

Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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Website & Directory Information.
www.HolyCrossFtMyers.Org

Orthodox Sunday – Tone 5. Sunday of Orthodoxy. St. Theophylactus, Bishop of Nicomedia (842-845). Apostle Hermas of the Seventy (1st c.) Ven. Dometius (363). Hieromartyr Theodoretus of Antioch (4th c.). Ven. Lazarus (1391) and Athanasius (15th c.), Of murom. The Kursk-Root Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos (kurst1295).

Divine Liturgy of St. Basil The Great
Heb. 11:24-26, 32-12:2 John 1:43-51

Announcements

Sunday, March 8th – 5:00 pm Lenten Mission Vespers at Holy Spirit Church in Venice, Florida

Sunday, March 22 – after Divine Liturgy & coffee hour, Dr. Constantine Kallaur will speak on the, "Road to Autocephaly"

Sunday, March 15 – Lenten Mission Services at Holy Cross – Vespers at 6:00 pm

Church School and Fellowship following Divine Liturgy on Sundays.

Choir Rehearsal Saturday 4:30pm prior to Great Vespers.

Votive Candles: Donations have been provided through July, and the month of October.

Liturgical Schedule:

Divine Liturgy Sundays: 9:30 am

March 11 – Presanctified Liturgy: 5:30 pm

March 14 -- Great Vespers – Saturdays: 5:00pm

Troparion - Tone 5 (*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.

Troparion - Tone 2 (*Sunday of Orthodoxy*)

We venerate Your most pure image, O Good One, / and ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ God. / Of Your own will You were pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh / to deliver Your creatures from bondage to the enemy. / Therefore with thanksgiving we cry aloud to You: / You have filled all with joy, O our Savior, / by coming to save the world.

Troparion – Tone 3 (*Saint Theophylactus, Bishop of Nicomedia*)

As an unsleeping guardian of the Church, / you were a refuter of godlessness. / By defending and honoring the icon of Christ, / you were made to endure exile and affliction. / Righteous Father Theophylactus, entreat Christ our God to grant us His great mercy.

Kontakion – Tone 2 (*Saint Theophylactus, Bishop of Nicomedia*)

Podoben: "Seeking the highest..." / You were revealed as a beacon shining to the ends of the earth, / holy hierarch Theophylactus. / You preached the Word, one in essence with the Father and the Spirit, / enlightening the council of God-bearing fathers. / You were revealed to be a favorite of the Trinity; / standing before Him unceasingly pray for us all.

Kontakion – Tone 8 (Sunday of Orthodoxy)

No one could describe the Word of the Father; / but when He took flesh from you, O Theotokos, He accepted to be described, / and restored the fallen image to its former beauty. / We confess and proclaim our salvation in word and images.

HUMAN BEINGS ARE ICONS

"Out of non-being You brought me into being, O God, and You honored me by making me an Icon of Your Divine Being.

And so I am the Icon of Your ineffable glory, even though I bear' the marks of sin. " [From the Funeral Service]

When we hear the word Icon, we always think of some painted image, a panel or mosaic. Our attention usually focuses on a colored portrayal of Christ, the Virgin, the Saints or some event. Such Images play a central role in our religious life, and they are always regarded with the utmost honor, devotion and veneration.

But there is another important dimension of iconography- that we must not overlook. There is another kind of Icon that is not painted by human hands: that is not composed of colored pigments. This is an **ICON** that is made by God Himself, an Icon that is mankind. Let us then take a look at this idea of the human species as an Icon of God.

Human beings are Icons of Divine Being. This fact has always been stressed by our religious tradition and our spiritual fathers. This idea is clearly formulated and articulated in our services, spiritual writings and the Scriptures. But somehow we have forgotten and ignored his very essential doctrine. We don't think of humans as Holy Icons. We don't regard people as sacred entities. We don't relate to others with a holy veneration. We don't see persons as divine shrines. And so we end up in a blasphemous relationship with our fellow human creatures.

The Iconic character is given by creation as a "thing of nature" say our fathers. God created humans as an Icon of Himself, as we are told in Genesis: *"God created man as His own Icon; as the Icon of God He created him; male and female, He created him."* Immediately God blessed them to copulate and procreate His Image in ongoing humanity.

There is, however, only one Icon or Image that constitutes mankind. For the same Iconographic Image is implanted in each human being. Humanity is a single Icon of God because a single Divine Image is embodied in all. This is the unifying factor, binding and identifying all humans in a deifying bond, and is based on God's creative fiat.

Being an Icon of God means that every human person is in essence a spiritual being, endowed with a spiritual nature, a living Godlike soul and an eternal existence. Gregory of Nazianzus clearly understood this Iconographic character of humans and expressed it in this precise way:

"The soul is the inspiriting of God. It is the divine and inextinguishable light in human beings. The Spirit that God inspirits into us is the emanation, the flowing of the Invisible Divinity. Thus the human is made into the Icon of the Immortal. For in both God and humans the spiritual nature reigns supreme. In my body I am connected to a life here below on earth, but I also share a part of the Divine Being".

Wow! That really tells us something about what it means that **human beings are Icons of God**. It shows that there inheres within us a divine spark of seed, a sacred character, a holy quality, a godly affinity a spiritual capacity, a self-transcendent potential. Our spiritual nature is similar to God's nature; it is the governing factor and power that enables us to be like God and determines what we are essentially. An Icon represents an image of someone. There is a resemblance and connection of the Icon with the prototype or model. John Chrysostom says, "Man as Icon of God postulates a divine human resemblance. This resemblance of the human to the divine consists of the mind, intelligence, will, freedom and spirit.