

Opening Prayer

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

We venerate your holy icon, a loving Lord, and we ask that you forgive our sins, O. Christ our God. For of Your own will You ascended the Cross, in the flesh, to deliver them whom You have fashioned from the bondage of the enemy. Therefore, we cry out to You in thanksgiving: O Savior, You filled all things with joy when you came to save the world.

Dismissal Hymn
Sunday of Orthodoxy

The Glorification of Christ

A contemporary Coptic monk has said: “My doctor is Jesus Christ, my food is Jesus Christ, and my fuel is Jesus Christ.” The main theme of the spiritual diary of Saint John of Kronstadt, the 19th century Russian saint, is expressed through these words of his:

The Lord is everything to me. He is the strength of my heart and the light of my mind. He inclines my heart to everything good; He strengthens it; He also gives me good thoughts; He is my rest and my joy; He is my faith, hope, and love; He is my food and drink, my raiment, my dwelling place.

The icons, hymns, prayers, worship, and liturgy of the Orthodox Church unceasingly focus our attention on Christ, His person, saving work, and present lordship. One could say that the heart of Eastern Christianity, the inner mystery of its radiant beauty, the source of its true worship and for teaching, is the glorification of the living Christ through whom we know the Father and from whom we receive the Holy Spirit.

The first Sunday of Lent, the Sunday of Orthodoxy, is an impressive reminder of the centrality of Christ in the Orthodox Church. This Sunday is a spiritual feast during which Orthodox Christians reaffirm their confession of faith in Christ and His saving work.

It is a day when we left that Christ in praise and glorification. The hymns and prayers of this Sunday echo three related themes:

1. The fervent expectation of the old testament prophets and righteous people for the coming of Christ.

2. The incarnation of Christ, that is, the real presence of Christ in history, in the Church and in our personal lives.
3. The corporate joy of the Church in confessing, proclaiming, and glorifying Christ and His lordship overall.

Some of the hymns for this Sunday express the joyous glorification of Christ as follows:

Rejoice, O honored prophets,
Firm and unshaken pillars of faith,
Who proclaimed aright the Law of the Lord
You served as messengers of the New Covenant of Christ.
Now, dwelling in heaven, pray to Him for peace in the world
and for the salvation of our souls.

Vesper hymn
Sunday of Orthodoxy

Leaping with joy, let us and all the faithful cry out today:
How Marvelous are Your works, O Christ! How great is Your power!
You have brought about our harmony and have made us of one mind.
O Lord, Who loves all people, the Church rejoices in You,
Her Bridegroom and her Founder,
for by Your divine will You have delivered her from error and by Your precious
Blood You have betrothed her to Yourself.

Matin Hymns
Sunday of Orthodoxy

Read John 1:43-51, which is the Gospel reading for the Sunday of Orthodoxy.

What is the title of this passage in your New Testament?

What did Philip tell Nathaniel (vs 45)?

Nathaniel said, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

What did Phillip reply (vs. 46)?

What was Nathaniel's confession upon recognizing Who Jesus was (vs 49)?

To Ponder

1. How can you yourself honor Christ?
2. How can a Christian family honor Christ?
3. How can a local parish honor Christ in its life and ministries?

The Triumph of Faith

The Sunday of Orthodoxy marks a historic event in the life of the Orthodox Church: the restoration of icons (843 AD) as an important way of living and expressing the Christian faith. This celebration was first held in Constantinople in 878 AD and has been commemorated ever since for over a thousand years as a crowning feast of the Orthodox people: "the triumph of Orthodoxy." A special observance on the Sunday of Orthodoxy is the procession of icons headed by the icon of Christ why all the hymn of this feast is chanted.

Read the opening prayer on the previous page which is the hymn of the Sunday of Orthodoxy and answer the following questions:

How do we express our faith in Christ according to the hymn?

We _____ Your holy icon, O loving Lord.

We ask that you _____ O Christ our God.

How is salvation described in this hymn?

Christ was pleased to _____ in the flesh.

Christ thus delivered humankind from _____ of Satan (the enemy).

Read Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-40, which is the Epistle reading for the Sunday of Orthodoxy.

What made Moses refused to become an Egyptian when he grew up (v 24)?

What two things did Moses decide by faith?

1. He preferred to _____ (v 25)
2. He reckoned that to _____ (v 26)

Lest some of the triumphs of faith accomplished by the Old Testament Kings, judges, and prophets which are striking to you (vss 33-37).

What was God's plan for them and for us (v 40)?

His purpose was _____

Read also Ephesians 2:19-22, a passage which tells about the family of God.

What are we now as believing Gentiles, that is Christians (v 19)?

We are now _____ and _____

We are built upon the foundation of _____ (vs 20)

The cornerstone is _____ (vs 20).

What is Christ continually doing (v 21)?

When is each of us part of God's people being built into His dwelling place (v 22)?

When we live in _____ with Christ.

1. Do you have an icon of Christ and of your patron saint? What do they mean to you?
2. How are you, your family, and your local parish a part of the continuing story of the triumph of faith celebrated on the Sunday of Orthodoxy?
3. How can the Sunday of Orthodoxy be a Sunday of true confession of faith and of true commitment to Christ for you?

Closing Prayer

The grace of truth has shown upon us.

The mysteries prefigured in the days of old are now fulfilled.

Behold, the Church becomes a true ark of the covenant.

Clothed with the icon of the incarnate Christ, it bears a beauty that surpasses all things earthly and abides in the Orthodox Faith.

Let us hold fast to the icon of Christ whom we worship and let us not be led astray. Our Glory is the icon of the Word made flesh which we venerate.

Let us kiss it with fervent faith and let us cry out:

O Lord our God, save Your people and bless your heritage." Amen.

Vesper Hymn
Sunday of Orthodoxy