

JUNE 15, 2014

ST. SPIRIDON ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

400 Yale Ave., Seattle, WA 98109



WEEKLY PUBLICATION

1st SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

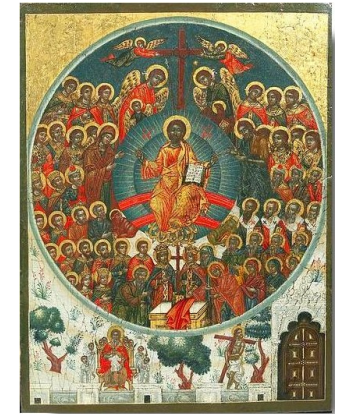
Tone 8. All Saints. Prophet Amos (8th c. B.C.). St. Jonah, Metropolitan of Moscow (1461). Ven. Gregory and Cassian, Abbots of Avnezhk (Vologdá—1392). Martyrs Vitus, Modestus, and Crescentia, at Lucania (ca. 303). Martyr Dulas of Cilicia (4th c.).

CANONIZATION

The word *canonization* means that a Christian has been found worthy to have his name placed in the canon [list] of saints of the Church. This *canon* is read during the services of the Church. Every day in the calendar year is dedicated to a group of saints whose names are remembered by the people of God.

At the same time, when a Christian's name has been included in the canon of saints, it is a sign that the Church encourages the faithful to ask that saint for his prayers before God. Services may be specially composed in the saint's honor and celebrated in the churches by the Church -- the people of God.

The Church decides to include names in its canon for many reasons. Basically, underlying all possible reasons for canonizing this or that Christian is the idea that the person in question has



preserved in himself the image and likeness of God in which he was originally created. When God created man, He created him in His own image. The words used for "image" is simply the familiar Greek word, *ikon*. In other words, God made the first *ikon*, and man is created to be an *ikon* of God, a faithful copy of the original.

The people of God see God's image in His saints. For this reason our church buildings contain many ikons of saints in order to remind us that we are meant to see the image of God in ourselves and in each other. The living people of God gather

Orthodox confuse saints with God. Praying to a saint means something very easily understood: *we ask the holy person to pray for us*. We can, of course, ask for the prayers of those who are not officially saints. In fact, we often ask our friends and families to pray for us. We may ask a person who has died -- a mother or father or grandparent -- to pray for us. But we are especially interested in seeking out the prayers of those whose lives have been wholly devoted to prayer, who are in fact, "experts" in the matter of prayer and of praying. Thus the Orthodox Christian prays to a saint by asking the saint to pray for him. The Orthodox Christian venerates ikons -- he bows and kisses the ikon and in doing that he bows before and kisses the image of God which he sees in the saint. He bows to honor the image of God; he kisses to show his love for that image, and to express his hope that the image of God will also become evident and manifest in himself. In a similar way the priest censes the ikons

and bow to them -- again, seeing the image of God, censing it, bowing to it; and then the priest turns and censes the people gathered in the Church and bows to them, just as he did to the ikons. He also sees the image of God in the people of God who are the Church of Christ on earth. In turn, the people bow to the priest, seeing also in him that same image, that same call to be an ikon.

Canonization does not make a man a saint. Rather, it establishes the fact, publically and for all to see, that the man is already a saint -- that is, that the holy man and God have so cooperated together at every level of the man's existence that the man has become, by grace, a god, just as God Himself is God by nature. The old saying in the Church is that "God became a man (in the incarnation of Christ) in order that man might become a god."

This article originally appeared in the commemorative book titled Canonization of Saint Herman of Alaska (August 9, 1970 - Kodiak, AK).

LOOKING AHEAD

Saturday, June 21:	9:30am Liturgy (Slavonic) 5pm PC Meeting 6:30pm Vespers
Sunday, June 22:	9:30am Liturgy

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together in temples in the presence of the *ikons* of men and women who have shown in an especially notable way what it means to live life fully in Christ.

For the first thousand years of the history of the Church saints were recognized without any formal rite of canonization. Local congregations of the faithful simply began to remember certain well-known Christians in their liturgical gatherings, to ask them for help in prayer, to visit their relics, which frequently remained vehicles of the Holy Spirit, curing the sick in soul and body, as they had during earthly life.

In the 10th century, in the west, the then-Orthodox Church of Rome began to insist that saints be formally and officially "registered" as such with the Roman authorities. The first recorded canonization of this type was that of Ulrich of Augsburg, canonized in 993 by John XV. For the next 600 years -- during which time the Roman Catholic Church split off from the Orthodox community -- the west developed a very legalistic and precise method of determining who were saints.

The Holy Orthodox Church never developed any comparable methods for canonizing her saints. The situation remained very much determined by local practices, local cults, and local traditions. Holy men and women continued to be recognized as such during their own lifetime; they continued to be venerated

(honored) after their death; Christian people continued to ask for their prayers and to visit their shrines.

In time, especially in the Slavic Churches, a more disciplined method of canonization became the rule, due to the influence of the example of the western Christians. But no Orthodox Church has developed a system as detailed and as legalistic as that of the western groups. Such a development would in fact be highly undesirable from the point of view of the Orthodox tradition.

The word *saint* means *holy*, thus "Saint John" means, in fact, "Holy John." This is not to say that he was always perfect; that he was a genius; that he was a great man according to the understanding of this world; that his views on politics, social life, or economics were desirable or correct. It means only that, within the context of his age, he manifested the *image of God in himself* in some way -- that he was an *ikon*, an original creation, a new creature in Christ.

Canonization does not make anybody a saint. Canonization recognizes that someone already was, in his own lifetime, a saint. Having recognized that the Church encourages its members to follow the example, the model, provided by the life of the holy person, to pray to him, to keep his memory alive. Praying to a saint does not mean that

Tone 8 Troparion *(Resurrection)*

You descended from on high, O Merciful One!
You accepted the three day burial to free us from our sufferings!//
O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to You!

Tone 4 Troparion *(from the Pentecostarion)*

As with fine porphyry and royal purple,
Your Church has been adorned with Your martyr's blood shed through-
out all the world.
She cries to You, O Christ God:
"Send down Your bounties on Your people,//
grant peace to Your habitation and great mercy to our souls!"

Tone 8 Kontakion *(from the Pentecostarion)*

The universe offers You the God-bearing Martyrs
as the first fruits of creation, O Lord and Creator.
By their prayers keep Your Church, Your habitation, in abiding
peace//
through the Theotokos, O most Merciful One!

Tone 8 Prokeimenon *(Resurrection)*

Pray and make your vows before the Lord, our God! (Ps 75/76:11)

v: In Judah God is known; His name is great in Israel. (Ps 75/76:1)

Tone 4 Prokeimenon *(Saints)*

God is wonderful in His saints, the God of Israel. (Ps 67/68:35)