



## St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Church

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Services Schedule

Please see our [online calendar](#) for dates and times of Feast Day services.

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Bulletin for Sunday, January 16, 2022

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### Welcome



Jesus Christ taught us to love and serve all people, regardless of their ethnicity or nationality.

To understand that, we need to look no further than to the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Every time we celebrate the Divine

Liturgy, it is offered "on behalf of all, and for all." As Orthodox Christians we stand against

racism and bigotry. All human beings share one common identity as children of God. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatian 3:28)

### Members of our Parish Council are:

Joseph Barbera - Council Member at Large

Susan Davis- Council Member at Large

Carolyn Neiss - President

Marlene Melesko - Vice President

Susan Egan - Treasurer

Dn Timothy Skuby - Secretary

## **Pastoral Care - General Information**

Emergency Sick Calls can be made at any time. Please call Fr Steven at (860) 866-5802, when a family member is admitted to the hospital.

Anointing in Sickness: The Sacrament of Unction is available in Church, the hospital, or your home, for anyone who is sick and suffering, however severe.

Marriages and Baptisms require early planning, scheduling and selections of sponsors (crown bearers or godparents). See Father before booking dates and reception halls!

Funerals are celebrated for practicing Orthodox Christians. Please see Father for details. The Church opposes cremation; we cannot celebrate funerals for cremations.

## **Announcements**

**His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon has designated Sunday, January 16, 2022 as Sanctity of Life Sunday to be observed in parishes of the OCA**

The following petitions are to be inserted into the Litany of Fervent Supplication as part of the annual commemoration of Sanctity of Life Sunday:

- Again we pray that You will grant to the people of this nation the will to do good, to flee from evil, and to practice all righteousness, making us respectful of life and sharers of Your blessings, caring for one another in mercy and truth.
- Again we pray that You will banish all evil from our hearts and wickedness from our laws, enabling us to be servants of Your holy

will and performers of Your Love.

- Again we pray that You will kindle in our hearts the will to care for the needy, to show kindness to the poor, to aid the homeless and help the helpless.

The following prayer is to be read after the singing of "Blessed be the Name..." (2x)

Let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy. O Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son, Who are in the bosom of the Father, True God, source of life and immortality, Light of Light, Who came into the world to enlighten it: You were pleased to be conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary for the salvation of our souls by the power of Your All-Holy Spirit. O Master, who came that we might have life more abundantly, we ask You to enlighten the minds and hearts of those blinded to the truth that life begins at conception and that the unborn in the womb are already adorned with Your image and likeness; enable us to guard, cherish and protect the lives of all those who are unable to care for themselves. For You are the Giver of Life, bringing each person from non-being into being, sealing each person with divine and infinite love. Be Merciful, O Lord, to those who, through ignorance or willfulness, affront Your divine goodness and providence through the evil act of abortion. May they, and all of us, come to the light of Your Truth and glorify You, the Giver of Life, together with Your Father, and Your All-Holy and Life-giving Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

## **ByLaws Review**

I am in need of a few stout souls to help with the review of our ByLaws. If you

are interested or have some expertise that you would like to contribute your talents, please let Fr Steven or Marlene Melesko know that you would be willing to help. Thank you.

### **Social Media**

We are looking for a couple of extraordinary individuals who would like to be involved with taking and posting photographs, soliciting and authoring articles on our social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook and web site). No experience necessary as we are willing to train! Please see Fr Steven if interested.

### **Zoom Management**

We are looking for someone to help manage the computer running Zoom, most particularly during Liturgy. We will be making some changes to make the computer more accessible during services, but it the computer does need to be monitored throughout the services. We would like to start stream to Facebook or YouTube once again. Again, no experience necessary as we will train you! Please see Fr Steven if you have the time and desire to help. Thank you.

### **Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations**



Archpriest Dennis,  
Archpriest Michael,  
Deacon Timothy, Evelyn,  
Katheryn, Anne, Aaron,  
Veronica, Richard,  
Nancy, Susanne, Carol,  
Alexander, Gail, Kelley,  
Nina, Ellen, Maureen,  
Elizabeth, Christopher,  
Joshua, Jennifer, Petra,  
Olivia, Jessica, Sean,  
Sarah, Justin, Edward,  
Dayna and Maria.

Please pray for our catecumens: Daniel,  
Gregory and David.

Many Years! to Kyra and Roderick Seurattan.  
on the occasion of their anniversary; and to  
Dn Timothy on the occasion of his Name's Day.

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- Pray for: All those confined to hospitals, nursing homes, and their own homes due to illness; for all those who serve in the armed forces; widows, orphans, prisoners, victims of violence, and refugees;
  - All those suffering chronic illness, financial hardship, loneliness, addictions, abuse, abandonment and despair; those who are homeless, those who are institutionalize, those who have no one to pray for them;
  - All Orthodox seminarians & families; all Orthodox monks and nuns, and all those considering monastic life; all Orthodox missionaries and their families.
  - All those who have perished due to

- hatred, intolerance and pestilence; all those departed this life in the hope of the Resurrection.

Veneration of the Precious Chains of the Holy and All-glorious Apostle Peter. Bl. Maxim of Tot'ma, Fool-for-Christ (Vologdá—1650). Martyred brothers Speusippus, Eleusippus, Meleusippus, and those with them, in Gaul (161-180). Martyr Danax the Reader, in Macedonia (2nd c.). St. Honoratus, Archbishop of Arles and founder of the Abbey of Lérins (429). Hieromartyr Damascene the New (Mt. Athos—1771).

## Parish Calendar

### Schedule of Services and Events

January 16 to January 24, 2022

#### Sunday, January 16

12th Sunday of Luke  
Sanctity of Life  
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

#### Monday, January 17

Anthony the Great  
8:30AM Akathist to St Anthony the Great

#### Tuesday, January 18

Athanasios and Cyril, Patriarchs of Alexandria  
Repose of Victor Kuziak  
8:30AM Akathist to St Athanasias

6:30PM Parish Council Meeting

#### Wednesday, January 19

Macarius the Great of Egypt  
4:30PM Open Doors

#### Thursday, January 20

Righteous Euthymius the Great  
8:30AM Daily Matins

#### Friday, January 21

Maximus the Confessor

#### Saturday, January 22

Kyra and Roderick Sutteran  
Timothy the Apostle of the 70  
5:30PM Great Vespers

#### Sunday, January 23

14th Sunday of Luke  
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

#### Monday, January 24

Xenia, Deaconess of Rome

## Saints and Feasts

### January 16

#### Veneration of Apostle Peter's Precious Chains

Herod Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great and king of the Jews, grew wroth against the Church of Christ, and slew James, the brother of John the Evangelist. Seeing that this pleased the Jews, he took Peter also into custody and locked him up in prison, intending to keep him there until after the feast of the Passover, so that he could win the favour of the people by presenting him to them as a victim. But the

Apostle was saved when he was miraculously set free by an Angel (Acts 12:1-19). The chains wherewith the Apostle was bound received from his most sacred body the grace of sanctification and healing, which is bestowed upon the faithful who draw nigh with faith.

That such sacred treasures work wonders and many healings is witnessed by the divine Scripture, where it speaks concerning Paul, saying that the Christians in Ephesus had such reverence for him, that his handkerchiefs and aprons, taken up with much reverence, healed the sick of their maladies: "So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them" (Acts 19:12). But not only the Apostles' clothing (which certainly touched the bodies of the sick), but even their shadow alone performed healings. On beholding this, people put their sick on stretchers and beds and brought them out into the streets that, when Peter passed by, his shadow "might overshadow some of them"(Acts 5:15). From this the Orthodox Catholic Church has learned to show reverence and piety not only to the relics of their bodies, but also in the clothing of God's Saints.

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## January 17

### Anthony the Great

Saint Anthony, the Father of monks, was born in Egypt in 251 of pious parents who departed this life while he was yet young. On hearing the words of the Gospel: "If thou

wilt be perfect, go and sell what thou hast, and give to the poor" (Matt. 19:21), he immediately put it into action. Distributing to the poor all he had, and fleeing from all the turmoil of the world, he departed to the desert. The manifold temptations he endured continually for the span of twenty years are incredible. His ascetic struggles by day and by night, whereby he mortified the uprisings of the passions and attained to the height of dispassion, surpass the bounds of nature; and the report of his deeds of virtue drew such a multitude to follow him that the desert was transformed into a city, while he became, so to speak, the governor, lawgiver, and master-trainer of all the citizens of this newly-formed city.

The cities of the world also enjoyed the fruit of his virtue. When the Christians were being persecuted and put to death under Maximinus in 312, he hastened to their aid and consolation. When the Church was troubled by the Arians, he went with zeal to Alexandria in 335 and struggled against them in behalf of Orthodoxy. During this time, by the grace of his words, he also turned many unbelievers to Christ.

Saint Anthony began his ascetic life outside his village of Coma in Upper Egypt, studying the ways of the ascetics and holy men there, and perfecting himself in the virtues of each until he surpassed them all. Desiring to increase his labors, he departed into the desert, and finding an abandoned fortress in the mountain, he made his dwelling in it, training himself in extreme fasting, unceasing prayer, and fierce conflicts with the demons. Here he remained, as mentioned above, about

twenty years. Saint Athanasius the Great, who knew him personally and wrote his life, says that he came forth from that fortress "initiated in the mysteries and filled with the Spirit of God." Afterwards, because of the press of the faithful, who deprived him of his solitude, he was enlightened by God to journey with certain Bedouins, until he came to a mountain in the desert near the Red Sea, where he passed the remaining part of his life.

Saint Athanasius says of him that "his countenance had a great and wonderful grace. This gift also he had from the Saviour. For if he were present in a great company of monks, and any one who did not know him previously wished to see him, immediately coming forward he passed by the rest, and hurried to Anthony, as though attracted by his appearance. Yet neither in height nor breadth was he conspicuous above others, but in the serenity of his manner and the purity of his soul." So Passing his life, and becoming an example of virtue and a rule for monastics, he reposed on January 17 in the year 356, having lived altogether some 105 years.

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## January 19

### Macarius the Great of Egypt

Saint Macarius the Great was from the Thebaid of Egypt, a disciple, as some say, of Saint Anthony the Great. He was born about 331 and struggled in asceticism in the desert at Scete. Although young, he was called "the child elder" because of his great wisdom and austere manner of life. He was

ordained presbyter and reposed in 391, at the age of sixty. There are fifty homilies ascribed to him.

It is said of Saint Macarius that he became as a God upon earth, for even as God protects the whole world, so did he cover the faults he saw as if he did not see them. Once he came back to his cell to find a thief taking his things and loading them on a camel. Macarius' non-possessiveness was so great that he helped the thief load the camel. When the camel refused to rise, Macarius returned to his cell and brought a small hoe, said that the camel wanted the hoe also, loaded it on, and kicked the camel telling it to get up. The camel obeyed Macarius' command, but soon lay down again, and would not move until everything had been returned to Macarius. His contemporary, Saint Macarius of Alexandria, was so called because he came from Alexandria and was therefore of that Greek-speaking colony; while Saint Macarius the Great is also called "of Egypt," that is, he belonged to the ancient race native to Egypt, the Copts.

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## January 20

### Righteous Euthymius the Great

This Saint, who was from Melitene in Armenia, was the son of pious parents named Paul and Dionysia. He was born about 377. Since his mother had been barren, he was named Euthymius-which means "good cheer" or "joy"-for this is what his parents experienced at his birth. He studied under Eutroius, the Bishop

of Melitene, by whom he was ordained and entrusted with the care of the monasteries of Melitene. Then, after he had come to Palestine about the year 406, he became the leader of a multitude of monks. Through him, a great tribe of Arabs was turned to piety, when he healed the ailing son of their leader Aspebetos. Aspebetos was baptized with all his people; he took the Christian name of Peter, and was later consecrated Bishop for his tribe, being called "Bishop of the Tents." Saint Euthymius also fought against the Nestorians, Eutychians, and Manichaeans. When Eudocia, the widow of Saint Theodosius the Younger, had made her dwelling in Palestine, and had fallen into the heresy of the Monophysites which was championed in Palestine by a certain Theodosius, she sent envoys to Saint Symeon the Stylite in Syria (see Sept. 1), asking him his opinion of Eutyches and the Council of Chalcedon which had condemned him; Saint Symeon, praising the holiness and Orthodoxy of Saint Euthymius near whom she dwelt, sent her to him to be delivered from her error (the holy Empress Eudocia is commemorated Aug. 13). He became the divine oracle of the Church, or rather, "the vessel of divine utterance," as a certain historian writes. He was the instructor and elder of Saint Sabbas the Sanctified. Having lived for ninety-six years, he reposed in 473, on January 20.

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## January 21

### **Maximus the Confessor**

The divine Maximus, who was from Constantinople, sprang from an illustrious

family. He was a lover of wisdom and an eminent theologian. At first, he was the chief private secretary of the Emperor Heraclius and his grandson Constans. When the Monothelite heresy became predominant in the royal court, out of hatred for this error the Saint departed for the Monastery at Chrysopolis (Scutari), of which he later became the abbot. When Constans tried to constrain him either to accept the Monothelite teaching, or to stop speaking and writing against it - neither of which the Saint accepted to do - his tongue was uprooted and his right hand was cut off, and he was sent into exile where he reposed in 662. At the time only he and his few disciples were Orthodox in the East (See also August 13).

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## January 22

### **Timothy the Apostle of the 70**

The Apostle Timothy, who was from Lystra of Lycaonia, was born of a Greek (that is, pagan) father and a Jewish mother. His mother's name was Eunice, and his grandmother's name was Lois (II Tim. 1:5). He became the disciple of the Apostle Paul when the latter first preached there, and he followed St. Paul during the whole period of the Apostle's preaching. Afterwards, Timothy was consecrated by him as first Bishop of the church in Ephesus. Under the supervision of John the Evangelist, who governed all the churches in Asia, he completed his life as a martyr in the year 97. He was stoned to death by the heathens, because, as some surmise, he opposed the festival held in honor of Artemis (Diana).

The Apostle Paul's First and Second Epistles to Timothy were written to him.

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## Hymns of the Day



### **Tone 5 Troparion (Resurrection)**

Let us, the faithful,  
praise and worship the  
Word,  
co-eternal with the  
Father and the Spirit,  
born for our salvation

from the Virgin;  
for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in  
the flesh,  
to endure death,  
and to raise the dead//  
by His glorious Resurrection.

### **Tone 4 Troparion (St. Peter)**

You came to us without leaving Rome  
through the precious chains that you wore.  
First-enthroned of the Apostles,  
we bow down to them in faith and pray://  
“Through your prayers to God grant us great  
mercy!”

### **Tone 5 Kontakion (Resurrection)**

You descended into hell, O my Savior,  
shattering its gates as Almighty,  
resurrecting the dead as Creator,  
and destroying the sting of death.  
You have delivered Adam from the curse, O  
Lover of man,//  
and we cry to You: “O Lord, save us!”

### **Tone 2 Kontakion (St. Peter)**

Christ the Rock radiantly glorifies the Rock of  
Faith,  
the first-enthroned of the disciples;  
He calls us to honor the miracles wrought  
through Peter's chains,//  
so that He may grant us forgiveness of our  
sins.

### **Communion Hymn**

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him  
in the highest! (Ps. 148:1)  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

## Gospel and Epistle Readings

### Epistle Reading

#### **The Reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians 3:12-16**

Brethren, put on as God's chosen ones, holy  
and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness,  
meekness, and patience, forbearing one  
another and, if one has a complaint against  
another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has  
forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And  
above all these put on love, which binds  
everything together in perfect harmony. And  
let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to  
which indeed you were called in the one body.  
And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell  
in you richly, teach and admonish one another  
in all wisdom, and sing psalms and hymns and  
spiritual songs with thankfulness in your  
hearts to God.

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## Gospel Reading

### The Reading is from Luke 18:18-27

At that time, a ruler came to Jesus and asked him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.' " And he said, "All these I have observed from my youth." And when Jesus heard it, he said to him, "One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." But when he heard this he became sad, for he was very rich. Jesus looking at him said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Those who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" But he said, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."

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## Wisdom of the Fathers

So in order that we may not destroy the grace that we have received, but preserve it to the end and depart this life in possession of the treasure, there is need of something human, of endeavor on our part. In ordinary affairs it is neither reasonable nor usual for us merely to be content with having received life ... Rather we must seek the means of preserving it.

## St. Nicholas Cabasilas

*The Life in Christ, The Sixth Book, 1. B#38, p. 159, 14th Century*

## Beyond the Sermon



### Kingdom of God

*And of His kingdom there will be no end . . .*

Jesus is the royal Son of David, of whom it was prophesied by the angel at His birth:

He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there will be no end (Lk 1.32-33).

Through His sufferings as the Christ, Jesus achieved everlasting kingship and lordship over all creation. He has become "King of kings and Lord of lords," sharing this title with God the Father Himself (Deut 10.17; Dan 2.47; Rev 19.16). As a man, Jesus Christ is King of the Kingdom of God.

Christ came for no other reason than to bring God's kingdom to men. His very first public words are exactly those of His forerunner, John the Baptist: "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt 3.2, 4.17).

All through His life Jesus spoke of the kingdom. In the sermons such as the

Sermon on the Mount and the many parables,  
He told of the everlasting kingdom.

Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the  
kingdom of heaven . . .

Blessed are they who are persecuted for  
righteousness sake for theirs is the kingdom of  
heaven.

He who does these commandments and  
teaches them shall be called great in the  
kingdom of heaven.

But seek ye first the kingdom of heaven and  
its righteousness, and all things will be yours  
as well.

Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord,"  
shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who  
does the will of My Father who is in heaven.  
(Mt 5-7)

The mustard seed, the leaven, the pearl of  
great price, the lost coin, the treasure in the  
field, the fishing net, the wedding feast, the  
banquet, the house of the Father, the vineyard  
. . . all are signs of the kingdom which Jesus  
has come to bring. And on the night of His last  
supper with the disciples He tells the apostles  
openly:

You are those who have continued with me in  
my trials; as My Father appointed a kingdom  
for Me, so do I appoint for you that you may  
eat and drink at My table in my kingdom, and  
sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of  
Israel (Lk 22: 28-30; Reading of the Vigil of  
Holy Thursday).

Christ's kingdom is "not of this world"

(Jn 18.31). He says this to Pontius Pilate when  
being mocked as king, revealing in this  
humiliation His genuine divine kingship. The  
Kingdom of God, which Christ will rule, will  
come with power at the end of time when the  
Lord will fill all creation and will be truly "all,  
and in all" (Col 3.11). The Church, which in  
popular Orthodox doctrine is called the  
Kingdom of God on earth, has already  
mysteriously been given this experience. In  
the Church, Christ is already acknowledged,  
glorified, and served, as the only king and  
lord; and His Holy Spirit, whom the saints of  
the Church have identified with the Kingdom  
of God, is already given to the world in the  
Church with full graciousness and power.

The Kingdom of God, therefore, is a Divine  
Reality. It is the reality of God's presence  
among men through Christ and the Holy  
Spirit. "For the Kingdom of God . . . means . . .  
peace and joy and righteousness in the Holy  
Spirit" (Rom 14.17). The Kingdom of God as a  
spiritual, divine reality is given to men by  
Christ in the Church. It is celebrated and  
participated in the sacramental mysteries of  
the faith. It is witnessed to in the scriptures,  
the councils, the canons, and the saints. It will  
become the universal, final cosmic reality for  
the whole of creation at the end of the ages  
when Christ comes in glory to fill all things  
with Himself by the Holy Spirit, that God  
might be "all and in all" (1 Cor 15.28).

<https://www.oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/doctrine-scripture/the-symbol-of-faith/kingdom-of-god>

## Epiphany

Thou hast appeared to the world today, O Lord, And Thy light has shone forth upon us. With full knowledge we praise Thee Thou has come and Thou art visible O unapproachable Light.  
--Kontakion

On January 6th, the Orthodox Church celebrates the Epiphany Festival. This Festival is usually known as the celebration of Christ's baptism. But this is only one part of the Feast. There is another and deeper meaning of the Epiphany Festival.

In the first place, the proper name of this Festival is "The Holy Theophany."

"Theophany" means "the appearance of God."

So the Feast of Epiphany is dedicated to the memory of Christ's baptism and to the memory of God's appearance to mankind. The Feast is often called Epiphany because Epiphany means an appearance.

It was at the Baptism of our Lord that God appeared in the form of the Trinity. Even though we constantly hear about the Trinity in Church, we do not very often understand exactly who this Trinity is, and what it means to us. The Trinity is clearly expressed in the Troparion (Hymn) of the Feast:

When Thou, O Lord, was baptized in the Jordan, The Worship of the Trinity was made manifest. For the voice of the Father bore witness to Thee, And called Thee His beloved Son.

And the Spirit, in the form of a dove, Confirmed the truthfulness of this Word.

O Christ our God, who revealed Thyself And has illumined the world. Glory to Thee!

Here, at the Baptism of Christ, we see affirmed one of the greatest Christian truths—the truth that God is one essence and three persons. Here we see God revealing Himself as one triune being. We hear the Father speaking; we see the Holy Spirit descending; and the only-begotten Son being Baptized. The Trinity is a great mystery. Our limited minds find it difficult to understand. Yet the Truth of the fact of the Trinity cannot be denied. The Trinity is a life of love and peace. In God there is a fellowship of three Persons, living together, united in nature, will, knowledge, understanding and action. This relationship is intimate and personal. It consists of an ideal social life of harmony and friendship, of companionship and common purpose.

Thus God is the pattern for society. God wants men to live together as one as He lives together as three Persons. As They love one another, so are we to love one another—perfectly, completely, truthfully. We are asked to unite ourselves to Them and in Them, as They are united in each other (John 17). That is what Orthodox life means—seeking this unity with God, sharing God's life. And of course, the weekly Liturgy tries to be the expression of that "coming together" and becoming one mind, one voice, one heart—becoming worthy, in other words, to receive God into our own bodily lives in the Eucharist, and of being received into God's life in return. That is the answer to the question, "What do Orthodox believe?"

It shows, too, how Orthodox Christians look at matter and material things in a revolutionary new way. God used matter—flesh, bodies, oil, water, bread and wine, etc. for spiritual purposes. The Epiphany Festival emphasizes our new and radical approach to created things to the world in its use of water.

-Fr. George Timko

Occasionally the Cathedral clergy would be disconcerted to see Vladika, in the middle of a service (though never in the altar), bend over to play with a small child! And on feast days when blessing with holy water was called for, he would sprinkle the faithful, not on the top of the head as is usual, but right in the face (which once led a small girl to exclaim, "he squirts you").

- *St John Maximovitch*

