

## *Pascha Con't*

At the Ninth Ode of the Canon of Nocturn, the priest, already vested in his brightest robes, removes the Holy Shroud from the tomb and carries it to the altar table, where it remains until the leave-taking of Pascha. The faithful stand in darkness. Then, one by one, they light their candles from the candle held by the priest and form a great procession out of the church. Choir, servers, priest and people, led by the bearers of the cross, banners, icons and Gospel book, circle the church. The bells are rung incessantly and the angelic hymn of the resurrection is chanted.

The procession comes to a stop before the principal doors of the church. Before the closed doors the priest and the people sing the troparion of Pascha, "Christ is risen from the dead...", many times. Even before entering the church the priest and people exchange the paschal greeting: "Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen!" This segment of the paschal services is extremely important. It preserves in the experience of the Church the primitive accounts of the resurrection of Christ as recorded in the Gospels. The angel rolled away the stone from the tomb not to let a biologically revived but physically entrapped Christ walk out, but to reveal that "He is not here; for He has risen, as He said" (Matt. 28:6).

In the paschal canon we sing:

*Thou didst arise, O Christ, and yet the tomb remained sealed, as at Thy birth the Virgin's womb remained unharmed; and Thou has opened for us the gates of paradise (Ode 6).*

Finally, the procession of light and song in the darkness of night, and the thunderous proclamation that, indeed, Christ is risen, fulfill the words of the Evangelist John: "The light shines in darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5).

The doors are opened and the faithful re-enter. The church is bathed in light and adorned with flowers. It is the heavenly bride and the symbol of the empty tomb:

Bearing life and more fruitful than paradise  
Brighter than any royal chamber,  
Thy tomb, O Christ, is the fountain of our resurrection  
(Paschal Hours).

*Con't Pg 10*



## **CHRIST IS RISEN**

Pascha! The feast of glory, the feast of glory, the feast of light the feast of joy! What words can convey the splendor and power of Pascha? When our faces are shining with the light of the Resurrection and our hearts are glowing with the radiance of the risen Christ we cannot talk about Pascha; we can only sing Pascha! We break out in spontaneous rejoicing, embracing one another, singing the resurrection hymn, and heralding the paschal greetings: "Christ is risen!" Indeed He is risen!" Only praises, songs, and hymns, can adequately celebrate the mystery of the risen Christ!

Each Pascha is a celebration of the first Pascha. We come, as did the women disciples, to the empty tomb. The Church is darkened. Will darkness prevail? Is death the end? Where have they taken the Lord? Suddenly the priest exits from the altar, bearing light from the altar vigil lamp. He holds the lighted taper high and triumphantly sings: "Come, receive light from the unending Light, and glorify Christ, risen

## MATINS

Matins commences immediately. The risen Christ is glorified in the singing of the beautiful canon of Saint John of Damascus. The paschal greeting is repeatedly exchanged. Near the end of Matins the paschal verses are sung. They relate the entire narrative of the Lord's resurrection. They conclude with the words calling us to actualize among each other the forgiveness freely given to all by God: This is the day of resurrection.

*Let us be illumined by the feast. Let us embrace each other. Let us call "brothers" even those who hate us, And forgive all by the resurrection. . .*

The sermon of Saint John Chrysostom is then read by the celebrant. The sermon was originally composed as a baptismal instruction. It is retained by the Church in the paschal services because everything about the night of Pascha recalls the Sacrament of Baptism: the language and general terminology of the liturgical texts, the specific hymns, the vestment color, the use of candles and the great procession itself. Now the sermon invites us to a great reaffirmation of our baptism: to union with Christ in the receiving of Holy Communion. If any man is devout and loves God, let him enjoy this fair and radiant triumphal feast. . . the table is fully laden; feast you all sumptuously. . . the calf is fattened, let no one go hungry away. . .

## THE DIVINE LITURGY

The sermon announces the imminent beginning of the Divine Liturgy. The altar table is fully laden with the divine food: the Body and Blood of the risen and glorified Christ. No one is to go away hungry. The service books are very specific in saying that only he who partakes of the Body and Blood of Christ eats the true Pascha. The Divine Liturgy, therefore, normally follows immediately after paschal Matins. Foods from which the faithful have been asked to abstain during the lenten journey are blessed and eaten only after the Divine Liturgy.

## THE DAY WITHOUT EVENING

Pascha is the inauguration of a new age. It reveals the mystery of the eighth day. It is our taste, in this

age, of the new and unending day of the Kingdom of God. Something of this new and unending day is conveyed to us in the length of the paschal services, in the repetition of the paschal order for all the services of Bright Week, and in the special paschal features retained in the services for the forty days until Ascension. Forty days are, as it were, treated as one day. Together they comprise the symbol of the new time in which the Church lives and toward which she ever draws the faithful, from one degree of glory to another.

*O Christ, great and most holy Pascha. O Wisdom, Word and Power of God, grant that we may more perfectly partake of Thee in the never-ending day of Thy kingdom (Ninth Ode, Paschal Canon).*

The V. Rev. Paul Lazor  
New York, 1977

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### John 1:1-17 (Gospel)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'" And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

## Acts 1:1-8 (Epistle)

The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

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### St. Joseph Church, Wheaton, IL offers liturgical interpretive signing for hearing impaired

Saint Joseph Church, Wheaton, IL, is now offering signing services for the hearing impaired at the 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy on the first and third Sundays of every month.

According to Archpriest Joseph Kopka, Rector, signing services also will be available for the celebration of this year's midnight Paschal Matins and Divine Liturgy on Sunday, April 28.

For additional information, please contact Deacon Lawrence Dugoni at 708-424-7149 or [dcnlawrence@hotmail.com](mailto:dcnlawrence@hotmail.com).

In related news, Saint Joseph parish will celebrate its 30th Anniversary on Sunday, May 5. His Grace, Bishop Paul will join Father Joseph, Associate Pastor Priest Jonathan Lincoln, and the parish clergy and faithful for the celebration of the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, which will begin at 9:15 a.m.

## Chicago's Holy Trinity Cathedral hosts area college students at lenten retreat

Some three dozen Orthodox Christian college students from Chicago, Wisconsin and Indiana were welcomed at Chicago's historic [Holy Trinity Cathedral](#) for an Orthodox Christian Fellowship lenten retreat led by cathedral Dean, Priest Alexander Koranda, on Saturday, April 6, 2019.

"The retreat focused on bringing college students together for a day of prayer, fellowship and study," said Father Alexander. "After the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, the students got acquainted with one another through icebreakers and a 'lenten cake decorating contest.'"

Father Alexander also led an enlightening discussion on prayer, based of the teachings of Saint Theophan the Recluse, and discussed a variety of other topics, including Church and Society.

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## Bright Thursday

### Commemorated on [May 2](#)

On Bright Thursday the Gospel reading is John 3:1-15, which mentions the Pharisee Nicodemus who came by night to speak to Christ. The Lord told him that a man could not see the Kingdom of God unless he were born again. Nicodemus, taking Him much too literally, could not understand how such a thing was possible.

The Savior then clarified His words, saying that one must be born "of water and the Spirit" (John 3:5), referring to Baptism. Nicodemus, however, still found it difficult to understand Him.

The Lord said, "If I have told you of earthly things, and you believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" (John 3:12).

The reading from Acts 2:38-41 also speaks of Baptism. Saint Peter told the crowd, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you... and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

The main focus of today's readings is on Baptism, but they also point to other things. We are to raise our mind and understanding from earthly to heavenly things, and to seek the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**2019 PASCHAL MESSAGE OF HIS GRACE,  
BISHOP PAUL**

*Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am laying in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: 'He who believes will not be in haste.'" (Isaiah 28:16)*

*Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures: 'The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?'" (Matthew 21:42)*

As we celebrate the three-day Pascha our Lord, these words from Isaiah and Matthew have been on my mind during Lent. The following words of St. Cyril of Alexandria have further helped me to clarify some words I wish to share with you.

*For the Savior, although He was a chosen stone, was rejected by those who whose duty it was to build up the synagogue of the Jews in everything that was edifying; and yet He became the head of the corner. Now the sacred Scripture compares to a corner the gathering together, or joining of two people, Israel I mean, and the Gentiles, in sameness of sentiment and faith. For the Savior has built the two people into one new man, by making peace and reconciling the two in one body to the Father (Ephesians 2:15). And the so doing resembles a corner, which unites two walls, and, so to speak, binds them together. And this very corner, or gathering together of the two people into one and the same, the blessed David wondered at and said... This—that is the corner—was the Lord's doing, it is marvelous in our eyes (Psalm 118:22). (St. Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke).*

The precious cornerstone is the Cross of our Lord. Our Lord Jesus Christ unites in Himself two people into one, creating a new man. He is that new Man Himself, the new Adam risen from the dead; "the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20).

How important it is for us to understand that this cornerstone is the way to uniting ourselves in the bond of love and joining together the dualities that exist even in our Orthodox parishes today. There

seems to be an increasing tension among our parishes over issues on sexual morality, sanctify of life issues, fears for safety (and how are we to address it) issues of how to deal with immigrants and refugees. But as a bishop once said, "if we start with issues and not Christ, we won't get anywhere."

Let us encourage one another to enter into this relationship with the "new Man" Who has united two people into one. Let the Newly-Risen Lord be our guide to navigating the challenging waters of life in this world we live in. Who is the God-Man? What does He tell us about ourselves and who we are? What can He tell us about what it means to be male and female? What can He tell us about what it means to be stewards over the world we live in? What can He tell us about what it means to be in the world but not of the world? What can He tell us about how to live in the world, especially when we find ourselves at odds with that same world we live in? What is to be our witness?

Let us not attempt to address any of the above "issues" in isolation from this cornerstone; once we do, we will only become a "party" or a "faction" and we will be no good to anyone. Let us remember that we are called to be the "salt of the earth" in Christ. If we lose that, we will have nothing to offer this world. Let us seek to promote a spirit of good will and mutual understanding in our parishes. Let us not be so quick to judge. We have Good News to share: Christ is risen from the dead!

I wish you all a glorious, joyful celebration of our Lord's Pascha. May we come to more deeply know the Eternal Well-Spring of Life, leaving us forever quenched in our thirst for Him. May we come to realize that "He has given all things to us" and that we need nothing else.

**Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!**

+PAUL

Bishop of Chicago and the Midwest

Harisutosu hukkatsu ;  
jitsu ni hukkatsu.  
*Japanese*

# Saint John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople

## The Paschal Sermon

*The Catechetical Sermon of St. John Chrysostom is read during Matins of Pascha.*

If any man be devout and love God, let him enjoy this fair and radiant triumphal feast. If any man be a wise servant, let him rejoicing enter into the joy of his Lord. If any have labored long in fasting, let him now receive his recompense. If any have wrought from the first hour, let him today receive his just reward. If any have come at the third hour, let him with thankfulness keep the feast. If any have arrived at the sixth hour, let him have no misgivings; because he shall in nowise be deprived thereof. If any have delayed until the ninth hour, let him draw near, fearing nothing. If any have tarried even until the eleventh hour, let him, also, be not alarmed at his tardiness; for the Lord, who is jealous of his honor, will accept the last even as the first; he gives rest unto him who comes at the eleventh hour, even as unto him who has wrought from the first hour.

And he shows mercy upon the last, and cares for the first; and to the one he gives, and upon the other he bestows gifts. And he both accepts the deeds, and welcomes the intention, and honors the acts and praises the offering. Wherefore, enter you all into the joy of your Lord; and receive your reward, both the first, and likewise the second. You rich and poor together, hold high festival. You sober and you heedless, honor the day. Rejoice today, both you who have fasted and you who have disregarded the fast. The table is full-laden; feast ye all sumptuously. The calf is fatted; let no one go hungry away.

Enjoy ye all the feast of faith: Receive ye all the riches of loving-kindness. let no one bewail his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one weep for his iniquities, for pardon has shown forth from the grave. Let no one fear death, for the Savior's death has set us free. He that was held prisoner of it has annihilated it. By descending into Hell, He made Hell captive. He embittered it when it tasted of His flesh. And Isaiah, foretelling this, did cry: Hell, said he, was embittered, when it encountered Thee in the lower regions. It was embittered, for it was abolished. It was embittered, for it was mocked. It was embittered, for it was slain. It was embittered, for it was overthrown. It was

embittered, for it was fettered in chains. It took a body, and met God face to face. It took earth, and encountered Heaven. It took that which was seen, and fell upon the unseen.

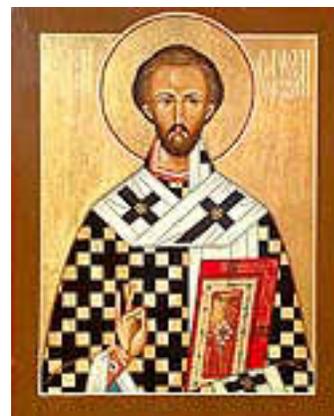
O Death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory? Christ is risen, and you are overthrown. Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen. Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice. Christ is risen, and life reigns. Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in the grave. For Christ, being risen from the dead, is become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. To Him be glory and dominion unto ages of ages. Amen.

### About St. John Chrysostom:

St. John Chrysostom ("*The Golden Tongue*") was born at Antioch in about the year 347 into the family of a military-commander, spent his early years studying under the finest philosophers and rhetoricians and was ordained a deacon in the year 381 by the bishop of Antioch Saint Meletios. In 386 St. John was ordained a priest by the bishop of Antioch, Flavian.

Over time, his fame as a holy preacher grew, and in the year 397 with the demise of Archbishop Nektarios of Constantinople—successor to Sainted Gregory the Theologian—Saint John Chrysostom was summoned from Antioch for to be the new Archbishop of Constantinople.

Exiled in 404 and after a long illness because of the exile, he was transferred to Pitius in Abkhazia where he received the Holy Eucharist, and said, "Glory to God for everything!", falling asleep in the Lord on 14 September 407.



## Bright Tuesday

Commemorated on [April 30](#)

### Commemoration of Saints Raphael, Nicholas and Irene of Lesbos

Newly-Appeared Martyrs of Lesbos, Saints Raphael, Nicholas and Irene These saints were martyred by the Turks on Bright Tuesday (April 9, 1463) ten years after the Fall of Constantinople. For nearly 500 years, they were forgotten by the people of Lesbos, but “the righteous Judge... opened the things that were hid” (2 Macc. 12:41).

For centuries the people of Lesbos would go on Bright Tuesday to the ruins of a monastery near Thermi, a village northwest of the capital, Mytilene. As time passed, however, no one could remember the reason for the annual pilgrimage. There was a vague recollection that once there had been a monastery on that spot, and that the monks had been killed by the Turks.

In 1959, a pious man named Angelos Rallis decided to build a chapel near the ruins of the monastery. On July 3 of that year, workmen discovered the relics of Saint Raphael while clearing the ground. Soon, the saints began appearing to various inhabitants of Lesbos and revealed the details of their lives and martyrdom. These accounts form the basis of Photios Kontoglou’s 1962 book *A GREAT SIGN* (in Greek). Saint Raphael was born on the island of Ithaca around 1410, and was raised by pious parents. His baptismal name was George, but he was named Raphael when he became a monk. He was ordained to the holy priesthood, and later attained the offices of Archimandrite and Chancellor.

In 1453, Saint Raphael was living in Macedonia with his fellow monastic, the deacon Nicholas, a native of Thessalonica. In 1454, the Turks invaded Thrace, so the two monks fled to the island of Lesbos. They settled in the Monastery of the Nativity of the Theotokos near Thermi, where Saint Raphael became the igumen.

In the spring of 1463, the Turks raided the monastery and captured the monks. They were tortured from Holy Thursday until Bright Tuesday. Saint Raphael was tied to a tree, and the ferocious Turks sawed through his jaw, killing him. Saint Nicholas was also tortured, and he died while witnessing his Elder’s martyrdom. He appeared to people and indicated the spot where his relics were uncovered on June 13, 1960. *Con’t Pg 15*

## Bright Monday

Commemorated on [April 29](#)

On Bright Monday the Church commemorates the Sweet-Kissing (Glykophilousa) Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos.

Like the Iveron Icon (March 31), the Sweet-Kissing Icon was also saved from the iconoclasts by a pious woman in the ninth century. It also traveled miraculously upon the sea, arriving at Mt. Athos, the “Garden of the Theotokos,” where it was honored by the monks.

A nobleman named Simeon was an iconoclast who shared the emperor Theophilus’s hatred for the holy icons. Simeon’s wife Victoria, on the other hand, venerated icons, especially a certain icon of the Mother of God before which she prayed each day. Simeon could not tolerate his wife’s piety, so he demanded that she give him the icon so he could burn it. Victoria threw the icon into the sea, hoping that it would be preserved through God’s providence.

Years later, the icon appeared on the shores of Mt. Athos near the monastery of Philotheou. The igumen and the brethren of the monastery retrieved the icon and placed it in the church, where it worked many miracles.

In 1830 a pilgrim came to the monastery from Adrianopolis. He listened to the history of the icon and the miracles associated with it, but regarded such things as childish fables. The monk who had related all this was surprised and grieved by the pilgrim’s disbelief, fearing that such doubts indicated an unhealthy spiritual state. He did all that he could to remove the pilgrim’s skepticism, but the man stubbornly adhered to his opinion.

The Mother of God, in her compassion, finally healed the pilgrim’s soul in a rather dramatic way. On the very day that he had his discussion with the monk, the pilgrim was walking on an upper balcony. Suddenly, he lost his footing and began to fall. In his distress he called out, “Most Holy Theotokos, help me!” The Mother of God heard him, and he landed on the ground completely unharmed.

The icon is one of the Eleusa (Tenderness) type. It is unusual in that it shows the Virgin kissing her Child. Christ raises His hand as if to repulse His mother’s caress.

## ***Bright Tuesday Con't***

Saint Irene was the twelve-year-old daughter of the village mayor, Basil. She and her family had come to the monastery to warn the monks of the invasion. The cruel Hagarenes cut off one of her arms and threw it down in front of her parents. Then the pure virgin was placed in a large earthen cask and a fire was lit under it, suffocating her within. These torments took place before the eyes of her parents, who were also put to death. Her grave and the earthen cask were found on May 12, 1961 after Saints Raphael, Nicholas and Irene had appeared to people and told them where to look.

Others who received the crown of martyrdom on that day were Basil and Maria, the parents of Saint Irene; Theodore, the village teacher; and Eleni, the fifteen-year-old cousin of Saint Irene.

The saints appeared separately and together, telling people that they wished to be remembered. They asked that their icon be painted, that a church service be composed for them, and they indicated the place where their holy relics could be found. Based on the descriptions of those who had seen the saints, the master iconographer Photios Kontoglou painted their icon. The ever-memorable Father Gerasimos of Little Saint Anne Skete on Mt. Athos composed their church service.

Many miracles have taken place on Lesbos, and throughout the world. The saints hasten to help those who invoke them, healing the sick, consoling the sorrowful, granting relief from pain, and bringing many unbelievers and impious individuals back to the Church.

Saint Raphael is tall, middle-aged, and has a beard of moderate length. His hair is black with some grey in it. His face is majestic, expressive, and filled with heavenly grace. Saint Nicholas is short and thin, with a small blond beard. He stands before Saint Raphael with great respect. Saint Irene usually appears with a long yellow dress reaching to her feet. Her blonde hair is divided into two braids which rest on either side of her chest.

Saints Raphael, Nicholas, and Irene (and those with them) are also commemorated on Bright Tuesday. Dr. Constantine Cavarnos has given a detailed account of their life, miracles, and spiritual counsels in Volume 10 of his inspirational series MODERN ORTHODOX SAINTS (Belmont, MA, 1990).

The Appearance of the Iveron (Portaitissa) Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos on Mt. Athos.

This icon was the property of a pious widow who lived in the area of Nicea in Asia Minor during the time of the iconoclastic emperor Theophilus (829-842). When the emperor's men arrived there to find and destroy every holy icon, this faithful widow threw the wonderworking icon of the Theotokos into the sea. Then she beheld a strange wonder. The icon stood upright on the water and traveled westward across the waves in this position.

After a time the icon arrived in front of the Iveron Monastery on Mt. Athos. A certain holy hermit named Gabriel received it in his arms from the water, and he gave it to the monks. They built a little church for the icon near the gate of the monastery, and they placed the icon there. From that time it was called the Portaitissa.

Since then the Most Holy Theotokos has worked many miracles through her holy icon. She has cured those who were possessed by demons, healed those who were lame, and given sight to the blind. At the same time, she has protected the monastery from every danger and saved it from invasions of foreigners. Among those who received benefit from the Portaitissa was a Russian princess, the daughter of Tsar Alexei Michailovitch (1651).

The icon arrived at the Holy Mountain on Bright Tuesday 1004. Therefore, the Iveron Monastery celebrates this bright festival even to the present day. The Divine Liturgy takes place in the church by the sea, where holy water gushed up when the monk Gabriel took the icon from the sea.

The Iveron (Portaitissa) Icon is also commemorated on March 31.

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**Cristo è risorto!  
È veramente risorto!**

*Italian*

**Christus resurrectus est ;  
vere resurrectus est.**

*Latin*

## Bright Wednesday

### Commemorated on [May 1](#)

On Bright Wednesday we commemorate the holy monastic Fathers who have shone forth on the God-trodden Mt Sinai. This commemoration was established by the Church of Russia on April 17, 1997.

Saints Theocharis and Apostolos are local saints of Arta. The first fell asleep in 1845 and the second a little later. Saint Theocharis was a teacher at Komboti, Arta. The icons of these saints are in the church of Holy Wisdom (Hagia Sophia) in Arta.

The Kasperov Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos is also commemorated today. Tradition says that this holy icon had been brought to Cherson from Transylvania by a Serb at the end of the sixteenth century. Passing down from parent and child, the icon had come to a certain Mrs. Kasperova of Cherson in 1809.

One night in February of 1840 she was praying, seeking consolation in her many sorrows. Looking at the icon of the Virgin, she noticed that the features of the icon, darkened by age, had suddenly become bright. Soon the icon was glorified by many miracles, and people regarded it as wonder-working.

During the Crimean War (1853-1856), the icon was carried in procession through the city of Odessa, which was besieged by enemy forces. On Great and Holy Friday, the city was spared. Since that time, an Akathist has been served before the icon in the Dormition Cathedral of Odessa every Friday.

The icon is painted with oils on a canvas mounted on wood. The Mother of God holds Her Son on her left arm. The Child is holding a scroll. Saint John the Baptist (January 7) is depicted on one side of the icon, and Saint Tatiana (January 12) on the other. These were probably the patron saints of the original owners of the icon.

The Kasperov Icon is commemorated on October 1, June 29, and Bright Wednesday.

### **Bright Friday: The Life Giving Spring of the Mother of God**

#### Commemorated on [May 3](#)

Today we commemorate the Life-Giving Spring of the Most Holy Theotokos. There once was a beautiful church in Constantinople dedicated to the Mother of God, which had been built in the fifth

century by the holy Emperor Leo the Great (January 20) in the Seven Towers district. Before becoming emperor, Leo was walking in a wooded area where he met a blind man who was thirsty and asked Leo to help him find water. Though he agreed to search for water, he was unable to find any. Suddenly, he heard a voice telling him that there was water nearby. He looked again, but still could not find the water. Then he heard the voice saying "Emperor Leo, go into the deepest part of the woods, and you will find water there. Take some of the cloudy water in your hands and give it to the blind man to drink. Then take the clay and put it on his eyes. Then you shall know who I am." Leo obeyed these instructions, and the blind man regained his sight. Later, Saint Leo became emperor, just as the Theotokos had prophesied.

Leo built a church over the site at his own expense, and the water continued to work miraculous cures. Therefore, it was called "The Life-Giving Spring."

After the Fall of Constantinople in 1453, the church was torn down by the Moslems, and the stones were used to build a mosque. Only a small chapel remained at the site of the church. Twenty-five steps led down into the chapel, which had a window in the roof to let the light in. The holy Spring was still there, surrounded by a railing.

After the Greek Revolution in 1821, even this little chapel was destroyed and the Spring was buried under the rubble. Christians later obtained permission to rebuild the chapel, and work began in July of 1833. While workmen were clearing the ground, they uncovered the foundations of the earlier church. The Sultan allowed them to build not just a chapel, but a new and beautiful church on the foundations of the old one.

Construction began on September 14, 1833, and was completed on December 30, 1834. Patriarch Constantine II consecrated the church on February 2, 1835, dedicating it to the Most Holy Theotokos. The Turks desecrated and destroyed the church again on September 6, 1955. A smaller church now stands on the site, and the waters of the Life-Giving Spring continue to work miracles. There is also a Life-Giving Spring Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos which is commemorated on April 4.