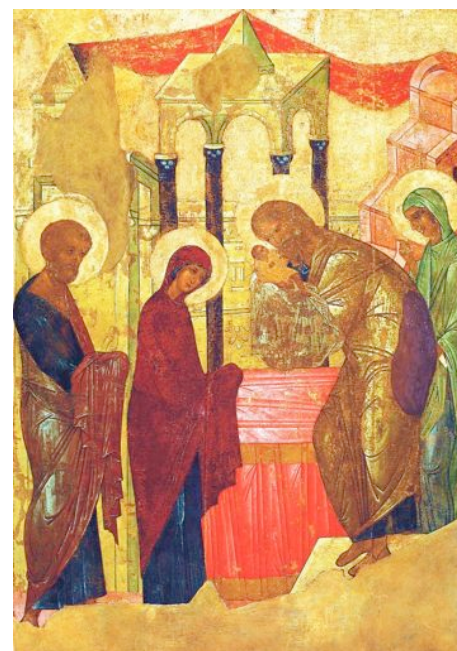


THE TRISAGION

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

The Presentation of the Lord

In celebrating the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, we conclude St. Luke's narrative of Christ's birth. It is a forty day period including the Nativity, the Circumcision, and ultimately the Presentation of Christ. This latter was the obligation of Jewish parents when a child was forty days old. Special offerings were prescribed that were particularly important for a first-born male, since he could be the Messiah. It also marked the mother's ritual re-entry into the worshipping community.



The Theotokos and Joseph take the infant Jesus to the Temple, offering two turtle doves as a sacrifice. (A young lamb was actually called for, but the poor were allowed to substitute turtle doves instead.) The Elder Simeon pronounces Jesus to be the long-hoped-for Messiah and prophesies her own agony at the Cross. Hannah (Anna) the Prophetess, a Holy Woman who had lived in the Temple precincts for many years, also speaks to many of the redemption which is to come through Jesus.

There are several names by which this Feast is called besides the Presentation. It is also commonly called the Meeting of the Lord, since Simeon

“meets the Lord.” Simeon had been vouchsafed to live long enough until he saw the Messiah.

Simeon's “meeting” gives specific meaning to the prayer he utters over the young babe: “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a Light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel.”

In other words: “Lord, let me now die in peace. You have kept your word: I have seen the Messiah.”

Another title is the Purification (of the Theotokos), especially popular in the West, because this was the purpose for the Theotokos to

make her offering. However, the Holy Fathers make abundantly clear that she had no need of Purification. Indeed, how could a Virgin need purification?

Finally, it is also known as Candlemas in English-speaking countries. This stems from the custom of blessing candles at this time, reminders that Christ is the Light of the Gentiles whom we have

(continued—see PRESENTATION, last page)

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Schedules

	Coffee Hour	Greeters	Altar Servers*
February 6	Russian Ladies	Megan Leathers and David Swisher	Team B
February 13	Karen Cattel and Dana Van Duijn	Ben Roberts and Ed Miranda	Team A
February 20	Mel. Jennifer Cadman and Megan Leathers	Leslyn and Mark Radomsky	Team B
February 27	Melody Thompson and Jean Miranda	Melody Thompson and Mark Fedlin	Team A
March 6	Judy Fyndo and Holly Torbic	Megan Leathers and David Swisher	Team B
March 13	Bob Schrauf and Leslyn Radomsky	Ben Roberts and Ed Miranda	Team A

* Team A: C. Dory, N. Fedin, M. Haupt, A. Miranda, S. Olynyk, and J. Stokles
Team B: J. Cappel, M. Dory, R. Dory, J. Miranda, S. Peltan, and J. Spokes

■ ORTHODOX NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

The Parish: Our Life in Christ

by Father Thomas Hopko

EDITOR'S NOTE: *We continue our multiple-part series examining the characteristics of a healthy parish according to Fr. Hopko. These factors—holiness, catholicity, apostolicity, liturgical worship, spiritual life, education, mission, and unity—closely mirror the quality areas of church life that Holy Trinity is seeking to improve upon through Orthodox Natural Church Development (NCD).*

Mind: Education and Enlightenment

Essential also to an Orthodox parish, if it is Christ's holy Church, is total mobilization of efforts to love God with all of one's mind through enlightenment and education.

Jesus' first title in the scripture is *rabbi*, which means teacher or master. As messianic pastor and priest, Christ is also "the prophet" who brings ultimate and lasting judgment upon those who hear and reject him (*John 1:21, 6:14; Acts 3:22-26*). The Lord's first followers are called disciples or students. And the first thing that is said about those who believed in God's gospel of Christ crucified and glorified is that they "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine" (*Acts 2:42*).

An Orthodox Christian parish, therefore, is essentially a teaching and learning community for all its members. It is a school of disciples whose master is Christ as He speaks within the community of believers, especially through the pastors and those with the charisma and training for teaching and preaching.

An Orthodox parish without well-prepared evangelical and exegetical sermons at its liturgical services, and well-prepared doctrinal and catechetical sessions as part of its educational ministry, whatever else it might do, including having lots of liturgical services and loads of social events, can hardly be an Orthodox Christian

On judgment day, the Lord will not ask us about our parish size and facilities...

All of these things are important, but their significance has only one end: the love of God with all one's heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Church. This is especially true now in North America when Christianity generally, not to speak of Orthodoxy, is not a respected, accepted and supported part of public life and education, but is rather warred against, scorned and ridiculed by powerful forces in society.

Strength: Mission and Philanthropy

Loving God with all one's strength, particularly according to the Hebrew text of holy scripture, means that we are to love God with all that we possess, primarily our money and property. Strength, in this context, does not merely mean mental, emotional or physical might, though these, of course, are not to be excluded from our love for the Lord.

An Orthodox Christian parish, when it is Christ's holy Church, is obliged to use all of its powers for God's glory and the people's good. Christians as individual persons, as well as families, parishes and dioceses, will have to give account to Christ for how they used their God-given strength. We will have to answer for our use of money and resources, property and possessions, positions and profits. We will be asked how we loved "in deed and in truth," and not merely "in word or speech," through concrete acts of charity for the hungry and thirsty, the sick and suffering, the homeless and naked, the persecuted and imprisoned (*cf. 1 John 3:18; Matt. 25:31-46*).

(continued—see THE PARISH, next page)

The Presentation of the Lord *(continued from page 1)*

received in Holy Baptism, when we were likewise "enlightened".

This feast is paralleled to this day individually by Orthodox Christians with the presentation of young children by their mothers forty days after childbirth, restoring mothers to active participation in church life and responsibilities, as well as dedicating the newborn to God, as did the Theotokos.

The Presentation of our own Children

We've rearranged our worship space in church a bit in order to allow parents with young children (babes in arms and toddlers) to access the rear area and be closer to the exit. We've only gotten positive feedback so far, but I would like to suggest the following for parents of children of all ages.

➤ Babies

If a child is crying (or screams), don't try to calm him down: remove him at once. A baby screams to express something he doesn't have words for. The place to take care of his needs is not in the church itself. (Sometimes, a parent actually ends up making more noise than the child when trying to stifle him!) "Relocation" allows the baby to be attended to with minimum distraction to others, and sometimes, he just needs to scream. (I'm not talking about a baby's whimpering, but one of those blood-curdling war whoops.)

When we remodeled the church, we hoped that the Narthex would be the place to take noisy and fidgety kiddoes. Well, it works for the mildly fidgety but not for the noisy. That sound comes right back into the Nave. So, if baby Cuthbert is pitching a fit, take him to the Parish Hall. If he is just wiggly, the Narthex will work. This is why the open area near the Narthex is more suited for "little-bitties."

This is especially important during the sermon. It's hard for the preacher to preach and hard for the listeners to listen. The time during the sermon until

the Great Entrance is a good time to give the littlest ones a bit of a break downstairs. Since babies don't have timers or mute buttons, it is best to be proactive. In other words, don't wait for the sermon to be "punctuated" before taking action. They'll outgrow this soon enough.

➤ Older Kids

If a mid-sized child has been allowed to go to the restroom during liturgy—the only reason one should be leaving, come to think of it—remind him when it is proper to leave and re-enter the church. Litanies are the best time. If he has a tradition of getting lost downstairs, accompany him. Special "No-no's" are Censings, Entrances, Scripture readings, Sermons, the Creed, and the Anaphora.

➤ Adults

The rules for mid-sized children apply, although one is hard pressed, save for reasons of illness, to understand why adults need to be excused after entering church.

Several have commented to me about the tendency for some adults to sit during the communion of the clergy and to converse. Actually, sitting is not allowed at this point during the liturgy out of respect for the Holy Eucharist, except for the infirm. (We tolerate this for the children.)

And chatting during Liturgy? Beloved, the time is Holy. The place is Holy. A Holy God is acting in our midst. So, wait until after Liturgy and first of all tell someone what that Holy God has done for you that day before tackling the more mundane issues of life. OK?

Now—all of this is said, not to be harsh, but to enable the whole Body of the faithful to participate as fully as possible in divine worship by minimizing possible distractions. We come together as one Body to worship, to glorify, to rejoice in the great things God is doing. By being sensitive to the needs of others around us, we bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. — Fr. John

■ FROM THE DESK OF DEACON ALEXANDER

PSU OCF to Team Up and Serve Appalachia

For the first time in our history, Penn State Orthodox Christian Fellowship students will join forces with FOCUS North America (Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve) to lend a much needed hand to one of the poorest counties in the United States. Departing State College very early in the morning on “Clean Monday” (March 7)—the first day of Great Lent (and Spring Break)—members of our fellowship will rendezvous with fellow OCF students in Pittsburgh before caravanning together in 15-passenger vans to North Carolina. During the weeklong mission, the team will carry out construction, handy work, and home

improvement to those living in the heart of Appalachia, where nearly one in five live below the poverty line. Volunteers of all experience levels will share their blessings with those less fortunate while growing in Christ with one another.

If you are interested in helping support one of our students in this endeavor, you are invited to enjoy some of the delicious homemade baked goods they will prepare and sell following the Divine Liturgy on February 27. All proceeds will go towards providing scholarships to offset the minimal \$199 fee needed for the trip. Thank you in advance! ■

■ NEWS & NOTES

The Orthodox Church Beyond Our Parish

CONCERT TICKETS STILL AVAILABLE

NEW YORK – It’s still not too late to order tickets for the English-language U.S. premiere of the *St. Matthew Passion* by Metropolitan HILARION in New York City on Monday, February 7 at 7:30 p.m. at St. Paul the Apostle Church, on Columbus Ave. between 59th and 60th Streets. This profound work of sacred music intersperses St. Matthew’s Gospel account with texts from the Holy Week services of the Orthodox Church. The concert is being produced by Holy Trinity’s own Nicholas Reeves.

His Eminence HILARION will also present a lecture entitled “The Meaning of ‘Icon’ in the Orthodox Church” at the 28th Annual Schmemmann Memorial Lecture on February 5 at 3:30 p.m. at St. Vladimir’s Seminary. A public reception will follow.

For further information about the concert, and for tickets and bus reservations, visit svots.edu or call (914) 961-8313 ext. 323.

OCMC MISSION TEAMS ANNOUNCED

ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA – In 2011, the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) will coordinate 13 mission teams that will serve in 9 countries, including a team for families with children aged 8 years or older. Fees (which do not include airfare) range from \$840 to \$1,700. Most trips last a few weeks and depart during the summer months (May-August). Please call OCMC at 1-877-GO-FORTH or e-mail teams@ocmc.org for more information.

Transitions

CATECHUMEN

- **Dimitri Vaughn**, enrolled in the Holy Catechumenate on January 9.

BAPTISMS

- **Gabriel Stodart**, son of Brandon and Chelsea Stodart, baptized January 8. Many years!
- **Micah Patel**, son of Ravi and Dee Patel, baptized January 29. Many years!

Ministry Expo to Begin Feb. 13

Ever want to get involved at Holy Trinity but just didn’t know what was available, who to contact, or how to join? Every Sunday following liturgy in the Narthex there will be an informational table staffed by representatives from the “Ministry of the Week” so you can learn more. The Expo will continue through Lent with the goal of increasing by Pascha the overall percentage of parishioners involved in one or more of our many groups.

Holy Trinity Young Adults to Hold Summit; Attend Retreat

All young adults (married and single) aged 18 to thirty-something at Holy Trinity are invited to attend a one-of-a-kind summit to capture ideas and input regarding the possible formation of a new young adult ministry in our community. The event will take place in the Parish Hall on Monday, February 28 at 7 p.m. There will be a time for fellowship after the event. Plenty of food and drink will be served.

Young adults can also gather for a day of worship, learning, and connecting with other Pennsylvania Orthodox Christians at the Fifth Annual (Pre)-Lenten Retreat on March 5 at Holy Apostles Orthodox Mission in Mechanicsburg. Penn State OCF alumnus Fr. Hector Firoglanis will present on the theme “The Church as a Spiritual Hospital.” Lunch will be provided.

For more information on either event, call or text Deacon Alexander at (814) 321-4473.

Mission Choir to Visit HTOC

St. Tikhon’s Mission Choir will sing the Divine Services with us the weekend of February 26 and 27. The choir teaches, preaches, provides presentations about, and supports the work of the St. Tikhon’s Seminary and Monastery, located in South Canaan, Pennsylvania.

The Parish *(continued from page 2)*

On judgment day, the Lord will not ask us about our parish size and facilities. Nor will He be interested in our liturgical schedule or style. He will not ask us how we dressed or what we ate. He will be indifferent to how large our church temples were, or where they were located, or how they were decorated and appointed. Nor will He ask us to recite the Nicene Creed, or to explain the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. All of these things are important, but their significance has only one end: the love of God with all one’s heart, soul, mind, and strength, expressed as it can only be expressed in this present age, in concrete acts of love for our neighbors, first of all the members of our own families and parishes, and most of all for those who hate and oppose us.

Love of God with all our strength through acts of love for our neighbors and enemies is enacted primarily in acts of evangelism and philanthropy. While sacramental participation in a parish is strictly reserved for committed Orthodox who take full responsibility for the Church’s faith and life, and completely identify with the Church’s path through history, the philanthropic and evangelical activities of an Orthodox Christian parish as well as its services of teaching, counseling, and prayerful intercession, have no bounds or limitations of any kind. They are to be exercised freely and without discrimination for all people regardless of their religion, nationality, race, sexual behavior, or relation to Christ’s church. The first Christians, as witnessed in the New Testament, and such saints as John Chrysostom and Fr. John of Kronstadt and Mother Maria Skobtsova, taught and practiced this Christian truth without the slightest hesitation, equivocation or compromise.

A parish without carefully planned and implemented evangelical and philanthropic activity directed both within and outside its parochial bounds, is simply not Orthodox or Christian. ■

■ SUNDAY SCHOOL SCOOP

Kissing and Crossing

by Deacon Mark Oleynik

Most everyone has heard the old proverb, “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” The same could be said of the teachings of our Lord and the Church: what is learned should be kept for a lifetime.

It is always a joy to see a young child approach an icon or the cross. He/she stops, takes a deep breath, and then begins to “cross” themselves. Sometimes this is done with the left (incorrect) hand, or with the incorrect finger positions, or with the incorrect motions. Then the child senses the moment and kisses the holy object with great love and satisfaction. Almost always there is a parent or adult standing by assisting when needed and constantly smiling.

Unfortunately, as the child grows older oftentimes the lessons learned in these simple and beautiful actions are modified, forgotten, or even neglected. You almost cannot help but notice all the variations of crossing oneself and could even identify them by name: **the “fly swatter”** (this is where the person waves their hand around their head and chest as if a fly was ready to land on them); **the “blur”** (the person makes the sign of the cross so fast their hand is just a blur); **the “energy saver”** (the person conserves their energy by putting their hand somewhere in the vicinity of the front of their body and uses only wrist action), and **the “add-on”** (the person adds a couple of extra movements at the end of the blessing).

Similarly, veneration by kissing has its variations and the two most common are the **“I just can’t...”** (the person pauses and admires and respects the icon/cross/etc. but then moves on) and the **“air kisser”** (a pretense of kissing—the lips are pursed as if kissing but they do not actually touch

Extra “Scoops”

RETREAT/SUMMER CAMP ASSISTANCE

Although specific dates may not yet be known for the various Orthodox summer camps (St. Tikhon’s, St. Andrew’s, Antiochian Village, etc.) and retreats that are conducted each year, parents may start planning ahead for the summer. Our parish (through the Sunday School budget) will assist families in paying tuition up to \$100 per child per year if they attend an Orthodox camp or retreat

DO YOU KNOW YOUR NAME DAY?

During the dismissal of most of our services the priest mentions the name of the saint(s) which are commemorated on that day. In our parish, we have a wonderful custom of singing Many Years after the Divine Liturgy on Sunday to those who are celebrating name days (along with birthdays, anniversaries, etc) during the coming week. Parents can link this occasion to honor the memory of the saint for which their child is named. The celebration can include reading about the saint’s life, singing or reading the troparion to the saint, praying as a family in front of an icon of the saint, putting this icon in a special place in the home for the day, and even perhaps holding a special dinner or special activity for the day.

anything...you also often see this among celebrities associated with the *mwah* sound).

The idea here is not to be legalistic but to understand that there really is a right and wrong way to do these things. It is a parent’s responsibility to correct a child (regardless of age) if they are doing these actions incorrectly just as they would correct a child’s homework. Likewise, parents (and **all adults** of the parish) should set a good (correct) example not only for children but also for inquirers or visitors. Just as a fisherman learns to eat for a lifetime let’s ensure that we learn to worship properly for a lifetime.

■ ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

Heaven and Hell

by Metropolitan KALLISTOS (Timothy) Ware

The Church awaits the final consummation of the end, which in Greek theology is termed the *apocatastasis* or “restoration,” when Christ will return in great glory to judge both the living and the dead. This final *apocatastasis* involves the redemption and the glorification of matter: at the Last Day the righteous will rise from the grave and be united once more to a body—not such a body as we now possess, but one that is transfigured and “spiritual,” in which inward sanctity is made outwardly manifest. And not only man’s body but the whole material order will be transformed: God will create a New Heaven and a New Earth.

But Hell exists as well as Heaven. In recent years many Christians—not only in the West, but at times also in the Orthodox Church—have come to feel that the idea of Hell is inconsistent with belief in a loving God. But to argue thus is to display a sad and perilous confusion of thought. While it is true that God loves us with an infinite love, it is also true that He has given us free will; and since we have free will, it is possible for us to reject God. Since free will exists, Hell exists; for Hell is nothing else than the rejection of God. If we deny Hell, we deny free will. “No one is so good and full of pity as God,” wrote Mark the Monk or Hermit (early fifth century), “but even He does not forgive those who do not repent” (*On Those Who Think to be Justified from Works*, 71). God will not force us to love Him, for love is no longer love if it is not free; how then can God reconcile to Himself those who refuse all reconciliation?

The Orthodox attitude towards the Last Judgment and Hell is clearly expressed in the choice of Gospel readings at the Liturgy on three successive Sundays shortly before Lent. On the first Sunday is read the parable of the Publican and Pharisee, on the second

There is no terrorism in the Orthodox doctrine of God. Orthodox Christians do not cringe before Him in abject fear, but think of Him as the “lover of men.” Yet they keep in mind that Christ at His Second Coming will come as judge.

the parable of the Prodigal Son, stories which illustrate the immense forgiveness and mercy of God towards all sinners who repent. But in the Gospel for the third Sunday—the parable of the Sheep and the Goats—we are reminded of the other truth: that it is possible to reject God and to turn away from Him to Hell. “Then shall He say to those on the left hand, The curse of God is upon you, go from my sight into everlasting fire” (*Matt. 25:41*).

There is no terrorism in the Orthodox doctrine of God. Orthodox Christians do not cringe before Him in abject fear, but think of Him as *philanthropos*, the “lover of men.” Yet they keep in mind that Christ at His Second Coming will come as judge.

Hell is not so much a place where God imprisons man, as a place where man, by misusing his free will, chooses to imprison himself. And even in Hell the wicked are not deprived of the love of God, but by their own choice they experience as suffering what the saints experience as joy. “The love of God will be an intolerable torment for those who have not acquired it within themselves” (V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, p. 234).

Hell exists as a final possibility, but several of the Fathers have none the less believed that in the end all will be reconciled to God. It is heretical to say

that all must be saved, for this is to deny free will; but it is legitimate to hope that all may be saved.

Until the Last Day comes, we must not despair of anyone's salvation, but must long and pray for the reconciliation of all without exception. No one must be excluded from our loving intercession. "What is a merciful heart?" asked Isaac the Syrian. "It is a heart that burns with love for the whole of creation, for men, for the birds, for the beasts, for the demons, for all creatures" (*Mystic Treatises*, edited by A. J. Wensinck, Amsterdam, 1923, p. 341). Gregory of Nyssa said that Christians may legitimately hope even for the redemption of the Devil.

The Bible ends upon a note of keen expectation: "Surely I am coming quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (*Rev. 22:20*). In the same spirit of eager hope the primitive Christians used to pray: "Let grace come and let this world pass away" (*Didache*, 10, 6). From one point of view the first Christians were wrong: they imagined that the end of the world would occur almost immediately, whereas in fact two millennia have passed and still the end has not yet come. It is not for us to know the times and the seasons, and perhaps this present order will last for many millennia more.

Yet from another point of view the primitive Church was right. For whether the end comes early or late, it is always imminent, always spiritually close at hand, even though it may not be temporally close. The Day of the Lord will come "as a thief in the night" (*1 Thess. 5:2*) at an hour when men expect it not. Christians, therefore, as in Apostolic times, so today must always be prepared, waiting in constant expectation.

One of the most encouraging signs of revival in contemporary Orthodoxy is the renewed awareness among many Orthodox of the Second Coming and its relevance. When a pastor on a visit to Russia asked what is the burning problem of the

Wisdom from the Fathers

Many there are who pray against their own salvation, namely, when they pray against their enemies. This the wicked one has devised, in order that we may destroy ourselves (for the praying against one's personal enemies is a transgression of the law). But it is also worth hearing the very words of their prayer, and how the words are of a puerile mind; of how infantile a soul: "Avenge me of my enemies, show them that I have God (on my side)."

Our enemies do not learn that we have God when we are indignant and angry and impatient; but when we are gentle and meek and subdued, and practice all love of wisdom. So also God said, "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in the heavens." Perceivest thou not that it is an insult to God, the making a request to God against thine enemies? And how is it an insult? Because He Himself said, "pray for your enemies." By praying against him thou art pushing thine own salvation into a pit, and art rushing down a precipice...

— St. John Chrysostom

Russian Church, a priest replied without hesitation: "the *Parousia*" (P. Evdokimov, *L'Orthodoxie*, p. 9). (*Parousia* is the Greek term for the Second Coming.)

Yet the Second Coming is not simply an event in the future, for in the life of the Church, the Age to Come has already begun to break through into this present age. For members of God's Church, the "Last Times" are already inaugurated, since here and now Christians enjoy the first fruits of God's Kingdom. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. He comes already—in the Holy Liturgy and the worship of the Church. ■

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The Most Reverend Metropolitan KALLISTOS (Timothy Ware) of Diokleia is the former Spalding Lecturer of Eastern Orthodox Studies at Oxford University and author of numerous books and articles pertaining to the Orthodox Christian faith, including The Orthodox Church, from which this article is excerpted.*

Following are some information/tips regarding this topic which may be helpful when explaining to your child how and why we "kiss and cross".

Crossing Oneself

Making the sign of the cross reminds us that we are children of God and it signifies our desire to serve Him. To make the sign of the cross, the first three fingers of the right hand are folded together (the thumb and the two adjacent fingers) with the remaining fingers bent downward into the palm of the hand. The three joined fingers are then touched first to the forehead, then to the chest and then to the right shoulder and then to the left shoulder. Following the making of the sign of the cross, reverence should be further expressed by bowing the head and/or a bow from the waist.

The joining of the thumb and two fingers to make the sign symbolizes the Holy Trinity—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The two fingers bent downward signify the two natures of Jesus Christ—true God and true Man.

The forehead is touched to make our minds and thoughts holy, the breast is touched to make our hearts pure and kind, the shoulders are touched to give our arms and hands the power to do good works. By the sign of the cross we show our belief and faith in Him and we give our minds, our hearts, and our strength to the service of God.

TO CROSS OR NOT TO CROSS?

Anyone who has looked during the various services will notice that people cross themselves at different times. To a certain extent, when to cross oneself is according to personal piety and not an issue of dogma. But there are times when it is specifically proper to cross yourself and times when you should not. Here is a brief list of when to cross and when not to cross:

➤ When To Cross

- (1) *When you hear one of the variations of the phrase, "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit";*
- (2) *at the*

beginning and end of the liturgical service or your private prayers; (3) entering or exiting the church, or when passing in front of the Holy Altar; and (4) before venerating an icon, the cross, or Gospel book.

➤ When Not to Cross

- (1) *At the chalice before or after taking Communion (you might hit the chalice with your hand);*
- (2) *when the priest or bishop blesses saying, "Peace be to all" (you should bow slightly and receive the blessing);*
- (3) *when receiving a blessing from a bishop or a priest (kissing the right hand of the bishop or priest is appropriate, but not making the sign of the cross).*

Kissing

The kiss is action firmly rooted in Orthodoxy. When we enter into the church, it is customary to venerate or kiss the icon near the doors and as you enter into the nave. This shows love and respect as does a kiss on the cheek when greeted. You will also see the faithful kiss the bishop or priest's right hand. This, too, is an act of veneration. The people are venerating the High Priesthood of Christ, of which the parish priest is simply a participant in. None of this kissing or veneration should be confused with worship.

It is our belief that the outward honor we pay to the material reality goes far beyond to the "prototype." There is also a vast distinction between honor (i.e., veneration or respect) and worship. We worship God alone, and may have no others before Him (*Exodus 20*). The Orthodox Church has already dealt with the issue of those who could not make that distinction (i.e. the "iconoclasts") in the 8th Century at the Seventh Ecumenical Council. You may explain to your child that we have pictures of grandparents, friends, and family in our homes to remind us of their good example and their special relationship to us. In a similar way, the icons of the Church provide the same intention.

All of our actions are to be done for the glory of God. Let us and our children do so. ■