Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.

Sophia

A Devotional Newsletter of St. Sophia Parish

St. Sophia Orthodox Church
195 Joseph St.
Victoria, BC
V8S 3H6
Canada

St. Sophia Orthodox Church

a Parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

195 Joseph Street,
Victoria, British Columbia
Canada V8S 3H6

email: info@saintsophia.ca
website: www.saintsophia.ca

Services are in English

Saturday

Vigil – 6 p.m. – Всенощное бдение

Sunday

Hours – 10 a.m. – Часы

Divine Liturgy – 10:30 a.m. – Божественная Литургия

Vespers – 5 p.m. – Вечерня

Archpriest John Adams
Priest Philosoph Uhlman
Protodeacon Gordian Bruce

January 2018 Services

Saturday January 6- Eve of Nativity Great Compline & Matins- 6pm
Sunday January 7- Holy Nativity Liturgy of St. Basil the Great 10:30am
Nativity Yolka *to follow after the Divine Liturgy.*

Saturday January 13- Vigil 6pm
Sunday January 14- Liturgy of St. Basil the Great 10:30am
(Circumcision of our Lord. St. Basil the Great Feast Day)

- *Sunday Evening Vespers- 5pm*

Thursday January 18- Eve of Theophany Great Compline & Matins- 6pm
Friday January 19- Liturgy Holy Theophany 10:30am *Blessing of the Waters; and House Blessings*

Saturday January 20- Vigil 6pm
Sunday January 21- Liturgy 10:30am

- *Sunday Evening Vespers- 5pm*

Saturday January 27- Vigil 6pm
Sunday January 28- Liturgy 10:30am

- *Sunday Evening Vespers- 5pm*

Now is Christ Born!

Christ is born, give ye glory, Christ comes from heaven, meet ye Him!

The words of this joyous Nativity hymn, call us to meet Christ, Who is come from heaven.

They do not say Christ was born two thousand years ago, but that He IS BORN, that is… in the present time.

How is it that Christ IS BORN now, this year, in our lifetime? Here lies the Mystery of His Church.

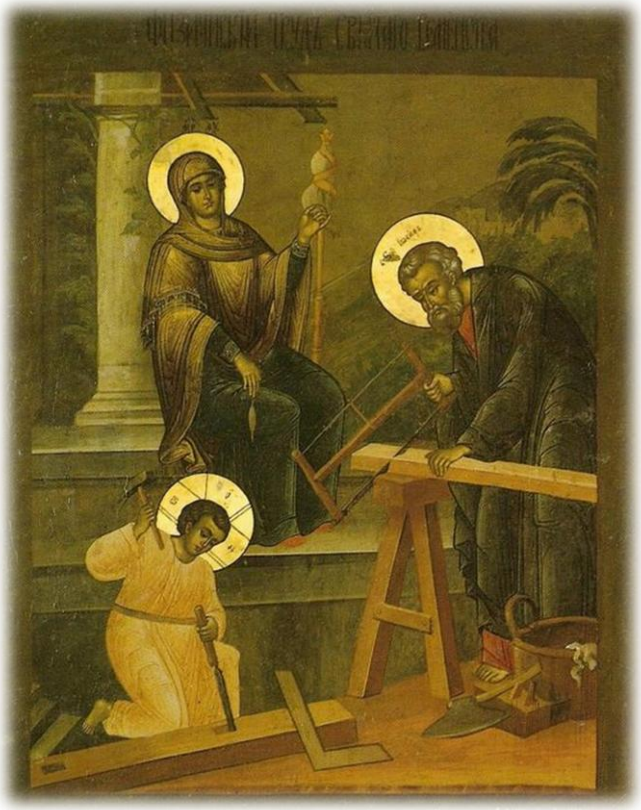
All that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished for the salvation of us sinners in the thirty three years of His life on earth, years which long ago became history, all this takes place also today, in reality and in-actuality- in His Church.

All of the events in the Life of Christ on earth which serve for our salvation, we must perceive with a greater sense of reality, awareness and joy… As members of the Church, we receive the grace of the Holy Spirit through the Sacrament of Baptism and Chrismation; we partake of Christ in the Mystery of the Eucharist; through the Church there are opened to us the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. We have been given more… and more is to be expected of us.

For this reason, the yearly cycle of the Great Feasts of the Church cannot be for us simply a remembrance of some historical event which took place long ago and which have no bearing on us today. The very manner in which we are called to prepare for the Feasts testifies to their importance and their reality in the present.

…For the great Feasts of the Church, we must prepare ourselves every year with PRAYER and FASTING-which means to battle with our fallen human nature, to quash our sinful egotism, to purify our hearts and minds. Only after such preparation will the Feast truly become for us the greatest REALITY in this present life; a reality which overshadows all other reality in the world surrounding us, a reality which is beyond this world and beyond time.

And it is not only for those children of the Church who fast, but for the whole world, that the Holy Night appears each year as a living and eternal recurrence of that night when the angels first sang: *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men*.



Regardless of the passing of time, the same wickedness of Herod seeks to kill the Christ Child, to kill Him there where He IS BORN, in pure hearts, in souls cleansed by fasting and Prayer. Just as centuries ago when the children of Bethlehem were killed, each year we continue to see martyrs for Christ. And just as before, Christ IS BORN for very few, for those who love and seek Him; He remains unseen and unrecognized by the world which… which has forgotten its Creator.

In this way, Christ IS BORN, even today in His Church. He IS BORN in my life, for my sake, loving me.

Make haste, O Christian, to delight your heart with His love… to find your Saviour in the manger, and to find the joy of true communion with Him. *-Archbishop Antony of Geneva and Western Europe*

The Feast of Holy Theophany

Theophany (from Greek theophania, meaning "appearance of God") is one of the Great Feasts of the Orthodox Church, celebrated on January 6/19. It is the feast which reveals the Most Holy Trinity to the world through the Baptism of the Lord (Mt.3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22).

This observance commemorates Christ's baptism by John the Forerunner in the River Jordan, and the beginning of Christ's earthly ministry. The Feast of Theophany is the culmination of the Christmas Season, which starts on December 25/January 7, and ends on January 6/19. In mystic commemoration of this event, the Great Blessing of Water is performed on this day, and the holy water so blessed is used by the local priest to bless the homes of the faithful.

The feast is called Theophany because at the baptism of Christ the Holy Trinity appeared clearly to mankind for the first time- the Father's voice is heard from Heaven, the Son of God is incarnate and standing physically in the Jordan, and the Holy Spirit descends on Him in the form of a dove.

The services of Theophany are arranged similarly to those of the Nativity. The Royal Hours are read and the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great is served with Vespers on the eve of the feast.

The Vigil is made up of Great Compline and Matins. On the morning of the feast, the Divine Liturgy is served. The Liturgy of the feast begins with psalms of glorification and praise instead of the three normal Antiphons.

And the baptismal line from Galatians 3:27 replaces the Thrice-Holy. As many as been baptized into Christ have put on Christ: Alleluia.

The Gospel readings of all the services tell of the Lord's baptism by John in the Jordan River. The epistle reading of the Divine Liturgy tells of the consequences of the Lord's appearing which is the divine epiphany.

Since the main feature of the feast is the blessing of water... The blessing verifies that mankind, and all of creation, were created to be filled with the sanctifying presence of God.

In connection with the feast, it is traditional for the priest to visit all the homes of the faithful for their annual house blessing using the water that has been blessed at the Theophany services.
-https://orthodoxwiki.org/Theophany

Month of January Saint's Days

Congratulations to Evguenia, Anysia, Melania, Genevieve, Tatiana, and Nina! May God grant you many years!

Thank You!

Thank you to the month of December Church Cleaners, Church Flower arrangers and Gardeners. May God reward your diligent and loving efforts!

Upkeep and Beautification of God's House.

Posted on the bulletin board are 3 signup sheets.
- **Monthly Church Cleaning**
- Monthly Purchase of **Church Flowers** for services, and arrangement
- **Green Team Gardeners**

St. Basil the Great

St. Basil the Great was born in 329 AD of a distinguished family of Caesarea, the capital of Cappadocia - a province of Asia Minor. The family had been Christian since the days of the persecutions of Christians, which ended early in the 4th century.

In 357 AD St. Basil made an extensive tour of the monasteries of Egypt, and in 360 he assisted the Cappadocian bishops at a synod in Constantinople, defending the Orthodox faith against the heretical Arians.

As bishop of Caesarea, Basil was also metropolitan (ecclesiastical primate of a province) of Cappadocia, and his own diocese covered the great estates of eastern Cappadocia.

St. Basil the Great founded charitable institutions to aid the poor, the ill, and travelers.

His numerous and influential writings stemmed from his practical concerns as monk, pastor, and church leader. The Longer Rules and Shorter Rules (for monasteries) and other ascetic writings continued in his supervision of the monasteries of Cappadocia: exerting strong influence on the monastic life of Eastern Christianity.

St. Basil's preserved sermons deal mainly with ethical and social problems, and over 300 of his letters are preserved. Many deal with daily activities; and others are short treatises on theology or ethics. Several of his Canonical Epistles, and decisions on points of discipline, have become part of the canon law of the Eastern Orthodox Church. He also contributed to the magnificent series of Eucharistic prayers known as the Liturgy of St. Basil.

St. Basil the Greats Meditations on the Nativity of Christ

Cappadocia Countryside

The actual, first nativity of Christ, His actual birth from all eternity in the bosom of His Father, must be venerated in silence. We should never permit our mind to investigate this mystery. Since time and space did not exist, since no form of expressions had yet been created, since there is not a single eyewitness, nor anyone who can describe this eternal birth, how can reason form any concept for reflection? How can the tongue give expression to thoughts that cannot be formulated? The Father was, and the Son was born! Do not say: "when?" but rather leave that question unasked. Do not ask "how?" for there is not answer! For the word "when" suggests time, and "how" suggests birth in the flesh... God is on earth, He is among men, not in the fire nor amid the sound of trumpets; not in the smoking mountain, or in the darkness, or in the terrible and roaring tempest giving the Law, but manifested in the flesh, the gentle and good One dwells with those He condescends to make His equals! God is in the flesh, not operating from a distance, as did the prophets, but through Him human nature, one with ours, He seeks to bring back all mankind to Himself. - *St. Basil the Great "On the Incarnation"*

Since Thou art the God of peace and the Father all-merciful, O Lover of Mankind, Thou sent us the great Messenger of Thy knowledge and granted to us Thy peace. Led to the light of Thy Divine Knowledge, we come out of

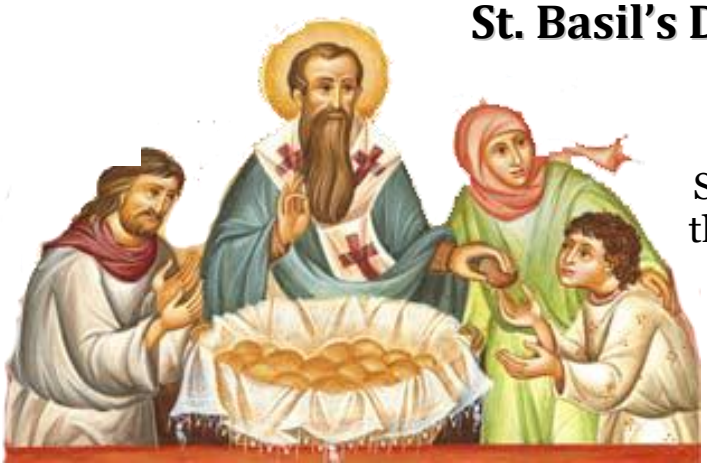
the darkness to sing to Thee a hymn of glory. – *St. Basil the Great; Orthros Service*

Inside a Cappadocian Cave Church

O man, know then that God becomes flesh and where did this incarnation take place? The body of a Holy Virgin! Let us, too, burst forth with voice of joy. Let us celebrate the mystery of the Salvation of the whole world, the birthday of mankind. Today the blame of Adam is revoked. No longer: "You are dust, and to dust you will return"; but, closely united to the celestial world, you will be lifted even into Heaven... - *St. Basil the Great; Homily on the Generation of Christ*

Cappadocia Hills

St. Basil's Day Cake



St. Basil's Day is also falls upon the Feast Day of the Circumcision of Christ, January 1/14.

St. Basil the Great helped the poor people to welcome and pacify a hard, new governor who was arriving to inspect the city.

To do this, St. Basil asked for a piece of jewelry or a gold coin from each family to give as a gift to the Governor. The Governor however, was taken aback at this generosity. He felt sorry for the people and gave all the jewelry back to the city and left.

St. Basil did not know who owned each piece of jewelry or coin. This is when the miracle occurred.

He had the village bakers bake many, many cakes, and put a jewel or a coin inside each loaf. When the loaves were given out, everyone had their own jewelry inside the piece of loaf!

This traditional cake (a sweet yeast loaf also is popular) is baked for **January** 1/**14** to celebrate the life of St. Basil, and the miracle of the coin/jewel!

The cake is distributed by tradition in a specific order.

The first piece cut is in honour of St. Basil, the second is cut in honour of the Virgin Mary. These two pieces are saved and given the same day to the elderly or the poor.

The next piece is cut for the most senior member of the household down to the youngest member. Whoever finds the coin in their piece of cake puts it toward something special.

- 1 cup butter, plus 1 Tbsp. butter, for greasing cake pan
- 2 cups white sugar, plus
- 2 Tbsp. white sugar, for sprinkling on top of cake later
- 3 cups flour
- 6 eggs
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 cup warm milk
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1/4 cup blanched slivered almonds

1. Wash and dry a coin, and tightly wrap it in aluminum foil.
2. Preheat oven to 350°. Grease a 10 inch round cake pan with 1 Tbsp. of butter.
3. In a medium bowl, cream 1 cup of butter and 2 cups of sugar together until light in colour. Stir in the flour and mix until the batter resembles coarse breadcrumbs. Add the eggs one at a time, blending each one in well.
4. In a small bowl combine baking powder and milk, add to the cake batter and mix well. Finally combine the lemon juice and baking soda in a small bowl, add to the cake batter and mix well. Pour the cake batter into the greased cake pan, insert the foil wrapped coin, and bake for 20 minutes.
5. Remove the cake from the oven; sprinkle the nuts and 2 Tbsp. sugar over the cake, then return the cake to the oven and bake for a further 20-40 minutes (depends on your oven) until the cake springs to the touch, and an inserted knife is removed clean.

   Allow to cool on a rack for 10-15 minutes, then invert the pan on to a cake plate.

Rejoice and Be Glad!

Dear Saint Sophia Parish,

We got your gift of $100 (American) (to the Fund for Assistance) on December 19 and I called Sister Martha (Bethany School for Girls). She was so happy to hear that generous people like you are donating and the funds for the van are accumulating! Your gift will be matched and doubled!

I can just see the delight on Eve's face (not her real name) when she finds out that she and the other orphans can finally board their new van; how relieved they will be when you take away the fear that the old van will break at a checkpoint, and the girls will be checked individually by armed men; how happy they will be when your kindness rushes them to a doctor when they are sick… When your love takes them to the beach for an outing to have some fun… Because your generous donation will accomplish all of that.

… The girls have been through so much already. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for doing this for them. Sister Martha tells me they will be praying for you.

Thank you again and again.

P.S. No goods or services were rendered to you in return for your gift.
P.P.S. Thank you again so much!

With gratitude and love in Christ, Dasha Lyubovskaya

(Sister Martha is a nun. The 11 orphans – ages 5 to 19 are her adopted children from all over the world. Sister Martha, three sisters, and a few volunteers tenderly mother these orphans – giving them the loving care that every child deserves and desperately needs. All the orphans are Orthodox – from different countries, including the USA. This school is a small epicenter of Orthodoxy which shines the light of our faith…)

Our Church is a Family

His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion of Eastern America and New York, First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, talks about the recent Council of Bishops in Moscow, the preaching Christ in today's world, on the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia and about Orthodox Christians in North America.

An excerpt by Metropolitan Hilarion at the recent Diaspora Council of Bishops

– Question to Vladyka Hilarion… Youth ministry was identified as a priority in Church life by the Council. How are young people to be turned towards Christ?

– A. Young people are the most important thing we have—they are the future of the Church.

We need to tend to areas where little is being done in rearing our youth, beginning with the littlest kids in our parish… We must support our youth even after they graduate from parish school. We need to immerse ourselves into what their interests are now. We need to host more frequent youth conferences where they can get to know each other, at which the truths of the faith are explained in their own language.

If the foundation of one's faith is laid down during childhood, then it is easier to find one's way later in life. If this foundation is lacking, everything becomes more complicated. ..

At a young age, even children from churchly families often leave the care of their parents and pastors and fall under the influence of negative things. We especially sense this pressure in the secular world abroad. We must try to restrain every person entering this all-important phase of life from making mistakes that lead to catastrophe: young men and women should at least stay close to the Church.

Parishes can set up athletic groups, pilgrimage clubs, organized around common interests and hobbies, just so young people can stay in touch with

the Church. We must constantly invent new forms and possibilities for youth to express themselves on the parish level and maintain activities around the Church. This is hard in today's world…

Youth Activities in Our Parish

Our parish at St. Sophia's has an active youth group.

During the liturgical year under the blessing of Archpriest John, the sisterhood incorporates: Youth Choir, Youth Camp, Youth Picnic/BBQ, Youth-hosted fundraisers, and Youth Performance at Pascha and Yolka.

There is room for *more* of our parish youth from ages 4 – 12. During a Victoria visit, Vladika Gabriel said that language should not be a barrier. Parish youth should be together. They will enjoy each other's company, regardless of language, and it is very important for them to be with other Orthodox Christian youth.

Two of our teens have recently returned from the annual All-Diaspora St. Herman's Youth Conference, this year hosted in Seattle, where they enjoyed the fellowship of other Orthodox teens; all within an action-packed and church activity oriented schedule. From Question and Answer boards moderated by clergy, to socials, services, choir, and singing in a seniors' home. This year, following Metropolitan Hilarion's request, our parish would *also* like to focus on a teen oriented group. More information coming…

Youth Choir

Resumes Sunday March 4th for boys and girls ages 4 – 12. We will be rehearsing for the Pascha luncheon concert on Sunday April 8th. **A registration form will be on the bulletin board in February**.

Sisterhood Meeting

General Meeting with lunch first, Sunday January 28th immediately after Divine Liturgy. We will discuss upcoming new training/teams for those interested in helping with cooking/cross-board flowers/sewing/youth camp/gardening; and to touch base regarding the upcoming Blini preparation on Forgiveness Sunday. Church will provide Lunch. **Please let m Barbara** (Senior Sister) **or Irena** (Assistant Senior Sister) **know by Theophany if you are coming (we need to know numbers in regards to the lunch), and in which area you would like to help.** (Cooking/cross-board flowers/sewing/youth camp). The Church will provide sandwiches and beverages.
matushkabarbara@gmail.com etellier@telus.net

February 4th Youth Camp 2018 Assistants Meeting

General Meeting with lunch first, Sunday February 4th immediately after Divine Liturgy. **We will plan the upcoming the 2018 Youth Camp (Dates July 29-31).**

Please note: Although last year was wonderful and successful, we ran on the bare minimum of 8 assistants. This year we need at least 5 more assistants to make it feasible, or it may be cancelled.

Church will provide Lunch. **Please let m Barbara** (Senior Sister) **or Irena** (Assistant Senior Sister) **know by Sunday January 28th if you are coming (we need to know numbers in regards to the lunch), and in which area you would like to help.** (Cooking, art, general activities, games). The Church will provide sandwiches and beverages.
matushkabarbara@gmail.com etellier@telus.net

Pearls of Wisdom

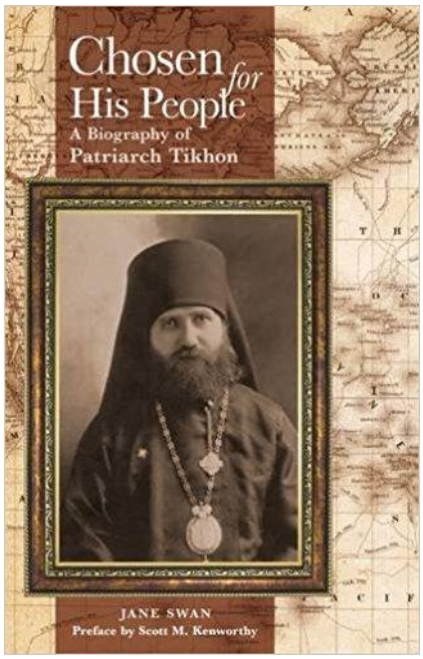
When someone steals another's clothes, we call them a thief. Should we not give the same name to one who could clothe the naked and does not? The bread in your cupboard belongs to the hungry; the coat unused in your closet belongs to the one who needs it; the shoes rotting in your closet belong to the one who has no shoes; the money which you hoard up belongs to the poor. - *St. Basil the Great*

Human life is but of brief duration. 'All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God shall stand forever' (Isa. 40:6). Let us hold fast to the commandment that abides, and despise the unreality that passes away.
- *St. Basil the Great*

A tree is known by its fruit; a man by his deeds. A good deed is never lost; he who sows courtesy reaps friendship, and he who plants kindness gathers love. — *Basil the Great*

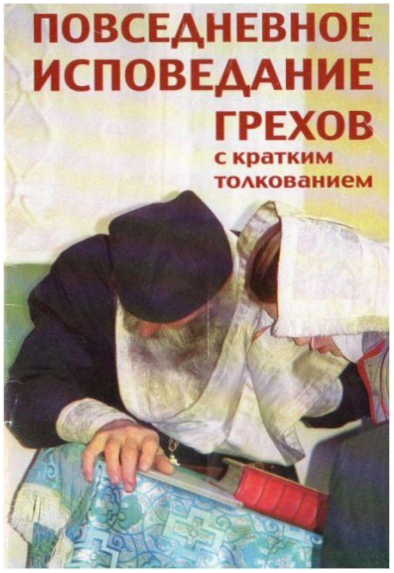
When you sit down to eat, pray. When you eat bread, do so thanking Him for being so generous to you. If you drink wine, be mindful of Him who has given it to you for your pleasure and as a relief in sickness. When you dress, thank Him for His kindness in providing you with clothes. When you look at the sky and the beauty of the stars, throw yourself at God's feet and adore Him who in His wisdom has arranged things in this way. Similarly, when the sun goes down and when it rises, when you are asleep or awake, give thanks to God, who created and arranged all things for your benefit, to have you know, love and praise their Creator. -*St. Basil the Great, Homily V*

January Library Features



Chosen for His People: a Biography of Patriarch Tikhon *by Jane Swan*

St. Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow (Vasily Ivanovich Bellavin, 1865–1925) is one of the most important figures of both Russian and Orthodox Church history in the 20th century. The biography reveals a picture of a man whom no one expected to be chosen as Patriarch, yet who nevertheless humbly accepted the call of God and the people to guide the Church during the most turbulent of times as it faced both internal upheavals and external persecution. Readers will become better acquainted with St. Tikhon through this modest but carefully crafted book.



«Повседневное исповедание грехов с кратким толкованием», М., «Благо», 2004, 47 стр.

Эта книга содержит краткие толкования святых отцов православной церкви о грехах в помощь исповедующимся.

The Orthodox Church holy fathers wrote much about everyday sins. This book contains short discussions of over 20 various sins to help prepare for confession.

100th Anniversary of the Martyrdom of the Russian Royal Family ... A series of articles from various sources

The Nicholas II Family: An Ideal Christian Family - From the Memoirs of Nun Nina (Krygina)

Before I became a nun I was a certified counsellor, and I also have a son of my own. My interest in the psychological health of families began during my secular life, and

I came to understand that the most effective and comprehensive answer to almost all family issues can be found only in the Orthodox Christian faith.

As somebody studying counselling, I often asked myself why divorce statistics in Tsarist Russia were so much lower than in today's Russia; only two to two-and-a-half percent of families registered a divorce back in those times. I know that a real-life story is often much more powerful than a theoretical discussion. Could it be that families back in those times had a real-life example of an ideal family? That everybody knew perfectly well who the ideal family was and they were trying to be like them? What was that ideal yet very real family anyway?

Once I was walking in Moscow streets; I was a young student then. Suddenly I saw a picture of Tsar Nicholas's family in the window of a Moscow publishing house. It was there by some miracle, as everything relating to the Tsar was strictly banned in Soviet Russia. And I saw their eyes—the eyes of the Tsar, his wife Alexandra, their children Olga, Tatiana, Maria, Anastasia, and little Alexei… That was a pivotal moment in my life, as I found the answer to my questions. That ideal family whom everyone knew as a real family was Tsar Nicholas's family. No wonder they were canonized in Orthodox Christianity and as a family too!

From then on I have pointed all families who needed my professional advice to the Tsar's family. This is an example everybody in Russia can understand and somehow relate to, especially if one wants to have a happy family. Theirs was a very happy family, despite their tragic end and the dramatic times they were living through. They often wrote in their private correspondence how they valued each other as people, as parents, and as children.

And then I decided to find the keys to their happiness. I began to study the documents and I realized how little we Russians knew about this great Russian Tsar, how many false accusations had been made against them. It was extremely sad to see how easily the Russian people had fallen for those completely unfounded accusations, how eager we were to spread those lies and to think poorly of the Tsar family. Truly, we see the world through the

window glass of our own sins, and the more sinful we are, the dirtier the picture is!

So, I studied the correspondence of the Tsar's family and some first-hand accounts of their lives and I gradually found the first key to their happiness. It's something that I could call integrity. Integrity means unity of soul, body, and spirit; it stands for such attitude towards life for a family where God is the cornerstone of everything a family does, and the man is the head of the family and the receiver of God's grace. The woman is his helper and she receives God's grace through her husband. The children see this hierarchy and also receive grace. That's the law of God.

At this point I am often asked how a contemporary family can be patriarchal if some men cannot be natural leaders, if the wife makes more money, if she does some important responsibilities, etc. Indeed, today these are important factors in any family, and science has even proved that there are actual pain points which can trigger a divorce. These can be money matters, making decisions, the birth of a child, even retirement.

To this I would answer with words I once heard when monks were burying a fellow monk whom they particularly loved. One of them said that it was only sin that separated people from each other. Without it, all people would be an integral unit dedicated to each other and to God. So, I would repeat this to all of today's families who have marital issues: only your own sin separates you from each other and prevents you from building a strong and loving family. The Tsar's family was very aware of this and it helped them deal with their own issues. They wrote a lot about their struggles with their passions, particularly when bringing up the children, especially the hemophiliac Alexei, who was the heir to the throne of Russia.

There is also this issue of being busy today, when parents cannot spend time together with their children as they are so "busy." Now think about the Tsar: was he not busy? He probably was the busiest person on the planet, ruling the biggest country in the world. Compare that to your "busy" and realize that if the Tsar could find time to spend with his family, so can everyone else. True, he could not spend much time, but what he could he turned into quality time, more often reading Russian literature to his

children. That was one great tradition that can be easily and with great success borrowed in today's busy families. Another tradition of Nicholas's family was the physical education of the children. Nicholas was a very physically fit man; he especially liked swimming and rowing. He made a very concerted effort to ensure his children also did physical exercise and spent as much time in the fresh air as possible; that they knew how to take care after themselves, to keep everything clean and in order. As a Tsar he could have everything done by servants, but he was wise enough not to let his children get spoiled. What a lesson for all of us today!

The second key to their happiness was humility. Tsarina Alexandra told her son Alexei never to be proud of their wealth and the elevated position. It is wrong to do so because everybody is equal before God. These were not empty words; they were supported with example. When the war broke out Alexandra and her elder daughters became nurses in hospitals, assisting in bloody operations or simply sitting by the bed and praying for the wounded and the dying. The soldiers were all their children needing attention and prayer, just as the sick Alexei was. Nicholas never showed off his rank; his regular attire was a humble military uniform.

They were a very loving family. They believed in God with all their heart; they were truly Orthodox Christians. We must use them as models to have at least a little of God's grace, which they had in such abundance.

Practical Tips

HOUSE BLESSINGS AT HOLY THEOPHANY.

It is traditional to have one's house blessed on this day. The priest will make a circuit of the houses in his parish on the day of the feast. If you do not live in the vicinity of the church, arrange with the pastor to bless your home as soon as is practical sometime afterwards.

The priest will lead a short prayer service in each home, before going through the house, blessing with Theophany Holy Water. Prepare for this by setting up a table in front of the principal icon corner in your home, the

one where the family prayers are usually said. The table should be covered with a clean cloth, and there should be a lighted candle.

If possible, all members of the family should gather, properly attired as if for a church service. Please do not have the television or music playing. The family follows the priest round the house, chanting the troparion of the festival as he blesses the rooms. At the end of the service, the priest will bless each member of the household by sprinkling them with holy water as they approach to kiss the Cross.

The home is for an Orthodox Christian a house-church, a place of spiritual struggle, temptations and trials. This annual blessing dedicates it again to the Lord bringing refreshment for those who live there. - *The Shepherd*

Links

St. Sophia Orthodox Church, Victoria BC
http://saintsophia.ca/

Official site of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia
http://www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws/synod/indexeng.htm

Official site of the Montreal and Canadian Diocese
http://mcdiocese.com/en/

The Rudder: Streaming Orthodox Christian sacred music 24/7
http://www.myocn.com/rudder/

St. Sophia's FREE Lenten Cookbook Recipes "Come and Dine"
http://comeanddinerecipe.blogspot.ca/

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, Vancouver BC
http://russianorthodoxchurch.ca/en/

Morning Offering by Abbot Tryphon
http://blogs.ancientfaith.com/morningoffering/

Western America Diocese Official Site
http://www.wadiocese.org/

"We knew not whether we were in heaven or earth… We only know that God dwells there among men, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations."

The Orthodox Church

With these words, envoys sent from Russia by Prince Vladimir in the year 987 recorded their impression of Constantinople's awesome Orthodox Cathedral, Hagia Sophia. They had been sent to search for the true religion. Within a year of their report, Prince Vladimir and the Russian people were baptized in Christ by Orthodox missionaries. Today, as in Prince Vladimir's time, the Orthodox Church – fully aware that man is a union of body and soul – uses all the beauty of creation to move her faithful children to prayer and worship: icons, beautiful singing, sweet-smelling incense, and majestic services.

The Greek word 'Orthodoxia' means 'correct praise' or 'correct teaching' and in the Orthodox worship the praise and teaching are closely interwoven.

Jesus Christ founded His Church through the Apostles. By the grace received from God at Pentecost, the Apostles established the Church throughout the world. In Greece, Russia, and elsewhere, the True Apostolic Church continues to flourish, preserving the Faith of Christ pure and unchanged.

"Christ the Power of God,
and the Wisdom of God"

– First Corinthians

Troparion in the Second Tone

We bow down before Thine all pure image, O Good One, asking forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ God; for Thou wast well pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh of Thine own will, that Thou mightest save what Thou hadst created from slavery to the enemy. Wherefore, we cry out to Thee in thanksgiving: Thou hast filled all things with joy, O our Saviour, Who hast come to save the world.

Kontakion in the Second Tone

O uncircumscribable Word of the Father, knowing the victorious image, uninscribed and divinely wrought, of Thine ineffable and divine dispensation towards man, of Thy true incarnation, we honour it with veneration.