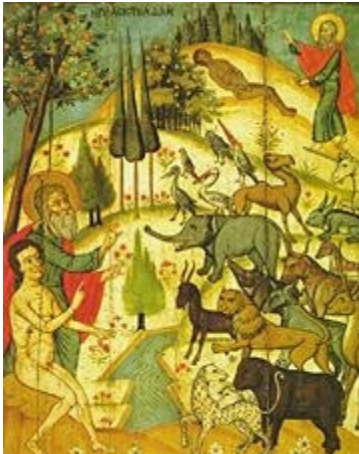


SEPTEMBER 2009 BULLETIN
St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Church
Issaquah, WA

The Orthodox New Year
By Fr. Michael Harper



It can be frustrating to move suddenly from the end, back to the beginning of something. But this is what Orthodox believers do as we move from August 31st - the last day of the old year, to September 1st, the first day of the new year.

It is part of the goodness of God, that He, who has no beginning and no ending, the Eternal Trinity, should take such care to give us a year which begins and ends, and then begins all over again. In our human and finite state we need fresh starts, and this is one of them. From the peaks of Pascha, Ascension, Pentecost, and Transfiguration, we move back to beginnings, the Nativity of the Mother of

God, and then in December of the Son of God Himself. We start this wonderful cycle all over again. But the Holy Spirit, as we trust Him, will renew this new year to us, and give us a whole new understanding of it.

"Behold I will do a new thing", God says through the prophet Isaiah (43:19). The new wine will come to us in new wineskins.

The God who has put eternity in our hearts, knows our human frailty. He knows that marriages need their anniversaries, and all of us, especially children, need their birthdays from year to year. We in the Orthodox Church also hold a special place for the anniversaries of those who have died in Christ. We recall every year the glorious deaths of the saints. But the whole of this is held in a solid framework - the Orthodox Calendar. Through the God inspired wisdom of our fathers and mothers, we have a beautifully constructed lectionary, which flows through the year, like the streams of an effortless river, blessing whatever they touch.

It is significant that the last great feast of the old year is that of the Dormition of Mary, the Mother of God. Her human passing was to heaven's glory. And the first great feast of the new year is her Nativity. It is not that Mary is more important than Christ, around which most of the Calendar revolves. Mary is not God. She did not exist from eternity. But she is honored in this way because she is our supreme example. She lived a life of complete obedience to God.

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It should be noted that to the present day, the Church has always celebrated the beginning of the New Year on September 1. This was the custom in Constantinople until its fall in 1453 and in Russia until the reign of Peter I. September 1 is still festively celebrated as the New Year at the Patriarchate of Constantinople; among the Jews also the New Year, although reckoned according to a moveable calendar, usually falls in September. The service of the Menaion for January 1 is for our Lord's Circumcision and for the memorial of Saint Basil the Great, without any mention of its being the beginning of a new year.

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Beginning of the Church New Year
September 1/14

Troparion

Creator of the universe, setting times and seasons by Your sole authority, bless the cycle of the year of Your grace, O Lord, guarding our rulers and Your nation in peace, at the intercession of the Theotokos, and save us.

Kontakion

Living in the Highest, Christ the King, The Creator and Fashioner of all things visible and invisible, Who creates the days and nights, times and seasons: Bless now the crown of the year And protect Thine Orthodox rulers, cities and people in peace, O Greatly merciful One.

Почетак Црквене Нове године
1./14. септембар

Тропар

Створитељу све твари, који си времена и лета оставио у Својој власти, благослови годишњи круг благошћу Твојом Господе, сачувај у миру и град Твој, молитвама пресвете Богородице, и спаси нас.

Кондак

У вишњем Царству живиш Христе Царе, Творче и Створитељу свега видљивог и невидљивог, који си дане и ноћи, време и године створио, благослови сада годишњи круг, сачувај и одржи у миру град и народ Твој, Многомилостиви.

WHY ARE VIGIL LAMPS LIT BEFORE ICONS?



First-because our faith is light. Christ said: I am the light of the world (John 8:12). The light of the vigil lamp reminds us of that light by which Christ illumines our souls.

Second-in order to remind us of the radiant character of the saint before whose icon we light the vigil lamp, for saints are called sons of light (John 12:36, Luke 16:8).

Third-in order to serve as a reproach to us for our dark deeds, for our evil thoughts and desires, and in order to call us to the path of evangelical light; and so that we would more zealously try to fulfill the commandments of the Saviour: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works" (Matt. 5:16).

Fourth-so that the vigil lamp would be our small sacrifice to God, Who gave Himself completely as a sacrifice for us, and as a small sign of our great gratitude and radiant love for Him from Whom we ask in prayer for life, and health, and salvation and everything that only boundless heavenly love can bestow.

Fifth-so that terror would strike the evil powers who sometimes assail us even at the time of prayer and lead away our thoughts from the Creator. The evil powers love the darkness and tremble at every light, especially at that which belongs to God and to those who please Him.

Sixth-so that this light would rouse us to selflessness. Just as the oil and wick burn in the vigil lamp, submissive to our will, so let our souls also burn with the flame of love in all our sufferings, always being submissive to God's will.

Seventh-in order to teach us that just as the vigil lamp cannot be lit without our hand, so too, our heart, our inward vigil lamp, cannot be lit without the holy fire of God's grace, even if it were to be filled with all the virtues. All these virtues of ours are, after all, like combustible material, but the fire which ignites them proceeds from God.

Eighth-in order to remind us that before anything else the Creator of the world created light, and after that everything else in order: And God said, let there be light: and there was light (Genesis 1:3). And it must be so also at the beginning of our spiritual life, so that before anything else the light of Christ's truth would shine within us. From this light of Christ's truth subsequently every good is created, springs up and grows in us.

May the Light of Christ illumine you as well!

St. Nikolai (Velimirovich) - Translated by R.D.

ЗАШТО СЕ ПАЛИ КАНДИЛО ПРЕД ИКОНОМ?

Прво зато што је вера наша свјетлост. Рекао је Христос: Ја сам свјетлост свету. Свјетлост кандила опомиње нас на свјетлост којом Христос обасјава душу нашу.

Друго, да нас подсети на свјетлост карактера оног светитеља пред којим палимо кандило. Јер су свеци назвати: синови свјетлости.

Треће, да нам служи као укор за тамна дела наша, и зле помисли и жеље, и да нас позове на пут јеванђелске свјетлости. Да би се потрудили тако са ревношћу око заповести Спаситељеве: тако да се свијетли ваше видјело пред људима, да виде ваша добра дјела.

Четврто, да то буде мала жртва наша Богу, који се сав жртвовао за нас. Један мајушни знак велике благодарности и светле љубави наше према Ономе, од кога у молитви просимо и живот и здравље и спасење и све оно што само безгранична небеска љубав може дати.

Пето, да то буде страшило злим силама, које нас нападају при молитви и одводе нам миси на другу страну од Творца нашега. Јер зле силе воле таму и тржу се сваке свјетлости, нарочито од оне која је намењена Богу и његовим угодницима.

Шесто, да нас подстакне на самопрегорење. Као што јелеј и фитиљ горе у кандилу, покорни вољи нашој, тако нека горе и душе наше пламеном љубави у свима страдањима, покорни вазда вољи Божијој.

Седмо, да нас научи, да као што кандило не може да се запали без наше руке тако ни срце наше, то унутрашње кандило наше, не може се запалити без светог огња Божије благодати, ма било испуњено свим врлинама. Јер све су врлине наше као гориво, а од Бога је огањ, који их зажиже.

Осмо, да нас опомене да је Творац света пре свега створио свјетлост, а онда све остало по реду. И рече Бог: нека буде свјетлост. И би свјетлост. Тако мора и на почетку нашег духовног живота прво да се засија унутра у нама свјетлост Христове истине. Од те свјетлости Христове истине после ствара се и ниче и расте у нама свако добро.

Свјетлост Христова нека и Вас осветли.

Св. Николај (Велимировић)

How to be with God?

Before this question gets answered, it is important to understand that God has absolute and complete love towards mankind. God's absolute and complete love was clearly shown when "He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). In other words,



the Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, sacrificed Himself on the cross and destroyed the power of death and sin, so that people can be with God forever. To explain this great act of God even more clearly, imagine that your friend, whom you love so dearly, gets a speeding ticket. Unfortunately, your friend is very poor and, thus, unable to pay the fine. Since you have great love towards your friend, you decide to pay the fine. In other words, you pay for your friend's misdeed. This is basically what God did on the cross. Every person is mortal and sinful because sin had entered mankind's nature through Adam's and Eve's disobedience towards God. God's Holy Law clearly states, "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). But, God does not want mankind to be separated from Him since separation from God means eternal damnation. Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God and Man, sacrificed Himself on the cross to pay for our sins and to free us from the bondage of sin and death.

So, it's obvious that God's plan for the salvation of mankind is driven by His absolute and complete love. Since God's love is perfect, He does not want to force anybody to love Him back. He does not want to force anybody to show love towards Him by being holy. That is to say, if some person truly loves God and wants to be with Him eternally, that person will show love towards God by being holy before Him. God wants us to choose to live holy lives before Him because that is the meaning of perfect love towards God. This is clearly mentioned in many Biblical verses, such as: "If you love me, you will obey what I command" (John 14:15) and "Be holy, because I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16). Therefore, the only way to show our love and faith towards God and desire to be with Him after our earthly death is to obey the Word of God and the commandments of Eastern Orthodox Church. The Lord Jesus Christ clearly showed this through Holy Fathers and Apostles. We study the Word of God by reading the Bible, the writings of Holy Fathers, and attending Liturgies. The commandments of Eastern Orthodox Church clearly show that one must be baptized first, and, then, clean the soul through fasting, praying, confessing sins regularly to the priest, and taking Holy Communion. A lot of people say, "I don't have time for this" or "this is too hard". But, one has to remember that salvation of one's soul is the number one priority, just like the Lord Jesus Christ said, "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26). Also, one has to into account the fact that any kind of achievement in life requires work; so, in the same way, to be clean and holy before God, requires work on our side. There is no need to be afraid to walk on the path of holiness since the help of Holy Spirit is promised to those who

walk on the holy path of salvation. God loves us completely and He will always guide us. Unfortunately, there are people who call themselves Eastern Orthodox, but they don't lead lives according to the Word of God and the commandments of Eastern Orthodox Church. In other words, they don't lead holy lives. Such people must not weaken one's faith in God. The Lord Jesus Christ clearly said that such people would show up. Our goal is to watch our soul, our heart, and to lead holy lives by obeying the Word of God and the commandments of Eastern Orthodox Church.

Today, it is so sad that a lot of people do not choose to be with God, but choose the path to eternal damnation. A lot of people don't have Christ in their hearts. This is so sad. It is so depressing to see so many horrible sins, such as violence, swearing, fornication (sex before marriage), abortion, lying, and other horrible sins. Such sins separate people from God. The only way to be with God is to lead holy and Godly lives by obeying the Word of God and the commandments of Eastern Orthodox Church. Holy and Godly life will lead us to Kingdom of Heaven after earthly death. (*Serbian Saints Church – Toronto*)

Како бити са Богом?

Пре него што се одговори на ово питање, потребно је прво да разумемо да Бог има апсолутну и путпуну љубав према човеку. То је јасно изражено у речима Светог Писма: "Бог тако завоље свијет да је Сина својега Једнороднога дао, да сваки који вјерује у њега не погине, него да има живот вјечни" (Јован 3:16). Другим речима, Исус Христос, Син Божији, жртвовао се на крсту и уништио моћ смрти и греха, тако да човек може бити заувек са Богом. Да би се ово још боље појаснило, замислите да неко кога пуно волите вози брзо и, према томе, добије да плати казну за тај прекршај. На жалост, та особа нема могућности да плати казну, јер је јако сиромашна. Пошто ви имате велику љубав према тој особи, донесете одлуку да уместо ње платите, то јест, ви одлучите да платите грех ваше вољене особе. Тако нешто је Бог урадио на крсту. Сваки човек је грешан и смртан, зато што се грех увукао у људску природу када су наши пра-родитељи, Адам и Ева, згрешили пред Богом. Божији Свети Закон јасно каже: "плата за грех је смрт" (Римљанима 3:23). Али Бог не жели да људи буду одвојени од Њега, јер бити одвојен од Бога значи пребивати у вечној смрти и патњи. Зато се Исус Христос, који је Бог и Човек, жртвовао на крсту да плати за наше грехе, и тиме ослободи људе од смрти и греха. Као што се види, Божији план за спас људског рода је заснован на Божијој апсолутној и потпуној љубави према човеку. Пошто је Божија љубав савршена, Бог не жели никога да тера да Га воли. Бог жели да човек слободном вољом одабере да буде свет и чист пред Њим, јер је то потребан услов савршене љубави према Богу. То јест, ако особа заиста воли Бога и жели бити са Њим заувек, онда ће се та особа трудити да буде света и чиста пред Богом, као што је речено на многим местима у Светом Писму: "Ако ме љубите, заповјести моје држите" (Јован 14:15); "Будите свети, јер сам ја свет" (1 Пет 1:16) Значи, једини начин на који можемо показивати љубав и веру према Богу, и жељу да будемо са Њим после наше земаљске смрти, је кроз држање Његових заповести и заповести Свете Православне Цркве. Исус Христос је ово јасно показао кроз Свете Оце и Апостоле. Ми учимо Реч Божију када читамо Јеванђеље, Житије Светих Отаца и када идемо на Литургије. Заповести

Свете Православне Цркве јасно показују да човек мора бити прво крштен, па онда да чисти своју душу кроз пост, молитву, редовну исповест код свештеника, и примање Светог Причешћа.

Доста људи каже: "немам времена за ово" или "ово је тешко". Али, човек треба да се сети да је душа најважнија, као што је Господ Исус Христос рекао: "Јер каква је корист човјеку ако сав свијет задобије а души својој науди? Или какав ће откуп дати човјек за душу своју?" (Матеј 16:26) Такође, треба узети у обзир и то, да шта год човек жели да постигне у животу, за то мора да се потруди; на исти начин, ако желимо да постанемо свети и чисти пред Богом, потребан је рад и труд са наше стране. Не треба се плашити идења путем светости, јер је помоћ Светог Духа обећана. Бог нас потпуно воли и Он ће нам увек помоћи. На жалост, некада видимо људе који себе зову Православнима, али не воде Богоугодне животе. Не смемо дозволити да нас такви људи (чак и ако имају неку црквену одговорност) одвоје од Господа Исуса Христа. Не смемо дозволити да такви људи ослабе нашу веру у Бога. Господ Исус Христос је упозорио да ће се такви људи појавити. Наш циљ је да пазимо на нашу душу, срце, и да водимо Богоугодан живот, извршавајући Божије и Црквене заповести.

Данас је велика трагедија што доста људи не бира да буде са Богом у вечности, него бира пут вечне пропасти. Доста људи не прима Христа у своја срца. Ово је највећа трагедија наше генерације. Тужно је видети толико пуно насиља, псовања, блуда, чедоморства, лагања и осталих великих греха. Овакви и многи други греси одвајају човека од Бога. Зато, једини начин да будемо са Богом је да водимо чист и Богоугодан живот, извршавајући Божије и Црквене заповести. Свет и Богоугодан живот ће нас увести у Царство Небеско. *(Храм Српских Светитеља – Торонто)*

Recent blessings and prayers:

40 day birth prayers: Tatjana Fournier (baby Sofia), Ghina Nshweit (baby Zaina)

Baptism: Milica Karakusevic-Vitman, Sara Zekanovic

Home blessing: Nenad Grubisa family, Verne Poupitch Family

Slava – St. Panteleimon: Petra & Pantelije Djurdjevic family, Vitomir Samardzic family, Zoran Samardzic family.

Healing prayers: Drago Bundalo, Elizabeth Popovich, Marko Zalokar

Parastos: Renata DiVora, Ilya Eppler

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Lunch Preparation:

Thank you to Anna Kassianov and Families, Protinica Carole

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Appeal for help:

Protinica Nina Garich, wife of retired priest Fr. Miladin Garich, is seriously ill and requires constant medical care. Due to their lack of personal funds, St. Sava Parish in Jackson, California is asking for donations to help pay for her care. You may make out your checks to “St. Sava Church” and on the memo line note: “Protinica Garich”, and mail to our church address. Thank you!

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Calendar:

Serbian Days – Portland, OR:

Everyone is welcome to attend the Serbian Days Celebration at St. Stephen’s Church on September 12-13, 2009. The parishioners of St. Stephen’s were very supportive of our Serbian Days Celebration by attending in great numbers. Let’s also support our brothers and sisters in Portland during this weekend.

Lecture – His Grace Bishop Savas of Troas will present: “Living out God’s Word in Contemporary America” on Thursday, September 24, 2009 at Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church, 19421 Ashworth Ave. N., Shoreline, WA. Everyone is welcome.

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Stewardship:

We currently have 72 stewards. Our goal is to have a minimum of 100 stewards before the end of this year. For those who already help the church through your time, talents and donations, please fill out the stewardship card if you haven't yet done so. In this way we can acknowledge your efforts and give you a letter at the end of the year. For those who have not yet made an effort to help your church in some way, please consider the importance of perpetuating our faith and culture. Our community is only as strong as we want to make it.

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Christian Education:

Once again the children are preparing to go back to public school and it is time to also remember to come back to Sunday School. The Christian Education of our children is just as important, if not more important than secular education when the soul is in question. The children spend five days a week at public school. Surely, there is time to spend a few hours in the week to worship and learn about God.

Registration and the beginning of the Church School Year will be September 27, 2009. Please bring your children that day so we can say together prayers for the beginning of the school year and take a group picture of the children. Part of the children's Christian Education is to attend Divine Liturgy. Just as it is mandatory to be on time at public schools, God deserves the respect for us to be in church before Divine Liturgy begins. Let us teach our children by our example.

Specific religious classes will be offered after Holy Communion. The children will be divided into age groups. The folklore class will be held after lunch. During dance practice, parents and others are welcome to join Fr. Ilija for a questions and answer session to learn more about the Orthodox Faith. Parents are welcome to contact Fr. Ilija with any suggestions for the betterment of our school or if you wish to help teach or help in any way.

Now that summer is over, we will have many children in attendance at church so it is important that lunch be available every Sunday. All parishioners are welcome to help organize at least one lunch during the year. Please let Fr. Ilija know what date you prefer. Thank you!

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Sabor:

(visit www.serborth.org for pictures of the Sabor)

The Triennial Church Sabor was held in N. Canton, Ohio at St. George’s Church on August 10-13, 2009. Fr. Ilija attended representing our Church. A total of 222 persons – laity and clergy, representing four dioceses, were in attendance. The theme of the Sabor was “Christ the True Light: The Light of the Church and the Light of the World.” This Sabor was of historical importance because after many years of being divided administratively on this continent, we now have a Church Constitution in the Americas that reflects the traditional organization of the Orthodox Church, specifically, we no longer have overlapping dioceses. The Sabor concluded in the spirit of Godly love and forgiveness with the hope that our Church will continue to prosper.

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Roslyn Cemetery:

At the August 25, 2009 City of Roslyn Council Meeting St. Sava Church was recognized for their volunteer efforts to maintain the Serbian Cemetery in Roslyn. Fr. Ilija was present to accept this recognition on behalf of the St. Sava Church.

More work is planned in the near future to continue cemetery repairs. Details to follow.

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Diocesan Children’s Summer Camp- Jackson, CA:



Fr. Ilija attended the second week (July 27-31, 2009). Children from throughout our Diocese attended with the opportunity to see old friends and make new friends. The theme of this year’s camp was “Christ the True



Vine.” Throughout the week the children learned about how we are all connected to each other and to God. Along with attending church services everyday, the children also crafted projects, learned songs and folklore dancing, participated in various sports activities as well as swimming every day. The week ended with a fantastic talent show. To attend church camp is truly a great experience for our children that will last a lifetime. Visit www.campstsava.org for more information.

