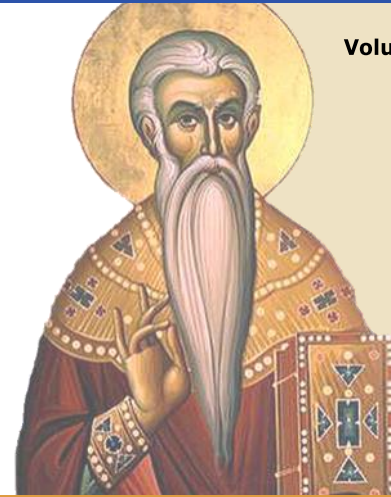


# *in* Touch

Volume 32, Issue 6

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## Completion of the Entry Portico!

Lord, You know that men are flesh and blood; forgive them their sins and pour out Your blessing on all. — St. Haralambos

# Entry Portico



On Bright Monday, May 6, after seven months of construction, we were happy to witness the placement of the dome on the top of our Entry Portico. What a wonderful difference it has made to our building, easily visible from Pinnacle Peak Road.

A wonderful evening dinner-dance was held on Saturday, May 11, to celebrate the completion of the Portico. A delicious dinner catered by John Mitchell, together with dancing to live music by "Bobby" made for a memorable evening. Thanks to Anna Kinniburgh for her tireless efforts chairing the Portico project, and to the many donors who offered their support!





## Holy Pentecost

*“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. <sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:1-4)*

Even the well-known saying, “A picture is worth 1,000 words” can only catch a brief moment of the miraculous day of Pentecost. A short video clip would quickly have gone viral, showing flames from heaven resting over the heads of the disciples, then hearing them speak in a variety of languages! But with the onset of AI (Artificial Intelligence) and computer graphics of today, such a video would just as quickly be labeled a fake, too far-fetched to be real and believable.

How do we trust Holy Scripture, then? What do we say to those who say it’s “old news,” “unbelievable,” and “impossible to prove?” We could start, in all seriousness, by agreeing with those statements: it really is old news, and the events truly unbelievable (even according to the Apostles!), and yes, impossible to prove.

But as believers today, we can’t stop there. We may not have been eye-witnesses, but that doesn’t

mean there were no eye-witnesses; of course there were! The Scriptures were written by those eye-witnesses! Why not believe them?

As believers, we can rightly respond, “Can you prove to me these events in Holy Scripture did not happen?” Obviously, they cannot.

Thank God that “impossible” miracles occur, things that are beyond our understanding, that occur outside the laws of science

and nature! How would God, who created everything from nothing, truly be God if He could not make the impossible happen?

*Thank God that “impossible” miracles occur, things that are beyond our understanding,*



Holy Scriptures tell God’s story, from the creation to the birth of Jesus Christ, God-become-Man, to His death, resurrection, Ascension into heaven, and yes, Holy Pentecost, the descent of the Holy Spirit, enlightening and strengthening the Apostles to begin preaching Jesus Christ and His Resurrection

throughout the world.

It is an unbelievable story, yet one that I truly believe. I can rightly say that, without the descent of the Holy Spirit, I would likely not be a believer, because this is the way God chose for His truth to be spread throughout the world.

Let us all celebrate our belief in the unbelievable!



**St. Haralambos  
Greek Orthodox  
Church**

www.stharalambos.org

**Rev. Michael Pallad**

### Sunday Worship

Matins: 8:45 a.m.  
Divine Liturgy: 10 a.m.

[Services live online](#)

### Office

623-486-8665  
7950 W. Pinnacle Peak Rd., Peoria, AZ 85383  
Office@StHaralambosAZ.com  
FrMichael@StHaralambosAZ.com

### Hours

Monday - Friday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

### Parish Council

Cynthia Bekiaris  
Harry Bekiaris  
Deborah Chionchio  
Angie Cholas  
Virginia Dent  
Dan Teska

Vivian Teska  
Solomon Woldesilassie  
Mary Wyszmierski  
Ray Wyszmierski  
Linda Zakas

## Parish Council News

By Ray Wysmierski, President

We are now past Pascha and looking forward to the new year.

At the General Assembly I called for volunteers to assist with our parish strategic vision. So far, I have not been contacted by anyone. This is a very simple process in order to document what we plan for our parish over the next 5-10 years.

We are also seeking volunteers for a parish festival committee; these events cannot take place without YOUR help. This is your parish too. Please take a moment to reflect on what you can possibly help with, either the festival committee or the strategic vision committee.

If we want to be a vibrant parish, please consider putting forth your time to help us. Remember, the council can't do it all and effectively manage our parish. We are finally moving financially in the right

direction, thanks to our treasurer Cynthia Bekiaris, who is making investments with our accounts to maximize the return on the investments.

Also consider a run for council as we will have four open seats, it's not one or two who manage the church business however, the entire council. Please consider a once-a-month meeting for 2 hours. All the heavy lifting (projects) are complete so it will be relatively easy.

As always we want our church to grow, we have started with the newly baptized and chrismated members, there are still too many empty seats, let's get them filled. All of you are evangelists, the information below may help you explain our faith.

Please see the article written by Fredica Mathews-Green, Our faith and how we practice it, (pages 8-10). So if you wonder why there are so many different Orthodox Churches, this may help you understand.

### Birthdays



Rebecca Bryson (4)  
George Theoharatos (6)  
Edna Nicely (7)  
Nile Solomon (15)  
Harry Bekiaris (17)  
Stavroula Dodd (18)  
Niat Solomon (18)  
Maria Conklin (19)  
Duane Schepers (22)  
Eleni Teska (23)  
Andreanna Zafiropoulos (25)  
Madelyn Pritchard (27)  
Anna Kinniburgh (29)  
Bereket Russom (29)  
Nadia Schepers (30)

If you don't see your name, or those of family members, and would like to be included on the monthly birthday listing, please send the information to the church office.

## Stewardship

We ask and encourage all our parish families to send in the Stewardship form each year, together with their offerings of time, talents and treasure. If Saint Haralambos Church is the church you regularly attend, please consider becoming a steward, one who not only supports the church financially, but also with involvement in parish ministries and activities.

There are no Membership Dues in the Orthodox Church, there is no required minimum or maximum for offerings. Our offerings show our care for the continued functioning of our Church. In addition, being a parish steward fulfills the Archdiocese requirements of being a Member in Good Standing, allowing you to serve as godparents and sponsors for Orthodox sacraments.

Our financial contributions should be a percentage of our financial resources. This continues the biblical teaching on deciding an appropriate amount each year. It is fair because percentage giving is not a fixed amount applicable to all families, and it is biblical because of the teaching of the tithe, or a 10% gift back to the Church. Above all, our giving should be cheerfully given, recognizing our desire - not simply obligation - to give back to God a portion of our blessings we receive from Him.

The 2024 Stewardship brochures are available in the Narthex and the church office. Please print legibly, and enter your contributions of time, talents and treasure. Completed brochures can be mailed to the office or dropped off on Sundays.

## St. Anna's Philoptochos Society

By Anna Kinniburgh, President

Christ is Risen

The month of May was a wonderful month with the Resurrection of Christ and the completion of the long awaited Portico.

Our National Ministry commitments for April, May and June, were to:

- Sisterhood of St. Basil Academy.
- International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC)

- 75TH Anniversary founders Fund
- Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF)
- Total \$275

Thank you for helping us with Sunday's coffee hour with your donations, which help us with these costs and purchasing our kitchen supplies

Have a Safe and Healthy Summer.



## Portico Project

By Anna Kinniburgh

With God's help and prayers we were finally able to bless and celebrate the long waited Portico.

In January of 2021 I had an Idea on how we could make the building which is our church look like an Orthodox place of worship.

We had made the inside look Beautiful with painting the walls by the very talented Kay Fulghum. It took her a long time to paint the white walls to what we see now. All because of her dedication and patience.

The icons around the church were donations by dedicated Parishioners.

Some of those donations that were left over will be used for Icons that will be used in the Narthex area which we will see soon. All this was called a beautification project and the Portico was an extension of the project.

Starting with an idea to build the Portico I contacted an architect who designed it from pictures of other Orthodox churches in Greece. With the drafts in hand we started searching for contractors to get estimate costs. All this was presented to the Spring General Assembly of 2022 informing all in attendance of all, that the costs will be paid by donations.

I contacted 6 different contractors and got estimates ranging from \$125,000 to \$566,000. The contractor we chose is called AX3 and it cost us \$172,312

The Architect and the city of Peoria cost \$10,013.64, landscaping \$2,800 and landscaping labor \$900 for a total of \$186,025.64

Donations were raised but we are still short by \$7,951. Hopefully we will have additional donations for final payment to the contractor.

I like to thank everyone that help make this Beautiful Entrance possible.

On Saturday May 11th we had a Fund Raising Dinner. To make it a success a committee was formed.

- Cynthia Bekiaris (Pricing and flyers)
- Angie Cholas (Room and table decorations)
- Linda Zakas (Registration)
- Voula Dodd (Invitations)
- Elpida Evangelinos (Desserts)
- Presbyteria Kristin (Donating Food Baskets)

I would like to thank Virginia Dent for her support and monetary help

Cynthia and Harry Bekiaris for their Wine Donations

Angie Cholas and Nardos for their flower and balloon donations

Stella Pagos for bringing in table linens and setting tables.

Father Michael and Vivian Teska for setting up the tables

Thank you all for your Help and support.



## Birthdays



Rebecca Bryson (4)  
 George Theoharatos (6)  
 Edna Nicely (7)  
 Nile Solomon (15)  
 Harry Bekiaris (17)  
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 Bereket Russom (29)  
 Nadia Schepers (30)

If you don't see your name, or those of family members, and would like to be included on the monthly birthday listing, please send the information to the church office.

## Sacraments

On Holy Saturday morning, May 4, we were blessed to celebrate the baptism of 11 parishioners and the chrismation of two during the Divine Liturgy. The baptisms took place under the Portico before the liturgy using our new adult baptistery, and the Chrismations took place during the liturgy. We welcome them all into the Holy Orthodox Christian faith, and pray that God grant them many years!



## Greeters

Thank You to our generous Greeters who attended and ushered services through Great Lent and Holy Week. Your gift of time and talent is a display of your abundant love for our Savior and an example to others of devotion and service to our Church. A special thank you to Lindsay Vardalos for her exceptional assistance.

The future of our church is brimming with possibilities! Please consider the honor of being a Greeter and a welcoming presence to all who enter our spiritual home.

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen,  
 Irene Nathanson

## 2024 Stewardship Families

Abbott, Demetra  
 Asfaha, Moges  
 Bachanos, Evan & Jewelie  
 Basha, Genti & Elda  
 Bastell, Rudy & Suad  
 Bekiaris, Harry & Cynthia  
 Berhe, Almaz & Mogos  
 Bruno-Doster, Jenny  
 Bryson, Tom & Joan  
 Carlson, Olga  
 Chionchio, Deborah  
 Cholas, Angie  
 Christian, Thalia  
 Christie, Paul & Patricia  
 Conklin, Tom & Maria  
 Cotton, John & Ali

Covault, Lloyd & Angela  
 Danielek, Michael & Chrissy  
 Deming, Janet  
 Dent, Virginia  
 Dodd, Stavroula  
 Evangelinos, Parry & Hope  
 Farr, Jeff and Judy  
 Finch, Dennis & Marina  
 Germenis, Dennis  
 Giannias, Elaine  
 Gryparis, Demetri & Magda  
 Hartsel, Barbara  
 Javaras, Harry  
 Jolly, Judith  
 Kinniburgh, Anna  
 Lafayette, Henry & Maria

Lazzelle, Estelle  
 Levendi, Mary  
 Mavridis, Christos  
 Meyer, Herman  
 Milonas, Nick & Jane  
 Nathanson, Alan & Irene  
 Pagos, Stella  
 Pallad, Fr. Michael & Kristin  
 Pappas, Irene  
 Raiciof, Catalina  
 Ratliff, Koula  
 Russom, Bereket  
 Sambol, Patricia  
 Servetas, Charlotte  
 Singleton, Melanie & Bryan  
 Frost

Surman, Dina  
 Tally, Katherine  
 Tesfay, Ocbai & Genet  
 Teska, Dan & Vivian  
 Theoharatos, George & Lisa  
 Thieke, James & Lucy Schouten  
 Tucker, Marvin & Eleni  
 Vardalos, Peter & Lindsay  
 Woldesilassi, Solomon & Lydia  
 Wysmierski, Ray & Mary  
 Yiannakopoulos, George & Helen  
 Zakas, Speros & Linda  
 Zaruba, Estelle

## Treasurer's Report

By Cynthia Bekiaris, Treasurer

What a glorious Pascha we had this year. We are truly blessed. Pascha provided us \$2,763.06 in profits and the Dinner Dance brought \$3,276.55 in profit.

Now that our structure is complete, our Portico project continues with remaining requirements by the City of Peoria. The cement curbing is finished and the gravel will be upgraded as required. Donations are still being taken to cover remaining cost overruns!

That's My Brick! Is an ongoing fundraiser, to assist with costs remaining on a few projects and upcoming church door repairs. Please go on the [www.stharalambos.org](http://www.stharalambos.org) website to place your order.

Stock donations are a great way to support our church and take advantage of an income tax deduction.

How does this work you ask?

- 1) You had purchased \$100 in stock
- 2) Over time it is now worth \$500
- 3) If you sell this stock you pay taxes on \$400 capital gain
- 4) However, if you donate the stock to our church a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, you would receive a \$500 tax deduction not just the \$100 originally purchased.

*This is a win-win opportunity!*

Please contact the church to assist with connecting you to our Wells Fargo advisor.

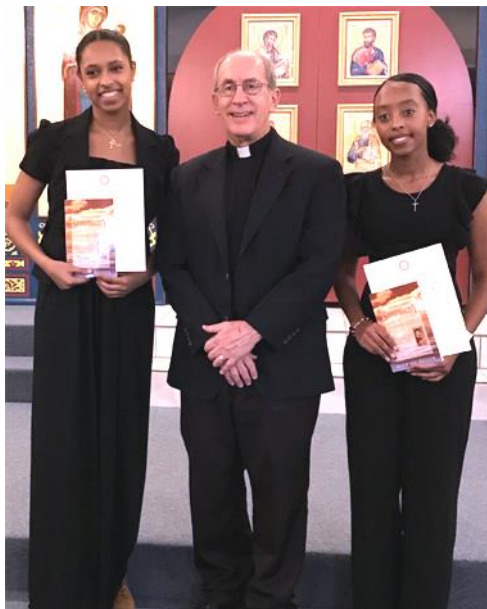
## Oratorical Festival

The St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival has provided Greek Orthodox teens, grades seven to twelve the opportunity to write and speak about their faith for forty years.

Two teen members of Saint Haralambos participated in the festival this year on both the parish and district levels. Nile Solomon and Bethel Samuel represented the parish senior division at the Southwest District festival in March at St. Katherine's in Chandler.

Both girls chose the topic dealing with natural disasters and how they would respond to someone who questions why God allows natural disasters to happen when we know God can intervene at any moment. IF God is all-knowing, all powerful and all-loving how can He allow evil things to happen? Each of them took a different unique approach to the topic.

Thank you Nile and Bethel for your hard work and heartfelt words. You inspire us!



## High School Graduations

This year we have two high school graduates who are going on to very big futures!

Yotham Moges has been a long time member of the St. Haralambos community. He has been active in Sunday School, St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival, serving on the altar and helping with the festival. Yotham has been very successful academically at Mountain Ridge High School and plans on attending the University of Arizona in the fall.

Bethel Samuel has also been a long time member of the community. She has been active in Sunday School, St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival, serving as a Myrrh Bearer during Holy Week, and helping with the festival. Several years she advanced to the both the District and Metropolis Levels of the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival. Bethel is a top graduate of North Phoenix Preparatory Academy with plans for next year to attend Barrett the Honors College at ASU majoring in Biological Sciences with a Pre-Med track.

We are so proud of you Yotham and Bethel as you are about to go make your mark on the world. Please know that you always have a home here, and that our prayers go with you.

# 12 Things I Wish I Knew

by Frederica Mathewes-Green (Edited)

Welcome to the Orthodox Church! There are a number of things about our worship that are different from the services of other churches, whether Roman Catholic, liturgical Protestant, or evangelical. In an effort to help alleviate confusion, here are twelve things I wish someone had explained to me the first time I visited an Orthodox church.

## 1. A Sense of Holiness

If you are from a Protestant or non-liturgical tradition, you may feel overwhelmed the minute you walk in the door of an Orthodox church. You will find yourself surrounded by a blaze of color in the priests' vestments and the icons that adorn the walls. The pungent odor of incense will assault your nose, possibly making you sneeze. Rich, deeply moving but unfamiliar music will fill your ears. All around you people will be doing things – lighting candles, kissing icons, making the sign of the cross, bowing, standing in prayer – everything but sitting still. To someone accustomed to four bare walls and a pulpit, all this may seem pretty strange.

It is important to remember that none of this is an end in itself. Everything we see, hear, smell, touch, taste or do in the Orthodox Church has one purpose and one purpose only: to lead us closer to God. Since God created us with physical bodies and senses, we believe He desires us to use our bodies and senses to grow closer to Him.

## 2. Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus

In the Orthodox tradition, the faithful stand through nearly the entire service. Really. In some Orthodox churches, there won't even be any pews, just a few chairs scattered at the edges of the room for the elderly and infirm. Expect some variation in practice: older churches, especially those that purchased already existing church buildings, will have well-used pews. In any case, if you find the amount of standing too challenging, you're welcome to take a seat. It gets easier with practice.

## 3. By This Sign, Pray

To say that we make the sign of the cross frequently would be an understatement. We sign ourselves whenever the Trinity is invoked, whenever we venerate the cross or an icon, and on many other occasions in the course of the Liturgy. But people aren't expected to do everything the same way. Some cross themselves three times in a row, and some finish by sweeping their right hand to the floor. Often before venerating an icon, people will cross themselves twice, bowing each time with their right hand to the floor, then kiss the icon, then cross themselves and bow again. Don't worry; that doesn't mean you have to follow suit.

We cross with our right hands, touching forehead, chest, right shoulder, then left shoulder to end over the heart, the opposite of Catholics/Episcopalians. We hold our hands in a prescribed way: thumb and first two fingertips pressed together, the last two fingers pressed down to the palm. Here as elsewhere, the Orthodox impulse is to make everything we do reinforce the Faith. Can you figure out the symbolism? (The three fingers held together represent the Trinity; the two fingers against the palm represent the two natures of Christ.)

## 4. What, No Kneeling?

Generally, we don't kneel on Sundays. We do sometimes prostrate. This is not like prostration in the Catholic tradition, lying out flat on the floor. To make a prostration we kneel, place our hands on the floor, and touch our foreheads between our hands. At first, prostration feels embarrassing, but no one else is embarrassed, so after awhile it feels more natural.

Sometimes we do this and get right back up again, as during the prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian, which is used frequently during Lent. Other times we get down and stay there awhile, as during a portion of the eucharistic prayer.

Not everyone prostrates. Some kneel, some stand with head bowed, or sit crouched over. Standing there feeling awkward is all right, too. No one will notice if you don't prostrate. In Orthodoxy there is an acceptance of individualized expressions of piety, rather than a sense that people are watching you and getting offended if you do it wrong.

One former Episcopal priest said that seeing people prostrate themselves was one of the things that made him most eager to become Orthodox. He thought, "That's how we should be before God."

## 5. Pucker Up

We kiss things. When we first come into the church, we kiss the icons (Jesus on the feet, and saints on the hands, ideally). You'll also notice that some kiss the chalice, some kiss the edge of the priest's vestment as he passes by, the acolytes kiss his hand when they give him the censer, and we all line up to kiss the cross at the end of the service.

We kiss each other ("Greet one another with a kiss of love." 1 Peter 5:14) before we take communion. When Catholics/Episcopalians pass the peace, they give a hug, handshake or peck on the cheek; that's how Westerners greet each other. In Orthodoxy different cultures are at play: Greeks and Arabs kiss once on each cheek; the Slavs come back again for a third. Parishes with lots of American converts may give a hearty bear hug. Follow the lead of those around you and try not to bump your nose.

*(Continued on page 9)*



# 12 Things I Wish I Knew

*(Continued from page 8)*

The usual greeting is “Christ is in our midst,” with the response, “He is and shall be.” Don’t worry about getting it wrong. The greeting is not the previously familiar “The peace of the Lord be with you,” nor is it “Hi, nice church you have here.”

## 6. Blessed Bread and Consecrated Bread

Only Orthodox may take communion, but anyone may have some of the blessed bread. Here’s how it works: the round communion loaf, baked by a parishioner, is imprinted with a seal. In the preparation service before the Liturgy, the priest cuts out a section of the seal and sets it aside; it is called the “Lamb.” The rest of the bread is cut up and placed in a large basket and blessed by the priest.

During the eucharistic prayer, the Lamb is consecrated to be the Body of Christ, and the chalice of wine is consecrated as His Blood. Here’s the surprising part: the priest places the Lamb in the chalice. When we receive communion, we file up to the priest, standing and opening our mouth wide while he gives us a portion of the wine-soaked bread from a spoon. He also prays over us, calling us by our first name or by the saint-name which we chose when we were baptized or chrismated (received into the Church).

As we file past the priest, we come to an altar boy holding a basket of blessed bread. People will take portions for themselves and for visitors and non-Orthodox friends around them. If someone hands you a piece of blessed bread, do not panic; it is not the eucharistic Body. It is a sign of fellowship.

## 7. No General Confession?

In our experience, we don’t have any general sins; they’re all quite specific. There is no complete confession prayer in the Liturgy. Orthodox are expected to be making regular, private confession to Christ in the presence of their priest.

The role of the pastor is much more that of a spiritual father than it is in other denominations. He is not called by his first name alone, but referred to as “Father Firstname.” His wife also holds a special role as parish mother, and she gets a title too, though it varies from one culture to another. Some of the titles used are “Khouria” (Arabic), or “Presbytera” (Greek), both of which mean “priest’s wife;” or “Matushka” (Russian), which means “Mama.”

Another difference you will probably notice is in the Nicene Creed, which may be said or sung, depending on the parish. In the Creed we affirm that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, but we don’t add “and the Son,” as Western denominations do. In this we adhere to the Creed as it was originally written.

## 8. Music, Music, Music

About seventy-five percent of the service is congregational singing. Traditionally, Orthodox use no instruments, although some churches will have organs. Usually a small choir leads the people in a capella harmony, with the level of congregational response varying from parish to parish. The style of music varies as well, from very Oriental-sounding solo chanting in an Arabic church to more Western-sounding four-part harmony in a Russian church, with lots of variations in between.

This constant singing is a little overwhelming at first; it feels like getting on the first step of an escalator and being carried along in a rush until you step off ninety minutes later. It has been fairly said that the Liturgy is one continuous song.

What keeps this from being exhausting is that it’s pretty much the same song every week. Relatively little changes from Sunday to Sunday; the same prayers and hymns fall in the same places, and before long you know it by heart. Then you fall into the presence of God in a way you never can when flipping from prayer book to bulletin to hymnal.

## 9. No Shortcuts

Is there a concise way to say something? Can extra adjectives be deleted? Can the briskest, most pointed prose be boiled down one more time to a more refined level? Then it’s not Orthodox worship. If there’s a longer way to say something, the Orthodox will find it. In Orthodox worship, more is always more, in every area including prayer. When the priest or deacon intones, “Let us complete our prayer to the Lord,” expect to still be standing there fifteen minutes later.

The original Liturgy lasted something over five hours; those people must have been on fire for God. The Liturgy of St. Basil edited this down to about two and a half, and later (around 400 A.D.) the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom further reduced it to about one and a half. Most Sundays we use the St. John Chrysostom Liturgy, although for some services (e.g., Sundays in Lent, Christmas Eve) we use the longer Liturgy of St. Basil.

When you arrive for Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning, worship will already be in progress and you will feel chagrined at arriving late. You are not late; the priest, cantors and some parishioners are just winding up Matins, which began about an hour before. Divine Liturgy follows on its heels, with the posted starting time only approximate. Before Matins, the priest has other preparatory services; he will be at the altar for a total of

*(Continued on page 10)*

# 12 Things I Wish I Knew

*(Continued from page 9)*

more than three hours on Sunday morning, “standing in the flame,” as one Orthodox priest put it. Orthodoxy is not for people who find church boring!

## 10. I’m Just Wild About Mary

We love her and it shows. What can we say? She’s His Mom. We often address her as “Theotokos,” which means “Mother of God.” In providing the physical means for God to become man, she made possible our salvation. Not that we think she or any of the other saints have magical powers or are demigods. When we sing “Holy Theotokos, save us,” we don’t mean “save” in an eternal sense, as we would pray to Christ; we mean “protect, defend, take care of us here on earth.” Just as we ask for each other’s prayers, we ask for the prayers of Mary and the other saints as well. They’re not dead, after all, just departed to the other side. Icons surround us, in part, to remind us that all the saints are joining us invisibly in our worship.

## 11. The Three Doors

Every Orthodox church will have an iconostasis before its altar. “Iconostasis” means “icon-stand.” In a mission parish it can be as simple as a large image of the Virgin and Child on an easel on the left, a matching image of Christ on the right. In a more established church, the iconostasis may be a literal wall, adorned with many icons. The basic set up of two large icons creates, if you use your imagination, three doors. The central opening, in front of the altar itself, usually has two doors, called the “Royal Doors,” because that is where the King of Glory comes out to the congregation in the Eucharist. Only the priest and deacons, who bear the Eucharist, use the Royal Doors.

The openings on the other sides of the two main icons, if there is a complete iconostasis, have doors, with icons of angels; they are termed the “Deacon’s Doors.” Altar boys and others with business behind the altar use these, although no one is to go through any of the doors without an appropriate reason. Altar service – priests, deacons, altar boys – is restricted to males. Females are invited to participate in every other area of church life. Their contribution has been honored equally with that of males since the days of the martyrs; you can’t look around an Orthodox church without seeing Mary and other holy women. In most Orthodox churches, women do everything else men do: lead congregational singing, paint icons, teach classes, read the epistle and serve on the parish council.

## 12. Are Americans Welcome?

Flipping through the Yellow Pages in a large city you might see a multiplicity of Orthodox churches: Greek, Romanian, Carpatho-Russian, Antiochian, Serbian, and on and on. Is Orthodoxy really so tribal? Do these divisions represent theological squabbles and schisms?

Not at all. All these Orthodox bodies are one church. The ethnic designation refers to what is called the parish’s “jurisdiction” and identifies which bishops hold authority there. There are about 6 million Orthodox in North America and 250 million in the world, making Orthodoxy the second-largest Christian communion.

The astonishing thing about this ethnic multiplicity is its theological and moral unity. Orthodox throughout the world hold unanimously to the fundamental Christian doctrines taught by the Apostles and handed down by their successors, the bishops, throughout the centuries. They also hold to the moral standards of the Apostles – abortion and homosexual behavior remain sins in Orthodox eyes.

One could attribute this unity to historical accident. We would attribute it to the Holy Spirit.

Currently the largest American jurisdictions are the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, the Orthodox Church in America (Russian roots), and the Antiochian Archdiocese (Middle Eastern roots). Services will differ in the language used, the type of music, and a few other particulars, but the Liturgy is substantially the same in all. I wish it could be said the every local parish eagerly welcomes newcomers, but some are still so close to their immigrant experience that they are mystified as to why outsiders would be interested. Visiting several orthodox parishes will help you learn where you’re most comfortable. You will probably be looking for one that uses plenty of English in its services. Many parishes with high proportions of converts will have services entirely in English.

Orthodoxy seems startlingly different at first, but as the weeks go by it gets to be less so. It will begin to feel more and more like home, and it will draw you into the Kingdom of God. I hope that your first visit to an Orthodox church will be enjoyable, and that it won’t be your last

# JUNE 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						<b>1</b>
<b>2</b> 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy <b>The Samaritan Woman</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 10:00am Bible Study	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b> 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 9:00am Divine Liturgy <b>Ascension of the Lord</b> 10:00am Bible Study	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b> 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> 9:00am Divine Liturgy <b>Saturday of Souls</b>
<b>23</b> 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy <b>Sunday of Pentecost</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 10:00am Bible Study	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b> 8:45am Matins 10:00am Divine Liturgy <b>Synaxis of the Holy Apostles</b>						