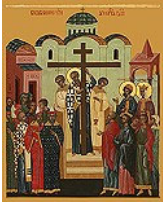


## ✠Bulletin✠

Week of June 8th to June 14th



## Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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**Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom**

**8th SUNDAY OF PASCHA - Tone 7**

### Holy Pentecost: Feast of the Holy Trinity

Translation of the Relics of the Greatmartyr Theodore Stratelates (319). St. Theodore, first Bishop of Rostov and Suzdal' (1023). Finding of the Relics of Ss. Basil and Constantine, Princes of Yaroslavl (13th c.). St. Ephraim, Patriarch of Antioch (545). Ven. Zosimas of Phœnicia (Syria—6th c.).

#### Weekly Liturgical Service Schedule

**Sunday June 8, 2025 - PENTECOST**

**9:10 am** - Hours

**9:30 am** - Divine Liturgy

**Kneeling Prayers**

#### Weekly Schedule

**Sunday June 8, 2025**

- Church BBQ following Divine Liturgy
- Inquirers & Catechism classes following Divine Liturgy

## Excerpts of the Sermon of Saint John Chrysostom Given on the Feast of Holy Pentecost

Let us spiritually extol the grace of the Holy Spirit in spiritual hymns, since spiritual grace has on this day shown upon us from heaven. Though our words are too weak to express adequately the greatness of this [grace], we shall praise its power and activity to the extent of our abilities; for the Holy Spirit probes all things, even the depths of divinity.

We are celebrating the day of Pentecost, the day of the Descent of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, [the day of] the hope of perfection, the end of expectation, the longing for salvation, the fulfillment of prayer and the image of patience. Today the Spirit Who acted [to scatter] the nations in the time of Heber has formed tongues of fire among the Apostles. His action [of old] led to the confusion of the nations, in order to restrain the will of man from its brazenness and [consequent] chastisement; on this occasion, however, amidst fiery tongues, the deeds wrought by the activity of the Holy Spirit [served] to preserve us [as] recipients of preaching, [in] fulfillment of the will of God.

In the beginning the Spirit of God moved over the water, and later, in the time of Christ, the same Holy Spirit of God rested [upon Him]. Then He moved, and now He rested, as being one in essence, equal in honor, ever existent and unoriginate together with the Father and the Son. He Who by the flight of a dove over the waters of the Flood heralded fair weather to Noah, the same Holy Spirit, by the sight of a dove at the waters of the Jordan, showed the world the Sonship of Him Who was baptized. Moreover, the Lord had a terrifying answer for those who dared to utter blasphemy against the Holy Spirit: "Whosoever speaks [blasphemy] against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." David, declaring his desire for this Holy Spirit, prayed to God, saying: "Cast me not away from Thy presence, O Lord; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me."

As is well known, where He is absent, every sort of corruption sets in. Thus, the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit entered into him, wherefore [David] said, "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me."

This same Holy Spirit sanctified the prophets, instructed the apostles and empowered the martyrs. This same Holy Spirit consecrated Isaiah, taught Ezekiel and revealed the resurrection of the dead. As he says, "The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord." This same

Holy Spirit chose Jeremiah from his mother's womb, and raised up Daniel to deliver Susanna. As it is written, "God raised up by the Holy Spirit a young youth, whose name was Daniel." David so loved the presence of this same Holy Spirit that he prayed to God, saving, "Thy Holy Spirit shall lead me in the land of uprightness."

This same Holy Spirit of God came to dwell in the holy Virgin Mary, embracing her with the communion of the Divine Word at the good pleasure of the Father, and making her the Theotokos. Elizabeth, being filled with this same Holy Spirit, understood that the Lord had come to her by means of the Virgin; wherefore she said, "And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?" Zachariah, the father of John, was filled with the same Holy Spirit, whereby he declared that the son born to him would be the prophet and forerunner of the King Who was to come. John himself was also filled with the same Holy Spirit; the eyes of his intellect were given light, and he beheld the heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit hovering over Him Who was being baptized, Him Who baptized with the Spirit and fire.

By the action of the same Holy Spirit, the Lord Himself, when He was giving His Apostles His teaching in detail and strengthening their minds for the time of His Passion, said to them: "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." Moreover, revealing to them the Spirit's consubstantial power, He said: "When the Holy Spirit is come, Which proceeds from the Father, He will guide you into all truth." The holy Apostles waited expectantly for the coming of the power of this same Holy Spirit; they waited together to be clothed with power from on high, according to the commandment of the Lord, Who had said: "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high; for, behold, I shall send the promise of My Father upon you." And, as it is written, "when the day of Pentecost was fully come, all the holy Apostles were assembled with one accord in one place, and the Paraclete was sent to them under the appearance of tongues of fire." Having received the abundant promise of the Father and the Holy Spirit, they were strengthened, and they manifested Him Who was sent to them, His grace and His power.

The martyr and protodeacon Stephen, filled with the same Holy Spirit, Whom he received by the laying-on of hands of the Apostles, did great wonders and miracles among the people. Being full of the Holy Spirit, he saw the doors of heaven opened and the Only-begotten [Son] and Word of God standing in the flesh at the right hand of the power of God.

Filled with this same Holy Spirit, Paul became the preacher of divine

mysteries. As Ananias said to him: "The Lord, even the Savior, hath sent me to thee, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And [Paul afterwards] said with assurance: "And I think also that I have the Spirit of God."

This [is] the same Holy Spirit Who preached by the prophets, Who gave understanding to the apostles, Who spoke to men. He was given to them by the Lord, and all their adversaries were not able to gainsay or resist Him. For, as [the Lord] said, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father Which speaketh in you."

This Holy Spirit [also] ordains priests, consecrates churches, purifies altars, perfects sacrifices and cleanses people of their sins. This Holy Spirit abides with the godly, refines the righteous and guides kings. This same Holy Spirit preserved the soul of Simeon, lengthening the time of his life and reversing the rules of death, until the day when he beheld Him Who is the Redeemer of life and death; for it had been promised unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. It was the same Holy Spirit Who gave strength to Elijah, and Whose power Elisha desired when he asked of Elijah: "Let there be, I pray thee, a double portion of thy spirit upon me."

This Holy Spirit enlightens souls and sanctifies bodies. It was the same Holy Spirit Who descended upon the Apostles and filled them with divine wisdom. Having received His gifts, they were all filled with the knowledge of God; not only [were they given] divine knowledge, but also spiritual gifts. Simon Magus, being a stranger to the Holy Spirit, fell to his perdition. As Peter said to Simon: "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast desired to purchase the priceless grace of the Holy Spirit with money."

Therefore, beloved, let us strive to keep our bodies uncorrupted; for one who has acquired a new body, which is a temple of the Holy Spirit, has become a true victor over the devil. What the Spirit of God has said, may it be done unto me.

Many are the gifts of the Holy Spirit; many and all-powerful are His gifts. As it says in a certain place: By the Word of the Lord were the heavens established, and all the might of them by the Spirit of His mouth. And Isaiah says: "The Spirit of God [shall rest upon him], the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and godliness." And Paul adds, "The Spirit of adoption and of grace." He Who is equally ever-

existent, and equally unoriginate, and Who shares the throne and the honor of God, [His] Son and Word, called this Spirit the Spirit Who is our Comforter. David calls Him the Holy Spirit, since the Holy Spirit is sent by holiness; [the] governing [Spirit], since He has dominion over all, because all things came from Him and are kept in existence by Him; and the good [Spirit], since salvation and all kinds of goodness are from Him. And what does Isaiah [call Him]? The Spirit of God, because He proceeds from God the Father; thus does [God] Himself speak of the Spirit of God as proceeding, in the words, Which proceeds from the Father. [Isaiah] further [calls Him] the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, because all wisdom and good understanding have been given through Him; and the Spirit of counsel and strength, because He is able to bring to pass that which is desired; and also the Spirit of knowledge and godliness. Ezekiel, a man of the spirit, says: "And I will give you a new heart and a new Spirit."

Listen to St. John the Evangelist, who says: "The Holy Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Paul called this Spirit the Spirit of adoption and the Spirit of grace, inasmuch as in the waters of the baptismal font men are born again of water and the Spirit, and we receive the adoption of sons. In the same way, the Lord said to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Thus, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of sonship and the Spirit of grace; for grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, [for those who have been born] by the power of God.

Moreover, the Spirit [is called] the Comforter, because He is also our advocate with the Father. And not only is He with the Father, but He is always with us also as a gift. "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever," comforting your hearts and making them steadfast in divine patience and trust in Christ. Whereas the holy Apostles received this testament after [Christ's] holy Rising from the dead, and were sent forth to teach and to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and whereas we have already been vouchsafed this true washing by the Holy Spirit, let us strive to keep our souls and our bodies undefiled as we glorify the Most holy and consubstantial Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

## **Announcements:**

### **June 8<sup>th</sup> – BBQ**

We will have a BBQ following Divine Liturgy, on the Feast of Pentecost. Please bring your favorite dish!

### **Inquirers & Catechism Class**

Classes will be on Sundays following Divine Liturgy. For those new to understanding orthodoxy or for those who want to expand your foundation, please join us for our classes. Please check the schedule for changes.

### **[tithe.ly.com](https://tithe.ly.com)**

Another way to "donate". This app can be downloaded to your phone and Holy Cross can be accessed via this app. Also, [tithe.ly](https://tithe.ly.com) can be accessed through the church website [www.HolyCrossFtMyers.org](http://www.HolyCrossFtMyers.org)

### **Prayer Requests**

Carolyn – Robert & Debra's Forster's daughter  
Anne and Scott Peatross  
Annette Bartos – David Bartos' sister  
Robert (John) Forster  
Robert Kozera  
Megan – David & Phyllis Bartos' daughter  
Rosemary – Friend of David & Phyllis Bartos

### **Please pray for our families in Ukraine**

Leonid, Nadiia, Andrii, Halyna,  
Volodymyr, Maryna, Dmytro, Bohdan,  
Nadiia, Oleksandr, Tetiana,  
Roman, Mykola  
Anatoly, Olga, Maria, Andrei

**Please let us know if there is anyone you would like to add to the Prayer Lists.**

# The Divine Liturgy

Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

Variable Hymns and Readings

## The First Antiphon

The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims His handiwork. *(Ps. 18:1)*

*Refrain:* Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!

Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.

*(Ps. 18:2) (Refrain)*

Their proclamation has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the universe. *(Ps. 18:4) (Refrain)*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen. *(Refrain)*

## The Second Antiphon

The Lord answer thee in the day of trouble; the Name of the God of Jacob protect thee! *(Ps. 19:1)*

*Refrain:* O Gracious Comforter, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia!

May He send thee help from the sanctuary and give thee support from Zion!

*(Ps. 19:2) (Refrain)*

May He remember all thine offerings, and fulfill all thy plans!

*(Ps. 19:3) (Refrain)*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

*("Only-begotten Son and immortal Word of God...")*

## The Third Antiphon

In Thy strength the king rejoices, O Lord, and exults greatly in Thy salvation.

*(Ps. 20:1)*

*Refrain: Troparion of the Feast*

Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God,  
Who hast revealed the fishermen as most wise  
by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit,  
and through them Thou didst draw the world into Thy net.//  
O Lover of Man, glory to Thee!

Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withheld the request of his lips. *(Ps. 20:2) Troparion of the Feast*

For Thou dost meet him with goodly blessings; Thou dost set a crown of fine gold upon his head. *(Ps. 20:3) Troparion of the Feast*

## Priest Entrance Verse

Be Thou exalted, O Lord, in Thy strength! We will sing and praise Thy power! *(Ps. 20:13) Troparion of the Feast*

## Tone 8 Troparion

Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God,  
Who hast revealed the fishermen as most wise  
by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit,  
and through them Thou didst draw the world into Thy net.//  
O Lover of Man, glory to Thee!

## Tone 8 Kontakion

When the Most High came down and confused the tongues,  
He divided the nations;  
but when He distributed the tongues of fire, He called all to unity.//  
Therefore, with one voice we glorify the All-holy Spirit.

## Instead of the Trisagion, we sing:)

As many as have been baptized into Christ,  
have put on Christ. Alleluia.

## Tone 8 Prokeimenon (Pentecostarion)

Their proclamation has gone out into all the earth, / and their words to the ends of the universe. *(Ps. 18:4)*

*V. The heavens are telling the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims His handiwork. (Ps. 18:1)*

## Acts 2:1-11 (Epistle)

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this

sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs – we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."

#### **Tone 1**

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

*V. By the Word of the Lord the heavens were made; and all their host by the Spirit of His mouth. (Ps. 32:6)*

*V. The Lord looked down from heaven, and saw all the sons of men. (Ps. 32:13)*

#### **John 7:37-52, 8:12 (Gospel)**

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" So there was a division among the people because of Him. Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him. Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?" The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!" Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed." Nikodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?" They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee." Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

#### **Explanation of Today's Gospel Reading**

By Blessed Theophylact

Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria

**37-38. On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."** The first day and *the last day* (the seventh day) of the feast were both called *great*, because the law refers to them as especially holy [see Lev. 23:35-36]. <sup>1</sup> In keeping with the law, the Evangelist also calls the last day *great*. It was fitting that Christ preached to the multitude on the final day, as if providing food for thought on their journey home. The middle days of the feast, when the people celebrated by eating and drinking, would not have been the right time to address them, for they would have paid little attention. Jesus *cried* out, first, to make Himself heard, and second, to show that He feared no one. His words should be punctuated as follows: *He who believes in Me as the Scripture has said* (punctuate here, and begin again), *out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water*. Because many people believed solely because of the miracles, the Lord states that one should believe because of the testimony of the Scriptures, not on account of miracles, and that right belief stems from knowledge of the Scriptures. This is why He says, "*He who believes in Me as the Scripture has said*, that is, as the Scripture has testified concerning Me: that I am the Son of God, the Creator, the Lord of all, and Savior of the world." Many thought they believed, but they did so in accordance with their own opinions, not with Scripture. This is typical of all heretics. Christ promised that rivers would flow from the belly of him who believed *as the Scripture has said*. In Hebrew, the belly is used as a figurative expression for the heart. For example, David wrote, *Thy law is in the midst of my bowels* [Ps. 39:11], meaning, "in my heart." The Lord says that there *shall flow*, not a single river, but *rivers of living water*, indicating the abundance of the grace of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit acts in this manner: He enters the soul of a man and establishes Himself there, causing the soul to gush forth more abundantly than any spring. The eloquence of Peter, the fervor of Paul, and the wisdom of Stephen prove that rivers of divine grace indeed flow from the heart of the man who believes in accordance with the Scriptures. When these men spoke, no one could withstand them. Their preaching swept everyone along, like a mighty river in torrent.

<sup>1</sup> Note that Theophylact refers to the last day of the feast as the seventh day; but in Leviticus it is clearly stated that the last day is the eighth day.

**39. But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.** Here the Evangelist explains what are these rivers of living water: *this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given.* One might well ask, "How can the Evangelist say that the Spirit was not yet given? Did not the prophets prophesy and the Evangelists heal by the Spirit? If not by the Spirit, how did they do these things?" We answer that the prophets most assuredly gave utterance by the Spirit, but God held in check the power of that grace, which then departed from the earth. As a result, although the Spirit was active during the time of the prophets, when Christ walked the earth in the flesh, prophecy was no longer operative because of the unworthiness of the people. Grace no longer overshadowed their temple and holy things. Since the divine energy of the Spirit was absent at this time but was soon to be given [in full measure], the Evangelist says that *the Holy Spirit was not yet given*, meaning, was not active at that time among the Jews. Indeed, [before Pentecost] the apostles did not perform miracles by the Spirit, but by the power of the Lord. Note that the Evangelists state that the Lord gave His disciples authority and power before sending them out. But the Evangelists make no mention of the Spirit [see Mt. 10:1; Mk. 3:15; Lk.10:19]. This indicates that at that time the disciples worked miracles, not by the Spirit, but by the authority and the name of the Lord. Only after rising from the tomb did Christ say to them, *receive ye the Holy Spirit* [Jn. 20:22]; and on Pentecost the Holy Spirit came upon them [see Acts 2]. In another sense, even though the power of the Spirit had been present in the prophets, and in the apostles before the cross, yet was not in the same manner as after the ascension, when the Spirit was poured out superabundantly. Rightly does the Evangelist say, *The Holy Spirit was not yet*, meaning in this sense, *was not yet* poured out as plentifully as would later be the case. The power of the Holy Spirit was present before the cross, but not in such abundance. *Because Jesus was not yet glorified.* Here the Evangelist refers to the cross as "glory." By the cross the Lord cast down the tyrant and gained dominion over him. Before the cross was fixed in the earth, neither had sin been annulled, nor had our nature - in Christ- conquered the world, nor had it been reconciled to God; therefore, the grace of the Spirit was not yet given in full abundance. Before a man can hope for a gift from an earthly king, he must first become the king's friend. It was necessary that we first become God's friends through the cross; then we could receive His gift. Thanks be to God Who has bestowed grace upon us in greater abundance than He did upon the prophets! The prophets possessed the grace of the Spirit but could not bestow it on others. The apostles multiplied that grace ten thousandfold.

**40-43. many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" So there was a division among the people because of Him.** Although the rulers, burning with envy, continued to oppose the Lord fiercely, *many of the people*, confounded by the power of His speech, were won over and confessed that *this is the prophet* long awaited. *Others* - the more ignorant- *said, This is the Christ*, not understanding that the Christ and the prophet whom the Jews awaited were one and the same. Still others, who understood more but whose hearts were hardened, said, "Surely Christ shall not *come out of Galilee ... but out of Bethlehem ... and of the seed of David.*" They spoke cunningly, not guilelessly, as had Nathanael. As a man learned in the law and careful in its interpretation, Nathanael had wondered, *Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth* [Jn. 1:46]? The Lord praised him for asking this question, which showed Nathanael's keen knowledge of the law, and the absence in him of any deceit. But these Pharisees spoke craftily, saying that the Christ would not come from Galilee. In all likelihood they knew that Jesus was from Bethlehem, although He had been raised in Galilee. Spite drove them to conceal His birth in Bethlehem and pronounce Him to be a Galilean. But suppose they were indeed ignorant that He was from Bethlehem. They still had no reason to doubt that He was *of the seed of David*. Was it not obvious that Mary was of the lineage of David? Thus, their deceit is unmistakable. *There was a division among the people*, but not among the rulers, who with one mind refused to accept Him as the Christ.

**44-46. Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him. Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?" The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!"** Some of the Pharisees were less evil-minded and only argued against Christ. Others, more shameless, wanted to lay hands on Him, but were invisibly restrained by a divine power. Yet even this miracle did not soften their hearts. David spoke truly of these men when he said, *They were rent asunder yet not pricked at heart* [Ps. 34:19]. How do the officers who were sent to arrest Jesus answer the Pharisees' question? Honestly and candidly. The Pharisees, who supposedly were wiser and more learned in the law and had witnessed the Lord's miracles, raged against Him. Like brigands they snarled, *Why have ye not brought Him?* But the goodhearted officers, having witnessed no miracles, were won over by the Lord's teaching alone. That it was Christ's teaching - which is greater than any miracle - that persuaded them is clear from their answer to the Pharisees. They did not say,



"Never did a man work wonders like this man," but rather, *No man ever spoke like this man*. How quick they were to grasp His words of salvation! One must admire not only their swift comprehension, but also their boldness. They neither cowered at the anger of the Pharisees, nor - being servants under orders - did they report what their rulers wanted to hear. Instead, they witnessed to the truth. Let all who are under authority imitate these men and not obey those who give unjust orders. Let them follow the example of Saul's servants who disobeyed him when he gave an unlawful order to slay the priests of God [see I Kings 22:16-17].

**47-51. Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed." Nikodemos (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?"** The Pharisees attempt to soothe the servants, asking meekly, *Are you also deceived?* They feared that these too in the end would break with them and follow Christ. So, they employ flattery: "Are even you deceived, who are wiser than the others and have always stood by us, the masters of the law?" How flimsy is the argument they use to make their case: *Have any of the rulers ... believed in Him?*<sup>2</sup> Here is one of their own who believed in Him - Nicodemus. What answer does Nicodemus make? *Does our law judge any man, before it hears him?* He shows that the Pharisees neither knew the law, nor did what it prescribed, although they claimed to hold it in high regard. The law commanded that no one condemn a man without first judging him. By doing just that, the Pharisees obviously transgressed the law. The words, *and know what he does*, show that the law requires, not a perfunctory hearing, but a careful and meticulous study to determine what ought to be done. It certainly forbids a verdict be reached without knowledge of the facts.

<sup>2</sup> In the Greek text, the phrasing of the Pharisees' question has the connotation: "Surely none of the rulers or the Pharisees have believed in Him, have they?"

### Hymn to the Theotokos

***(Instead of "It is truly meet...", we sing:)***

Rejoice, O Queen, glory of mothers and virgins!

No tongue, however sweet or fluent, is eloquent enough to praise you worthily.

Every mind is overawed by your childbearing.

Therefore, with one voice, we glorify you.

### Communion Hymn

Let Thy good Spirit lead me on a level path! *(Ps. 142:12a)*

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

### Beginning of Kneeling Prayers:

O heavenly King,

the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth,

Who art everywhere and fillest all things;

Treasury of blessings

and Giver of life,

come and abide in us,

and cleanse us from every impurity, //

and save our souls, O Good One!