

## **Lives of the Saints**

By Archpriest Basil Rhodes

**Hieromartyr Dionysius the Areopagite** (96) He is mentioned in Acts 17:19-34. He was a learned Athenian, a member of the Athenian court on Mars Hill (Areos Pagos in Greek, from which the title 'Areopagite' comes). At the time of Christ's crucifixion, he was studying in Egypt and saw the sky darkened there for three hours when Christ breathed His last. He later married and had several children.

When St Paul preached in Athens, Dionysius was among the first to believe, and became Bishop of Athens succeeding St Hierotheos. With St Hierotheos he was present at the Dormition of the Mother of God. He received a martyr's end in his old age. He is the author of several famous works of mystical theology, including "On the Divine Names."

October 16

**Holy Martyr Longinus the Centurion** (1st c.) This is the Centurion who stood at the Cross of Christ and, seeing Him breathe his last, cried out "Truly this was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54). From that day forth he was a believer, and was soon baptized.

According to some accounts, he was one of the guards at the Tomb of Christ, and was one of those whom the Judaeen leaders sought to bribe not to tell the news of the Resurrection. But Longinus would not be bribed, so the leaders plotted to kill him. He left the army and went to his homeland of Cappadocia, where he boldly preached Christ. He was beheaded at the instigation of Pontius Pilate.

October 15 - 16

**Saint Jacob (Yaakov) ,Missionary to Alaska** (1865) He was born on the island of Unalaska in 1802, to a Russian father and an Aleut mother. Traveling to Russia, he attended the seminary in Irkutsk, and returned to Alaska after being ordained to the priesthood.

For the next thirty-six years he served as missionary and pastor to the Alaskan people, undergoing tremendous hardships to do so. He first traveled among the peoples of the Aleutian Islands, using native kayaks to paddle between the islands. From 1845 to 1863 he worked among the native people of the Yukon valley, traveling from village to village by dog-sled. He was the first Orthodox priest to serve the area since the hieromartyr Juvenaly, companion of St Herman. He carried with him a tent which served as a traveling church, in which he served the Divine Liturgy wherever he went — though sometimes the services could not be held because the bread and wine had frozen. Toward the end of his life, worn out by his labors, he settled for a brief time in Sitka, where he reposed in peace in 1865.

## **Orthopraxis**

### **The Icon Corner**

By Archpriest Basil Rhodes

The Icon Corner is an important worship space prepared in the homes of Orthodox Christians.

The Book of Acts and the Epistles of the Apostle Paul record that in the early Church, Christians used to meet in the homes of the faithful. (Acts 2:46, Acts 20:7-12, I Corinthians 16:19, etc.) This tradition of the "House Church" continues to this day in Orthodox Christianity. The home is considered to be a microcosm of the Church. The parents (both the husband and the wife) are the "clergy" of the house church, and the children are the "laity." The wedding ceremony ("crowning") is analogous to Ordination, and the house is blessed with a rite that is based upon the Consecration of a Church. Once a year, the priest will come to bless the house with Theophany Water.

An Orthodox Christian is expected to pray constantly. According to Bishop Kallistos Ware, "In Orthodox spirituality, [there is] no separation between liturgy and private devotion." Thus the house, just like the Temple (church building), is considered to be a consecrated place, and the center of worship in the home is the Icon Corner.

An Icon Corner is normally oriented to face east, just like the temple. Why east? Because we anticipate the Second Coming of Christ, and Scripture says he will appear from the East (Matthew 24: 27). It is often located in a corner to eliminate worldly distractions and allow prayer to be more concentrated. Here is where the icons that the family owns should be located, normally including at least icons of Christ, the Theotokos, and the Patron Saint(s) of the family. An oil lamp normally hangs, or is placed, in front of the icons. The careful trimming of the lamp to keep it burning at all times is interpreted as symbolic of the attentive daily care faithful Christians should take over their souls. Relics of saints (if the family possesses any) and a Gospel Book and a blessing cross would be kept there, as well as incense, holy water, palms and pussywillow from Palm Sunday, candles from Pascha (Easter), and other sacred items, as well as a personal Commemoration Book (containing the names of family and loved ones, both living and departed, to be remembered in prayer).

Ideally, the Icon Corner is located so that it is visible when one first enters the house from the main entrance. Traditionally, when first entering the house, an Orthodox Christian would venerate the icons before greeting the members of the house.

A traditional Orthodox family will gather together every day for morning and evening prayers. Sometimes, at the end of the prayers, the head of the household will take the hand censer and cense the icons and all of the members of the household.

Often, in addition to the Icon Corner, a family will hang a small "Portal Icon" (usually of the Virgin and Christ Child) by the door, which is venerated by family and guests whenever going in or out of the house.

## Charities

Ann Worobey has convinced local authorities to allow us to continue our tradition of feeding the homeless at the Sunnyvale Armory the first Sundays of December, January, February and March. Please join Ann in this rewarding ministry.

## Focus on the Faith

### A Few Notes on Genesis from the Tuesday Bible Study

By Archpriest Basil Rhodes

Genesis 1:2 says that when God first created the heavens and the earth, that "the earth was unseen (invisible) and unfurnished (nothing on it), and darkness was over the deep..." This is a very mysterious passage. How do our holy fathers understand it?

St. Basil the Great (+379 AD) says:

"The earth was invisible for two reasons: it may be because man, the spectator, did not yet exist, or because, being submerged under the waters which overflowed the surface, it could not be seen, since the waters had not yet been gathered together into their own places, where God afterwards collected them, and gave them the name of seas. What does it mean, to be "invisible?" First of all that our fleshly eye cannot perceive it; take our mind, for example. Or, it means that something which is visible in its nature, is hidden by somebody which conceals it, like iron in the depths of the earth. It is in this sense, because it was hidden under the waters, that the earth was still invisible. Additionally, as light did not yet exist, and as the earth lay in darkness...it should not astonish us that for this reason Scripture calls it "invisible." (From "Hexaameron" i.e. "The Six Days

## Upcoming Events

### Festival - October 3 and 4 – HELP WANTED

Please come and help with our Festival. We will be doing preparation tasks all week. We need help with set up on Friday, Oct 2 and tear down on Sunday. Less physical tasks include participating at our sales booths, dessert table and admissions table. Please tell all your friends. If you can print out Festival posters (even in black and white) and distribute them around.

### Lunches

Please sign up to host a lunch. It doesn't have to be complicated, just something to share to give us time to get to know each other.