



“Joy of All Who Sorrow”

No. 106 September 2017



StKassiani the Hymnographer

St Kassiani is the only woman among the great hymnographers of the Church.

Saint Kassiani the Hymnographer and poet was born sometime between 805 AD and 810 AD in the city of Constantinople into a wealthy family, and grew to be exceptionally beautiful and very intelligent. As a young woman, she was a participant in the "bride show" (the means by which Byzantine princes/emperors sometimes chose a bride, giving a golden apple to his choice) organized for the young bachelor-emperor Theophilos the Iconoclast by his stepmother, the Empress Dowager Euphrosyne. Smitten by Kassiani's (Kassia) beauty, the young emperor approached her and said: "Through a woman came forth the baser things," referring to the sin and suffering coming as a result of Eve's transgression. Kassiani promptly responded by saying: "And through a woman came forth the better things," referring to the hope of salvation resulting from the Incarnation through the Most Holy Theotokos. His pride wounded by Kassiani's rebuttal, Theophilos haughtily passed her by and chose Theodora to be his wife. Kassiani had no desire to be married, and was therefore relieved not to be chosen.

In 843 AD, Kassiani founded a women's monastery in Constantinople, becoming its first Abbess, and devoting her life to asceticism and the composing of liturgical poetry. The best known of her compositions is the Doxastikon Hymn on the Aposticha of the Bridegroom Orthros (Matins) for Great and Holy Wednesday (which is, in parish churches, chanted by anticipation on the previous evening).

Holy Tradition says that in his later years the Emperor Theophilos, still in love with Kassiani, wished to see her one last time before he died, so he rode to the monastery where she resided. Kassiani was alone in her cell, writing her now famous hymn about the sinful woman who anointed Christ, when she realized that the commotion she heard was because the imperial retinue had arrived. Being now devoted to God in her monastic life, Kassiani fled from her cell and hid, leaving the unfinished hymn on her writing desk. Theophilos was directed to her cell and entered it alone. Not finding Kassiani, he turned to leave, when he noticed papers on the desk and read what was written upon them. When he was done reading, he sat and added one line to the hymn; then he left - never to see Kassiani again. The line attributed to the Emperor is "those feet whose sound Eve heard at dusk in Paradise and hid herself for fear." When the emperor and his party departed from the monastery, Saint Kassiani returned to her cell, discovered what Theophilos had written, and finished the hymn now popularly known as "The Hymn of the Sinful Woman." It is chanted on Great and Holy Tuesday and can be read in full below:

O Lord, the woman who had fallen into many sins, perceiving Thy Divinity, fulfilled the part of a myrrh-bearer; and with lamentations she brought sweet-smelling oil of myrrh to Thee before Thy burial. 'Woe is me,' she said, 'for night surrounds me, dark and moonless, and stings my lustful passion with the love of sin. Accept the fountain of my tears, O Thou Who drawest down from the clouds the waters of the sea. Incline to the groanings of my heart, O Thou Who in Thine ineffable self-emptying hast bowed down the heavens. I shall kiss Thy Most Pure feet and wipe them with the hairs of my head, those feet whose sound Eve heard at dusk in Paradise and hid herself for fear. Who can search out the multitude of my sins and the abyss of Thy judgments, O Saviour of my soul? Despise me not, Thine handmaiden, for Thou hast mercy without measure.



35th Anniversary of the Repose of Father Seraphim (Rose)



2 September of this year marked thirty-five years since the repose of a righteous man of our time, Hieromonk Seraphim (Rose). Father Seraphim's contribution to the spread and deepening of Orthodoxy not only in America, but throughout the world cannot be overstated. A gifted man from birth, he came to his deep faith in Christ and firm belief in the truth of Orthodoxy through intense struggles of soul and mind—struggles so painfully familiar to people of our age that we cannot but acknowledge the veracity of the conclusions he unwaveringly drew from them. His life edifies even in its imperfection, for truly he was “one of us”.

It is generally accepted in the Orthodox Church that there are righteous people filled with the grace of God in this life whose bodies show little or no signs of corruption after their death. As Father Seraphim's unembalmed body lay in state in the monastery church in Platina for three days before his burial, it never stiffened, nor did it show any signs of decay, although the heat in that locality is still considerable in early September. His skin was soft and of a literally golden colour, as those around him remember. He looked younger than he was before his

illness, and he was smiling blessedly as an innocent child in sleep. As people who were there recall, the atmosphere around his coffin was so devoid of any deathly dread that even little children crowded around unwilling to leave it. The church was filled to overflowing, and all felt an incredible outpouring of grace. It was more like a solemn and joyous feast than a funeral service. The sorrow of those there turned to joy, when at the lowering of the coffin into the grave, all spontaneously began to sing the victorious Paschal hymn, “Christ is Risen from the dead!”

Even after his repose, Father Seraphim served to strengthen converts to Orthodoxy in his native land. The books he had written during his ascetical life in the Platina monastery have had a far-reaching effect, and brought many to the faith. He has even appeared to people at crucial times in their lives, such as in one incident experienced by a former Roman Catholic. This man was preparing to participate in “Operation Rescue”, a protest before an abortion clinic that would take place on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter. He had seen Father Seraphim's picture on a copy of the periodical *Orthodox Word*, which is published by the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood in Platina. Very anxious about the Operation the night before, he fell asleep restlessly, “only to be awakened shortly thereafter with Father Seraphim Rose's face gleaming at me,” he would later write to the monks at the St. Herman Monastery. “I knew that I was to pray to him that he would pray for my protection in ‘Operation Rescue’.... When I awoke in the morning, Father Seraphim was still with me.” When the man took his place blocking the doorway to the abortion clinic along with thirty-two other Christians, he could see Father Seraphim looking at him and protecting all of the other Rescuers. Although the group was arrested, they were treated very kindly by the police, much unlike previous Operations, and charged with no more than a “Class A” misdemeanour. The police intentionally put their case on the docket of the only pro-life judge in the precinct. This man, Dr. Stephens, was received three months later into the Orthodox Church along with his family, taking the new name Seraphim out of gratitude to Father Seraphim (Rose). He is now a priest in the Orthodox Church, serving in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

In the Monastery of St. Herman of Alaska in the Northern California wilderness, a humble wooden grave-covering on a raised wooden platform marks the final resting place of this righteous one—an American who became a bridge to the mind of the holy fathers of the ancient, original Church of Christ. Over the thirty years since his repose, numerous Divine Liturgies have been served over that grave, and it is a place of pilgrimage—not only for American converts, but for many people born into the Orthodox faith who know

in their hearts that Father Seraphim is an intercessor for them before God, and lives among the saints. Ever humble and unpretentious in life, Father Seraphim had always fled the praise of men. Now those whose lives he touched feel without a doubt that he is glorified in heaven, and it would be impossible to count all the words of thanks—for his suffering, for his conquering doubt and despair, and revealing and defeating the snares of man's enemy with his enlightened words.

Holy Father Seraphim pray to God for us!

Notes & Jottings

PATRIARCH SAINT TIKHON

Interestingly, St Tikhon was born in 1865, the same year that this house (The White House) was built. He had recently been appointed Metropolitan of Moscow when, on 5 November 1917, he was elected as the first Patriarch of Moscow after an interregnum lasting 217 years. He was, in fact, the 11th Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia. This year, the centenary year, 5 November falls on a Sunday which will be a day of great rejoicing.

Here are some quotes from Patriarch St Tikhon:

"Devote all your energy to preaching the word of God and the truth of Christ, especially today, when unbelief and atheism are audaciously attacking the Church of Christ. May the God of peace and love be with all of you!"

"May God teach every one of us to strive for His truth, and for the good of the Holy Church, rather than something for our own sake."

"The spread of Christ's faith ought to be near and precious to the heart of every Orthodox Christian"

OUR DAILY LIFE

The mains services (electricity and water) have been connected to the new chandlery, which is now in daily use. We are grateful to our friend Carmen Bourne for a substantial contribution toward the cost of the shingle for the extended pathway.

GIFTS

A large turned wooden candlestick has been donated to the church by Jonathan Olanczuk. We thank him for this, as well as for a projection screen, more books, office supplies and equipment that he has given to the college.

ON-LINE BOOK FAIR

We are beginning the serious task of rationalising the books here. Our policy is to accept everything that is offered to us. Some titles will be an asset for the college library. Others will be more useful for the on-going question of fundraising. For this purpose, we have established an on-line book list. A copy is being issued together with this bulletin. If this idea proves to be popular, we will keep it going by up-dating it once a month. Please peruse the list carefully. It contains a wide variety of subjects and, among the titles on offer, you might find some collectors' items.

CONCERNING BOOKS

Please remember that the regular book stock being sold through Olland Bookshop is now being advertised on Abebooks. We previously had over nine thousand books advertised on Amazon. Unhappily the stock cannot simply be transferred *en-bloc* but we have to upload the titles one by one. This is a slow job!



NAMEDAYS

We send congratulations to everyone who is celebrating a nameday at this time and wish them:

MANY YEARS!

- 1 September – **Martyr Timothy of Palestine** - Timothy Levine
8 September – **Martyr Adrian & Natalia of Nicomedia** – Adrian Cosby,
Natalia Weston
11 September – **Beheading of St John the Baptist** – John Barry
12 September – **St Alexander, Patriarch of Constantinople** – Alexander Bascu
30 September – **Martyr Sophia at Rome** – Sophia Weston



COLLEGIATE CHURCH OF THE MOTHER OF GOD
JOY OF ALL WHO SORROW

SEPTEMBER 2017

Saturday 2 September

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 3 September

10.10am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (Afterfeast of the Dormition)

Saturday 9 September

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 10 September

10.10am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (St Moses the Black)

Saturday 16 September

7.30 ~ Vigil

Sunday 17 September

10.10am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (Hieromartyr Babylas)

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Wednesday 20 September

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Thursday 21 September

10.10am ~ Hours and Festal Liturgy (The Nativity of the Theotokos)

Saturday 23 September

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 24 September

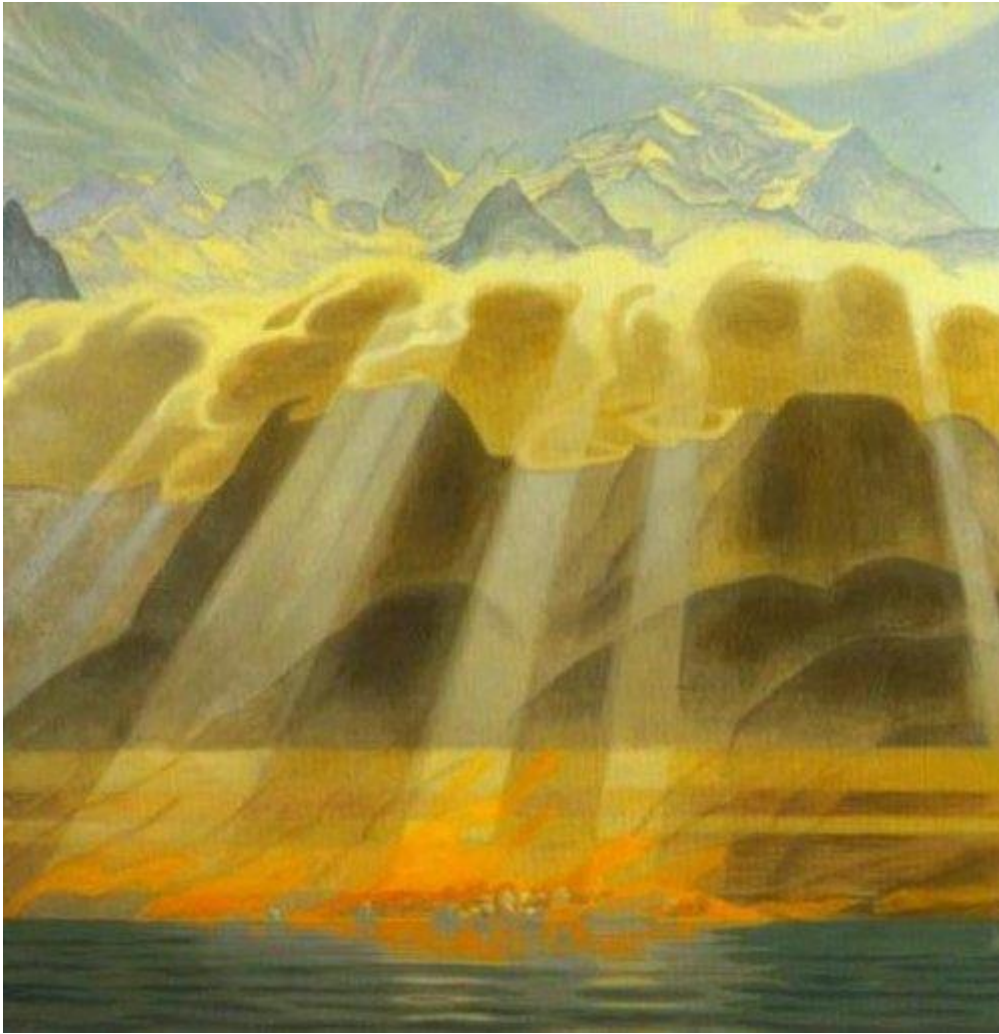
10.10am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (Afterfeast of the Nativity of the Theotokos)

Tuesday 26 September

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Wednesday 27 September

10.10am ~ Hours and Festal Liturgy (The Exaltation of the Cross)



Joyful, life-giving, and bright is the sun, but the light of God's countenance, which the angels and the souls of the righteous rejoice in, is still more joyful, life-giving, and bright.

St John of Kronstadt

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