

ANNUNCIATION ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

Archdiocese of Canada - Orthodox Church in America
His Eminence Seraphim, Archbishop of Ottawa and Canada

CATHEDRAL HERALD

December 2009



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Schedule Of Services & Events

Friday, Dec. 4:	9:30 am Divine Liturgy St Seraphim of Phanourion (Vladyka's saint)	2
Saturday, Dec. 5:	2:00 pm Holy Unction; 5:00 pm Hierarchical Vigil	
Sunday, Dec. 6:	9:15 am Hierarchical Divine Liturgy <i>St Nicholas</i>	
Wednesday, Dec. 9:	9:30 am Divine Liturgy; Conception of the Theotokos 7:00 pm Vespers	
Saturday, Dec. 12:	5:00 pm Vigil	
Sunday, Dec. 13:	9:30 am Divine Liturgy; <i>Liturgy St Herman of Alaska</i>	
Wednesday, Dec 16:	7:00 pm Vespers	
Saturday, Dec. 19:	5:00 pm Vigil	
Sunday, Dec, 20:	9:30 am Divine Liturgy; 6:00 pm Compline (Pre-feast)	
Monday, Dec 21:	6:00 pm Compline	
Tuesday, Dec. 22:	6:00 pm Compline	
Wednesday, Dec. 23:	7:00 pm Royal Hours of Nativity	
Thursday, Dec. 24:	9:30 am Vesperal Liturgy; 6:00 Vigil of Nativity	
Friday, Dec. 25:	9:30 am Festal Divine Liturgy Holy Nativity	
Saturday, Dec. 26:	9:30 am Divine Liturgy – Synaxis of the Theotokos 5:00 pm Grt. Vespers	
Sunday, Dec. 27:	9:30 am Divine Liturgy	
Thursday, Dec. 31:	5:00 pm Great Vespers – St Basil / Circumcision of Christ	
Friday, Jan. 1:	9:30 am Divine Liturgy	
Saturday, Jan.2:	5:00 pm Vigil	

FROM THE DEAN:

December 2009

Dear Faithful of the Cathedral:

This now is my third month as interim dean of the Cathedral parish, and by now I am no longer the visitor from Edmonton but a resident of Ottawa. For the next foreseeable period, I need to be in both parishes, and fortunately I have two good assistant priests in both parishes to make this even remotely possible.

There is a learning curve when you come into a position like this; there is a parish history, a present reality, and the vision for the future. My job is to keep those three in balance and move the parish on the path of salvation and harmony. First of all, this is a community of believers and this is foremost, then the fact that this community has the responsibilities and the blessings to serve as the Archdiocesan Cathedral is also important. We not only have ourselves and our community to care about, but the whole diocese as our extended family. It is like we are living in the old family home, and both the parish and the members of this Archdiocese need to feel welcome and secure in our building and family. Therefore our challenge is to make sure that the spiritual life, the programs, the fellowship, and parish growth continue to develop while we are concerned about the daily tasks of the building, the finances, and the community at large.

To this end we need to look at our "volunteerism". Where can I be of help? All of us have different gifts that we can use to build up the body of Christ. But we need to do those things in the life of the church that come naturally for us, for one to feel needed and satisfied in their offering of time, talent, treasure. Each one of us needs to ask ourselves "What can I do to help my church" and then talk with one of the priests on how I can use my talent to build up the Church of Christ.

The priests cannot do it themselves, nor just the parish council, nor the deacons, we all need to put our effort into our parish to make it grow to be vibrant and function on a daily basis. This is the challenge to us - to make it work with the Lord being our guide and leader.

Igumen Alexander

Services of Christmas in the Orthodox Church

Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann¹

The Nativity Cycle

As Orthodox Christians, we begin the celebration of the Nativity of Christ — on December 25 — with a time of preparation. Forty days before the feast of the birth of Our Lord we enter the period of the Christmas Fast: to purify both soul and body to enter properly into and partake of the great spiritual reality of Christ's Coming. This fasting season does not constitute the intense liturgical season that is characteristic of Great Lent; rather, Christmas Lent is more of an "ascetical" rather than "liturgical" nature. Nevertheless, the Christmas fasting season is reflected in the life of the Church in a number of liturgical notes that announce the coming feast.

Within the forty days preparation the theme of the approaching Nativity is introduced in the services and liturgical commemorations, little by little. If the beginning of the fast on November 15 is not liturgically marked by any hymn, five days later, on the eve of the **Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple**, we hear the first announcement from the nine *hirmoi* of the Christmas Canon: "Christ is born, glorify Him!"

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With these words something changes in our life, in the very air we breathe, in the entire mood of the Church's life. It is as if we perceive far, far away, the first light of the greatest possible joy — the coming of God into His world! Thus the Church announces the coming of Christ, the Incarnation of God, His entrance into the world for its salvation. Then, on the two Sundays preceding Christmas, the Church commemorates **the Forefathers** and **the Fathers**: the prophets and the saints of the Old Testament who prepared that coming, who made history itself into the expectation, the waiting for, the salvation and reconciliation of mankind with God. Finally, on December 20th, the church begins **the Forefeast of the Nativity**, whose liturgical structure is similar to the Holy Week preceding Pascha — for the birth of the Son of God as child is the beginning of the saving ministry which will lead Him, for the sake of our salvation, to the ultimate sacrifice of the Cross.

The Eve

The liturgical services of December 24th, **the Eve of the Nativity**, are:

1. The Hours
2. Vespers, and
3. The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great.

Coming at the end of the Forefeast, and indeed of the entire *Advent*, the Hours summarize all the themes of the feast and make them into a last and solemn announcement. In the special

¹ The Rev. Alexander Schmemmann in the book *The Services of Christmas: The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, David Anderson and John Erickson, Dept of Religious Education, Orthodox Church in America, Syosset, New York, 1981

psalms, hymns and biblical readings prescribed for each hour, the joy and power of Christ's Coming are

proclaimed. It is one last meditation on the cosmical meaning of the Nativity, on the decisive and radical change it performed in the entire creation.

Vespers, which usually follows the Hours, inaugurates the celebration of the feast itself, for, as we know, the liturgical day begins in the evening. The tone of this celebration is given by the five *stichera* on "Lord, I call..." What they really are is an explosion of joy for the gift of Christ's Incarnation, which is now fulfilled! Eight biblical readings show that Christ is the fulfillment of all prophecies, that His Kingdom is the Kingdom "of all ages," that all human history finds its meaning in it, and the entire cosmos its center.

The Liturgy of St. Basil which follows Vespers was in the past the baptismal liturgy at which catechumens were baptized, chrismated and integrated into the Church, the Body of Christ. The double joy of the feast, for the newly-baptized and other members of the Church, is reflected in the **prokeimenon** of the day:

*The Lord said to me: Thou art My son,
this day have I begotten Thee.
Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the ends of the
earth as Thy possession.*

Then, at the end of the Liturgy, the celebrant, taking a lighted candle to the very centre of the Church, and surrounded by the entire congregation, intones the troparion and kontakion of the Feast:

*Thy Nativity, O Christ our God,
Has shone to the world the light of wisdom.
For by it, those who worshipped the stars
Were taught by a star to adore Thee,
The Sun of Righteousness,
And to know Thee, the Orient from on high.
O Lord, glory to Thee!*

The Vigil and the Liturgy

Since Vespers of the feast already have been celebrated, the Vigil begins with Great Compline and the joyful proclamation from Isaiah "God is with us!" The order of Matins is that of a great feast. Now, for the first time, the full Canon "Christ is born...", one of the most beautiful canons in Orthodox worship, is sung while the faithful venerate the icon of Christ's Nativity. The Praises follow, summarizing the joy and themes of the entire feast:

*Make glad, O you righteous!
Greatly rejoice, O heavens!
Dance for joy, O mountains; for Christ is born!
The Virgin has become like the cherubic throne.
She carries at her bosom God the Word, made flesh*

*Shepherds glorify the newborn child.
Wise men offer the master gifts.
Angels praise Him and sing:
O Lord, past understanding, glory to Thee!*

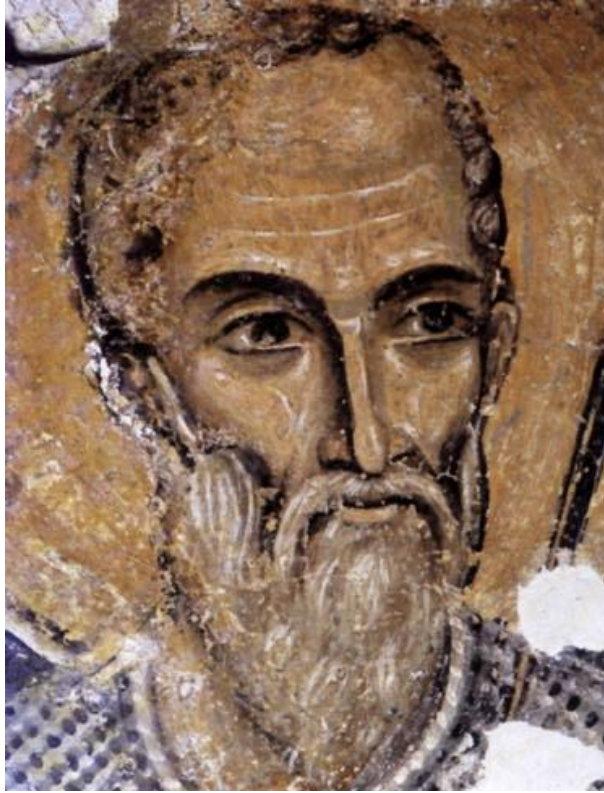
Concluding the celebration of the Nativity of Christ is the Liturgy of the day itself with its festal antiphons proclaiming:

*...The Lord will send Thee the scepter of power from Zion: "Rule in the midst of Thine enemies."
With Thee is dominion on the day of Thy birth, in the radiance of holiness.*

The Post-feast

On the second day of the feast, the **Synaxis of the Theotokos** is celebrated. Combining the hymns of the Nativity with those celebrating the Mother of God, the Church points to Mary as the one through whom the Incarnation was made possible. His humanity — concretely and historically — is the humanity He received from Mary. His Body is, first of all, her body; His life is her life. This feast, the assembly in honour of the Theotokos, is probably the most ancient feast of Mary in the Christian tradition, the very beginning of her veneration by the Church.

Six days of post-feast bring the Christmas season to a close on December 31. At the services of all these days, the Church repeats the hymns and songs glorifying Christ's Incarnation, reminding us that the source and the foundation of our salvation is only to be found in the One Who, as God before the ages, came into this world and for our sake was "born as a little Child."



Life of St Nicholas the Wonderworker (6th December)

Childhood and early life

St Nicholas was born (c. 270) in the the region of Lycia (southern Asia Minor), in the city of Patara. His parents, Theophanes and Nonna, were both pious Christians, and being childless until his arrival, consecrated Nicholas to God at his birth (the name Nicholas meaning 'Conqueror of nations'). His birth considered by both an answer to their prayer, and especially the prayer issued during Nonna's illness, his mother was said to have been healed immediately after giving birth. Nicholas would always remember his parents' love and devotion to God, and in his later years promised to come to the aid of those who remembered them in their prayers.

Various traditions recount signs of Nicholas' future glory as 'wonderworker' (Gr. *thaumatourgos*), apparent already in his earliest childhood. One recalls that as an infant in the baptismal font, Nicholas stood on his feet for three hours in honour of the Trinity. Another proclaims him a childhood faster, not accepting milk from his mother until after the conclusion of evening prayers on Wednesdays and Fridays.

His later life revealed that Nicholas had from a young age been absorbed in the study of the Church's sacred scriptures. He thrived on reading divine texts, and earned a reputation as a

devoted youth who often would not leave the church, reading the sacred texts late into the night.

Such activity soon came to the attention of the local bishop, Nicholas' uncle (his father's brother), also called Nicholas. Seeing his nephew's fervour for the Christian life, this elder Bishop Nicholas of Patara tonsured him reader, and later ordained him priest. At Fr Nicholas' ordination, the elder Bishop Nicholas remarked:

'I see, brethren, a new sun rising above the earth and manifesting in himself a gracious consolation for the afflicted. Blessed is the flock that will be worthy to have him as its pastor, because this one will shepherd well the souls of those who have gone astray, will nourish them on the pasturage of piety, and will be a merciful helper in misfortune and tribulation.'

The newly-ordained Fr Nicholas' special charge as assistant to the bishop of Patara was the instruction of the faithful – a unique and uncommon role, given his young age.

The ministry of Fr Nicholas

Nicholas approached his duties as priest and teacher of the faith with the same fervour his uncle had witnessed in him during his childhood. Despite his youthfulness, many of the faithful considered him an elder, and his ability to respond to questions of the faith in love and wisdom earned him the deep respect of those in the city. He was noted in particular for the fervency of his prayer and kind-hearted nature, and the attention to charitable work that characterised his priestly ministry. Following the injunction of Christ, Fr Nicholas sold his possessions and, following his parents' deaths a few years after his ordination, distributed his inheritance to the poor and afflicted, who would often seek him out for assistance.

In one of his most well-known acts of selflessness as a young priest, Fr Nicholas reacted to the intention of a wealthy businessman of Patara who had fallen on hard times and lost his fortune. Desperate, the man had determined to sell the bodies of his three daughters in order to raise funds for the family. Hearing of the plan (in some accounts, through a divine revelation), Fr Nicholas called by his home in secret during the night and threw an offering of gold – three hundred coins wrapped in a handkerchief through the man's window. Convinced of the goodness of the gesture, though unaware of the identity of his benefactor, the man used the funds to arrange for his eldest daughter to be married honourably to a nobleman. Later the man arose to find the act had been repeated; and eventually, a third time. In each instance, the priest made his offering secretly, attempting to conceal his works of charity.

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

Following the example of his bishop, who had made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land a few months before, Fr Nicholas requested to travel to Jerusalem himself, to visit the holy places of the city. Icons today continue to recount the miraculous nature of his voyage there by ship, during which a great storm arose (Nicholas having earlier predicted that it would). Seeing in a vision the devil climbing aboard the ship, Nicholas warned the crew and prayed for the salvation of the craft and its occupants, and the sea shortly calmed.

Arriving in the Holy Land, Nicholas made his pilgrimage of the holy places in Jerusalem, especially Golgotha where Christ was crucified. Overcome by the reality of these places where the incarnate Son of the Father had walked and acted, Nicholas determined to retreat into the desert to live a life of solitude. But he was stopped by a divine voice, which forbade this course and urged him to return home. This he did, though still longing for quiet and the solitary life. Having been moved by his experiences on Mount Sion in Jerusalem, he entered the monastic community of Holy Sion in Lycia (which had earlier been founded by his uncle); but again, the Lord made known to him that this was not to be his path. The voice of the Lord is said to have come to him: *'Nicholas, if you desire to be vouchsafed a crown from me, go and struggle for the good of the world. This [monastery] is not the vineyard in which you shall bring forth the fruit I expect of you; but turn back, go into the world, and let my Name be glorified in you.'*

Desirous above all to follow the command of God, Nicholas departed the brotherhood of Holy Sion and moved to Myra.

Consecration to the episcopate

Shortly after his arrival in Myra, the elder Archbishop of that city, a certain John, died. There was some discussion as to who should succeed him as the chief bishop of the region, the local synod of bishops desirous that the new archbishop should not be an individual chosen by men for the office, but one revealed by God. One of their eldest number beheld a vision of the illumined Christ, who indicated that the old bishop should go into the church, for the one who was first to enter it that night – who would be called Nicholas – was he who should become the new archbishop.

The elder bishop went to the church to await Nicholas' arrival, in obedience to the vision. When Fr Nicholas arrived, the bishop stopped him.

'What is your name, child?' he asked.

God's chosen one replied, 'My name is Nicholas, Master, and I am your servant.'

The bishop took St Nicholas immediately to the other bishops and exclaimed, 'Brethren, receive your shepherd whom the Holy Spirit himself anointed and to whom he entrusted the care of your souls. He was not appointed by an assembly of men but by God himself. Now we have the one that we desired, and have found and accepted the one we sought. Under his rule and instruction we will not lack the hope that we will stand before God in the day of his appearing and revelation.'

Nicholas was consecrated to the episcopacy during a tumultuous time in the life of the Church in Lycia. The persecutions under the emperor Diocletian (284-305) effected that region deeply, and for a time, Bishop Nicholas was imprisoned with other Christians for refusing to bow down and worship the idols of the imperial cult. He was remembered later for the exhortations he delivered to his fellow prisoners, urging them to endure with joy all that the Lord lay before them, whether chains, bonds, torture or even death.

Bishop Nicholas' imprisonment came to an end with the ascension of Constantine to the throne in the early fourth century. He returned to his flock in Myra, which received him with

joy, and resumed his episcopal work. He was known as a great ascetic, as he had been since his childhood, and for his gentleness and love. But his kind-hearted spirit was also one of zeal, and with the new freedoms offered under the peace of Constantine (following the 'Edict of Milan' in 312), he was known to travel through his city, visiting pagan temples and overthrowing their shrines and idols.

The First Ecumenical Council, Nicaea 325

In the year 325, a great council of bishops – the largest in the history of the Church – was held in the city of Nicaea under the patronage of Emperor Constantine, who had, since his miraculous vision of the cross at Milvian bridge, himself converted to Christianity. This synod, which in later years would come to be known as the First Ecumenical Council (commemorated on the seventh Sunday after Pascha), was attended by over three hundred bishops from throughout the Christian world, to establish various canons of order for the growing Church, affirm the faith, and combat heresy. In particular, the teachings of Arius, a presbyter in Alexandria, were addressed and condemned by the council, which formulated a statement of faith that, with later refinements at Constantinople in 381, became the Creed of the Church.

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St Nicholas was a participant at this council, and is particularly remembered for his zeal against Arius. Having openly combatted him with words, Bishop Nicholas, in a fit of fervour (some accounts indicate he was displeased with Arius' monopolisation of the meeting with his 'constant arguing'), went so far as to strike Arius on the face. Shocked by this behaviour, especially given that the canons forbid clergy from striking any one at all, yet uncertain of how to react to such actions by a hierarch they knew and respected, the fathers of the council determined to deprive Nicholas of his episcopal emblems (traditionally his omophorion and the Gospel book), and placed him under guard. However, a short time later, several of the assembled fathers reported having a common vision: the Lord and His Mother returning to Nicholas his episcopal items, instructing that he was not to be punished, for he had acted 'not out of passion, but extreme love and piety'. This was taken as a sign that the extreme behaviour of Nicholas was nonetheless pleasing to God, who was thus restored to the fulness of his episcopal office.

Nicholas the Wonderworker

St Nicholas' title 'wonderworker' comes from the multitude of reports of miracles that issued forth at his intercession, both during his life and after. The renown of his miraculous acts was widespread in his own lifetime. As he had secretly delivered gold, many years before, to the father of three destitute daughters, so he secretly delivered gold to an Italian merchant (by some accounts, this gold was left miraculously by an apparition of the saint appearing to the merchant in Italy), convincing him to sail to Myra with a shipment of grain. And so by his prayers and deeds, his city of Myra was rescued from a terrible famine.

One miracle, particularly widely known, was Bishop Nicholas' conversion of the local governor, who had been bribed into unjustly condemning three men to death. The saint approached the executioner, who had already raised his sword to issue the death-blow, and swiftly removed it from his hands. He then approached the governor and denounced his unjust

action. This latter, convicted by St Nicholas' words, repented and asked the saint's forgiveness. This episode is remembered as connected directly to another: for three officers of the imperial military were present to see St Nicholas stay this execution, who were later slanderously accused before the emperor, who condemned them to death. St Nicholas appeared to Emperor Constantine in a dream and urged him to reverse this sentence, which the emperor did.

Many times, the saint's prayers were said to have saved those drowning in the sea (just as his prayers had calmed the sea on his own journey, as a young priest, to Jerusalem). Prisoners unjustly condemned prayed to him and were delivered. The poor prayed to him and were provided for. And so Nicholas' reputation as *thaumaturgos* was established during his life. It continues to this day.

The saint's departure



The original sarcophagus of St Nicholas, in Myra

Living his life in ascetic labour and zealous ministry, St Nicholas fell asleep in the Lord at an old age (d. 6th December 343), by some accounts quite ill. A church was built in his honour by the residents of Myra, in which his relics were kept for many centuries.

Alexei Cominos ascended the throne of the Byzantine Empire in 1081, in which year Asia Minor suffered various attacks and threats of barbarian invasion. St Nicholas' relics at this time remained in his city of Myra. However, a priest in the Italian city of Bari soon beheld a vision in which Nicholas appeared and informed him that he did not wish to remain in a city as barren as the defeated Myra. He instructed the priest to remove his body from the city.

After informing the residents of Bari of his vision, three ships were sent to Myra to retrieve the saint's relics.

On their arrival in the city in 1087, the travellers from Bari found the Church of St Nicholas in Myra abandoned, save for the presence of four devoted monks. These led the men to the coffin of the saint, which they had hid to keep it safe from invaders. On opening the coffin, the men found St Nicholas' relics flowing with myrrh which they collected in vials, before securing the coffin and placing it on one of the ships for the return voyage to Bari, accompanied by two of the Myran monks.

Some time later, the ships arrived in Bari, and were met at the port by throngs of the local faithful. A great festal Liturgy was held in the Church of St John the Forerunner and Baptist, to which the saint's relics were taken in procession. Craftsmen had fashioned an ornate silver box, into which St Nicholas' head and hands were placed, while the remainder of his relics remained in their original coffin from Myra.

A short time later, a large church was built and dedicated to St Nicholas, and the two boxes containing his relics were transferred to it from the Church of St John, where they remain to this day (this event is commemorated on 20th May / 2nd June).[8] Chrism continues to flow from the saint's relics, as it has for centuries.

St. Herman of Alaska (December 13th)

Saint Herman of Alaska was born in 1756 or 1760 in Serpukhov in the Moscow Diocese of Russia. He took the name Herman when tonsured a monk in the Trinity-Sergius Hermitage, near the Gulf of Finland, about 10 miles from St. Petersburg. He then transferred to the Valaam Monastery on the islands of Lake Ladoga. He was allowed later to live in the wilderness, a hermit alone in prayer, returning to the monastery only for the services of holy days.

In 1793, Father Herman, with Father (later, St.) Juvenaly and others, were chosen to do missionary work in Alaska. By zeal and the grace of God, they brought to the Faith several thousands of Native Alaskans. However, as time went by, the missionary party was slowly cut down. Some drowned in a ship at sea. Father Juvenaly was martyred at the hands of fearful Alaskans. Eventually, only Father Herman alone, of the original party, remained.

Father Herman settled on Spruce Island, and named it, "New Valaam," in honor of his beloved Valaam Monastery. He dug a cave out of the ground with nothing but his hands, and lived there until a cell could be built, in which he then lived until his death. He grew his own food, not only for himself but for all he cared for, digging the earth, planting, carrying heavy loads of seaweed to fertilize the earth. He was a great ascetic; he was always barefoot even in these lands of the far North, and wore only a deerskin smock, a podrasnik and a patched rassa (inner and outer cassock), and his klobuk (monastic hat). He slept very little, and only on a wooden bench with no cushion, used bricks for a pillow, and covered himself with no blankets, but only a board.

He advocated for and defended the Aleuts against sometimes oppressive authorities. He cared lovingly and sacrificially for all who came to him, counseling and teaching them, and tirelessly nursing the sick. He especially loved children, for whom he often baked biscuits and cookies.

He was a great and compelling teacher, not only to Aleuts but also to highly educated and "free-thinking" Russians and Europeans who happened to travel there, and this humble monk humbled these "great ones" by his knowledge and wisdom, converting many to the true Faith. Often Aleuts were so captivated that they stayed up with him all night, not leaving until dawn.

The elder was given great spiritual gifts by God. He often foreknew the future, telling people of events that would happen many years later, and which were shown to have come true. By his prayers, God averted forest fires from crossing a line Father Herman made, and stopped a flood from rising past the position where Father Herman had placed an icon of the Mother of God and prayed.

Father Herman reposed in the Lord in his sleep on the 25th day of December (December 12th on the ancient Calendar of the Church), in 1837. He continued to work miracles after his death, answering the prayers of the faithful in intercession for them before God.

Holy St. Herman, pray to God for us.

St John of Kronstadt. (December 20th & October 19th)

John Ilyitch Sergieff, the son of poor peasant folk, was born on the 19th of October 1829 in the little village of Soura, in the province of Arkhangelsk in the far north of Russia (typically, in the midst of his amazingly full life, Father John never forgot Soura: he visited it every year, and bestowed many gifts upon it, among them a new church and a school). The beauty of the natural environment of his early life - for Soura was situated amid majestic scenery - greatly impressed the boy, and throughout his life he was acutely aware of the spiritual witness of the material world to its Creator.

His parents, poor and simple though they were, took great pains with his education, both spiritual and temporal. From the first he displayed understanding of, and love for, the services of the church; but his intellectual development was delayed, for he had great difficulty in learning to read - he himself tells us that he could still read only block capitals when, at the age of nine, he was sent to school in Arkhangelsk. Still making little headway, and grieving bitterly over it, for he knew how difficult it was for his parents to find the money for his education, he prayed earnestly for divine enlightenment, and one morning, after he had risen during the night and prayed while his companions slept, he found himself able to read easily, and to understand what he had read.

From school, where he had gone to the top of his class, he went to the seminary. From there, once more at the top of his class, he was sent in 1851, at government expense, to the Theological Academy of Saint Petersburg. While he was there his father died, and it was with great thankfulness to God that he accepted the post of registrar - offered to him on account of his perfect handwriting - and was able to send his little honorarium of ten rubles a month to his mother.

Having considered becoming a monk, and going to eastern Siberia as a missionary, he came to the conclusion that there were many people around him as unenlightened as any pagan, and he decided to work for their salvation, after a dream in answer to prayer, in which he saw himself officiating in some unknown cathedral.

His Ministry Begins

SOON AFTER completing his studies he married Elisabeth, daughter of the Archpriest K. P. Nevitzki, and he was ordained priest on the 12th of December 1855. Appointed as assistant priest at Saint Andrew's Cathedral, Kronstadt, when he entered it for the first time he recognized it as the church he had seen in his dream; and there, first as curate, and afterwards as rector, he served throughout the fifty-three years of his ministry. Cherishing a lofty ideal of the priestly vocation, he continued nightly to study and pray that he might perfect himself in it, while during the day he devoted himself to the many poor of his parish.

The inhabitants of Kronstadt, a naval base situated on an island at the mouth of the Neva, not far from Saint Petersburg, were in 1855 drawn largely from the very worst elements of the population of the capital, and much of the place was a festering sore of sin and filth, of poverty and misery, of disease and starvation. Father John, whose predecessors, apparently, had hardly even dared to penetrate the worst parts of the town, spent much of his time there,

striving to heal bodies and souls alike, attracting to himself first the children, and then, through them, their parents. Often he found no time to eat until the late evening, and even then he would sometimes be summoned out again, and not return before the small hours; he gave away his own shoes, he gave away the housekeeping money: his wife gradually accustomed herself to it, and finally became something like his keeper.

His Fame Spreads

HE LIVED in a sparsely furnished cottage on the seaboard. Soon he found he was unable to go out of his house without being attended by a crowd, which would wait at his door or the door of the cathedral, and would follow him through the streets. Early each morning, after a period of intense prayer before an icon at home, he would go to church - as usual, through a crowd - and there sing the liturgy in a deep, clear, and powerful voice. He usually celebrated the Eucharist or at least communicated every day. Afterwards he would make twelve or fifteen sick calls, fulfill teaching engagements, and often go into Saint Petersburg for more of the same. His renown as a powerful intercessor and healer grew very rapidly, and spread throughout the country. He continually received appeals for spiritual and material assistance, none of which went unanswered. He received scores of visitors daily, and hundreds of letters, while the crowds pressed round him wherever he appeared - in the streets of Kronstadt or Saint Petersburg, at the railway stations, everywhere. In summer he would talk with the poor in the fields outside the town, sitting on the grass, with the children by him, and the adults standing or sitting around. Rich and poor, he was ready to help all, and he treated all alike - often some important personage, with whom he had an appointment, had to wait for Father John who was delayed by answering the urgent appeals of the crowds of poor people. It is not surprising to learn that he habitually walked fast!

In 1857 he was invited to teach the scripture in the municipal school at Kronstadt, and he accepted with joy, for he loved children, and always took great pains with them. He was much loved in return by his pupils - some delightful anecdotes survive on this score, which unfortunately we have not the space to recount - and on this he based his authority; he never needed to use either severity or mockery. The bible, he held, should not be taught just like any other subject, but with faith and love, to awaken faith and love in others, and the measure of his own success may be estimated from the fact that, while he never insisted that his pupils must go to church, they all went when he celebrated. When his fame had spread and he was constantly visiting Saint Petersburg, then to his own, his colleagues and pupils great regret, he was forced to abandon his teaching post. Another object of Father John's concern and labor was the removal of the widespread poverty that afflicted Kronstadt. At first he gave these beggars money for food and shelter, but he soon came to see that this was not merely useless, but positively harmful. In 1868 he conceived the idea of founding a House of Industry, comprising a number of workshops, a dormitory, a refectory, a dispensary, and a primary school. He formed a committee, and appealed for funds. His appeal was answered by rich and poor from all over Russia, and the House of Industry was founded in 1873. Father John administered a total of over \$25,000 a year in numerous charities, half of it in Kronstadt.

How did he manage to do it all? He had the ability - acquired, no doubt, by prayer and patience - to snatch a short period of deep sleep wherever and whenever he got the chance; and he had a great love of the early morning hours for prayer and meditation, but his early morning

walks in his garden were soon discovered, and then - farewell to solitude! Often, indeed, he could barely save half-an-hour for his own prayers. On the rare occasions when he was able to pass a whole day in Kronstadt he liked to walk in the streets toward midnight, praying and meditating: if he saw a light, however, he would knock - often to comfort someone ill or dying, but just as ready to join in laughter and cheerful conversation, if that should be what he found. It is not surprising that he had moments of depression through sheer fatigue; he had been beset in the same way in his student days, then later he overcame them, as he overcame all, as he achieved all, by prayer and, above all, by devout reception of the holy communion.

He himself declared that only by partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ every day was he able to accomplish tasks, otherwise beyond human powers. When he came to partake of the Blessed Mysteries he would be utterly transfigured: all weariness, all burden of trouble and sorrow gone, and every line of his face reflecting an extraordinary spiritual joy, heavenly peace, and a great feeling of strength and power. Is it any wonder that his church was packed to the doors, Sundays and weekdays alike? The great cathedral of Saint Andrew at Kronstadt could hold seven thousand people, and when Father John celebrated the liturgy it was so crowded that, as the Russian saying has it, "even an apple could not have found room to fall to the ground".

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Not Everyone Loved His Conservatism

LOVED ALIKE by rich and poor, by nobleman and beggar, Father John was not, however, universally popular. There were those who looked upon him and his works with jealousy and ill will, particularly among clergy and civil servants there were many who disliked him. On the other hand, towards the end of his life, his conservatism, authoritative and outspoken, on matters of principle, both theological and political, aroused the bitter enmity of the liberal pseudo-intellectuals who were zealously preparing the way for the overthrow of both church and monarchy, and with them of every public and private virtue, and the establishment of an ungodly and inhuman tyranny. They could not but hate one who saw them for what they were, who preached Christianity so powerfully and persuasively, and whose own life was an example of it far more persuasive than any preaching.

For his part, Father John during his last years constantly predicted the approach of terrible events in Russia, and openly denounced those who with increasing success were leading people astray, above all those in positions of authority. In all his sermons of 1907 he spoke of the terrible judgment of God, and urged the **need of repentance** and a **return to common sense**, declaring that if Russia ceased to be **Holy Russia**, she would become nothing more than a mere horde of tribal savages, intent upon destroying each other.

Father John's health began to decline in 1906, and towards the end of 1908 he became very ill, and was unable to get any rest from his sufferings, except during his daily liturgy, which he continued to celebrate as long as possible, doing so for the last time on 10 December. He still communicated daily, but on 18 December he fell into a coma, from which, however, he awoke the following evening, much afflicted in his soul. Having with great difficulty received communion for the last time, he died at twenty minutes to seven on the morning of the 20th of December.

His body was taken solemnly to Saint Petersburg, and there interred in the great church of the convent of Saint John, which he had founded. The whole route of the procession, from Kronstadt to Oranienbaum, and again from the Baltic station to the convent, was lined by weeping crowds, mourning the loss of their father and intercessor; even the choir of the imperial guard, who sang the requiem, were unable to restrain their tears. At least sixty thousand people attended the funeral.

He who in this life cared so much for his children, and interceded for them so powerfully, has not abandoned them: the stream of healing, both bodily and spiritual, through his prayers, has not ceased to flow. During the few years between his death and the catastrophe of the Communist revolution, which he foretold, pilgrims journeyed to his tomb. Now the pilgrims come in even greater numbers.

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