



Christians, have we understood the great responsibility that we have taken on before God through baptism? Have we come to know that we must conduct ourselves as children of God, that we must align our will with the will of God, that we must remain free from sin, that we must love God with all our hearts and always patiently await union with Him? Have we thought about the fact that our heart should be so filled with love that it should overflow to our neighbor? Do we have the feeling that we must become holy and perfect, children of God and heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven? We must struggle for this, so that we may not be shown unworthy and rejected. Let none of us lose our boldness, nor neglect our duties, nor be afraid of the difficulties of spiritual struggle. For we have God as a helper, who strengthens us in the difficult path of virtue.

Saint Nektarius of Aegina

Sunday 2 September 2014 is the First Sunday of Luke

Matins Gospel: Luke 24:13-35

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 6:1-10

Gospel: Luke 5:1-11

Resurrectional Apolytikion:

You abolished death by your Cross, you opened Paradise to the Thief, you transformed the Myrrhbearers's lament, and ordered your Apostles to proclaim that you had risen. O Christ God, granting to the world your great mercy.

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Readings and saints for this week:

Monday: Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:1-3; Luke 4:38-44
Cyriacus the Anchorite; Martyr Petronius

Tuesday: 1 Corinthians 16:13-24; Matthew 24:42-47
Gregory the Illuminator; Mardonios & Stratonikos the Martyrs

Wednesday: Acts 9:10-19; Luke 5:33-39
Holy Protection of the Theotokos; Ananias of the 70

Thursday: 1 Timothy 1:12-17; Luke 6:12-19
Martyrs Cyprian and Justina; Martyrs Rusticus and Eleutherius

Friday: Acts 17:16-34; Luke 6:17-23
Dionysios the Areopagite; John the Chozebite of Caesaria

Saturday: 1 Corinthians 14:20-25; Luke 5:17-26
Hierotheus, Bp. of Athens; Domnina the Martyr



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A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith

28 September 2014

Cast Out into the Deep

Today we hear Saint Luke's account of the calling of the first disciples. After preaching on the shores of the lake, Jesus Christ approached some fishermen who had been fishing all night but had caught nothing. On hearing this, He challenged them to cast their nets into the deep waters. When they obeyed Him, they caught so many fish that their nets could not contain them.

The call of Christ can often upset our normal ways of looking at things – after all, the fishermen knew that there were no fish around. And yet, when they responded to Christ's initiative new possibilities emerged. Their experience was to prove so overwhelming that it was to reshape their whole lives.



In this incident we see how the disciples came to recognize who Jesus is. From calling Him "Master," a common term of address for a teacher, the Apostle Peter came to recognize Him as "Lord" as he fell at His knees, saying: "Leave me, Lord; I am a sinful man." He recognized his own sinfulness because he had glimpsed something of Jesus' true identity. And this recognition would reshape his entire life.

Like the Apostle Peter and these first disciples, we too are called to respond to Christ and this may lead to us to entirely unexpected things, for God seeks to use each of us in our own way to carry out His mission in our world.

Just as a little boat holds the dying fish that have been brought up from the deep, so also the vessel of the Church gives life to human beings who have been freed from turmoil. Within itself, I say, the Church gives life to those who were half-dead, as it were.

Saint Maximus of Turin

Joining Heaven and Earth

An Introduction to the Orthodox Understanding of Icons

We have seen that icons belong within the Church and are an expression of its faith. Therefore, those who paint them need to work within certain guidelines and see their work as an expression of the Church's mission in passing on the faith that she has received from the Apostles.

Icons can be made using various materials, including mosaic, wall painting, relief carving, and embroidery. However, for most people the word icon is connected to holy images painted on wood, or portable icons. Until the eighth century these icons were painted using a method known as encaustic, which involved painting straight onto a wooden panel with hot wax that had been mixed



with powdered pigments. Although most of these encaustic icons were destroyed during the iconoclastic period, some striking examples survived at the Monastery of Saint Katherine in the Sinai desert.

Since the eighth century, most icons have been painted using egg tempera, which is a mixture of egg yolk and pigment. First the board for the icon has to be prepared. A piece of linen is applied using animal glue and gesso is made from animal glue and fine chalk powder. Several layers of this warm, liquid gesso are applied and when dry it is finally sanded smooth. This white gesso helps to give the icon its luminosity and is seen as an image of the Holy Spirit gives light.

The design of the icon is then sketched or traced onto the panel and if gold leaf is to be used, it is usually applied at this point.

The painting then begins. While there are differences in techniques, the darker shades are generally painted first so that the movement in the painting is from dark to light, with the final highlights being added last. The iconographer does not use shadows, but rather paints with light, so that the light emerges from within the icon (and within the persons depicted). In this way it shows them as radiating Christ's light that comes from within.

The final stage in the painting of an icon is the writing of the name of the person depicted, and it is the presence of the name that really makes the icon a holy icon rather than simply a work of art.

To be continued...



All things will become light. All are immersed in light and fire and are indeed changed, but are not, as certain people say, dissolved and transformed into fire so that nothing of their nature remains. For Peter is Peter, and Paul, Paul, and Philip is Philip. Each person in his own unique nature and personality remains, yet filled by the Spirit.

Saint Macarius the Great

When bad thoughts are planted in you, then cry to God: 'Lord, my Maker and Creator. You see that my soul is in agony from bad thoughts. Have mercy on me.' Teach yourself to root out thoughts immediately. But when you forget and don't root them out immediately, then offer repentance. Work on this, so that you get a habit.

Saint Silouan the Athonite

Question Box

If you have a question about the faith and teaching of the Orthodox Church, you can send it to evangelion@goarch.co.za

Why are Christ and the saints never shown smiling on icons? They look so severe. Is smiling a sin? Surely they are happy if they are in heaven?

It is true that Jesus Christ, the Theotokos, and the saints are not normally shown smiling in icons. This is not because smiling is a sin, but rather because it is the expression of a natural emotion that belongs to this world. There is nothing wrong with that, but the icon speaks to us of another reality, which is the transfiguration of the world in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The icon is not simply a portrait, but rather the transfigured and ideal image of the human person. Therefore, there is no place for the purely psychological or emotional happiness that is expressed in a smile. A smile may be beautiful, but it is nevertheless transitory, whereas the icon expresses something eternal.

The icon expresses not so much happiness as joy. Joy is deeper and more enduring than mere emotion and it ultimately involves the deep dispassion that the saints have acquired, which Saint Maximus the Confessor tells us is "a peaceful condition of the soul."

If emotion is reflected in an icon, then that is done through clearly defined gestures, such as gestures of joyful blessing, the prayerful lifting up of hands, or the hand pressed to the cheek to express sorrow. The crucial expression of someone's countenance in an icon is seen in the eyes. The eyes are the window to the soul and express what the icon seeks to convey to us.

However, it is not a person's emotional state that the eyes convey, but rather what that person is saying to us. If you look at different icons of Christ, you will see that on one He looks severe, on another compassionate, on another inviting, and so on. These are not an expression of his emotion – such as a transitory smile is – but are rather different aspects of who He is eternally. It is this that the different icons convey to us, so that we may respond to Him.