

Orthopraxis

By Archpriest Basil Rhodes

When NOT to Move About During the Divine Liturgy

We should avoid walking around the church unless absolutely necessary, especially at the most important points in the Liturgy, e.g. during the Little Entrance (i.e. when the Holy Gospel is brought out of the Altar); during the reading of the Epistle or Gospel, during the Homily (Sermon), during the Cherubic Hymn; of course, during the Eucharistic Canon, beginning with the deacon's (or priest's) exclamation: "Let us stand aright, let us stand with fear let us attend! ..." until the ending of that section, which is the singing of "It is truly meet..." ; during the Lord's Prayer; and during Holy Communion.

Focus on the Faith

By Fr David Moser - St Seraphim Orthodox Church - Boise, Idaho

Is Jesus Your Personal Savior?

Coming from a Protestant background, I was always taught to think of Jesus as my "personal Savior." Is this view based on scripture and Christian tradition? What is the relationship of the individual believer to Jesus? How does it work?

I come from a strong evangelical Protestant background and the idea of Jesus Christ as my personal Savior is strong in my upbringing. I think the Protestant emphasis comes from the recognition that just a simple acknowledgment of Jesus as Messiah or as Son of God or even as the Accomplisher of Salvation is not enough, but that there must also be some type of commitment involved.

In the Orthodox Church the understanding (of our relationship with Jesus Christ) is much more organic than in the Protestant confessions. In Protestantism, the individual is saved by a personal (meaning relating to me alone) action of God, and the Church is the collection of all of those

saved individuals. Salvation is an individual state, according to this view. The Orthodox Faith teaches us that salvation is not individual but corporate - the whole Church is saved together and apart from the Church we cannot be saved. The conversion experience as a "saving act" is not a part of Orthodox faith - rather this conversion experience (accomplished by baptism, by the way) is only the door into the saving ark of the Church. Jesus by His death and (more importantly) resurrection has defeated sin death and the devil and has unlocked the door to paradise (it had been closed against fallen man and guarded by an angel with a flaming sword) and leads us in. Will we follow? - that is what "salvation" is all about; following Christ into paradise.

The words "individual" and "personal" bring up another interesting and important aspect. Within Orthodox teaching we can say that Jesus is our personal Savior in that He takes individuals (a being that is independent and separated from all others) and makes them persons (a separate being that is united to other beings in a larger whole, in this case the Church) This contrast between individuals and persons is a little bit of an extrapolation from the doctrine of the Trinity. We worship One God (individual) in three persons. Similarly there is only One Church (individual) which is made of many persons. The emphasis on individuality in western and especially American culture is in this sense anti-Christian and derives from an incorrect understanding of the Church which is the result of the reformation in Western Europe and the resulting theology which had to justify salvation apart from the Church. We must remember that salvation is corporate - the whole Church is saved together and will be presented as a single entity as the Bride of Christ (there is only one Bride - Jesus is not a polygamist) at the second coming. Our individual judgment is not whether we are saved or not, but rather we are part of the Church and following Christ. If we are part of the Church following Christ then we are saved along with the whole Church but if we cease to follow Christ and separate ourselves from the Church by placing our own judgment and will as higher and more important than that of the Church, then we are not saved because we have "jumped out of the ark".

Lives of the Saints

October 10

Our Venerable Father Arsenios of Cappadocia, the Wonderworker (1924)

“Cappadocia (in eastern Turkey) is virtually devoid of Christians now, but in 1840, when St Arsenios was born there, there were still vital Orthodox communities. He became a monk and was sent to his native town, Farasa, to serve the people. He became known as a mighty intercessor before God, praying for all who came to him, Muslims as well as Christians. His countless miracles of healing became known throughout Cappadocia; those who could not come to see him would sometimes send articles of clothing for him to pray over. He became known as Hadjefendis, a Muslim term of honour for pilgrims, because he made pilgrimage to the Holy Land every ten years on foot. He never accepted any gifts in return for his prayers and healings, saying ‘Our faith is not for sale!’

“He concealed his holiness as much as he could beneath a rough and sharp-tempered exterior. If anyone expressed admiration for him, he would reply "So you think I'm a saint? I'm only a sinner worse than you. Don't you see that I even lose my temper? The miracles you see are done by Christ. I do no more than lift up my hands and pray to him." But as the Scriptures say, the prayers of a righteous man avail much, and when St Arsenios lifted up his hands, wonders often followed.

“He lived in a small cell with an earthen floor, fasted often and was in the habit of shutting himself in his cell for at least two whole days every week to devote himself entirely to prayer.

“Father Arsenios predicted the expulsion of the Greeks from Asia Minor before it happened, and organized his flock for departure. When the expulsion order came in 1924, the aged Saint led his faithful on a 400-mile journey across Turkey on foot. He had foretold that he would only live forty days after reaching Greece, and this came to pass. His last words were "The soul, the soul, take care of it more than the flesh, which will return to earth and be eaten by worms!" Two days later, on November 10, 1924, he died in peace at the age of eighty-three. Since 1970, many apparitions and miracles have occurred near his

holy relics, which reside in the Monastery of Souroti near Thessalonica. He was officially glorified by the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 1986.”

Source:

The primary source for the life of St Arsenios is "Saint Arsenios the Cappadocian," compiled by Elder Paΐsios of the Holy Mountain, who was baptized as an infant by the Saint.

October 11

Holy Apostle Philip, One of the Seven Deacons

He was married and had four daughters, virgins consecrated to Christ, each of whom was granted the gift of prophecy (Acts 21). When the Apostles first appointed deacons, Philip was chosen along with St Stephen and five others (Acts 6). He not only served the poor and widows, but was a powerful preacher of the Gospel: Simon the Magician was baptised after seeing his miracles, and it was St Philip who baptised the eunuch of Queen Candace of Ethiopia. In later life he was made a bishop, and reposed in peace.

Synaxis of the Holy Elders (*Startsi*) of Optina Monastery

Commemorated today are our holy fathers Moses, Antony, Leonid(Lev), Macarius, Hilarion, Ambrose, Anatolius I, Isaac I, Joseph, Barsanuphius, Anatolius the Younger, Nectarius, Nikon the Confessor, and Hieromartyr Isaac the Younger. Hieromartyr Isaac was shot by the Bolsheviks on December 26 1937.

This feast commemorates a few of the holy Fathers who made the Optina Hermitage (Pustyn) a focus for the powerful renewal movement that spread through the Church in Russia beginning early in the nineteenth century, and continuing up to (and even into) the atheist persecutions of the twentieth century. Saint Paisius Velichkovsky (November 15) was powerfully influential in bringing the almost-lost hesychastic tradition of Orthodox spirituality to Russia in the eighteenth century, and his labors found in Optina Monastery a 'headquarters' from which they spread throughout the Russian land. The monastery itself had been in existence since at least the sixteenth century, but had fallen into decay through the anti-monastic policies of

Catherine II and other modernizing rulers. Around 1790, Metropolitan Platon of Moscow undertook a mission to restore and revive the monastery in the tradition set forth by St Paisius. By the early 1800s the monastery (located about 80 miles from Moscow) had become a beacon of Orthodox spirituality, partly through their publication of Orthodox spiritual texts, but more importantly through the lineage of divinely-enlightened spiritual fathers (startsi, plural of starets) who served as guides to those, noble and peasant, who flocked to the monastery for their holy counsel. The fathers aroused some controversy in their own day; a few critics (some of them from other monasteries) disapproved of their allowing the Jesus Prayer to become widely-known among the people, fearing that it would give rise to spiritual delusion (prelest). For a wonderful depiction of the deep influence of the Jesus Prayer on Russian life during this period, read the anonymously-written *Way of a Pilgrim*.

With the coming of the Russian Revolution in 1917, the monastery was officially shut down, but some of the Fathers were able to keep it running for a time as an 'agricultural legion'. Over the years, most of the Fathers were dispersed, to die in exile, in prison camps, or by the firing squad. Many of them are known to have continued to function as startsi to their spiritual children, despite great danger and hardship, for the remainder of their time on earth.

Commemoration of the Optina startsi was approved by the Synod of the Russian Church Abroad in 1990, and by the Moscow Patriarchate in 1996. The Optina Monastery itself was officially re-established in 1987.

October 2 & 3 Festival

This is it!
Come help to make it a success. Come play and have fun!