



Fire & Light

St. Symeon Orthodox Church

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✠ **September 18, 2011** ✠

**Sunday after the Feast of the
Elevation of the Precious Cross**

Postfeast of the Cross

St. Eumenes of Gortyna, Crete (7th C) The Martyrs Sophia & Irene of Egypt (3rd C)

St. Hilarion of Optina (1873) New Russian Hieromartyr Amphilocius of Krasnoyarsk (1937)



✠ *Many Years! Newly Illumined Samson, Sarah, and the children Victoria, Anna, Kassiani and Elaine Nash!*

✠ **Wed. Sept. 21 6:30pm 40th Day Memorial - + Phillip Poole**

⇒ **Annual Parish Meeting – Sunday, October 2**

⇒ **Father Alexander will be away next weekend – Sept. 24 / 25.**

⇒ **Help: A bit of string – We are searching for a new source for cotton string for our lamp wicks. Anyone with any insight to help, we would appreciate it.**

The Power of the Sign of the Cross

✠ We faithful have a great weapon – this is the power of the Life-Giving Cross. Thank how terrifying it become for unbelievers; they are completely helpless. It is as if a person set out completely unarmed into the thick forest at night. Yes, the first beast he came across would tear him up, and he would have nothing to defend himself with. But we will not be afraid of the demons! The power of the Sign of the Cross and name of Jesus is terrifying to the enemies of Christ, and saves us from the evil nets of the demons.

St. Barsanuphius of Optina (1911)

✠ See how perfectly He (Christ) involves Himself and accepts total commitment, the terrible commitment of the Crucifixion, of our death. And also how free He remains, sovereign, always Himself, whatever the stresses, the exigencies, the risks, and the cost -- setting fearlessly God's absolute claim on us; that we must live and be possessed of eternal life. ~ **Met. Anthony Bloom**

✠ **"If you knew your own illness, you wouldn't know the illness of others.** I am not saying you shouldn't be concerned with their pain and suffering, but you must not preoccupy yourself with their faults. If a person is not concerned with his self, the tempter devil will lead him to be concerned with others' faults. If we work on ourselves, then we know ourselves; and come to know others as well. Otherwise, we judge others by the wrong assumptions we make about ourselves."

✠ **"The early years of Christianity were quite different from the present day.** Public confession is not advised today. ... Not only were [the believers] back then more zealous, they also did not suffer from what people suffer today. Nowadays, couples separate at the slightest setback; things aren't what they used to be. People have drifted away from the Mystery of Repentance and Confession --- drowning in their thoughts and passions." **Elder Paisios (+1994)**

Pearls of the Holy Fathers (2:2)

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

Where it says "daily" it shows that without it we cannot live a spiritual life for a single day. Where it says "today" it shows that it must be received daily and that yesterday's supply of it is not enough, but that it must be given to us today also in like manner. And our daily need of it suggests to us that we ought at all times to offer up this prayer, because there is no day on which we have no need to strengthen the heart of our inner man, by eating and receiving it.

St. John Cassian

Compunction is absolute master. One cannot protect oneself where there is no compunction.

Abba Peter the Pionite

The right practice of abstinence is needful not only to the mortification of the flesh but also to the purification of the mind. . . For the mind then only keeps holy and spiritual fast when it rejects the food of error and the poison of falsehood.

St. Leo the Great of Rome

Every bodily activity — by which I mean fasting, vigils, psalmody, spiritual reading, stillness and so on — is directed towards the purification of the intellect; but without inward grief the intellect cannot be purified, and so be united to God through the pure prayer that transports it beyond all conceptual thought, and sets it free from all form and figure.

St. Peter of Damascus

Forgive your brother, so that you also may be forgiven.

Abba Isidore the priest

Unless a man is assisted by inner work according to the will of God, he labors in vain at what is external.

St. Barsanuphius of Gaza

As long as we are in the monastery, obedience is preferable to asceticism. The one teaches pride, the other humility.

Mother Syncletica

Vice takes men away from God and separates them from one another. So we must turn from it quickly and pursue virtue, which leads to God and unites us with one another.

Abba Isidore of Pelusium

"The Spirit breathes where It wills" (John 3:8), and He breathes in souls that are pure and holy and righteous and good. And if they obey the Spirit, He gives them fear of God, and fervour. . . and . . . makes them hate all the world, be it gold or silver or ornaments, or father or mother or wife or children, and so it makes all the work of God sweeter to them than honey and the honeycomb, be it toil or fasting or vigil or quiet or works of mercy. . . And then all the things which before had seemed sweet to him weigh heavy upon him.

Abba Ammonas of Egypt

The angel who is always near us is by nothing so distressed and made indignant as when, without being constrained by some necessity, we deprive ourselves of the ministrations of the Holy Mysteries and of reception of Holy Communion, which grants remission of sins. For at that hour the priest offers up the sacrifice of the Body of Him Who gives us life, and the Holy Spirit descends and consecrates the Body and Blood and grants remission to creation. The Cherubim, the Seraphim, and the angels stand with great awe, fear, and joy. They rejoice over the Holy Mysteries while experiencing inexpressible astonishment. The angel who is always by us is consoled, because he also partakes in that dread spectacle and is not deprived of that perfect intercourse.

St. Isaac the Syrian

The Cross and the Eucharist

— Fr. Alexander Schmemmann

“For Christ is perfect love and therefore perfect sacrifice.”

CHRIST WAS CRUCIFIED BY “THIS WORLD,” BY ITS SIN, ITS EVIL, its struggle against God. In earthly history, in our earthly time, the initiative of the Cross belongs to sin, just as it belongs to it even today, in each of us, when through our sins we “crucify the Son of God on (our] own account and hold him up to contempt” (Heb 6:6).

If the Cross—an instrument of a shameful execution—has become the most holy symbol of our faith, hope and love, if the Church never tires of glorifying its unfathomable and unconquerable power, of seeing in it the “beauty of the universe” and the “healing of creation,” of witnessing that “through the Cross joy has come into all the world,” it is because, of course, through that same Cross, which incarnated the very essence of sin as theomachy (of fighting against God) this sin was overcome; because through the death on the Cross, death, which had reigned in the world and would appear to have achieved its ultimate victory, was itself destroyed; and finally because from the depths of this victory of the Cross radiated the joy of the Resurrection.

But what transformed the Cross and eternally transforms the Cross into victory if not the love of Christ, the same divine love that, as the very essence and glory of the Kingdom of God, Christ manifested and granted at the Last Supper? And where, if not at the Last Supper, do we find the consummation of the full, complete self-sacrifice of this love, which in “this world” made the Cross—betrayal, crucifixion, suffering and death—unavoidable?

The Gospels and the Church services, particularly the wonderfully profound services of Passion Week, witness precisely to this link between the Last Supper and the Cross, to their connection as the manifestation and victory of the Kingdom of God. In these services, the Last Supper is always referred to that night that surrounds it on all sides and in which particularly clearly shines the light of the festival of love that

Christ accomplished with His disciples in the ‘large upper room, furnished,’ as if prepared in advance from all ages. This was the night of sin, night as the very essence of “this world.” And here it thickens to the limit, it prepares to devour the last light shining in it. Already the ‘princes of the people are assembled together against the Lord and His Christ.’ Already the thirty silver pieces—the price of betrayal—are paid. Already the crowd, incited by their leaders, armed with swords and spears, are heading out on the road leading to the Garden of Gethsemane.

But—and this is infinitely important for the Church’s understanding of the Cross—the Last Supper itself took place under the shadow of this darkness. Christ knew “the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table” (Lk 22:21). And it was precisely from the Last Supper, from its light, that Judas, after taking the morsel (Jn 13:27), went out into that dreadful night, and soon after him, Christ. And if in the services of Holy Thursday, the day of the express commemoration of the Last Supper, joy is all the time interlaced with sadness, if the Church again and again recalls not only the light but also the darkness overshadowing it, it is because, in the double exits of Judas and of Christ from that light into that darkness, She sees and knows the beginning of the Cross as the mystery of sin and the mystery of victory over it.

The mystery of sin: Judas’ exit is the limit and completion of that sin whose origin is in Paradise and whose essence lies in the falling away of human love from God, in choosing, through this love, *oneself*, and not God. All of the life, all of the history of the world, as the fallen world, as “this world,” which lies in evil, as the kingdom of “the prince of this world,” begins with this falling away and is inwardly determined by it. And now, in the exit of Judas, apostle and betrayer, this history of sin—blind, twisted, devoid of love, which had become thievery, for it had stolen life, which was given for communion with God, “for itself”—approaches its end.

For the mystically terrible meaning of this exit is that Judas also left Paradise, he took flight from Paradise, he cast himself from it. He was at the Last Supper, Christ washed his feet, he took into his hands the Bread of Christ’s love, Christ gave Himself to him in this Bread. He saw, he heard, he felt the Kingdom of God with his own hands. And here, like Adam, fulfilling Adam’s primordial sin, taking the entire horrible “logic” of

sin to its limit, he did not want this Kingdom. In Judas, the theomachistic desire, the fallen love of "this world," proved the more powerful. And this desire, on the strength of all its horrible logic, could not but be - consequently, inevitably—for the murder of God. After the Last Supper, Judas had nowhere to go but into the darkness of deicide. When it was done and this desire, and through it his "living" life, was exhausted, Judas would have nowhere to go but into self-annihilation and death.

The mystery of victory: In Christ, Who through His self-sacrifice manifested His Kingdom and its glory at the Last Supper, this very Kingdom appeared in the night of "this world." After the Last Supper, Christ also had nowhere greater to go than to this encounter, to the deadly duel with sin and death—because these two kingdoms, the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of the "prince of this world," could not simply "coexist," because it was in order to destroy the dominion of sin and death, to return his creation, stolen from him by the devil, to himself, to save the world, that God gave His only-begotten Son, Thus, Christ condemned Himself to the Cross with the Last Supper, with the manifestation in it of the Kingdom of Love. Through the Cross the Kingdom of God, which was secretly manifested at the Supper, enters into "this world" and through this entrance becomes struggle and victory.

Such is the knowledge, such is the original experience of the Cross in the Church, as witnessed by her entire liturgical tradition, and above all by the Eucharistic remembrance. As the prayer of thanksgiving continues:

Remembering this saving commandment and all those things which have come to pass for us: the Cross, the Tomb, the Resurrection on the third day, the Ascension into heaven, the Sitting at the right hand, and the second and glorious Coming.

This enumeration—in which, let us emphasize, the Cross is not isolated from or contraposed to the other events but constitutes together with them as it were one ascending series—is a commemoration of a single victory, gained in Christ by the Kingdom of God over "this world." The victory, which is realized, however, in a succession of victories, each finding its fulfillment in the next, is the action of the victorious progress toward that end, when Christ

"delivers the Kingdom to God the Father. . . then God shall be all in all" (1 Co 15:24, 28).

The sacrificial love of Christ, the single sacrifice, integrally offered by Christ through all these victories, unites them together, transforms them into a single victory. Here, in relation to this single and all-encompassing sacrifice of Christ, is disclosed the "harmfulness" of the identification, inherent in the "dismembering" school theology, of the sacrifice that Christ offers for us only with the suffering and death on the Cross. This harmfulness is rooted, of course, in the first place in the one-sided "juridical" understanding of the very idea of sacrifice as an atoning act, correlative to evil and sin as their expiation, and thus an act that according to its very essence "demands" suffering and ultimately death. This understanding, however... is precisely one-sided and in its one-sidedness false. In its essence, sacrifice is linked *not* with sin and evil but with *love*: it is the self-revelation and self-realization of love. There is no love without sacrifice, for love, being the giving of oneself to another, the placing of one's life in another, the perfect obedience to another, is sacrifice. If in "this world" sacrifice is actually and inevitably linked with suffering, it is not in accordance with its own essence but in accordance with the essence of "this world," which lies in evil, whose essence lies in the falling away from love.

The Eucharistic experience of the Church, in the experience of the Eucharist as sacrifice, this sacrifice embraces Christ's entire life, His entire ministry, or, better still, it is Christ Himself. For Christ is perfect love and therefore perfect sacrifice. He is sacrifice not only in his saving ministry but above all in his eternal Sonship, His giving of Himself in love and in perfect obedience to the Father. Indeed we can, without fear of falling into contradiction with the classic doctrine of the complete beatitude of God, trace sacrifice to the very life of the Trinity, and even more so, we can contemplate the very beatitude of God in the perfection of the All-holy Trinity as the perfect self-giving of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to each other, as perfect love and, hence, perfect sacrifice.

The Son offers this eternal sacrifice to the Father, transforming it through obedience to the Father into giving Himself for the life of the world. He offers it through His being made man, taking on human nature, and becoming for all eternity the Son of man. He offers it in receiving

baptism from John and in it taking on Himself all the sin of the world. He offers it through His preaching and miracle-working. And He fulfils this offering by manifesting and granting to his disciples at the Last Supper the Kingdom of God, the kingdom of perfect self-renunciation, perfect love, perfect sacrifice.

But because this offering is accomplished in "this world," because it encounters from the very beginning the opposition of sin in all its manifestations—from the blood of the children slaughtered by Herod, from the unbelief and the skepticism of the world to the frenzied hatred of the scribes and Pharisees—this whole offering from the very beginning is the Cross—the Passion and its acceptance, the moral struggling and overcoming—it is crucifixion in the deepest sense of the word. "And he began to be greatly distressed and troubled"—this was said about the final struggle, the final exhaustion on the night of betrayal at Gethsemane. But this very distress is the distress over the sin that surrounded Christ, and the troubling is over the loss of faith of "his own," to whom He had come, been present for His entire life and His entire ministry. And it is not for nothing that, on the Feast of the Nativity, while preparing for the joyful celebration of the Incarnation, the Church performs a certain prefiguration of Passion Week, contemplating in this very joy the Cross, inevitably inscribed in it from time immemorial.

As the entire earthly ministry of Christ is the offering – in "this world," "for the sake of us men and for our salvation"—of the eternal sacrifice of love, so it is all—in "this world"—the Cross. Completed as joy, as the gift of the Kingdom of God, at the Last Supper, His ministry is completed as struggle and victory on the Cross. It is the same offering, the same sacrifice, the same victory. And, finally, through the Cross and as the Cross, this offering, this sacrifice and victory is handed over and granted to us who live in "this world," Because in "this world," and above all in our very selves, it is only through the Cross that the ascension into the joy and fullness of the Kingdom appointed for us is accomplished.

ONLY THROUGH THE CROSS.. In reality, everything that I am endeavoring to say... I deliberately say in feeble and insufficient words: about the essence of the Church as ascension to Heaven, into the joy of the Kingdom of God, and of the Eucharist as the Sacrament of this ascension. These very words about joy and

fullness would be truly irresponsible words were they not referred— through the Church herself, in the Eucharist itself—to the Cross, to the singular path of this ascent, to the means of our participation in it.

"The Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal. 6:14). Need we point out that in these words the Apostle Paul expresses the entire essence of the Christian life as a following after Christ? The world is crucified to me if following after Christ is the reciprocal love of His love, the reciprocal sacrifice to His sacrifice, then in "the world" it cannot but be a spiritual feat of genuine renunciation of the world in its selfishness and pride, in its "desire" as "the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life" (1 Jn 2: 10). *I am crucified to the world:* but this sacrifice cannot but be my crucifixion, for "this world" is not only outside of me but above all in my very self, in the old Adam in me. Its mortal struggle with the new life granted to us by Christ never ceases in our earthly sojourn.

"In the world you have tribulation" (Jn 16:33). Anyone who would in the smallest degree follow the path of Christ, love Him and and give himself to him, has this tribulation, recognizes this suffering. The Cross is suffering. But through love and self-sacrifice this same tribulation is transformed into joy. It is experienced being crucified with Christ, as accepting His Cross and hence taking part in His victory. "Be of good cheer, I have overcome t world" (Jn 16:33). The Cross is joy, "and no one will take your joy from you" (Jn 16:22).

The Eucharistic remembrance is the remembrance of the Kingdom of God, which was manifested and appointed at the Last Supper. But the remembrance of the Cross, the body of Christ broken for us, the blood of Christ poured out for us, is inseparable from it. This is why it is only through the Cross that the gift of the Kingdom of God is transformed into its reception, its manifestation the Eucharist—in our ascent to heaven, in our partaking at the table of Christ in His Kingdom...the gift to us of our life as sacrifice.... For Christ took our life in himself and gave it to God. Christ manifested this sacrifice as life and life as sacrifice in the self-giving of His love...

{From *The Eucharist*, pps. 204-211}



CONCERNING THE EFFECTS OF RECEIVING THE BODY AND BLOOD OF OUR LORD

There are at least four major benefits which may be expected after partaking of Christ's Body and Blood, namely:

1. Intimate union with Christ through His love.

Through this union we mingle with God and share with Him. As God is love, when we partake of Him through Holy Communion we become partakers of His love. It should be added that these Gifts from God are truly free. He compels no one to accept, just as in true love there is no compulsion, but absolute free to either accept or reject.

2. Strengthening of the body and soul.

Eating ordinary food only nourishes a person's body; but eating Christ's Flesh and Blood strengthens and nourishes both the body and soul. When the soul is nourished, a person is better able to live, grow and develop spiritually. This means that the ability to resist sin is greatly increased, thus enhancing the desire and capacity to be more virtuous, righteous, compassionate and considerate. We can be sure that this is so since Christ said: "I am the bread of life, he who comes to Me shall not hunger and he who believes in Me shall never thirst" (Jn 6:35), and then: "For My Flesh is true food and My Blood is true drink" (Jn 6:55).

With these statements Christ expounded the eternal nourishment value of His Flesh and Blood. Unlike ordinary food which only temporarily strengthens the body, true Divine food strengthens the soul eternally.

The strengthening effect of these Gifts, is another indicator of Christ's great love for us. Christ gave us certain Commandments to follow if we are able to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. Scripture teaches that evil is spread through man by various demonic powers (Eph 6:12). Without Divine intervention man does not have the strength to fight these extremely powerful, fleshless creatures – as Christ said: "...for without Me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5). Man alone does not have the strength to become perfect. Not wishing man to be condemned to hell, Christ nourishes us with His Body

and Blood – giving us a Perfect Food with which to become perfect.

3. Preparation for eternal life with God.

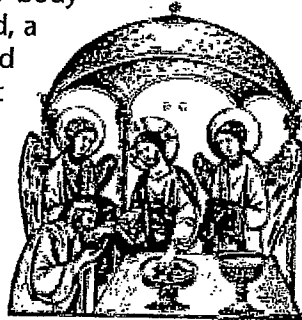
Partaking in Communion prepares us to share with God, an eternally joyful life after the resurrection of the dead. Christ is God and therefore lives forever – by eating His Body and Blood, we are blended with Him and will likewise live forever. This is Christ's promise when He said: "He who eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood has eternal life; and I will raise him up on the last day" (Jn 6:54).

This "life" that Christ refers to is not related to the life here on earth, since it is obvious that all men "live" here, even non-Christians. Nor does He refer to "life" of the general resurrection. Rather, Christ refers to the glorious life which some Christians will inherit as a reward for righteous living. How necessary it is for us to partake in Christ's Body and Blood; by being with Him, our souls are washed and transformed – made beautiful – then, after death, we would not expect punishment and hell, but the unspeakable rewards of the Heavenly Kingdom.

4. Unity through love with other Christians.

Christ has only one Body, by partaking of It, each and everyone of us also becomes united into one body – the Body of Christ. Christ's love for us is made perfect in unity, since not only is it reciprocated between ourselves and Christ, but amongst ourselves as well. This is what Christ meant when He established the Church.

The Church is not a building where people pray, it is the Body of Christ – a living organism, in which we all unite in love with Him and amongst ourselves, when we partake of Holy Communion (1 Cor 10:17). Christ is the head of His Body, the Church (Col 1:18), and not some bishop, patriarch, theologian or other mortal man. The Orthodox Church is thus infallible, since Christ being God, is infallible; we can then be sure that our Divine nourishment can never be false or corrupted, even if those who perform this Sacrament are themselves imperfect or unworthy.





STRUGGLE AND SPIRITUAL WARFARE

- *From 3rd Homily of St. Macarius the Great (+390)*

One thing is required – that one should have treasure in his soul and the life which is the Lord in his mind, so that, whether he works or prays or reads, he should have that possession which cannot be lost, which is the Holy Spirit.

There are those who say that the Lord requires only visible fruits from men. The interior ones God will rectify. But this is not the way things are. For as one defends himself against the exterior man, so also he must enter into the lists and do battle against his thoughts. For the Lord demands of you that you be angry with yourself and engage in battle with your mind, neither consenting to or taking pleasure in wicked thoughts.

Still, to uproot sin and the evil that is so imbedded in our sinning can be done only by divine power, for it is impossible and outside of man's competence to uproot sin. To struggle, yes, to continue to fight, to inflict blows, and to receive setbacks is in your power. To uproot, however, belongs to God alone. If you could have done it on your own, what would have been the need for the coming of the Lord? For just as an eye cannot see without light, nor can one speak without a tongue, nor hear without ears, nor walk without feet, nor carry on works without your hands, so you cannot be saved without Jesus nor enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Suppose you say: "I do not outwardly corrupt myself by fornication or adultery nor do I commit the crime of avarice, therefore it follows that I am justified." You are completely off the mark in such thinking that you have perfectly fulfilled everything. There are not just three categories of sin against which one must guard oneself, but the number is legion. Arrogance, presumption, unbelief, hatred, envy, deceit, hypocrisy, where do these come from? Are you not obligated to war against these in your inner thoughts? If a robber invades your house, are you not at once greatly distressed? He does not allow you to be freed from anxious worries. You begin to fight back against him. You exchange blows. So ought also the soul to strike back, to resist, to strike blow for blow.

Consequently, when the will fights back in its trouble and affliction, it begins to gain the upper hand. It may fail; it rises. Then sin pounces on the soul and wages ten or twenty conflicts. It overcomes the soul and pins it down. But then the soul, after a while in a momentous struggle, overcomes sin. If the soul preserves without letting down its guard in any area, it begins to emerge victorious as it sees through the deceit of sin and so it wins the crown of victory over sin.

*A Saving Instruction by St. Innocent of
Alaska (+Mar. 31, 1879)*

"On the Bearing of the Cross"

Jesus said: "Whoever wishes to follow Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me."

The first dutyis to deny oneself. To deny oneself means to give up one's bad habits; to root out of the heart all that ties us to the world; not to cherish bad thoughts and desires; to suppress every evil thought; to avoid occasions of sin; not to desire or to do anything out of self-love, but to do everything out of love for God. To deny oneself, according to St. Paul means to be dead to sin...but alive to God.

A Christian's second duty is to take up his cross. The word cross means sufferings, sorrows and adversities. To take up one's cross means to bear without grumbling everything unpleasant, painful, sad, difficult and oppressive that may happen to us in life.

Thus whether anyone offends you, or laughs at you, or causes you grief, sorrow or annoyance; or you have done good to someone and instead of thanking you, he rises up against you and even makes trouble; or you want to do good, but are not given the chance; or some misfortune has happened such as sickness; or with all your activity and untiring labors you are suffering from want and poverty and are so hard pressed that you cannot make ends meet; or besides that you are in some personal difficulty – bear all this without malice, without grumbling, that is, without regarding yourself as offended and without expecting any earthly reward in return, but bear all with love, with joy and with courageous strength.

So far we have spoken of exterior crosses, but there are interior crosses as well.

Interior crosses can be found at all times, and more easily than exterior ones. You have only to direct your attention to yourself and examine yourself with a sense of repentance, and a thousand interior crosses will present themselves to you.

We can never see the condition of our inner self in all of its nakedness or vividly realize its dangers without special grace and help from God, because the interior of our soul is always hidden from us by our self-love, prejudices, passions, worldly cares, delusions. And if it sometimes happens to us that we see the condition of our inner selves, we can only see it superficially and no more than our reason and conscience can show us.

Interior crosses are sometimes so burdensome that the sufferer can find no consolation whatever in anything.

All this can happen to you too! But in whatever position you may be, and whatever sufferings of the soul you may feel, do not despair and do not think that the lord has abandoned you. No! God will always be with you and will invisibly strengthen you even when it seems that you are on the very brink of perdition.

God will never allow you to be tried and tempted more than he sees fit. Do not despair and do not be afraid. With full submission surrender totally to Him. Have patience and pray. He is our Loving Father.



WHY DOES THE PRIEST CENSE US?

During the services, the priest censes many things in church. He also censes the people. Why does he cense the people?

As clouds of smoke from the burning incense rise up, we are reminded that we were created in the "image and likeness of God." It is this image in us that the priest censes. Just as he censes the icons of the saints, he censes each of us.

We are called to be saints. When we turn to God and tell Him we are sorry for our sins, He visits us and blesses us. He encourages us to grow and become more like Himself who is both holy and good. When the priest censes us, he reminds us to keep the divine image in us pure and God-like.