

HOLY ASCENSION PARISH NOVEMBER 2010 NEWSLETTER



SAINT KATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA

THE HOLY ASCENSION ORTHODOX CHURCH is the Washington, DC, parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (ROCA), under the *omophor* (or the conciliar leadership) of Metropolitan Agafangel (Pashkovsky), Bishop of Odessa & Taurida. The Holy Ascension Parish was organized on Ascension Day, May 17, 2007.

BISHOPS & LOCAL CLERGY

✠ Metropolitan Agafangel, Bishop of Odessa & Taurida, and First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad ✠ Bishop Joseph (Hrebinka), Vicar Bishop of Washington ✠ Deacon John Hinton ✠ Subdeacon Seraphim Englehardt, ✠ Subdeacon Andrew Frick ✠ Subdeacon John Herbst ✠

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PART 1. OUR PARISH

The Holy Ascension parish welcomes all Orthodox people to its sacraments and all other people with an interest in Christianity and the abiding Tradition of the Holy Orthodox Church. The immediate Holy Ascension parish background is Russian émigré with many English-speaking converts. Members, visitors, and people in touch online come, however, from all ethnicities. The Church is One.

<http://sinod.ruschurchabroad.org/engindex.htm>
<http://news.ruschurchabroad.org/>
<http://www.holyascension.info/>

PART 2. FEAST OF SAINT KATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA

The holy and glorious Great Martyr Katherine of Alexandria was the daughter of the Constus or Costus, governor of Roman Egypt, during the reign of the Roman Emperor Maxentius (305-312). She suffered for Our Lord in the year 305. Her original feast day is November 24 (December 7), a date still celebrated in Slavic churches. The Monastery of Sinai and the Byzantine churches commemorate the saint on November 25, with the Leave-Taking After the Presentation of the Theotokos into the Temple.

Living in the capital of the Hellenistic world and bearing an uncommon beauty and intellect, Saint Katherine received a fine education in the philosophy of antiquity. Young aristocrats sought the hand of the beautiful Katherine, but she told her parents that she would be enter into marriage only with someone who surpassed her in station, wealth, beauty, and wisdom.

Katherine's mother, a secret Christian, sent her to her own spiritual father for advice—to a saintly elder living in solitude in a cave. Having listened to Katherine, the elder said that he knew

of a youth who surpassed her in everything--“His beauty was more radiant than the shining of the sun, His wisdom governed all creation, His riches were spread throughout all the world—this however did not diminish but rather added to the inexpressible loftiness of His lineage.” The elder’s recommendation of the Heavenly Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus, caused the holy maiden to want to see Him. Thus, in parting, the elder gave Saint Katherine an icon of the Mother of God with the God-Child Jesus on her arm and the elder bid Katherine to pray with faith to the Queen of Heaven—the Mother of the Heavenly Bridegroom—for the bestowing of the vision of her Son.

Katherine prayed all night and saw the Most Holy Virgin, who sent her Divine Son to look at the Katherine kneeling. But the Child turned His face away from her, saying that He could look at her because she was ugly, lowborn, poor, and mindless, like every other person in the world—and Not Washed with the Waters of Holy Baptism and not Sealed by the Holy Spirit. Saint Katherine returned rather deeply saddened to the elder. He lovingly received her, instructed her in the Christian faith, and admonished her to preserve her purity and integrity and to pray unceasingly. Then he performed the sacrament of Holy Baptism for her. And again Saint Katherine had a vision of the Mother of God with her Child. But this time the Lord looked tenderly at her and gave her a ring—A Gift of the Heavenly Bridegroom.

At this time the new Emperor Maxentius was himself in Alexandria for a pagan feast day. His presence made the feast



SAINT KATHERINE

splendid and especially crowded. The cries of animals being sacrificed, the smoke and smell of the sacrifice animals, the festival endless fires, and bustling crowds filled all of Alexandria. There were also many human victims, whom the Romans consigned to death by fire because these Christians would not recant their beliefs even when being tortured. The saint's love for the Christian martyrs and her wish to lighten their suffering led Saint Katherine to the pagan high priest and ruler, the Emperor Maxentius.

Introducing herself, Saint Katherine confessed her faith in the one true God, and with wisdom she listed the errors of paganism. The beauty of the Christian maiden captivated the emperor. In order to convince her and to show the superiority of pagan wisdom, the emperor gave orders to his staff to gather 50 of the most learned men of the empire to talk to her. But Saint Katherine upstaged the Emperor persuaded these wise men to believe in Christ. Then Saint Katherine shielded the martyrs with the sign of the cross, and they bravely accepted death for salvation in Christ.

No longer hoping to convince the saint, Maxentius promised her riches and fame. Having received another angry refusal, the Emperor gave orders to torture Saint in prison. The Empress Augusta had heard of Saint Katherine and this intelligent woman wanted to see her. The Empress prevailed upon the military commander Porphyry to accompany her with soldiers, and thus she and the soldiers went to the prison. The Empress was impressed by the brave spirit of Saint Katherine, whose face glowed with Divine Grace. The holy martyr explained Christian teaching to all these pagan people newly arrived, and they were also converted to Christianity.

On the following day the Emperor’s men again brought Saint Katherine for martyrdom at the place of judgment where, threatening to break her on the wheel, they gain urged her to recant the Christian faith and to offer sacrifices to the gods. Saint Katherine did not weaken. She steadfastly confessed her faith in Christ even as she herself approached the wheel. Then an angel

smashed the wheel, this instrument of death, into many pieces that all pagans passing nearby could see the event. Having beheld this wonder, the Empress Augusta, Porphyry, with their 200 soldiers also confessed their faith in Christ publicly in front of everyone, and so they too were all in turn beheaded. Emperor Maxentius again tried to entice the Saint Katherine, proposing marriage to her, and again she refused him. St. Katherine firmly confessed her fidelity to the heavenly Bridegroom, Christ, and with a prayer to him she herself put her head on the executioner's block, below the extinguishing sword.

Angels took the relics of St. Katherine to Mount Sinai--the venerable head and left hand of the holy martyr--now in the Sinai Monastery Church, built by the Christian Emperor Justinian the Great in the 6th century. Saint Katherine's story appears in the newsletter this month in recognition of the newly baptized Katherine van der Lee Kirk, the first new baptism within our congregation honoring this saint by name.

TROPARION OF SAINT KATHERINE

Greek usage (Tone Plagal 1)

Let us praise the all-lauded and noble bride of Christ,
the godly Katherine, the guardian of Sinai and its defense,
who is also our support and succor and our help;
For with the Holy Spirit's sword
she hath silenced brilliantly the clever among the godless;
and being crowned as a martyr, she now doth ask great
mercy for us all.

Slavic usage (Tone 4)

Thy lamb Katherine, O Jesus,
Calls out to thee in a loud voice:
I love thee, O my bridegroom,
And in seeking thee, I endure suffering.
In baptism I was crucified so that I might reign in thee,
And died so that I might live with thee.

Accept me as a pure sacrifice,
For I have offered myself in love.
By her prayers save our souls, since thou art merciful.

PART 3. LITURGIES, ACCORDING TO THE CIVIL
CALENDAR

All Holy Ascension Parish Sunday Liturgies begin at 10:00 AM. A luncheon buffet follows all Sunday liturgies. Volunteers may come forward to offer help and materials with cooking at home and with preparation at the church.

Currently a regular schedule also designates a family that is responsible for cleaning the church after the services. The duty is for one month at a time. If you wish to volunteer, please see the warden/*starosta*, Mr Gontscharow.

NOVEMBER 2010 SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Monday, November 1. SAINT JOHN OF KRONSTADT. No Divine Liturgy.

Saturday, November 6, Vigil at 4:30 PM.

Sunday, November 7, the 24th Sunday After Pentecost. Hours & Divine Liturgy at 9:40 AM. MARTYRS MARCIAN & MARTYRIUS.

Sunday, November 7, Vigil at 5:00 PM.

Monday, November 8, GREAT-MARTYR DEMETRIUS. No Divine Liturgy.

Saturday, November 13, Vigil at 5 PM.

Sunday, November 14, the 25th Sunday After Pentecost. Hours & Divine Liturgy at 9:40 AM. Saints Cosmas & Damian.

Saturday, November 20, Vigil at 5 PM.

Sunday, November 21, the 26th Sunday After Pentecost. Hours & Divine Liturgy at 9:40 AM. Synaxis of the Archangel Michael & the Other Bodiless Powers.

Thursday, November 25, at 10:00 am. THANKSGIVING MOLEBEN.
Thanksgiving Day

Saturday, November 27, Vigil at 5 PM.

Sunday, November 28, the 27th Sunday After Pentecost.

Hours & Divine Liturgy at 9:40 AM. Martyrs Gurias, Samonas,
& Abibus. *The Nativity Fast begins. Fish, wine, and oil are
allowed.*

Friday, December 3, Vigil at 6:30 PM.

Saturday, December 4, ENTRY OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS Into
the Temple. Hours & Divine Liturgy at 8:40 AM. *Fast Day:
Fish, wine, and oil are allowed.*

Saturday, December 4, Vigil at 5 PM.

Sunday, December 5, the 28th Sunday After Pentecost. Hours &
Divine Liturgy at 9:40 AM. AFTERFEAST OF THE ENTRY OF THE
MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS INTO THE TEMPLE. *Fast Day: Fish, wine,
and oil are allowed.*

*Please report all difficulties with newsletter distribution and, by all
means, all newsletter corrections, to the newsletter preparer, Patrick
Brown, The Woodlawn Editor ~ hpcjfbrown@cox.net.*

