

ST. INNOCENT ORTHODOX CHURCH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Glorifying The Saints

"How monotonously alike all the great tyrants and conquerors have been; how gloriously different are the saints." — C.S. Lewis



ISSUE 2, OCTOBER 13, 2018

October 1

Protection (Pokrov) of
The Most-Holy Theotokos

October 6

St. Innocent of Alaska,
Metropolitan of Moscow;

Holy Apostle Thomas

October 7

Synaxis All Saints of Alaska

October 18

Holy Apostle And Evangelist Luke

October 22

Kazan' Icon of Theotokos

October 26

Great Martyr Demetrius

Dear St. Innocent Orthodox Church Family,

In October, the Orthodox Church venerates many saints including all saints of Alaska and North America. The Saints are an essential part of religious life. In fact, it has been said that fervent veneration of the Virgin Mary and the Saints is the soul of Orthodox piety.

October's newsletter is dedicated to a study of why we honor Saints and what role they play in the story of our salvation. It must be stated at the beginning that the only true "saint" or holy one (*Hagios*) is God Himself.

The Bible states, "For I am the Lord your God; you shall name yourselves holy and keep yourselves holy, because I am holy..." (Levit. 11:44; 19:2 and 20:7). Man becomes holy and "sainted" by participation in the holiness of God.

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT THE SAINTS *By Anthony M. Coniaris*

The Celebration of God's Salvation

IN HONORING THE SAINTS we celebrate God's accomplished work of salvation. Archbishop Paul of Finland writes, "In glorifying the saints' spiritual struggle and victory, the Church is in fact glorifying God's work of salvation, the work of the Holy Spirit; it experiences the salvation already accomplished in them, the goal towards which the members of the Church militant are still pressing on (Phil. 3:12,14)." Thus, by remembering the saints we celebrate what the Holy Spirit has done in their lives.

How greatly God honors our nature through the saints. Father John of Kronstadt, a saintly Russian priest, emphasized this when he wrote:

"How the Creator and Provider

of all has honored and adorned our nature! The saints shine with His light, they are hallowed by His grace, having conquered sin and washed away every impurity of body and spirit; they are glorious with His glory, they are incorruptible through His incorruption. Glory to God, Who has so honored, enlightened, and exalted our nature."

The saints show us what a glorious destiny we have in God. Through the glorious example of their lives, they point the way to our becoming "partakers of divine nature."

What is a Saint?

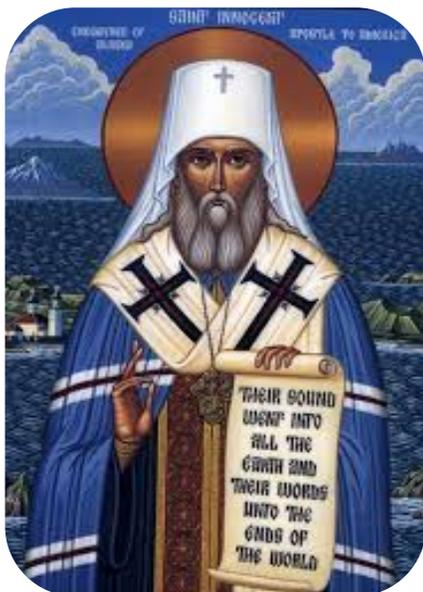
LET US SHARE SOME INSPIRING definitions of sainthood. A saint is one who makes

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Hero worship is part of human nature. Most of us want someone to look up to and admire. We need role models in our Christian faith. We grow to be like the people we admire. If the desire for holiness is to be encouraged, one must see, not only its perfection in Christ, but approximations to it in the Saints.

St. Innocent the Metropolitan of Moscow and Enlightener of the Aleuts, Apostle to the Americas



ST. INNOCENT Metropolitan of Moscow and Apostle to America and Siberia is commemorated on October 6. He was born in Irkutsk, Russia, in 1797. St. Innocent felt called by God to preach the Gospel "to the ends of the earth." So he spent most of his life traveling to remote regions. He went to the far northern forests of Siberia and taught the people there about Christ. He traveled to Alaska, which was at that time a territory of Russia. In the Aleutian Islands of Alaska, he learned the languages of six different native peoples and preached to them in their own languages. St. Innocent translated a Catechism (a book that teaches about the Orthodox faith) and the Gospel into the Aleut language. In 1833, he wrote a book in the Aleut language, *Indication of the Way to the Kingdom of Heaven*, which is considered to be "one of the finest works of Orthodox missionary activity." In 1859, he conducted the first Divine Liturgy in the Yakut language.

When he was a young man, St. Innocent began his service to God as a parish priest. When he became older he was selected to serve as Metropolitan of Moscow. He obeyed the will of God all his life. His favorite Scripture, which he requested to be preached at his own funeral, was Psalm 37:23 -- "The steps of a man are rightly ordered by the Lord".

God's goodness attractive. Saints are forgiven sinners living out their lives in the forgiveness God has given them. Saints are people who make it easier for others to believe in God.

A little girl said once as she looked at a saint portrayed in a stained glass window: "A saint is a Christian who lets God's light shine through."

St. Symeon the New Theologian says that the reason vigil lights are placed before the icons of the saints is to show that without the Light, Who is Christ, the Saints are nothing. It is only as the light of Christ shines on them that they become alive and resplendent.

A saint is one who is constantly conscious of being a sinner and rarely, if ever, conscious of being a saint. In fact, it has been said that there are two kinds of people in the world: sinners who think they are saints, and saints who know they are sinners. The most outstanding personalities in Orthodox spirituality, those who saw the light of God, never said they had reached that high level of spirituality. The people around them detected it from the distinct radiance they generated.

It has been said that when a saint gets to heaven, three things will surprise him. First, he will be surprised to see many he did not think would be there. Second, he will be surprised that some are not there whom he expected to see. Third, he will be surprised that he himself is there.

A saint is one who sees himself in the sins of others. A saint is one in whom Christ lives; one who opens his life to Christ and lives as Christ wills him to live. A saint is one who has been made actually what Baptism declares him to be, one set apart for God.

God's saints are not those who wear the biggest halos. They are ordinary people who go to work, pay taxes, talk to friends. But when God speaks, they obey.

God's saints are often afraid but they count on God's promise, "Fear not." They know they are weak, but they depend on His strength. They sin, but grieve over every lapse. They never feel they have attained, but constantly press on toward their goal (Phil. 3:14).

"The saints show the way and are forerunners. The world is not yet with them, so they often seem in the midst of the world's affairs to be preposterous. Yet they are impregnators of the world, vivifiers; and animators of potentialities of goodness which but for them would lie forever dormant" (William James, 1842-1910).

Saints are the most convincing answer to atheism and agnosticism. A saint is someone who shows us what the Christian life is really all about. A saint is a sinner who

keeps trying. Francis R. Line wrote these words entitled "A Saint?"

What made Francis a saint?

It was simple.

Love of God and love of neighbors –

That was all.

He lived the two great commandments.

He really loved.

He loved God.

With all his heart,

With all his mind,

With all his soul,

With all his strength.

As for his neighbors

He gave his whole life to them

In loving word and deed and service.

It is simple, being a saint.

There are only two rules.

It is simple

But it isn't easy.

Saints are people who have consecrated themselves wholly to strive to express in their daily lives the love of God as revealed in Jesus.

The Greek word for saint *hagios* comes from a root word that means not like anything else, different. Saints are different from the people of the world. They march to the tune of a different drummer. They are conformed to the will of God in Christ.

As members of the Body of Christ, the Church, saints are the hands of God by which He accomplishes His work in the world today. Even after their deaths they perform works of love as intercessors in heaven who pray for us.

After a Christian missionary surgeon had operated on an African woman for cataracts and restored her sight, she said to him as she was leaving, "Good-bye, God." The doctor hastily explained that he was not God only a poor weak servant of His. That he was-but the woman saw God in him. So, a saint is one who makes God real to people today.

After visiting the home where a saint had lived, a person said, "There was an aroma of God in that room that 200 years could not erase. I think I'm better because I visited there." A saint is "the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved" through whom Christ "spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of Him everywhere" (2 Cor. 2:15-16).

All of us are involved in the process of deification, i.e., becoming like God in Christ. The saints are those who,

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What We Believe About Saints (Continued)

having advanced closer to that goal, can help the rest of us through their example and prayers.

Listen to this beautiful definition of a saint as a mirror of Christ:

“Francis of Assisi was poor,
Frail in purse and body.
No excess possessions,
No surplus muscles or strength.
Plain sandals, rude cloak, rough cowl.
Not much to look at.

But
No one saw him when they looked.
They saw the one he reflected.
He was a mirror of Christ.”

– by Francis R. Line

A saint is a mirror who reflects not himself but Christ.

“Called to be Saints”

ST. PAUL WROTE to the Romans: “To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints ...” (Romans 1:7). To the Corinthians he wrote: “To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints” (1 Cor. 1:2). When Paul was writing to the Christians in Rome and Corinth, reminding them they are “called to be saints,” he was not writing to people likely to figure in stained-glass windows, but to a motley collection of shop-keepers, minor civil servants, converted prostitutes, prizefighters and slaves. These were the people he called God's “holy ones” – called to be like Christ their Lord, agents and instruments of His continuing work in the world. These were the saints.” And so, by God's grace, are we.

Every Christian is called to perfection and is capable of revealing the image of God hidden in him. But only a few become so transfigured through the Holy Spirit during their earthly life that they can be recognized as saints by other Christians and officially canonized as such by the Church. This should not draw our attention away from the fact that every baptized Christian is called to be a saint. In the New Testament the saints were not a spiritual elite but the whole body of Christians. That never meant that all Christians were regarded as having reached a sinless perfection. In that sense there are no saints in the New Testament, for even the best of Christians are far from perfect. The only saints the New Testament knows are forgiven sinners who are always ready to place their utter dependence on God's mercy

and grace.

Thus, there are the Saints, with a capital “S,” those officially recognized and canonized by the Church, and there are the saints with a small “s,” who are the whole body of Christians—you and I included. We, too, are called to be men and women in whom others can in some way meet the living Christ. We can appreciate our call to be saints when we realize that saints become saints not so much because of the unusual things they do but rather because of the unusual degree to which they give themselves to Christ. By our daily faithfulness to Christ, each of us is a saint in the making. Made in the image of God and baptized in the Trinity, every Christian has the potential of sainthood.

Fr. Kallistos Ware writes, “It must not for one moment be thought that there are no saints except those publicly honored as such. Those who are mentioned in the calendar form but a small fraction of the whole Communion of Saints; besides them there is a great host whose names are known to God alone, and these are venerated collectively on the Feast of All Saints (observed on the first Sunday after Pentecost).”

From Every Class and Occupation

SAINTS COME FROM EVERY class and occupation, every temperament and background. They show us how Christ can be imitated in everyone's life including our own. As we have models in business, science, homemaking, etc., so we have faith models. We have soldier-saints, scholar-saints, politician-saints, missionary--saints, parent-saints, praying-saints, healer-saints, worker-saints, and most important of all, sinner-saints. Saints are not perfect people: to be a saint is to be the best one can be by God's grace. That is why every saint is different and why every Christian can be one.

Fully Human

THE SAINTS were people who were just as human as we are. They were jealous, spiteful, scheming, lustful, often depressed and utterly discouraged. They did not walk through life with halos gleaming, with kindness and love streaming from them 24 hours a day. There were disagreements among them. St. Paul and St. Barnabas, for example, had a difference of opinion as to whether to take Mark along with them on a missionary journey. Their disagreement was strong enough to make them agree to go their separate ways. Writing to the saints at Corinth, St. Paul reminds them that some of them had been fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, thieves, covetous, extortioners... but now in Christ they were washed and sanctified, he tells them. Thanks be to Christ Who washes our soiled humanity and transforms it into an attractive image of Christ that serves as an inspiration to others.

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What We Believe About Saints (Continued)

" God's Family

ST. PAUL WROTE to the Ephesians: "So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God..." (Eph. 2:19). Every Christian has status. He or she belongs. We are fellow citizens with the Saints and members of the household of God! Christians should be taught from infancy to have the right kind of family pride: the kind that makes us want to live up to the family standard. The Head of our family is Christ Himself. Some of our brothers and sisters are the Virgin Mary (Theotokos), John the Baptist, the Apostles, St. Basil, St. Chrysostom and countless others. We belong to them, and they to us. It is a distinguished family tree.

A Christian does not walk alone as if sealed in a space capsule. We are members of God's family. As such, we must help and be helped by others. Orthodox Christianity does not espouse a narrowly individualistic "God-and-me" relationship. The Church is a family, God's family, in which we are concerned for one another. In the words of St. Paul: "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together" (1 Cor. 12:26).

The Russian theologian Alexis Khomiakov (1804-60) said, "We know that when one of us falls, he falls alone; but no one is saved alone. He is saved in the Church, as a member of her and in union with all her other members."

As members of the household of God, Orthodox Christians feel that they can call upon their brothers and sisters in the faith-the Saints-for family support. This they do through prayers, beseeching the prayers of the Saints in their behalf.

The late Fr. George Florovsky, eminent Orthodox theologian, wrote: "The final purpose of the Incarnation was that the Incarnate should have a 'body', which is the Church ... Christ is never alone. He is always the Head of His Body. In Orthodox theology and devotion alike, Christ is never separated from His Mother, and His 'friends', the Saints. The Redeemer and the redeemed belong together inseparably. In the daring phrase of St. John Chrysostom (inspired by Ephesians 1:23), Christ will be complete only when His Body, the Church, has been completed."

Speaking on the concept of the Church as the family and household of God, Nicolas Zernov wrote: "The Orthodox... regard the saints... as teachers and friends

who pray with them and assist them in their spiritual ascent. Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry was surrounded by disciples who did not prevent others from meeting Him, but on the contrary helped newcomers to find the Master. In the same manner fellowship with the saints facilitates communion with God, for their Christ-like character brings others nearer to the divine source of light and life."

The Heroes of Faith

AT YANKEE STADIUM, the home of the New York Yankees, there is a "Yankee Hall of Fame." One can spend a number of hours reading about all the great Yankee stars of the past. By putting on earphones one can hear their voices on recordings; telling among other things what their greatest thrills were as Yankee players.

God has a "Hall of Fame." In Hebrews chapter 11, He has listed some of the heroes and heroines of faith-men and women who trusted in God for their salvation. It is a thrilling chapter to read.

The Saints are in God's "Hall of Fame." They are the heroes of our faith. Carlyle said once, "Show me the man you honor, and I will show you the kind of man you are." It has been said that we are fresh out of heroes for our young people today. We are exalting punks. Saints make excellent heroes for children. They are powerful allies for parents and ideal heroes for children. It is for this reason that an Orthodox Christian is given the name of a saint at Baptism. In fact, the great St. John Chrysostom said, "Let us afford our children from the first an incentive to goodness from the name that we give them. Let none of us hasten to call his children after his forebears, his father and mother and grandfather and grandmother, but rather after the righteous-martyrs, bishops, apostles. Let one be called Peter, another John, another bear the name of one of the saints. Let the names of the saints enter our homes through the naming of our children."

It is not only the names but also the exemplary Christ-centered examples of the Saints that can enter our homes if parents will encourage children to learn about their patron saints. It is the custom among Orthodox to keep an icon of one's patron saint in one's room, to invoke his prayers and to celebrate the festival of one's patron saint as his/her Name Day. To many Orthodox this is a date even more important than one's actual birthday.

It is not just children who need heroes; adults also need them...

The full text of the article is here:

https://www.fatheralexander.org/booklets/english/saints_a_coniaris.htm

The Venerable Father Herman Elder And Wonderworker Of Alaska And All-America

Saint Herman came from a family of merchants of Serpukhov, a city of the Moscow Diocese. His name before he was tonsured, and his family name are not known. He had a great zeal for piety from youth, and at sixteen he entered monastic life.

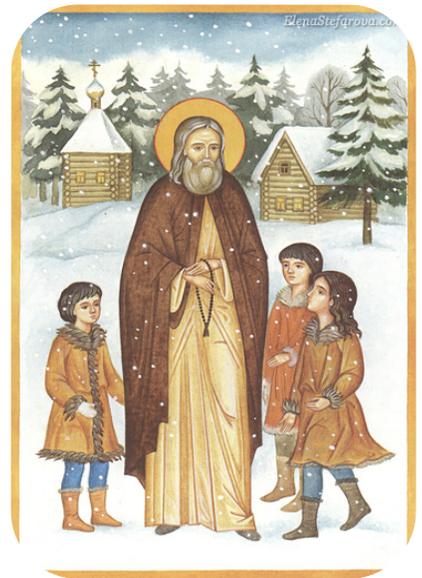
First, he entered the Trinity-Sergius Hermitage, which was located about 10 miles from Saint Petersburg. There he was miraculously cured from an awful abscess with the help of the Virgin Mary.

After his transfer to the Valaam Monastery, he went through the various obediences, and being well disposed toward every thing, has found his abode in the wilderness. On holy days, Father Herman would come to the monastery

and sing in the choir, 'O Sweetest Jesus, save us sinners. Most Holy Theotokos, Save us,' and tears would fall like hail from his eyes.

In 1793, Father Herman traveled with eight other monks to the Aleutian Islands. Russians had been exploring and trading there since at least 1740. Thus, he marks the first arrival of Orthodox Christian missionaries in North America. He built a school for the Aleutians, and he often defended them from the injustices of the Russian traders.

They knew him as *Apa*, which means "Grandfather." He lived most of his life as the sole resident of Spruce Island, a tiny wooded island near Kodiak Island.



Father Herman's Question

Once the Elder was invited aboard a frigate, which came from St Petersburg. The Captain of the frigate was a highly educated man, who had been sent to America by order of the Emperor to make an inspection of all the colonies. There were more than twenty-five officers with the Captain, and they also were educated men. In the company of this group sat a monk of a hermitage, small in stature and wearing very old clothes.

"Father Herman once asked them all: "Gentlemen, What do you love above all, and what will each of you wish for your happiness?" Various answers were offered ... Some desired wealth, others glory, some a beautiful wife, and still others a beautiful ship he would captain; and so forth in the same vein.

Fr. Herman replied, "It is not true, that all your various wishes can bring us to one conclusion—that each of you desires that which in his own understanding he considers the best, and which is most worthy of his love?"

They all answered, "Yes, that is so!"

He then continued, "Would you not say, Is not that which is best, above all, and surpassing all, and that which by preference is most worthy of love, the Very Lord, our Jesus Christ, who created us, adorned us with such ideals, gave life to all, sustains everything, nurtures and loves all, who is Himself Love and most beautiful of all men? Should we not then love God above every thing, desire Him more than anything, and search Him out?"

All said, "Why, yes! That's self-evident!"

Then the Elder asked, "But do you love God?"

They all answered, "Certainly, we love God. How can we not love God?"

St. Herman responded... "I a sinner have been trying for more than forty years to love God, I cannot say that I love Him completely."

He then began to demonstrate to them the way in which we should love God.

"If we love someone," he said, "we always remember them; we try to please them. Day and night our heart is concerned with the subject. Is that the way you gentlemen love God?"

Do you turn to Him often? Do you always remember Him? Do you always pray to Him and fulfill His holy commandments? They had to admit that they had not!

For our own good, and for our own fortune," concluded the Elder, "at least promise ourselves that from this very minute we will try to love God more than anything and to fulfill His Holy Will!"

Martyr Peter the Aleut

We know very little about Saint Peter, except that he was from Kodiak, and was arrested and put to death by the Spaniards in California because he refused to convert to Catholicism.

The 14 captured Aleuts were placed in prisons two to a cell. That evening, the Spaniards tried to persuade two Aleuts in the cell to accept the Catholic Faith. 'We are Christians,' the Aleuts replied, 'and we will not change our Faith.' Then the Spaniards began to torture them. At first, the one while his companion was a witness. But the martyr endured all and firmly repeated one thing: 'I am a Christian.' He died in such suffering, due to a loss of blood. The Catholics also promised to torture his comrade to death the next day.

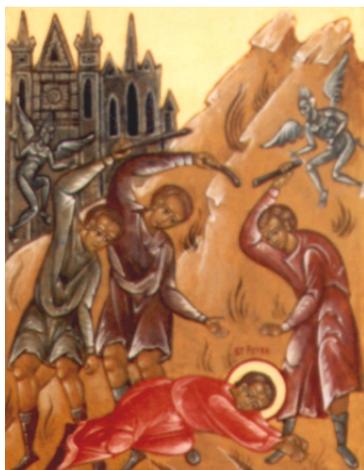
But that night an order was received from Monterey stating that the imprisoned Aleuts were to be released immediately. Therefore, in the morning all were sent to Monterey with the exception of the dead Aleut.

When this story had been told to Father Herman, he asked about the name of the martyred Aleut. Received the answer that the first name of Aleut was Peter, the Elder stood reverently before an icon, made the Sign of the Cross and said, 'Holy New Martyr Peter, pray to God for us!'

Both in his sufferings and in his steadfast confession of the Faith, Saint Peter is the equal of the martyrs of old, and also of the New Martyrs who have shone forth in more recent times. Now he rejoices with them in the heavenly Kingdom, glorifying God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, throughout all ages.

Full text: <https://oca.org/fs/st-peter-the-aleut>

Icon: Martyrdom of St. Peter the Aleut by Spanish Missionaries in California, 1815



Martyr Peter the Aleut

Hymns

Troparion – Tone 4

Today Alaska rejoices and America celebrates / for the New World has been sanctified by martyrdom. / Kodiak echoes with songs of thanksgiving, / Iliamna and Kenai observe the Festival of Faith. / The apostle and martyr Juvenaly is glorified / and Peter the Aleut is exalted by his voluntary sacrifice. / In their devotion and love for the Lord / they willingly endured persecution and death for the Truth. / Now in the Kingdom of Heaven they intercede for our souls.

Kontakion – Tone 4

Today Valaam joins Alaska in celebrating this joyous feast, / as her spiritual son Juvenaly embraces the New Martyr Peter with love. / Together they suffered for the Lord in America / and united the Old World with the New by their voluntary sacrifice. / Now forever they stand before the King of Glory and intercede for our souls.

St. Innocent Apostle of Americas Hymns

Troparion (Tone 4)

O Holy Father Innocent
 In obedience to the will of God
 You accepted dangers and tribulations
 Bringing many peoples to the knowledge of
 truth.
 You showed us the way,
 Now by your prayers help lead us into the
 Kingdom of Heaven.

Troparion (Tone 2)

You evangelized the northern people of
 America and Asia,
 Proclaiming the Gospel of Christ to the natives
 in their own tongues.
 O holy hierarch Father Innocent,
 Enlightener of Alaska and all America, whose
 ways were ordered by the Lord,
 Pray to Him for the salvation of our souls in His
 Heavenly Kingdom!

Kontakion (Tone 2)

A true celebration of the providence and grace
 of God
 Is your life, O holy father Innocent, Apostle to
 our land.
 In hardships and dangers you toiled for the
 Gospel's sake
 And God delivered and preserved you
 unharmed.
 From obscurity He highly exalted you as an
 example
 That the Lord truly guides a man in the way he
 should go.

St. Herman of Alaska Hymns

Troparion (Tone 7)

Joyful North Star of the Church of Christ,
 Guiding all people to the Heavenly
 Kingdom;
 Teacher and apostle of the True Faith;
 Intercessor and defender of the oppressed;
 Adornment of the Orthodox Church in
 America:
 Blessed Father Herman of Alaska,
 Pray to our Lord Jesus Christ
 For the salvation of our souls!

Troparion (Tone 4)

O blessed Father Herman of Alaska,
 North star of Christ's holy Church,
 The light of your holy life and great deeds
 Guides those who follow the Orthodox way.
 Together we lift high the Holy Cross
 You planted firmly in America.
 Let all behold and glorify Jesus Christ,
 Singing his holy Resurrection.

Kontakion (Tone 3)

The eternal light of Christ our Savior
 guided you, blessed Father Herman,
 on your evangelical journey to America
 to proclaim the Gospel of peace.
 Now you stand before the throne of glory;
 intercede for your land and its people:
 Peace for the world and salvation for our
 souls!

Blessed Mother Olga of Alaska

Mother Olga (February 3 1916 - November 8 1979) lived a very poor life of subsistence in the village of Kwethluk, Alaska, on the Kuskokwin River. She married the village postmaster and manager of the general store, who later became Archpriest Fr. Nicolai Michael. Though she was short and modest looking, she had a sense of authority others could feel in her presence. She was loving, yet firm; always busy, yet always available to help. She didn't talk a lot. She just would go ahead and do what was needed... in order to help anyone with just about anything... She used to make traditional fur boots and parkas as donations to other communities, which were trying to raise money.

This was in addition to making all of her husband's vestments, as well as clothing for her children and for others in her village. She demonstrated compassion on those poorer than her, and allowed a neglected neighbor child to "steal" food from her table. She frequently passed her children's clothes onto other needy families, telling her children not to say anything if they saw someone else wearing something that used to be theirs. At least 10% of her village became seminarians at St. Herman's Theological Seminary during her lifetime.

Fr. John Shimchick mentions that Matushka Olga "knew the hymns of many feast days, including Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Pascha in Yup'ik (her native language) by heart."

Mother Olga was a midwife, a significant aspect of her life and legacy. She was blessed with the gift of knowing if a woman was pregnant even before the woman herself knew it. God also enabled her to know to send some women into a town with a hospital to give birth, because they were to have medical complications, and this directive came far sooner than any of the signs of complications became evident.

Olga died in November, and the weather was harsh and cold as usual for that time of year. However, a warm south wind blew in, melting the river, enabling many friends to come unexpectedly. During the funeral procession to the graveyard, a flock of birds escorted overhead - another exceptional occurrence for November. The warmth also softened the ground making it easy for those who dug her grave. Yet after the last of her friends departed that evening, the cold, harsh winter returned, the birds left, the river re-froze and the ground hardened.



As Fr. Michael Oleska writes, "the cosmos still cooperates and participates in the worship the Real People offer to God." In Mother Olga's native tongue, the very word "Yup'ik... means... to be a 'real person,'" ... it means "an 'ideal' personality."

Matushka Olga's life was certainly lived as a good example of what Christ has commanded His followers to do. There are still people today who have clothing originally made by her. As stated in an issue of Jacob's Well, "Matushka Olga's 'ministry' may be considered a 'living icon' of the Gospel used on the Sunday of the Last Judgment (Matthew 25:31-36)." During her life, Matushka Olga mainly ministered to other women and children as well as priests - in connection with her husband, Fr. Nicolai Michael - and so far these are the same types of people she has continued to minister through her prayers.

Full text: [http://www.cjoc.ca/pdf/Vol-3-W-1 Kevin 071228.PDF](http://www.cjoc.ca/pdf/Vol-3-W-1%20Kevin%20071228.PDF)

Prayer to Mother (Matushka) Olga

O, blessed Matushka Olga, hear our prayer as we lift up our hearts to you, trusting in the power of your ceaseless intercession.

Even as you spread the warmth of your maternal love over the souls of the needy, abused, and broken, so warm our souls also, healing our pain and bringing us the love of Christ. Through your prayers, may we walk in the paths of peace, pleasing our Lord and glorifying His Name, and so finally fail not to enter into the joy of His eternal Kingdom, praising our God forever before His throne: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

DIY KIDS: THE SAINTS OF OCTOBER FALLING LEAVES CALENDAR

This is a fun way to keep track of, and learn about all the different saints we celebrate in October.

Supplies: Leaves, Icons of all the Saints celebrated in October (printed on card stock), a stick, scissors, a glue stick, string (I used bakers twine), and a hole punch.

To find a list of all the saints go to <https://oca.org/fs>

You can create the family's Saints leaves, too!



Family Discussions For October

Teaching Your Children About the Saints *by Sarah Wright*

In my experience, children tend to be fascinated by the saints. Babies and toddlers love to kiss icons, young children enjoy picture books depicting their lives, and older children and teens find inspiration in their faith. Here are a few things that I, as a mother and Church school teacher, have found helpful:

1. *Take Children to Church*

When you are at church, point out the icons of the saints on the walls and the iconostasis. Explain that the icons of Christ and the Theotokos are always at the front, as well as those of St. John the Baptist and



the patron saint of the church. Help them pick out icons depicting feasts that they know. See if they can find an icon of the saint they are named after. Point out the hymn for the saint who is being remembered that day. If your church prints a description of that saint's life in the bulletin, take it home and read it together at dinner. Sing, chant, or read the hymn for the saint again.

2. *Listen to the Saint of the Day Feature*

Ancient Faith Radio has a great featured podcast called the [Saint of the Day](#). This very brief (usually 2-5 minute) feature reads the life of the saint of the day. I have learned so much by listening to it daily! Your family could listen together at a set time each day—perhaps [Morning](#) or [Evening Prayers](#) or at dinner. Try to ask questions and have a discussion afterward.

3. *Read Children's Books*

There are so many great picture books about the lives of the saints. Consider purchasing a few to add to your family's library. Or, perhaps other families at your church could start a book exchange program. A few of our favorite books are: [Saint George and The Dragon](#)

[The Ravens of Farne: A Tale of Saint Cuthbert](#)

[The Life of Saint Brigid: Abbess of Kildare](#)

[The Story of Mary, the Mother of God](#)

4. *Celebrate Name Days*

Make a big deal about your child's name day. (In the Orthodox Church, each child is given the name of a saint with whom they have a special connection throughout their life.) I've written more extensively about ideas for celebrating a name day [here](#). Help your child learn more about their saint and develop this relationship.

5. *Fill the House with Icons*

Each Orthodox home is to be a "Little Church." One simple yet profound way to do this is to have many icons around the home and in the [icon corner](#). Let your children see and venerate the icons, tell them the stories of those saints, ask for their prayers. If our homes are filled with pictures of our earthly families, shouldn't they also be filled with images of our spiritual family? As we strive to raise our children in the faith, let us introduce them to the saints who have gone before. Then, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us press on toward the prize—Christ Jesus. [Full Text: http://www.orthodoxmotherhood.com/teaching-your-children-about-the-saints/](http://www.orthodoxmotherhood.com/teaching-your-children-about-the-saints/)

The Honored Guest at Every Wedding



In Old Russia, October was a month for weddings. They usually were arranged after the feast of the Intercession (Protection of the Most-Holy Theotokos).

The most famous Russian wedding pie is *Kurnik* (KOOR-nik), or “chicken coop”. It is a *pirog* (potpie), taken to the highest level of the art form. It is a creamy concoction of chicken and rice covered by a puff-pastry crust that shattered at the touch of a fork. Its round or oval shape makes it a potent symbol of eternity, wholeness and fertility, which is why *Kurnik* often takes center stage at any wedding when the bride and groom are each presented with their own decorated pie.

Kurnik varies from family to family -- it can be made with two crusts or just a top crust, some recipes call for blini-like pancakes to separate the layers of ingredients, it can be round or rectangular in shape and, when it comes to the crust, well, anything goes. It can be made with pie dough, savory pastry dough or puff pastry. *Kurnik* is a lot like Polish *kulebiak*, which is known as *kulebyaka* in Russian. So, salmon would be a good substitute for the chicken or sautéed cabbage for a vegetarian version of this recipe. If using chicken, you can use rotisserie chicken, boiled chicken, or canned chicken. If boiling your own chicken, save the boiling water to cook the rice in for added flavor.

Ingredients:

For the Cream Cheese Pastry:

- 4 ounces cold butter, cut into chunks
- 4 ounces cold cream cheese, cut into chunks
- 1 cup all-purpose flour

For the Chicken Pie Filling:

- 2 cups water or chicken broth
- 1 cup rinsed rice
- 2 large thinly sliced onions
- 8 ounces sliced mushrooms
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 cup half-and-half
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 3 cups cooked, diced chicken meat
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Black pepper to taste
- 4 finely chopped hard-cooked eggs
- 1 tablespoon chopped dill

For the Egg Wash:

- 1 egg yolk beaten with 1 tablespoon water

Using the steel blade of a food processor, place all ingredients into the work bowl. Process until dough forms a ball, 18 to 20 seconds. Chilling isn't necessary. When ready, roll on a lightly floured surface to the measurements of the pan you are going to cover, plus about 2 inches on each side. An ungreased 12x7-inch baking dish works well for this recipe.

Bring 2 cups water or chicken broth to a boil in a medium saucepan. If using water, add salt. Stir in rinsed and drained rice. Return to a boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer for 15 minutes or until all the liquid has been absorbed and rice is tender. Uncover, fluff with a fork and remove from heat.

Meanwhile, melt 2 tablespoons butter in a large skillet and add onions and mushrooms, and sauté until onions are tender and somewhat caramelized. Stir cornstarch into half-and-half and add to onions along with 1 cup of chicken broth, bring to a boil, stirring constantly, reduce heat and simmer 1 minute. Add chicken, parsley, salt and pepper and mix thoroughly. Remove from heat. In a medium bowl, mix the hard-cooked eggs with the dill and set aside.

Heat oven to 400 degrees. Spread 1/3 of the cooked rice into the bottom of the ungreased pan. Next layer 1/2 of the chicken mixture and then 1/2 of the egg-dill mixture. Spread on another 1/3 of the rice, the rest of the chicken mixture and the rest of the egg-dill mixture. Spread on the remaining rice. Place rolled-out pastry crust on top. Turn the edges of overhanging pastry to the inside. Brush pastry completely with egg-water wash. Then, using the back of a fork, make decorative crisscross marks all over. Cut a slit in the center for an air vent. Alternatively, you can make fancy leaves or bird shapes out of leftover pastry dough to decorate the top.

Place dish on a baking sheet to catch any drips, and bake 30 minutes or until golden and bubbly. Remove from oven and let rest 10 minutes. Serve hot.