

Fire & Light

St. Symeon Orthodox Church

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✠ **October 7, 2012** ✠

Martyrs Sergius and Bacchus of Syria (303)

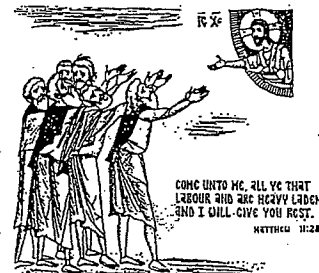
Virgin-Martyr Pelagia of Tarsus (287)

St. Jonah, Bishop of Manchuria (1925)

New Hieromartyr Priest Valentin (Sventsitsky) of Moscow (1931)

Riches are not in themselves blameable...
And even in material riches,
there is a place for virtue.

~ St. Ambrose of Milan



⇒ **TODAY ~ St. Symeon's Annual Parish Meeting**

⇒ **October 28 - 35th Anniversary Celebration - Liturgy & Banquet**

To be Orthodox ~ St. Justin Popovich (+1979)

✠ "For what does it mean for someone to profess to be Orthodox? It means this: to be part of the continuous struggle that leads from man to God-Man, that is, to be involved in the unending improvement of oneself through the holy mysteries, through struggles and virtues. Here the Orthodox Christian is never alone. Every feeling, act and thought is both individual and universal, not merely personal, but catholic and theanthropic (divine-human).

✠ When an Orthodox Christian ponders something, he does so prayerfully, with fear and trembling, since he knows that the choir of angels and the entire Church participate mystically with him in his struggle. The Orthodox Christian does not belong only to himself, but to all the Saints and, through them, to the holy Lord Jesus. When he examines his own spirit, the Orthodox Christian reflects: My spirit is nothing unless it is filled and perfected by the Holy Spirit."

The Church ~ the New Life

✠ The Church is the new life in Christ. In the Church there is no death and no hell. St. John the Evangelist says: Whoever keeps my word will never taste death. Christ does away with death. Whoever enters into the Church is saved; he becomes eternal. Life is one, an unbroken continuity: there is no end, no death. Whoever follows Christ's commandments never dies. He dies according to the flesh, according to the passions and, starting from this present life, is accorded to live in paradise, in our Church, and thereafter in eternity. With Christ, death becomes the bridge which we will cross in an instant in order to continue to live in the unsetting light.

Elder Porphyrios of Athens & Mt. Athos (+1991)

The Altar of Love

✠ We stand before the altar of love, before the very presence of Love Incarnate Himself, and we have no love for each other! Is it not strange? And worse, we do not even worry about it, do not even care about it. But love, especially love of neighbor, will not come of itself. We must strive for it with earnest efforts.

St. John of Kronstadt (+1908)

Baptism

✠ All of us who have been vouchsafed the laver of regeneration, offer good works to God --- not for the sake of recompense, but in order to preserve the purity given to us through Baptism. Every good work that we perform through our good nature, causes us to refrain from the opposite evil; but without Divine Grace, it cannot add to our sanctification.

St. Mark the Ascetic (5th C)

This and That

"Socialism only works in two places: Heaven where they don't need it and hell where they already have it."

'Government is like a baby: An alimentary canal with a big appetite at one end and no sense of responsibility at the other'

'The nearest thing to eternal life we will ever see on this earth is a government program.'

'It has been said that politics is the second oldest profession. I have learned that it bears a striking resemblance to the first'

'Politics is not a bad profession. If you succeed, there are many rewards; if you disgrace yourself, you can always write a book.'

'No arsenal, or no weapon in the arsenals of the world, is as formidable as the will and moral courage of free men and women.'

'I have wondered at times about what the Ten Commandments would have looked like if Moses had run them through the U.S. Congress..

'If we ever forget that we're one nation under GOD, then we will be a nation gone under.'

~ Ronald Reagan

...The number of self-identified Christians had fallen from 85 percent of the U.S. population in 1990 to 75 percent last year and that 1 in 6 Americans now disbelieve in God... Of Americans younger than 30, 1 in 4 profess no faith.

Patrick Buchanan

"It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters."

- Edmund Burke

(They tell you) ...what you read and watch has no influence on your character, attitudes, or behavior. That's why people spend so much time and money on video games, porn, and bad music, but it does not affect anyone except the cynical producers who get rich from destroying the minds and morals of their fellow-Americans.

- Thomas Fleming

With America headed for bankruptcy, with new debt of \$1 trillion piled up each year, perhaps John Quincy Adams' counsel may commend itself to a country weary from a century of crusades.

"America does not go abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own." - Patrick Buchanan

Two Classes

"The necessary result ... of the unequal fiscal action of the government is to divide the community into two great classes; one consisting of those who ... pay the taxes ... and bear exclusively the burden of supporting the government; and the other, of those who are the recipients of their proceeds, through disbursements, and who are, in fact, supported by the government; or, in fewer words, to divide it into taxpayers and tax consumers." - John C. Calhoun (early 19th Century)

A nation sundered between taxpayers and tax consumers, said Calhoun, "must give rise to two parties and to violent conflicts and struggles between them, to obtain the control of the government." Prophetic...

THOUGHTS CONCERNING THE CHURCH

By New Martyr Patriarch Tikhon.

And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains ... and all nations shall flow unto it ... and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks ... neither shall they learn war anymore. But they shall sit every man under his vine; and none shall make them afraid...

(Is 2:2, 4; Mic 4:3-4)



This kingdom of peace on earth, foretold by the Old Testament prophets, is the Church of Christ, and it is in her that one must seek peace. It is here that a man is given peace with God, for it is through the Holy Mysteries that he is cleansed of sin and becomes a beloved child of the Lord. Here in the Divine services, in the Mysteries, in the life of the Church, a Christian acquires peace

and joy and tranquility for his soul; his nature is regenerated, renewed, and in this meek, gentle, submissive, merciful and loving soul, there comes to abide the God of peace and love. And then the Christian experiences the highest degree of blessedness, which surpasses any and every earthly good. Nothing, no suffering can cloud this blessed peace within the Christian soul. On the contrary, we know from the history of the Church that holy people even rejoiced in sufferings and boasted of their trials, of being bound and imprisoned. In deserts and in caves and in the face of all manner of deprivation they were as content and serene as perhaps never are people who live with all manner of comfort and sufficiency. Even death did not frighten them; they serenely anticipated its approach and in peace departed to the Lord.

In Christ's Church peace is spread abroad. Here we pray for the peace of the whole world, for the union of all; here everyone calls one another brother, they help one another. Christians are called to love everyone; they even forgive their enemies and do good to them. And when Christians are obedient to the voice of the Church and live according to its precepts, then they truly experience peace and love. Let us only recall the first Christians, who had *one heart, one soul, who even owned what they had in common* (Acts 4:32). By contrast, when people distance themselves from the Holy Church and live according to their own will, then there reigns self-love, divisions, discord, wars.

Ought we not to rejoice and thank the Lord that He, in His merciful kindness, regards His Church and preserves her unharmed and invincible even to this very day? After all, it

was not only in the first centuries of her history that Christ's Church endured various troubles and was subject to persecutions, and it was not only during the time of the Ecumenical Councils that she was attacked by false teachers, who elevated their minds above the mind of God. From the first days of its existence and to the end of time she will be like a ship with passengers, sailing upon a tempestuous sea that is ready at any minute to capsize the ship and swallow its cargo. And it seems that the further the ship sails, the more fiercely the waves lash against it.

In the early centuries the Christians endured persecution from without, from the pagans. But when the Church proved victorious over them, an even greater danger arose, this time from another side: while troubles from the pagans ceased, there arose troubles from her own, troubles from false brothers, attacks from within. From within the bosom of Christianity itself there appeared one heresy and schism after another. Of course, the truth of God vanquished human falsehood, but members of the Church can never retire their weapons. They must wage war no longer against ancient heretics, but against new enemies: against unbelievers, against those who deny the truth, against those who pretend to be representatives of a powerful science. And we cannot say that with the passage of time this war has abated; no sooner does the Church manage to conquer one foe, than she is confronted with a new antagonist. Evil is like some hydra; as one head is decapitated, another appears in its place.

In the last times, evil will intensify all its forces and in the person of Antichrist it will engage the Church of God in the most violent battle. In those days there will be a *great tribulation* for the Church, *such as never was since the world began* (Mt 24:21). And just as in the past some flourishing and formerly renowned local Churches became impoverished and desolate, before the end there will be an even greater falling away. But there never was a time, and we believe, in accordance with the word of the Lord, that there will never come a time when the entire universal Church of Christ will disappear from the face of the earth. No: *the foundation of God standeth sure* (II Tim 2:19). Christ's Church is *founded upon an immovable rock, and the gates of hell will not prevail against her* (Mt 16:18). The more furiously the waves beat against this immovable rock, the farther they recoil from it.

At times, the enemies of Christ's Church are ready to celebrate a complete victory over her; it seems to them that they have put an end to her. But what do they discover? Just as swelling waves beat against a ship only to fall back into the sea to merge and become indistinguishable from other waves, so, too, the enemies of Christ, having launched an attack against the Church, again return to that nothingness from which they emerged, while the ship of the Church continues as before to advance in its victorious voyage. Every year that passes serves to affirm the certainty that the truth of the Lord

abideth forever, and that even *the gates of hell will not prevail against Christ's Church.*

How can we not rejoice on seeing that Christ's Church—a kingdom not of this world, a kingdom that has no worldly means at its disposal, no earthly enticements; a kingdom that is despised, persecuted, powerless—has not only not perished in this world, but has grown and has conquered the world. How can we not rejoice at the thought that in spite of all manner of coercion, attacks, and opposition, the Orthodox Church has preserved the faith of Christ as a precious treasure, in its original purity and entirety, unharmed, so that our faith is the faith of the apostles, the faith of the fathers, the Orthodox faith.

The holy Apostle Paul wisely compares the Church of Christ to a body. Now, in a body there is *not just one member but many* (I Cor 12:14), and *these members do not all have the same function* (Rom. 12:4), but each has its own: the eye has its function, the hand its function, and each member is necessary and cannot manage without the other; they *all contribute to the good of one another, and there is no division within the body* (I Cor 12:25-26). *Even so are you, brothers, the body of Christ and members in particular* (v. 27). *Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ* (Eph. 4:7) for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ (v. 12). Therefore, do you all with unfeigned love grow up into Him, *From Whom the whole body fitly joined together by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love* (v. 16).

Again, Saint John Chrysostom said, *Do not cast all responsibility upon the religious; you yourselves are capable of a great deal, you know one another better than we...* Therefore, brethren, edify one another, *warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men* (I Thess 5:14-15). *And the God of all grace, ... make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you. To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen* (I Pet 5:10-11).



When a non-believer asks you why you fast, don't tell him it is because of the Lord's suffering, or because of His Cross. We do not fast for the Passion or the Cross, but for OUR SINS, because we are preparing to approach the Holy Mysteries. The Passion of Christ is not a reason for fasting or mourning, but for joy and exultation! We fast and mourn, not for the Cross or for Christ's sufferings, but because of our own sins.

St. John Chrysostom

THE POWER OF PRAYER

Source: Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca.*

There was a presbyter who was discerning. While coming into the church to complete the synaxis, he saw a number of demons outside the cell of one of the brothers. Some had taken the form of women who were speaking indecently, and others of blasphemous youths; others were dancing while still others were trying on different outfits.

The old man sighed and said, "The brother persists in negligence in every way, and because of it the wicked spirits surround his cell in this disorderly manner." Therefore, when he had completed the synaxis, he returned and entered the cell of the brother, and said to him, "I am suffering, brother. I have faith in you, and if you pray for me, God will completely relieve my heart from suffering."

The disciple was ashamed, and said, "Father, I am not worthy to pray for you." The old man persisted, pleading and saying, "I will not leave unless you promise me that you will say one prayer for me every night." The brother obeyed the old man's command. The old man did this because he wanted a new way to ensure that the brother would pray at night.

Therefore, when the brother rose in the night, he said the prayer for the old man. After finishing the prayer, he was struck with contrition, and said to himself, "Wretched soul, you pray for the old man, but you do not pray for yourself." Therefore he offered one prayer for himself. He did this for a week, offering two prayers each night, one for the old man and one for himself.

On Sunday, while the old man was going to the church, he saw the demons once again standing outside the brother's cell, looking glum, and the old man knew that the demons were grieved because the brother prayed. He was filled with joy and went to the brother, saying, "Have charity and offer another prayer for me each night." After saying the two prayers for the old man, he was struck again with contrition, and said to himself, "O miserable one, offer another prayer for yourself."

He did this for a whole week, offering four prayers each night. When the old man came again, he saw the demons glum and silent, and gave thanks to God, and went in again to the brother and urged him to offer another prayer for him. The brother also offered one for himself, and said six prayers at night.

When the old man came again to the brother, the demons were angry with the old man, furious about the salvation of the brother. The old man gave glory to God and after entering his cell and exhorting him not to be negligent but the pray unceasingly, let him alone. The demons, seeing the brother's perseverance in the prayers and in soberness, by the grace of God left him.

A Psychological Profile of Christ?

The often-quoted words of C.S. Lewis, from *Mere Christianity*:

"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him (Jesus): 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

{pps. 55-56}

An interview with Dr. Gary Collins, PhD, a Christian clinical psychologist in Chicago, by Lee Strobel, in his book, *The Case for Christ*, pps. 146- 49.

I started our interview by gesturing out the window, where snow was gently falling on evergreen trees. "A few miles in that direction is a state mental institution," I said. "If we were to go over there, I'm sure we'd find some people who claim that they're God. We'd say they were insane. Jesus said he was God—was he crazy, too?"

"If you want the short answer," Collins said with a chuckle, "it's no."

But, I insisted, this is a legitimate topic that's worthy of further analysis. Experts say that people suffering from delusional psychosis may appear rational much of the time yet can have grandiose beliefs that they are superlative individuals. Some can even attract followers who believe they're geniuses. Maybe that's what happened with Jesus, I suggested.

"Well, it's true that people with psychological difficulties will often claim to be somebody they're not," Collins replied as he clasped his hands behind his head. "They'll sometimes claim to be Jesus himself or the president of the United States or someone else famous— like Lee Strobel," he quipped.

"However," he continued, "psychologists don't just look at what a person says. They'll go much deeper than that. They'll look at a person's emotions, because disturbed individuals frequently show inappropriate depression, or they might be vehemently angry, or perhaps they're plagued with anxiety. But look at Jesus: he never demonstrated inappropriate emotions. For instance, he cried at the death of his friend Lazarus—that's natural for an emotionally healthy individual."

"He certainly got angry at times," I asserted.

"Yes, he did, but it was a healthy kind of anger at people taking advantage of the downtrodden by lining their pockets at the Temple. He wasn't just irrationally ticked off because someone was annoying him; this was a righteous reaction against injustice and the blatant mistreatment of people.

"Other deluded people will have misperceptions," he added. "They think people are watching them or are trying to get them when they're not. They're out of contact with reality. They misperceive the actions of other people and accuse them of doing things they have no intention of ever doing. Again, we don't see this in Jesus. He was obviously in contact with reality. He wasn't paranoid, although he rightfully understood that there were some very real dangers around him.

"Or people with psychological difficulties may have thinking disorders—they can't carry on a logical conversation, they'll jump to faulty conclusions, they're irrational. We don't see this in Jesus. He spoke clearly, powerfully, and eloquently. He was brilliant and had absolutely amazing insights into human nature."

"Another sign of mental disturbances is unsuitable behavior, such as dressing oddly or being unable to relate socially to others. Jesus' behavior was quite in line with what would be expected, and he had deep and abiding relationships with a wide variety of people from different walks of life."

He paused, although I sensed he wasn't finished yet. I prompted him to continue by asking, "What else do you observe about him?"

Collins gazed out the window at the beautiful and peaceful snow-blanketed landscape. When he resumed, it was as if he were reminiscing about an old friend.

"He was loving but didn't let his compassion immobilize him; he didn't have a bloated ego, even though he was often surrounded by adoring crowds; he maintained balance despite an often demanding lifestyle; he always knew what he was doing and where he was going; he cared deeply about people, including women and children, who weren't seen as being important back then; he was able to accept people while not merely winking at their sin; he responded to individuals based on where they were at and what they uniquely needed."

"So, Doctor—your diagnosis?" I asked.

"All in all, I just don't see signs that Jesus was suffering from any known mental illness," he concluded, adding with a smile, "He was much healthier than anyone else I know—including me!"

"RAVING MAD"

Granted, as we look back through history, we don't see obvious signs of delusion in Jesus. But what about people who were directly interacting with him? What did they see from their much closer vantage point?

"Some people who were on the scene in the first century would vehemently disagree with you," I pointed out to Collins. "They did conclude that Jesus was crazy. John 10:20 tells us that many Jews thought he was 'demon-possessed and raving mad.' Those are strong words!"

"Yes, but that's hardly a diagnosis by a trained mental health professional," Collins countered.

"Look at what prompted those words—Jesus' moving and profound teaching about being the Good Shepherd. They were reacting because his assertions about himself were so far beyond their understanding of the norm, not because Jesus was truly mentally unbalanced."

"And notice that their comments were immediately challenged by others, who said in verse 21, 'These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?'"

"Why is that significant?" I asked.

"Because Jesus wasn't just making outrageous claims about himself. He was backing them up with miraculous acts of compassion, like healing the blind."

"You see, if I claimed to be the president of the United States, that would be crazy. You'd look at me and see none of the trappings of the office of president. I wouldn't look like the president. People wouldn't accept my authority as president. No Secret Service agents would be guarding me. But if the real president claimed to be president, that wouldn't be crazy, because he is president and there would be plenty of confirming evidence of that."

"In an analogous way, Jesus didn't just claim to be God—he backed it up with amazing feats of healing, with astounding demonstrations of power over nature, with transcendent and unprecedented teaching, with divine insights into people, and ultimately with his own resurrection from the dead, which absolutely nobody else has been able to duplicate. So when Jesus claimed to be God, it wasn't crazy. It was the truth."

The Murderers of Christianity

by Patrick J. Buchanan, November 10, 2010
Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture

Old news, but current....

Sunday, on the eve of All Saints' Day, Oct. 31, 2010, the faithful gathered at the Assyrian Catholic Church of Our Lady of Salvation in Baghdad. As Father Wassim Sabih finished the mass, eight al-Qaida stormed in, began shooting and forced him to the floor. As the priest pleaded that his parishioners be spared, they executed him and began their mission of mass murder.

When security forces broke in, the killers threw grenades to finish off the surviving Christians and detonated explosive-laden vests to kill the police. The toll was 46 parishioners and two priests killed, 78 others wounded, many in critical condition after losing limbs.

Within 48 hours, al-Qaida in Mesopotamia issued a bulletin: "All Christian centers, organizations and institutions, leaders and followers, are legitimate targets for the (holy warriors)."

It was the worst massacre of Christians yet. For Assyrian Catholics known as Chaldeans, whose ancestors were converted by St. Thomas the Apostle, the U.S. war of liberation has been seven years of hell.

Estimates of the number of Christians in Iraq in 2003 vary from 800,000 to 1.5 million. But hundreds of thousands have fled since the invasion. Seven of the 14 churches in Baghdad have closed, and two-thirds of the city's 500,000 Christians are gone.

While Saddam Hussein, a secularist, had protected religious minorities, Muslim vigilantes—Shia, Sunni and Kurd, as well as al-Qaida—have attacked the Christians who have endured kidnappings, pillage, rapes, beheadings and assassinations. And what has happened to this Christian community, which had lived peacefully alongside Muslim neighbors for centuries, must be marked down as one of the predictable and predicted consequences of America's war in Iraq.

...Why is Christianity being murdered in its cradle by Muslim fanatics?

Multiple reasons. A return of Islamic militancy. The rise of ethnic nationalism that conflates tribal and religious identity. Hatred of America for its domination of the region, for our war on terror that they see as a war on Islam and for our support of Israel in its suppression of the Palestinians. Christians across the Middle East are now seen as both members of an alien religion and a fifth column of the Crusaders inside their camp. Paul Marshall of Hudson Institute's Center for Religious Freedom warns that we may be in another great wave of persecution, "as Christians flee the Palestinian areas, Lebanon, Turkey, and Egypt." Christians are gone from Jerusalem, gone from Nazareth, gone from Bethlehem. From Egypt to Iran, the Vatican counts 17 million left.

"Across the Middle East," writes Robert Fisk in *The Independent*, "it is the same story of despairing—sometimes frightened—Christian minorities, and of an exodus that reaches almost Biblical proportions." In an essay titled in Christ's own words, "Whoever Loses His Life for My Sake ..." columnist Doug Bandow writes,

"Although Christians are no longer tossed to the lions in the Roman Colosseum, believers are routinely murdered, imprisoned, tortured and beaten. Churches, businesses and homes are regularly destroyed. The opportunity to meet for worship and prayer is blocked. There is real persecution rather than the cultural hostility often denounced as "persecution" in America. America remains the most Christianized of the Western nations. Yet, the protests of the White House, State Department and major media over the eradication of Christianity in the Middle East is muted."

Are we so wary of offending Muslim sensibilities or inflaming Muslim rage we cannot denounce the pogroms perpetrated against Christians in the name of Allah?

Of what worth these wars for democracy if we end up freeing fanatics to annihilate communities or expel populations of our own Christian brothers and sisters across the Middle East?

The Smell of Incense

SOMETIMES PEOPLE SEEM SURPRIZED BECAUSE THE ORTHODOX CHURCH USES INCENSE AS A PART OF HER WORSHIP SERVICES. ACTUALLY, INCENSE WAS VERY WIDELY USED IN ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD IN EARLY TIMES. IN THE BOOK OF EXODUS THERE ARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE BUILDING OF AN ALTAR OF INCENSE IN THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM. THE BIBLE ALSO TELLS US THAT SOME OF THE LEVITES WERE PUT IN CHARGE OF THE SUPPLIES NEEDED IN THE TEMPLE, AMONG THEM INCENSE IS SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED. THE ORTHODOX CHURCH HAS ADOPTED THE USE OF INCENSE AS A PART OF ITS JEWISH HERITAGE IN THE WORSHIP OF THE ONE, TRUE GOD.

THE GOSPEL SAYS THAT WHEN THE ANGEL APPEARED TO ZACHARIAS TO TELL HIM OF THE COMING BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST HE APPEARED TO HIM "ON THE RIGHT HAND OF THE ALTAR OF INCENSE", WHICH ZACHARIUS WAS TENDING IN HIS OFFICE OF PRIEST. INCENSE WAS ONE OF THE GIFTS OFFERED TO CHRIST AT HIS BIRTH.

IN THE FIRST CENTURIES INCENSE WAS CARRIED BEFORE IMPORTANT PEOPLE AS A SIGN OF HONOR. IF IT WAS RIGHT TO CARRY IT BEFORE A ROMAN CONSUL, WHY NOT CARRY IT BEFORE A CHRISTIAN BISHOP? ORIGINALLY, INCENSE WAS USED ONLY DURING PROCESSIONS. LATER ON, IT WAS USED AROUND PEOPLE AND THINGS SUCH AS THE GOSPEL, THE ALTAR AND SO ON.

DURING THE LITURGY THE SANCTUARY AND AND CHURCH ARE CENSED BEFORE BEGINNING, BEFORE THE GOSPEL IS READ, BEFORE THE GREAT ENTRANCE AND WHEN THE CONSECRATED COMMUNION IS REMOVED FROM THE ALTAR NEAR THE END OF THE SERVICE.

INCENSE ITSELF IS MADE FROM THE SAP OF THE FRANKINCENSE BUSH. SOMETIMES SCENTED OIL IS MIXED WITH IT TO PRODUCE A VARIETY OF PLEASANT ODORS WHEN IT IS BURNED.

INCENSE IS SYMBOLIC OF PRAYER RISING TO GOD. IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION (CH. 8) IT SAYS: "AND ANOTHER ANGEL CAME AND STOOD AT THE ALTAR, HAVING A GOLDEN CENSER; AND MUCH INCENSE WAS GIVEN TO HIM, THAT HE SHOULD OFFER IT WITH THE PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS...AND THE SMOKE OF THE INCENSE, WHICH CAME WITH THE PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS, ASCENDED UP BEFORE GOD OUT OF THE ANGELS HANDS"

