

Russian Orthodox Church of the Resurrection of Christ

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Schedule for the Week of November 1 – 7, 2009

Sunday Nov 1	St. John of Kronstadt Св. Иоанна Кронштадтского
Saturday Nov 7	5:30 PM Vigil
Sunday Nov 8	St. Demetrius of Thessalonica 8:30 AM Confessions, Nocturns 9:00 AM Divine Liturgy / Литургия

Святой Праведный Иоанн Кронштадтский

19 октября 1829 года в семье бедного глугоко верующего причетника села Суры Пинежского уезда Архангельской епархии родился слабенький мальчик, названный в честь празднуемого в этот день преподобного Иоанна Рыльского Иоанном. Он рос тихим, кротким, любвеобильным отроком, к которому уже в отроческом возрасте обращались односельчане с просьбой помолиться за них. И этого было Божие знамение и откровение: на Руси возрастал великий молитвенник, ревностный пастырь и милосердный друг самых отчаянных бедняков, чудотворец, пророк.

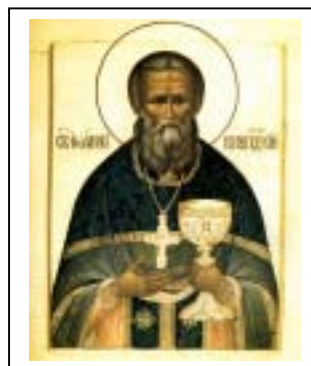
По его молитвам слепые прозревали, паралитики вставали и ходили, бесноватые и буйнопомешанные успокаивались и исцелялись, умирающие и безнадежные получали облегчение в тот момент, когда святой Иоанн получал телеграмму с просьбой помолиться о них. Пророчества его о судьбах России сбываются на наших глазах.

Святой праведный Иоанн Кронштадтский примером своей жизни учит нас, как надо жить вечными истинами в наше время, достигая совершенства духовного горением духа к Ходатаю Нового Завета Иисусу.

Он видимо не совершал подвигов, он просто жил, как все люди, но жил в Боге и все делал ради Него и во имя Его. Главным делом жизни святого праведного Иоанна Кронштадтского – доброго пастыря – были пламенное служение литургии и такая же пламенная молитва. И вся его жизнь и деятельность всецело питались и вдохновлялись священническим предстоянием у святого престола в алтаре. Молитва его была увенчана

многочисленными чудесными исцелениями, и он не скрывал этих чудес, но источником своей молитвенной силы указывал Святые Таинства.

Святой праведный Иоанн показал нам совершенную жизнь, он принес свою жизнь в жертву Богу и людям. И всемогущество Божией любви самовластно проявлялось чрез него, превращая его в жертву живую, благоприятную Богу. Христос, с младенческих лет войдя в его сердце, взрастил его в полную меру возраста Христова, и он теперь предстоит за нас и за Россию пред лицом Божиим в Царстве Небесном. И оттуда зовет нас: “Россия, будь такой, какой ты нужна Христу!” (Старец Архим. Иоанн Крестьянкин).



Excerpted from “Spiritual Portrait of St. John the Great Wonderworker of Kronstadt” by Archimandrite Constantine Zaitzev (1888-1975):

“We have before us a young man, a follower of Tolstoy. In his search for God, obscured by the blunderings of age, he was led to the feet of Leo Tolstoy. He greedily devours the writings of the new “teacher of life” -- but his heart remains cold. He does not see God! He retains boundless admiration for Tolstoy, reverence even. But the soul is empty. And then -- a chance encounter....

‘At that time, I happened once to be walking along the river bank. At first I did not notice an unusual gathering of people. Then I saw that many people were running toward the docks. I also went. A priest I knew ran past. His looks amazed me. Usually he was deliberately sedate, but this time he was running, pushing and holding up the edges of his cassock. I could not understand what had happened. Finally someone said that Father John had arrived. This was the famous Archpriest of Kronstadt who was passing through our city on his way to his birthplace. Until then I had only seen photographs of him. Now he stood on the ship, on the captain's bridge -- a priest, with a kind, affable face.

Everyone's eyes were on him, and happiness, rapture, deep emotion could be seen in them. Tears were flowing from many eyes. What was this? They had discovered something familiar and dear, which up until then had been hidden in the depths of each one's soul. They had not found this within themselves, but in another person, but that was all the same. They felt that man could be beautiful, and there is such a man, and here he is standing in front of them. And all that was beautiful within each one, all this rose up in them, and they drenched their ideal with tears of rapture and joy. The priest began to speak. It is claimed that gospel scenes no longer repeat themselves in our Church. Not so, for this was undoubtedly a scene out of the gospels. He spoke sincerely and simply, that he was happy to see us, that he wished us all the best and was fortunate, seeing that we believed in God and in His Christ. Eyes shone with kind, beatific, happy tears. If the intensity of faith and holy joy were to be weighed on the scale of God's Truth, I think that this moment would be indicative of the great faith of our city. If at that very moment Father John had told the people to leave all behind and follow him, I am convinced that many would have done so. Such words were not uttered, but it is evident that, having touched the edge, merely the edge, of the holy and the truthful, these people began to come to life....”

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Some people say: 'why must we enumerate the names of the living and the deceased when praying for them? God, being omniscient, knows these names Himself, knows each one's need.' But those who say this forget or do not understand the importance of prayer, forget that God's justice and mercy are obtained by our heartfelt prayer, which the Lord, in accordance with His goodness, imputes to the living and the deceased who are mentioned, since we are all members of a single Church body. They do not realize that the heavenly Church, in its great love, constantly prays to God for us, - and specifically mentions before God the names of those people who pray to the heavenly denizens - equal measure for equal measure. We commemorate them and they commemorate us. And whoever does not commemorate his brethren in his prayers, will himself be unworthy of commemoration. Of great significance is even a single word of faith and love during prayer. The fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much (James 5:16). (St. John of Kronstadt)

The Holy spoon and Proper Hygiene

*By Rev. Fr. Sylianos Muksuris
St. George Cathedral, Manchester, NH*

A concern often expressed by certain Orthodox Christians who attend the Divine Liturgy on Sundays and who receive the precious Body and Blood of our Lord, is having to share the same Communion spoon with others. Indeed, as concelebrating clergy commune

from the same chalice, so too do the lay people commune from the same spoon. A fear often verbalized is contracting infection or germs or some other disease by coming into contact with another person's saliva or lipstick that may come off on the spoon when receiving Holy Communion. The question I would like to address in this article is: Is there any reason to fear such a possibility?

The immediate answer is no. From a purely microbiological perspective, the sweet red wine used in Communion is typically high in alcoholic content. This means that the chances of bacteria or germs surviving in it are virtually minimal to non-existent. Although each of us communes the Body and Blood of Christ, the invisible microbes that may enter our mouths from the previous communicant are harmless. From a pure experiential perspective, every chalice on Sundays is consumed in its totality by the priest, after several mouths have communed from it. No priest, including the writer of this column, has ever become ill or incapacitated after consuming the Holy Gifts. And finally, from a purely spiritual perspective, the Holy Gifts are exactly that: they are sacred, in that they have become imbued with the fullness of God's presence and grace, and they are divine (not human) gifts, "for every good and perfect gift is from above, coming from Thee the Father of lights."

While there is no fear then of disease, it is pertinent that all Orthodox Christians follow certain basic rules of hygiene before approaching the holy chalice. First, it is important for us to wipe our mouths well after receiving Holy Communion. This prevents the elements from accidentally dripping onto the ground. Also, it is important for women who wear lipstick to wipe it all off before receiving Communion, or not to wear any lipstick at all when attending church. Not only does this show the proper respect to the Body and Blood of Christ, but it also shows respect to the fellow communicants who wish to commune the Holy Bread and Cup and nothing else! ...

It is important for us to know that the early Christians used to receive Holy Communion in a different manner than the present practice. They received from the celebrant a portion of the consecrated Bread into their hands, and they communed directly from the chalice, exactly the way priests do today. In fact, some of the more ancient liturgies, such as the Alexandrian Liturgy of St. Mark and the Jerusalem Liturgy of St. Iakovos, still call for the lay people to commune in this way. Because of the fear of accidents, the Church adopted, in time the use of tongs, with which the elements were mingled together and placed carefully into the mouths of the communicants through this instrument. By the ninth century, the Church changed over to the Communion spoon for the same practical reasons, and it is this practice that remains in place today .