

**SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH**  
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**BULLETIN OF MAY 13, 2012**  
**CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!**

**SUNDAY/MAY 13**

**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Pascha (Tone 4)**

**The Samaritan Woman at Jacob's Well**

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy  
Coffee Hour; Church School

**WEDNESDAY/MAY 16**

6:30p.m. Compline

7-8:30p.m. Adult Study Class:

*"Pursuing Our Own Good By Serving the  
Common Good"*

**THURSDAY/MAY 17**

7:00p.m. Parish Council Meeting

**SATURDAY/MAY 19**

9:30a.m. Akathist; Confession

10:30a.m. Gazebo Work Project

5:30p.m. Vigil; Confession

**SUNDAY/MAY 20**

**6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Pascha (Tone 5)**

**The Blind Man**

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy

Coffee Hour; Church School

11:45a.m. Movie: *"The Mission"*



**CHRIST & THE SAMARITAN WOMAN**

**Christ's Descent Reconstitutes Hades**

*"From Adam until the time of Christ, Hades was the place where the devil kept all who had died, and there was no way out. With Christ's victory and the despoiling of Hades, this function – is no longer operative. Hades now becomes simply and solely and solely the place of final punishment. Therefore, Hades is not simply abolished by Christ's descent, but rather reconstituted; it ceases to be the place of Satan's dominion over all the dead and becomes instead the place under Christ's lordship where those who refuse to believe in him reach their final destiny. Curiously, Cyril continues to call this place, 'Hades', making no distinction in the name, even though the function of the place has changed. In a sense, 'Hades' has changed ownership (and purpose) by virtue of Christ's glorious victory over death." (Daniel Keating, "Christ's Despoiling of Hades: According to Cyril of Alexandria,"*

### ***Offerings for the week of May 13***

Olive Oil – in memory of Michael and Justina; in memory of Vaschen and Emilia; for the health of Matthew, Leigh and Katlie; in memory of Catherine.

Wine – in memory of Joan and Sandy.

### ***Parish Synodicon – Memory Eternal!***

May 24 40<sup>th</sup> Day Helen Gregovitch  
June 13 40<sup>th</sup> Day Vassily Neudachin  
May 13, 1933 Maria Yaskovsky  
May 13, 1958 Jacob Popko  
May 14, 1933 Peter Chromoho  
May 14, 1953 Della Marchisian  
May 14, 1956 Pelagia Carko  
May 14, 1965 Metropolitan Leonty  
May 15, 1925 Maria Barna  
May 15, 2005 Olga Shemansky  
May 16, 1953 Michael Hobora  
May 16, 1962 Theodore Janushenko  
May 18, 1975 Wasil Kosticz  
May 19, 1939 Gregory Halkovich

### ***Coffee Hour Hosting***

May 13 - Sarchisian, Dunaenko and Hando  
May 20 - Peterson, Bakaletz and Mattei  
May 27 - Kita, Nevitt and Keller

### ***Ushers Schedule***

May 13 - T. Gorbatuk and J. Stone  
May 20 - P. Parsells and C. Dunaenko  
May 27 - E, Sarchisian and L. Khuzaurashvili

### ***Incense Fragrances In Usage***

Week of May 13 “*Fern*”  
Week of May 20 “*Constantinople*”  
Week of May 27 “*Lindisfarne*”

### ***Forth-Coming Calendar***

May 16 - Wednesday – Adult Study Class  
7-8:30p.m.  
May 17 - Thursday – Parish Council Meeting  
May 19 - Saturday – 10:30a.m. Gazebo Work  
May 24 - Ascension Thursday  
May 27 - Sunday 9:30 a.m. Hierarchical Divine  
Liturgy with Bishop Peter of Cleveland  
May 27 - Sunday – 2:00 p.m. Marriage of Peter  
Parsells & Heather Graver  
May 30 – Pilgrimage to St. Tikhon’s Monastery

June 3 - Sunday - Pentecost

June 3 - Sunday - 4:00p.m. Memorial at Parish  
Cemetery

June 14 – Thursday – Lecture by Bishop Michael  
7:00p.m. in Lower Hall

June 16 - Saturday – Parish Council Conference  
In Clifton

### ***Gazebo Work Project – May 19<sup>th</sup> 10:30 a.m.***

(Notation from Zachary Sokol)

As many of you know, for my Boy Scout eagle Project, I am coordinating the building of a gazebo for the church community. We will be finishing the work on the gazebo on May 19<sup>th</sup> at 10:30a.m. We will need at least **20 able-bodied volunteers**. We will need to carry large cement blocks to lay the foundation as well as some minor leveling with some gravel. Some tree branches may need to be trimmed in order for the work to be done more safely and without obstruction. Also, the majority of the work will be assembling the gazebo, which will involve screwing together the boards and installing decking. The roof needs to be installed and we would appreciate anyone who is able to shingle a roof, that would be a big help. All of the cutting and drilling will be done beforehand. All necessary tools will also be provided. The work will take no longer than 5 hours. I thank you in advance for your help. Please speak to me if you plan on coming, or if you have questions or concerns.

### ***Same Sex Marriages...Again!***

Those who wish to accept and promote same sex marriages, may make no claim that it is possible to reconcile this position with the Christian Faith. The acceptance of same sex marriages is at one and the same time an evil, the destruction of marriage and family and contrary to faith, morals, human history and common sense.

### ***Newly-Departed (+) William Neudachin***

On May 5<sup>th</sup>, William (Vassily) of Manville, reposed in the Lord. Our sympathy is expressed to his wife Ziniada. May his memory be eternal!

### ***Mother’s Day***

Congratulations to all celebrating this civil holiday!



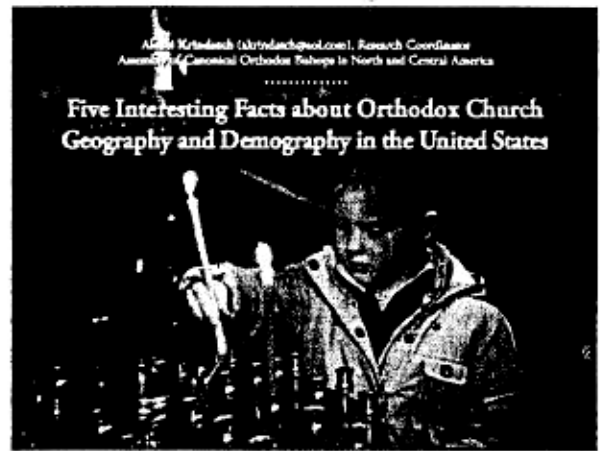
# ASSEMBLY OF CANONICAL ORTHODOX BISHOPS OF NORTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA

Home » News » Assembly News » Five Facts About the Orthodox Church in the United States

## Five Facts About the Orthodox Church in the United States

Assembly of Bishops Research Coordinator Alexei Krindatch has released a new 40-page report titled, Five Interesting Facts About Orthodox Church Geography and Demography in the United States. The report includes the following sections:

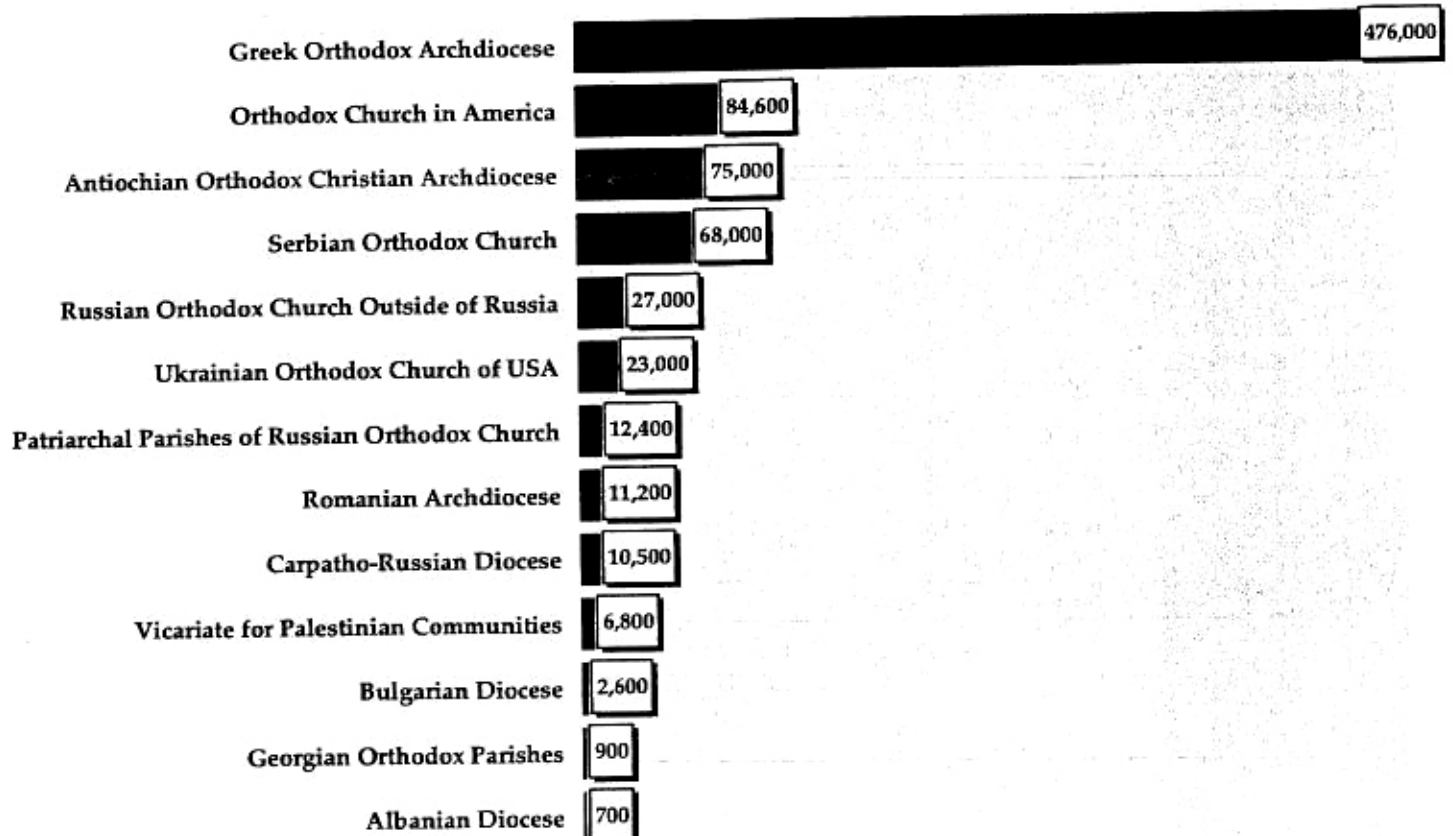
1. Orthodox Church Membership in America
2. Orthodox Church Geography in America
3. Orthodox Church Attendance in America
4. Ethnic Culture in American Orthodox Churches
5. Orthodox Monastic Communities in America



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**Fig. 1** Membership in US Orthodox Churches:

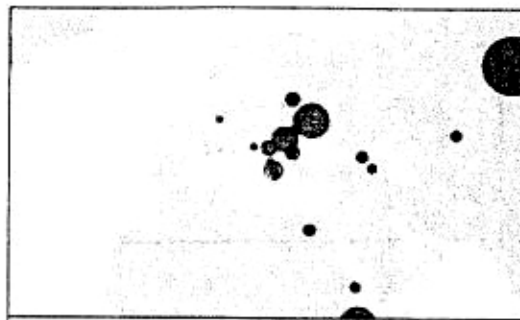
Total Number of Adherents (including children and occasional participants)



## Orthodox Christian

There are about 260 million Orthodox Christians, making up 12% of the global Christian population.

Nearly four-in-ten Orthodox Christians worldwide (39%) reside in Russia, the country with the largest number of Orthodox. Ethiopia has the second-largest number of Orthodox Christians and more than three times as many Orthodox as Greece. Although Turkey is the seat of the ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople, one of the highest archbishops in Orthodox Christianity (see [Defining Christian Traditions](#) for details), its Orthodox population is small (about 180,000).



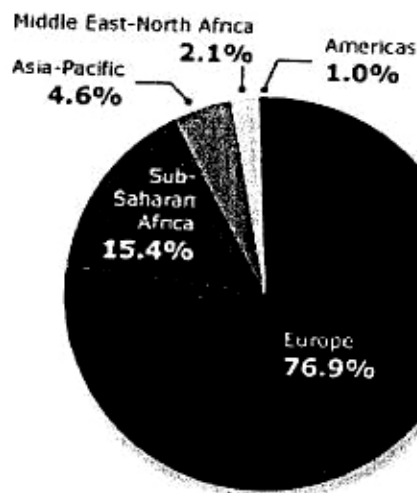
**MAP** Estimated Distribution of Orthodox Population by Country

	ORTHODOX POPULATION	THAT IS ORTHODOX	ORTHODOX POPULATION
Russia	101,450,000	71.0%	39.0%
Ethiopia	36,060,000	43.5	13.9
Ukraine	34,850,000	76.7	13.4
Romania	18,750,000	87.3	7.2
Greece	10,030,000	88.3	3.9
Serbia	6,730,000	86.6	2.6
Bulgaria	6,220,000	83.0	2.4
Belarus	5,900,000	61.5	2.3
Egypt	3,860,000	4.8	1.5
Georgia	3,820,000	87.8	1.5
Subtotal for the 10 Countries	227,660,000	54.9	87.4
Total for Rest of World	32,720,000	0.2	12.6
<b>World Total</b>	<b>260,380,000</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Nearly nine-in-ten (87%) of the world's Orthodox Christians can be found in the 10 countries with the largest Orthodox populations. Most of the countries with large numbers of Orthodox Christians have an Orthodox majority – though the Orthodox make up less than half the total population in Ethiopia and only about 5% of the population in Egypt. (See spotlights on [Ethiopia](#) and [Egypt](#).) Orthodox Christians make up a majority of the total population in 14 countries.

The Orthodox Christian population is heavily concentrated in Europe, which, for the purposes of this report, includes all of Russia. Europe is home to 77% of the global Orthodox population. Sub-Saharan Africa has about 15%, and the Asia-Pacific region (including Turkey) has roughly 5%. Small shares of Orthodox Christians also are found in the Middle East-North Africa (about 2%) and the Americas (1%).

## Regional Distribution of Orthodox Christians



Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.





## A LETTER TO A SPIRITUAL CHILD FROM A MONK OF MOUNT ATHOS

This letter is from Elder Ephraim of Katounakia on Athos. The Elder spent 65 years on Mount Athos, reposing on February 14, 1998, at the age of 86.

Like many elderly people, he was afflicted with illnesses - ulcers on his legs, loss of eyesight, severe eczema, ischaemic strokes and allergies. In the last years of his life, no standing, lying or sitting position gave him comfort.

Yet, as we see in the letter, the Elder was able to profit from his suffering.

May we also learn to be strong when we are weak and see God's love at work.

You wrote to me that you pray to God to relieve me from all my pains and so, I want to ask you to not pray for me like this. Instead, I want you to plead with God to give me patience, not relief. The Holy Fathers teach us many things but our poor experience teaches us much more, and more powerful things.

So, I confess to you:

Six years ago, I was in the Clerical Hospital in Athens due to my eczema. When I was released I went on a pilgrimage to St. Nektarios, in Aegina. When I knelt and kissed his holy skull I sensed a fine scent emanating from it and I took it to mean that many more afflictions awaited me and this is exactly what happened.

When we returned to Kallithea, Athens, I lay down on the bed to rest and I told Father J. who was with me: 'I feel as exhausted as if a hundred men have thrashed me.'

Ever since, all these years, I have been bedridden; you know all of this.

Many years ago I suffered from a cyst on the coccyx, which was unbearably painful. Due to my long stay in bed my behind hurt very much, they were stinging, which was a sign that sores were about to open.

Those sores were even more painful than the first ones.

I couldn't lie down on my right; the pain was horrible. The wound on my leg, the eczema, was at its worst.

And while in this ocean of affliction, at this dead end, I saw myself completely alone, fighting desperately against those bitter and unbearable waves. I realized that despair had gotten hold of me and suffocated me. Even thinking about this makes me tremble with horror.

I couldn't lie down on my left; the pain was terrible. I tried to lie on my back I couldn't; it hurt too much. 'What should I do? What will become of me? How will I end up?'

I was disturbed and pressed by disgraceful thoughts, terrible ones.

I even thought that God abandoned me.

I said nothing to my brotherhood. Outwardly, I appeared to be calm and peaceful but inside I was experiencing hell itself. That's what I had been taught by my elder: whether we experience heaven or hell we should never externalize it; we should appear impassive.

I was in this state for about six or seven minutes and then it was as if I heard a faint voice, that could barely be heard, telling me: 'That's how God wants you to be' and at once I came to my senses.

I replied to that voice: 'Since this is God's will, let this be blessed. Just give me the patience needed to deal with it.'

I then went, feeling more dead than alive, up to a small oil-lamp hanging in front of the icon of the Theotokos, I took some oil and smeared it twice or three times on the places that hurt most and I was healed.

However, the years went by and I was constantly in pain. Many times I clenched my teeth and stifled my groans of pain. I try to bear the pain, and I cannot sleep.

I believe this was an ordeal sent by God.

And now I move on to my main theme—listen to what I have to say carefully, my dear little teacher.

It's been seven or eight months now since God approached me from the right side. He opened the eyes of

my soul and I realized how much profit I have gained from this wound, how much reward is waiting for me, how much I have gained.

'I thank you God a thousand times.

I will never cease praising You as long as I live in this world; I will never stop chanting to You, kneeling before You, thanking You for this wound that You gave me.

Your boundless love, inconceivably deep and high, was revealed to me by this wound.

Thanks to Your glory - thanks to Your love - thanks to Your compassion - thanks to Your infinite mercy.

Thanks to You - Thanks to You - Thanks to You.

You are hidden there, in that wound.

Did you really love me, this dirt and stink, that much? Me, this dirt, this stink?

What good did I do to make you love me so much that you gave me this wound as a token of Your great love?'

This wave of gratitude lasted three days and three nights and then disappeared. After that I was soared with unutterable joy, I was in an ocean of spiritual happiness and other such feelings.

This I keep as a cornerstone, as a bedrock in my various sorrows, in the various afflictions of this bogus earthly life.

And so I tell you that whenever I am in pain, I am always happy deep down inside me. And when my pains are lessened I feel sad. Still, I am not indifferent to their cure.

It's only now that I understand why all the saints were happy about their sorrows. And I also now realize why the highest of the Apostles boasted of his sufferings, his illness, his cross.

And I also realize why St. John Chrysostom praises Job more when he suffered all the ordeals and while he was patient during his afflictions than when in his earlier life when he was righteous and pious and charitable and hospitable.

Now I understand by experience why all the saints suffered various ordeals of affliction and were tested through these whether they love God. God himself says: 'For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life' (Mt. 7:14).

.....  
Our late elder used to tell us that his entire life was a daily martyrdom. He was seldom happy; he was in sorrow night and day, and he was sad, and he cried.

Let me tell you something else as well. I think—at least this is what has been revealed to me—that God offered me a great gift by giving me this wound and these pains. Because the joy has no rewards, but sorrow does. 'Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things' (Lk. 16:25).

So, aiming at that reward, I am patient with the help of God. It's true, physically I might suffer, hurt, be in pain, but deep in my soul joy is what I feel.

Still, I don't neglect the care of my wound, with the help of various medicines, and doctors, and diets, and any reasonable way I think I might be cured.

Yesterday, while the Divine Liturgy was being celebrated, a first-class cantor came to our church and chanted. While he was chanting I said to myself: 'Father, you chant and this you offer to God and thus you are happy. I, on the other hand, have nothing but my pain and suffering to offer to God in order to be shown His mercy'

Whatever each one of us has to offer, this he will offer to God. Still, joy is very different to sorrow, health from illness, day from night.

Since you claim that you love God, wait for the proof of His love, meaning His Cross. This He will give you during this life, this gift, which is His love.

That is how you understand that God loves you: from the sorrows He gives you.

If we truly want to be His disciples, not only in word but also in deed, we must ascend the Cross just as He, our leader, did.

'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me' (Mt. 16:24).

By the cross He means afflictions and tears.

Whatever each one of us has suffered in his earthly life for Christ's shake, will be revealed on Judgement Day.

And blessed will be he who has many sufferings and a heavy cross to reveal.

May God forgive me for this verbosity of mine.

Blessed be His name now and forever.

With paternal wishes,  
Father Ephraim from Katounakia  
July 20<sup>th</sup>, 1989

