



# St. Makarios Church

Saintmakarios.org

ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA, oca.org

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Sunday Liturgy 10am (Orthros, 9am) at Sacred Heart Chapel, 1421 E. 53rd St.

Saturday Vespers 6pm at Calvert House, 5735 University Avenue

*Parish Council Meeting, Sunday 7/21 during coffeeshour.*

*Looking ahead: Transfiguration and Dormition—will have evening Liturgies on 8/5 & 8/14.*

*7.20.13 St. Elijah's Day!*

Dear Folks:

*Sorry it has been a while since the last bulletin, and if I seem somewhat preoccupied... I have finally been progressing with my dissertation! If any of you need anything, let me know. I am always available.*

Fr. Elijah

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From St. Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian & Gregory of Nyssa's *Philokalia* from the "Labor-Loving" Origen's writings: *Comments in red by Fr. Elijah. Notice implicit comparison of tripartite human nature and the temple—basis of mystical interpretation.*

BOOK I. 9) *(Interpret Scripture, in types, as with the Temple)*...For the sake, therefore, of those readers who are persuaded that the sacred books are not human compositions, but that they were written and have come to us by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, according to the will of the Father of All through Jesus Christ, we must point out what appear to be the right methods, while we keep to the rule of the heavenly Church of Jesus Christ in succession to the Apostles. And that there are certain mystic dispensations revealed through the Divine Scriptures has been believed by all who have studied the Word, even the simplest readers; but what these dispensations are, fair-minded and modest men confess they do not know. Anyway, supposing a man to be perplexed about the intercourse of Lot with his daughters, or the two wives of Abraham, or Jacob's marrying two sisters, and the handmaidens who had children by him, these readers will say that here we have mysteries which we do not understand. But suppose the passage to be about the building of the

tabernacle, feeling sure that the narrative is typical, they will endeavor to give each detail, as best they can, a spiritual meaning. So far as their conviction goes that the tabernacle is a type of something, they are not far wrong...

11) *(Look at the Scripture with Triple depth of interpretation)*... The right way, then, to read the Scriptures and extract their meaning, so far as we have been able to discover from examining the oracles themselves, appears to be as follows:--- -Solomon in the Proverbs gives a rule respecting the Divine doctrines of Scripture to this effect: "Do thou thrice record them with counsel and knowledge that thou mayest answer with words of truth to those who try thee with hard questions." A man ought then in three ways to record in his own soul the purposes of the Holy Scriptures; that the simple may be edified by, as it were, the *flesh* of Scripture (for thus we designate the primary sense), the more advanced by its *soul*, and the perfect by the spiritual law, which has a shadow of the good things to come. For the perfect man resembles those of whom the Apostle speaks: "Howbeit we speak wisdom among the perfect; yet a wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, which are coming to nought:

but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory, from the spiritual law which hath a shadow of the good things to come. As man consists of body, soul, and spirit, so too does Scripture which has been granted by God for the salvation of men...

13) (*seek a spiritual and heavenly level of understanding*)... spiritual interpretation is for one who is able to show the nature of the heavenly things... the good things to come... of which the law is a shadow. And in general, according to the apostolic command, we must everywhere seek wisdom in a mystery, "even the wisdom which hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the world unto the glory of the righteous; which none of the rulers of this world knoweth." The same Apostle, referring to certain incidents in Exodus and Numbers, somewhere says, "These things happened unto them by way of figure: and they were written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages are come"; and he hints at the things of which they were figures, saying, "For they drank of a spiritual Rock that followed them: and the Rock was Christ." And in the sketch of the tabernacle which he gives in another epistle he quotes the words, "Thou shalt make all things according to the pattern which was shewed thee in the Mount." Again, in the Epistle to the Galatians, as it were reproaching those who think they read the law though they do not understand it, and giving his judgment that as many as think there are no allegories in what is written, do not understand, he goes on to say, "Tell me ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, one by the handmaid, and one by the freewoman. Howbeit the son by the handmaid is born after the flesh, but the son by the freewoman is born through promise. Which things contain an allegory: for these women are two covenants," and so on. We must carefully note exactly what he says: "Ye that desire to be under the law": not "Ye that are under the law"; and, "Do you not hear the law?": the hearing in his judgment being the understanding and knowing. And also in the Epistle to the Colossians, where he epitomises the meaning of the whole giving of the law, he says, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day: which are a shadow of the things to come." Further, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, arguing concerning those of the Circumcision, he writes thus: "Who serve that which is a copy and shadow of the heavenly things." This will probably suffice to remove all doubts respecting the five books, called the Books of Moses, from the minds of those who really believe the Apostle to be a Divine man...

...16) (*Better to stumble and be troubled by the Scripture for higher meaning!*) If the use of the Law had been everywhere made perfectly clear, and strict historical sequence had been preserved, we should not have believed that the Scriptures could be understood in any other than the obvious sense. The Word of God therefore arranged for certain stumbling-blocks and offences and impossibilities to be embedded in the Law and the historical portion, so that we may not be drawn hither and thither by the mere attractiveness of the style, and thus either forsake the doctrinal part because we receive no instruction worthy of God, or cleave to the letter and learn nothing more Divine. And this we ought to know, that the

chief purpose being to show the spiritual connection both in past occurrences and in things to be done, wherever the Word found historical events capable of adaptation to these mystic truths, He made use of them, but concealed the deeper sense from the many; but where in setting forth the sequence of things spiritual there was no *actual* event related for the sake of the more mystic meaning, Scripture interweaves the imaginative with the historical, sometimes introducing what is utterly impossible, sometimes what is possible but never occurred. Sometimes it is only a few words, not literally true, which have been inserted; sometimes the insertions are of greater length. And we must this way understand even the giving of the Law, for therein we may frequently discover the immediate use, adapted to the times when the Law was given; sometimes, however, no good reason appears. And elsewhere we have even impossible commands, for readers of greater ability and those who have more of the spirit of inquiry; so that, applying themselves to the labour of investigating the things written, they may have a fitting conviction of the necessity of looking therein for a meaning worthy of God. And not only did the Spirit thus deal with the Scriptures before the coming of Christ, but, inasmuch as He is the same Spirit, and proceedeth from the One God, He has done the same with the Gospels and the writings of the Apostles; for not even they are purely historical, incidents which never occurred being interwoven in the "corporeal" sense; nor in the Law and the Commandments does the Spirit make the reasonableness altogether clear.

...21) (*sometimes best to stick with only the spiritual meaning of a scriptural passage*) Still, there are places where the careful reader will be distracted because he cannot without much labor decide whether he is dealing with history in the ordinary sense, or not, and whether a given commandment is to be literally observed, or not. The reader must therefore, following the Savior's injunction to search the Scriptures, carefully examine where the literal meaning is true, and where it cannot possibly be so; and he must, to the best of his ability, by comparing parallel passages scattered up and down Scripture, trace out the prevalent sense of what is literally impossible. Since, then, as will be clear to readers, the *literal* connection is impossible, while the *main* connection is not impossible but even true, we must strive to grasp the general sense which intelligibly connects things literally impossible with such things as are not only not impossible, but are historically true, and capable of allegorical [23] interpretation, no less than those which never literally occurred. For, regarding the whole of Divine Scripture, we hold that every portion has the spiritual meaning, but not every portion the "corporeal"; for the "corporeal" meaning is often proved to be impossible. The cautious reader must therefore very carefully bear in mind that the Divine books are Divine writings, and that there appears to be a peculiar way of understanding them, which I will now describe.

22. (*In the spiritual understanding of Scripture, we are all Jews*) The inspired words relate that God chose out a certain nation upon earth, which they call by several names. The whole nation is called Israel, and also Jacob. But after the division in the time of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the ten tribes under him were called Israel, and the other two with the tribe of Levi, governed by kings of the seed of David, were known as

Judah. And the whole country inhabited by the nation, and given to them by God, is called Judea; and of this Jerusalem was the metropolis, or mother city, that is to say, of numerous cities, the names of which dispersed in many parts of Scripture are included in one list in the Book of Joshua the son of Nun. This being so, the Apostle, raising our thoughts higher, somewhere says, "Behold Israel after the flesh," implying that there is an Israel after the Spirit. And elsewhere he says, "It is not the children of the flesh that are children of God: nor are they all Israel which are of Israel. Nor is he a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter." For if the judgment of the Jew depends on the inward state, we must understand that as there is a bodily race of Jews, so there is a race of those who are Jews inwardly, and that there are secret reasons for souls having this noble lineage. There are, moreover, many prophecies concerning Israel and Judah which relate the things that should befall them. Now, let me ask, do not such great prophecies written on their behalf, inasmuch as in the literal sense they are trivial and exhibit none of the lofty dignity of a promise made by God, require a mystical interpretation? And if the promises are spiritual, though expressed by means of things sensible, they also to whom the promises are given are not "corporeal."

...24) *(We are Israel and belong to the heavenly Jerusalem)* If we are impressed by what has been said about Israel and the tribes and the hundreds, when the Saviour tells us that He was not sent save unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel, we do not take the words in the same sense as the Ebionites with their poverty of understanding (their poverty of intellect gives them their name, for "Ebion" is the Hebrew for "poor"), and suppose that Christ came chiefly to Israel after the flesh; for "it is not the children of the flesh that are children of God." Again, the Apostle gives similar teaching concerning Jerusalem when he tells us that "the Jerusalem which is above is free, which is our mother." And in another epistle he says, "But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven." If, then, Israel is a race of souls, and there is a city, Jerusalem in heaven, it follows that the cities of Israel, and, consequently, all Judea, have for their metropolis the heavenly Jerusalem. Accordingly, whatever is foretold or said respecting Jerusalem, if we listen to God as God, and hear Him speaking from the depths of His wisdom, we must understand that the Scriptures refer to the heavenly city, and the whole country containing the cities of the holy land. It may be that these are the cities to which the Saviour leads us up when He gives the command of ten or five cities to those who satisfactorily dealt with the pounds.

...30) Not perceiving the difference between visible and spiritual Judaism, that is, between the Judaism which is outward and the Judaism which is inward, godless and impious heresies forsook Judaism and the God Who gave our Scriptures and the whole Law, and invented a different God besides Him Who gave the Law and the Prophets, besides the Maker of heaven and earth. The fact is not so, however; but He Who gave the Law also gave the Gospel, He Who made

things visible also made things invisible. And things visible are akin to things invisible; in such wise akin that the invisible things of God since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made. The things of the Law and the Prophets which are seen are akin to the things of the Law and the Prophets which are not seen but are intelligible. Seeing, then, that the Scripture itself consists as it were of a body which is seen, and a soul therein apprehended by the reason, and a spirit, that which corresponds to the copies and shadow of heavenly things, let us call upon Him Who created Scripture with a body, soul, and spirit, the body for those who were before us, the soul for us, and the spirit for those who in the coming age shall inherit eternal life, and are destined to reach the heavenly, archetypal things contained in the Law; and then let us search, not for the letter, but for the soul of what we are considering. Then, if we are able, we will ascend also to the spirit, corresponding to the principles involved in the sacrifices of which we read.

BOOK XV *(Transfiguration of the Word as we perceive him Spiritually)*

...7) *(The Word is light)* As for the sudden kindling in the soul of a burning light as it were from flaming fire, the Word knew this before Plato, for, speaking by the prophet, He said, "Light up for yourselves the light of knowledge." And John, who came long after, tells us that "What was in the Word was life, and the life was the light of men"; the true light which lighteneth every man as he cometh into the real "intelligible" world, and maketh him a light of the world. For this light shone in our hearts to give the illumination of the gospel of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Wherefore a very ancient Prophet, who prophesied generations before the rise of the kingdom of Cyrus, for he was earlier than that monarch by more than fourteen generations, says, "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?" and, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and light unto my paths"; and, "The light of thy countenance, O Lord, was lifted up as a banner over us"; and, "In thy light shall we see light." And, urging us to come to this light, the Word in Isaiah says, "Shine, shine, Jerusalem; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord hath risen upon thee." And this same Isaiah, prophesying of the coming of Jesus, Who turns men from the worship of idols and images and demons, says, "To them which sat in the region and shadow of death, to them did the light spring up." And again, "The people which sat in darkness saw a great light." Observe, then, the difference between Plato's fine saying respecting the Chief Good, and what is said in the Prophets concerning the light of the blessed; and observe further that the truth in Plato concerning the Chief Good did not at all help his readers to attain to pure and undefiled religion; and, what is more, it did not benefit the philosopher him-self who thus expounded the Chief Good. But the diction of the Divine Scriptures, poor as it is, has given inspiration to true readers---those who nourish this light with the oil spoken of in the parable, the oil which keeps alight the torches of the five virgins.

...18) *(The Word has a more Divine appearance if one ascends with Him)* And the Word has a more mystic meaning also, for it shows that the different appearances of Jesus are related to the nature of the Divine Word, which does not appear the same to the many, and to those who can follow Him to the

lofty mountain of which we have given an account. For in the eyes of those who are below and are not yet ready for the ascent, the Word hath neither form nor beauty; to such as these its form is without honor, and marred more than the words "born of men," in the passage before us figuratively called "sons of men." For we might say that the words of the philosophers, being "sons of men," look far more beautiful than the Word of God preached to the many, which even draws attention to the foolishness of the preaching, and it is because of the foolishness of the preaching that men who regard the preaching only, say, "We beheld it, and it hath neither form nor beauty." But for those who through obeying Him have received strength to follow Him even when He ascends the lofty mountain, He hath a Diviner appearance. And a man sees Him thus, if he is a Peter making room for the building of the Church within him through the Word, gaining such strength of character that no gate of hell shall prevail against him, inasmuch as he has been lifted up through the Word from the gates of death that he may declare all the praises of God in the gates of the daughter of Zion; and others see it thus also, men who have been born of words with a great voice, such as have the full tones of spiritual thunder.

19) (*Christ the Word's garments change if one ascends and approaches him*) And down below the Word has other garments; they are not white, they are not like the light; if thou shalt ascend to the lofty mountain, thou shalt see His light and His garments. The garments of the Word are the phrases of the Scripture; the Divine thoughts are clothed in these expressions. As then down below He looks different, but having ascended is transfigured, His face beaming like the sun, so it is with His clothing, so it is with His garments. When thou art below, they do not shine, they are not white; but if thou ascend, thou shalt see the beauty and the light of the garments, and shalt marvel at the transfigured face of Jesus. And consider whether the Gospels do not also give us the same teaching respecting Jesus. The particulars of His generation, His descent from Abraham and birth of the seed of David according to the flesh, is the Book of the generation

of Jesus Christ; but as for the more Divine and more important things to be said concerning Him, and proclaimed by Him, John says, "I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written." For we must not, like some, admit that if the world cannot contain the books that should be written, it is because of the multitude of the writings, but rather that it is on account of the greatness of the incidents; their greatness is not only indescribable, but they cannot be proclaimed by fleshly tongue, nor be made known in the language and speech of men. This is why Paul, when he is about to learn things more Divine, leaves our world of earth and is rapt into the third heaven, that he may be able to hear the unutterable words thence proceeding. For we are told of what was said there and considered to be the Word of God, the Word made flesh, and who, as regards being God with God, emptied Himself. Wherefore we see the Word of God on earth, for that He became man, in human guise; for even in the Scriptures the Word became flesh that He might tabernacle among us. But if we incline on the bosom of the Word made flesh and are able to follow Him when He ascends the lofty mountain, we shall say, "We saw his glory." Some perhaps who are not like those who lie upon His bosom and follow Him to the lofty mountain may say, "We saw his glory," but they will not add "Glory as of an only-begotten from a Father, full of grace and truth": for this language becomes John and such as are like him. And, according to a loftier interpretation, they who are able to walk in the footsteps of Jesus as He ascends, and is transfigured out of sight of earth, shall behold His transfiguration in every scripture; for instance, when Jesus shows Himself to the many, this is the function of the simpler diction; but when He ascends a lofty mountain and is transfigured, showing Himself to very few of the disciples, and to those who have become able to follow Him to the heights above, this is the work of the highest, sublimest sense, containing oracles of the wisdom hidden in a mystery, which wisdom "God foreordained before the worlds unto the glory of his righteous ones."

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St. John Mansur ("Damascene") *Orthodox Faith*, Book 4.4 (chapter 77) **How the Gospel was Spread** (*and should be now!*)

....creation has been sanctified by the divine blood: altars and temples of idols have been overthrown, the knowledge of God has been implanted in men's minds, the co-essential Trinity, the uncreated divinity, one true God, Creator and Lord of all receives men's service: virtues are cultivated, the hope of resurrection has been granted through the resurrection of Christ, the demons shudder at those who of old were under their subjection. And the marvel, indeed, is that all this has been successfully brought about through His cross and passion and death. Throughout all the earth the Gospel of the knowledge of God has been preached; no wars or weapons or armies being used to rout the enemy, but only a few, naked, poor, illiterate, persecuted and tormented men, who with their lives in their hands, preached Him Who was crucified in the flesh and died, and who became victors over the wise and powerful. For the omnipotent power of the Cross accompanied them. Death itself, which once was man's chief terror, has been overthrown, and now that which was once the object of hate and loathing is preferred to life. These are the achievements of Christ's presence: these are the tokens of His power. For it was not one people that He saved, as when through Moses He divided the sea and delivered Israel out of Egypt and the bondage of Pharaoh; but rather He rescued all mankind from the corruption of death and the bitter tyranny of sin: not leading them by force to virtue, not overwhelming them with earth or burning them with fire, or ordering the sinners to be stoned, but persuading men by gentleness and long-suffering to choose virtue and vie with one another, and find pleasure in the struggle to attain it. For, formerly, it was sinners who were persecuted, and yet they clung all the closer to sin, and sin was looked upon by them as their God: but now for the sake of piety and virtue men choose persecutions and crucifixions and death.

Hail! O Christ, the Word and Wisdom and Power of God, and God omnipotent! What can we helpless ones give You in return for all these good gifts? For all are yours, and You ask nothing from us but our salvation, You, yourself the Giver of this, and yet grateful to those who receive it, through your unspeakable goodness. Thanks be to You, giver of life to us, the grace of a happy life, and restored us to that, when we had gone astray, through your unspeakable condescension.

## Praying from the Mountaintop By Jon Gromek



From [Bread for the World](#) blog

*Photo: Simonopetra Monastery, also Monastery of Simonos Petra, is an Eastern Orthodox monastery in the monastic state of Mount Athos in Greece. (Flickr)*

Recently, I was blessed with the opportunity to make a pilgrimage to one of the holiest sites in my tradition of Eastern Orthodoxy, and indeed all of Christianity: Mount Athos in Greece. While there, I stayed with the monks at Simonopetra, a breathtaking monastery set atop the cliff of a mountain overlooking the ocean. Mount Athos is set apart from the world as we know it. For the past millennium, monks have lived here in simplicity, perpetual prayer, and worship. It was amazing to observe the monks pray without ceasing and, even in silence or during their work, see their lips

move in prayer. Some confided in me that after a while they even pray in their dreams and sleep.

Prayer and worship play an ever-important role in day-to-day life at Mount Athos. Indeed, their whole lives—their actions, words and deeds—serve as prayers. Their prayers, and mine I was told, are meant to assume the burdens of those “in the world” and to provide a spiritual compass and guidance to all of us who are called to build a world as it ought to be, rather than the way it is now. Patriarch Bartholemew I, the spiritual leader of the World’s Orthodox Christians has noted that “[m]onasticism seeks to change the world with silence and humility rather than power and imposition. It changes the world from within, internally, and not from the outside, externally. Monasticism proposes a revolutionary worldview, especially in a world where so many people are stuck in established ways that have proved destructive.” While the monks maintain a tradition of silence, that silence, and their prayers and actions, speak volumes. As Christians we are of course called to raise our voices, to speak out against injustice and speak for the most vulnerable. However, our silent actions and prayers to God and on behalf of all can be just as powerful. If you have been following the actions of Congress lately, you will no doubt see that there is a lot to pray for: protection from cuts to vital programs that feed hungry and poor people (including SNAP, international food aid, and WIC) as well as the creation of immigration policy that can end hunger and bring millions out of the shadows.

Together, let us pray in perpetuity for a world as God intended and for the hearts and minds of those who are responsible for shaping that world.

Jon Gromek is a regional organizer in the Central Hub and recently spent time at Mount Athos on a spiritual retreat.

[http://blog.bread.org/2013/07/praying-from-the-mountaintop.html?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+bread%2Fblog+%28Bread+Blog%29](http://blog.bread.org/2013/07/praying-from-the-mountaintop.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+bread%2Fblog+%28Bread+Blog%29)

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A very funny story:

<http://www.orthodoxartsjournal.org/texan-brewery-russian-iconographer/>