accepted everything that means to be human, with its corruption, passions, sufferings and death, to show us the true image of divine love, to call with his human voice to us, human beings, to return to God our Father and creator. Christ incarnate is the true image, true icon of God - as he says in the Gospels, "whoever has seen me, seen the Father" (John 14:9), and in the Gospel today, the Lord says, "all things were given to me by my Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Luke 10:22). The only way to know and see God is through his natural image - his only Son, thus if you want to truly know and see God, you look at the image of Christ, and him crucified (1 Cor 2:2), our crucified and risen Lord of glory (2:8).

The veneration of the images, not made by hands, and of those that are made with human hands, is the clear testimony to the reality of the incarnation of the Lord: the only-begotten God really and truly became man, took upon himself human nature, the immortal invisible God became visible, tangible, audible, and mortal as human - to save us, his creatures, to call us, his human beings, his children, to remember who we are, and to reveal to us the truth about God and ourselves. The incarnate Lord, our Savior Jesus Christ, is the fullness of revelation of God to human beings, the only true image of God, the image not made by hands, the perfect image of God that became visible as human. Only through him do we understand how we human beings are made in the image and likeness of God - for we also are icons of our creator, bearing his image, even if it is obscured in us by corruption, passions and mortality. Just as we venerate the icons of our Savior, as we venerate the images of His Mother who gave her flesh, her physical nature, for the incarnation of the Word, as we venerate the saints who revealed in themselves, in their lives and death, the image of God incarnate, Christ our God - so also we venerate one another, we bow to one another, in the church we are censured and sprinkled, honoring the image, the icon of the invisible God that we bear in ourselves. We struggle and we fall, we make mistakes, become confused, and overwhelmed, we forget God and we struggle to remember our calling, but God has not abandoned us - rather, he gave us all means by which to know him truly. He speaks to us through his Gospel, and when we lift up our eyes to heaven, we see before us the true image of God - Christ crucified and risen - we see the image to which we are called to conform ourselves, for we ourselves become the image of God if we seek to become like him, like Christ who became humble and meek for our sake, revealing through humility and weakness the incredible power of God. St Paul calls us - "be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Cor 11:1); we become true disciples of Christ, the image and likeness of our Creator, when we look at the image of God and by the grace given to us, by the mercy and grace of our Maker we more and more become like what or whom we see. May Christ our true God, the true image and temple not made by hands, who revealed and manifested himself to us through the saints, through the church, through his icons and his Gospel, bless, keep and preserve us in our daily struggle, give us his peace and his grace not to deviate from our path, but be faithful and keep our gaze only on him, on his cross, by which the joy and life has been given to the world.

EPISTLE READING

1 Corinthians 16.13-24

¹³Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

¹⁴Let all your things be done with charity.

¹⁵I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)

¹⁶That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboreth.

¹⁷I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied.

¹⁸For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such.

¹⁹The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

²⁰All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss.

²¹The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand.

²²If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.

²³The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

²⁴My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen