

## Holy Ascension

### Orthodox Christian Mission

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages; Light of Light, true God of true God; begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father, by whom all things were made;

Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from the heavens, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man;

And was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried;

And arose again on the third day according to the Scriptures;

And ascended into the heavens, and sits at the right hand of the Father;

And shall come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead; whose Kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life; who proceeds from the Father; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

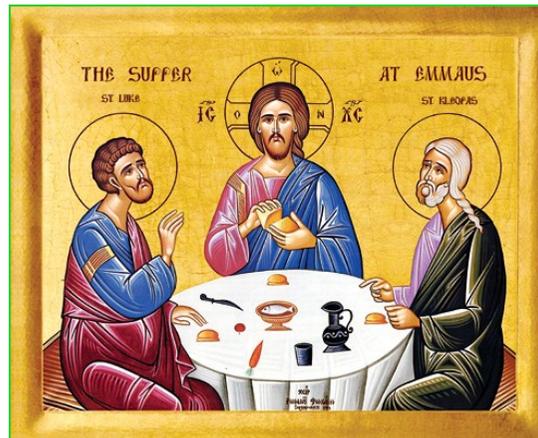
In One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

I confess one baptism for the remission of sins.

I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come. Amen.

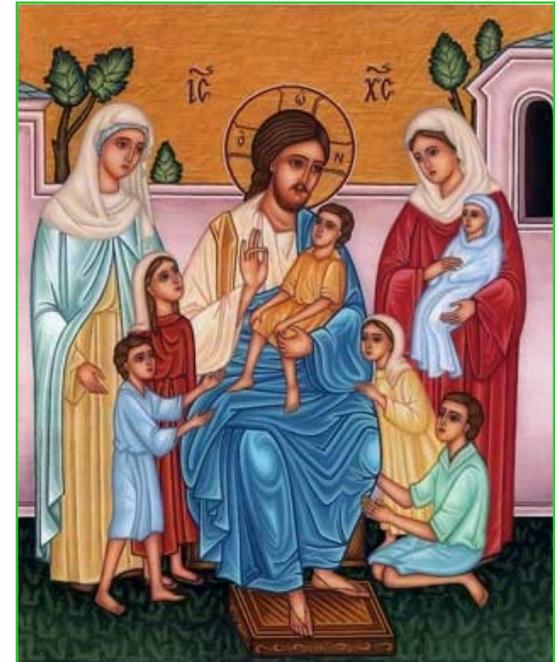
Please know how grateful this convert priest is that you and your ancestors held the Faith so that I could receive it now, but how can we stand by and watch the continued marginalization of our Faith, which we declare we believe, in the lives of the children we say we love. It is time to throw off excuse-making and do this hard work, depending on the strength of the Holy Spirit to make us able to do the impossible. The Faith is strong enough. Our children deserve our best. No more excuses. No more delays. No more apologies.

It is time for us to be Orthodox Christians on purpose! Today! Now!



**Holy Ascension  
Orthodox Christian Mission**

**Orthodox  
on  
Purpose**



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[www.ascensionorthodox.org](http://www.ascensionorthodox.org)

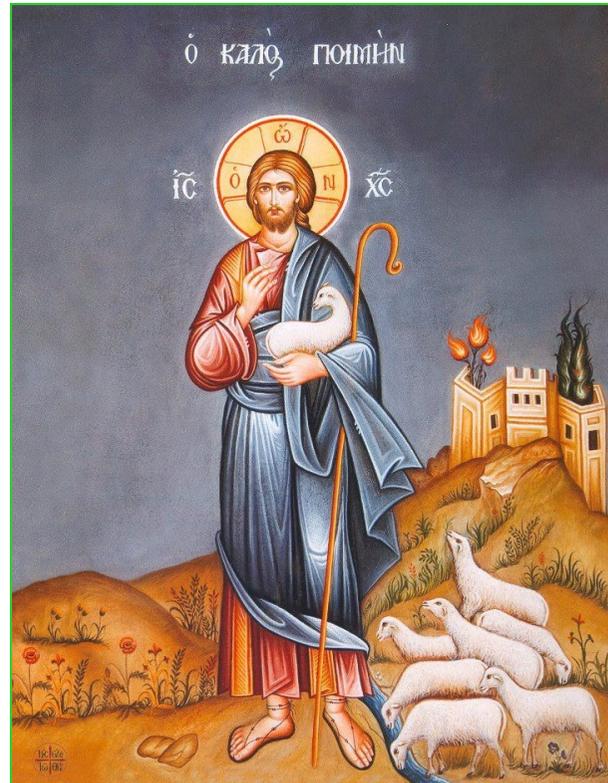
At a recent Youth conference, an Orthodox priest said, "The ONLY thing that will have a long lasting (albeit eternal), positive impact on our children and on the future of our Church is the transforming power of Jesus Christ." We must come to our senses and finally realise that a culture has developed where we attempt to attract our children to Church through things like basketball, Greek dance, Greek school, parties, etc... In other words, anything but the Faith and the transforming power of Jesus Christ. What will be the result of the secularisation of our Church for the sake of the next generation?



If all we offer our children, or our community, is just the ethnic, cultural trappings of a robust faith, then we cannot in all seriousness be surprised that our children then value the true Faith so little. As precious as some of the entertaining aspects are of our youth outreach, those programs WILL NOT be enough (and I know this because they are not enough now) to hold our children to the Faith in any serious and long term commitment. If we are using the excuse "Well, we must keep them connected to the Church," then it is time to realize it isn't working.

We must continually offer them the "power of Jesus Christ" to transform and transfigure their lives to fit them for knowing God and enjoying Him forever. The liturgical and sacramental life (the mystical life) of the Faith is the best and most ancient path to theosis (the process of moving ever closer to God and uniting with Him) and deep union with the Holy Trinity, Who is our life.

But all of this is predicated on us believing this ourselves. St Paul wisely declared, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Galatians 2: 20).



If we have any hope of actually being Orthodox Christians indeed, and not merely by the happy accident of our birth, we must enter seriously into the transformative life of the liturgy and the Eucharistic life of the Church. This is never a mere option. It is never just an alternative. It is never reducible to an experience reserved only for saints and monks. We will only pass on what we actually possess to our children. If we pass on a weak, anaemic, and mediocre faith, we simply cannot be surprised when our children disappear from our parishes. Nor should we be surprised when the Holy Spirit takes this precious Faith from us and gives it to those who will appreciate it.

Precious ones and children loved by God and favored with such a treasure and a spiritual head start that you have had this treasure gifted to you from your earliest days! We cannot allow the hard work ahead of us to keep us locked in the mediocrity and failed practices that do not strengthen the Faith.

