



*Synaxis of the Saints of Mt Athos*

Our Lady Theotokos with Saint John the Theologian were traveling by boat from Palestine to Cyprus to visit Saint Lazarus the Four-days-in-the-tomb (who was raised from the dead by Christ). However, because of a great storm the boat reached Athos and specifically the bay of Klementos. When the boat of the Panagia approached the Athos, the large statue of Dios at the summit of the Mountain was destroyed, and the remaining idols were crushed. The peak of Athos and all the trees and the houses bent in veneration towards the place of the bay of Klementos where the Virgin-Mother's boat was coming. The inhabitants of Athos, led by divine Providence, hastened to receive the Mother of Our Lord and, having been taught by her, they accepted Christianity.

When the apostles cast lots for the regions where they would preach, the All Holy Mother of God sought to take a lot to preach the Gospel. Her lot showed the region of Iberia (*modern Georgia in the Caucasus Mountains*). Archangel Gabriel, however, appeared and said to the Virgin that her true region would be Macedonia and the Mount of Athos. When their boat entered the bay, there was great turmoil on the Mountain, and then the inhabitants came and asked John how all of these things happened, and with which power. And he explained to them and preached the word of God.

The Mother of God, pleased by the beauty of the Mountain and the lot that she was granted, prayed to Christ, saying: "My Son and My God, bless this place and my lot. And pour forth upon it your mercy and preserve it unharmed until the close of this age, as well as those who dwell in it, through Your Holy name and mine, who through a small effort and struggle of repentance, are granted remission of their sins. Fill them with every good and necessary thing in this age, and grant them eternal life in the age to come. Glorify this place above all others, miraculously and utterly fill it from all nations under Heaven, who are called by Your name, and enlarge their dwellings from one end to the other. Deliver them from eternal damnation, and save them from every temptation, from visible

and invisible foes and from every heresy, and give peace to the Orthodox teaching.” Then she heard a voice from the Heavens that said: “Whatever you ask and pray for, O My Mother, is Yours always, if they keep my commandments! From now on, this place will be Your share and Your garden and Paradise, and a haven of salvation for those who desire to be saved, but also a recourse and refuge and unshaken haven of repentance for those who are weighed down with many sins.”

## **Sunday, June 26**

*Second Sunday after Pentecost*  
*Sunday of the Saints of North America*  
*Sunday of All Saints of Russia*

**Divine Liturgy 9:30 A.M.**

Synaxis of All the Venerable and God-bearing Fathers who shone forth on the Holy Mount of Athos

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## **Wednesday, June 29**

**Feast of the Pre-Eminent Apostles Peter and Paul**

**Divine Liturgy 9:00 A.M.**

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## **Sunday, July 3**

*Third Sunday after Pentecost*  
**Divine Liturgy 9:30 A.M.**

## **ON CHASTITY AND PREMARITAL COHABITATION**

*By Priest Paul Gumerov*



### Part III

**Question:** *My son lives with his girlfriend. He says that he eventually wants to legally marry her, but doesn't know how he could take such an important step without them first getting to know each other, without living together. After all, many marriages fail. What can I say to him?*

**Answer:** It is necessary to touch upon a very important theme, which has a direct relationship to mistakes made during the premarital period. Very many young people consider that those who wish to enter into marriage should definitely first try living a sexual life before marriage. They say that this will supposedly prevent mistakes, allow them to get to know each other better, and in general show whether or not they are sexually compatible—because all you hear about nowadays are hasty marriages and speedy divorces. There is a rule: practice is the criteria of truth. You can create as many theories as you want, and repeat all kinds of beautiful words, but when you put it to the test, everything becomes clear. We'll begin with the fact that with the rise in number of *test marriages*, the number of divorces has sharply increased, while the number of registered marriages has sharply fallen. Why? Statistics show that only 5% of cohabitations or *test marriages* end in legal marriage. And if the young people actually do enter into lawful marriage after their experiment of cohabitation, those marriages break up twice as often as marriages concluded without that prior experiment. Specialists at Penn State University, Pittsburgh, studied the married life of around 1,500 American couples. It was shown that the couples who lived together before marriage are twice as likely to divorce. Furthermore, the domestic life of these families is marked by a large number of arguments and conflicts. For cleanness and accuracy, the research was taken from data collected on people of varying ages: from the 1960's, 80's, and 90's. This means that something is amiss. People keep on testing, and meanwhile the divorce rate only goes up. They want to get to know each other better, but they cannot maintain a stable marriage.

The problem is that in an experimental marriage, the partners do not get to *know* each other; they only confuse each other more.

The time before marriage is given so that the bride and bridegroom might learn in the school of relationship without the additive of passion, wild hormones, and lack of restraint that greatly obstruct any objective evaluation of another person, and the ability to see him or her not as a sex object, but as a personality, a friend, and a future spouse. In a *test marriage*, the brain and feelings are fogged with the intoxication of passion. When people afterward create a family, they very often understand that they were bound together not by love, but by a strong sexual attraction, which, as we know, passes very quickly. Then you have a family consisting of people quite alien to each other. The courting period is given to the future spouses so that they would learn self-restraint, and study each other better—not as sexual partners, not as roommates sharing the same living space and bed, but rather from another, pure, friendly, human, and if you will, romantic side.

Another widespread mistake of modern times is the so-called *common-law marriage*. I will use this quite false and incorrect expression for the sake of convenience, and further on I will conditionally call such a marriage unlawful, not having been legally performed.

The falseness of this label is obvious. The term *common-law marriage* can only be applied to the thing that people who want to live together without legal registration are trying to avoid: a legally established marriage, registered in the applicable office.

This office exists in order to record the status of a country's citizens: when they were born, when they started a family, or when they died. When two members of opposite sex live together without legal registration, their relationship is called, in legal terms, cohabitation.

*To Be Continued*

## . . . . . News From All The Ends Of The Earth . . . . .

**New York, NY:** A group of New York City atheists is demanding that the city remove a street sign honoring seven firefighters killed in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks because they say the sign violates the separation of church and state. The street, "Seven in Heaven Way," was officially dedicated last weekend in Brooklyn outside the firehouse where the firefighters once served. The ceremony was attended by dozens of firefighters, city leaders and widows of the fallen men. "There should be no signage or displays of religious nature in the public domain," said Ken Bronstein, president of New York City Atheists. "It's really insulting to us." Bronstein said his organization was especially concerned with the use of the word "heaven." "We've concluded as atheists there is no heaven and there's no hell," he said. He was nonplussed over how his opposition to the street sign might be perceived – especially since the sign is honoring fallen heroes. "It's irrelevant who it's for," Bronstein said. "We think this is a very bad thing," David Silverman, president of American Atheists, agreed calling on the city to remove the sign: "It implies that heaven actually exists." "People died in 9/11, but they were all people who died, not just Christians. Heaven is a specifically Christian place (good point! *Fr S.*). For the city to come up and say all those heroes are in heaven now, it's not appropriate. All memorials for fallen heroes should celebrate the diversity of our country and should be secular in nature. These heroes might have been Jews, they might have been atheists, I don't know, but either way it's wrong for the city to say they're in heaven. It's preachy." Criticism of the sign brought condemnation from Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. "There are cities that have religious connotations in their names, why not a street," Land said. "Do they want us to rename Los Angeles, Corpus Christi, and St. Joseph?" He added, "In a country where 85 percent of the people say they are Christian or claim to be Christian, should it be surprising that you name cities and streets with religious terminology." The city has no intention of removing the sign. If that's the case, the two Jews who do not believe in Heaven, Bronstein and Silverman said they may consider a lawsuit.

**Berlin, Germany:** German security officials are increasingly concerned about the growing threat posed by Islamic clerics from the ultraconservative Salafi movement, and are calling for legal changes making it easier to deport hate preachers. "In the future, this should be possible if someone is disseminating content that is contrary to our free, democratic principles, or serves to promote terrorism," said Hesse state's interior minister, Boris Rhein. The Salafi movement is an ultraconservative interpretation of Islam that is close to Saudi Arabia's Wahhabism. Salafis seek to emulate the austerity of Islam's early days and reject a wide range of practices common in modern democracies, from parliamentary elections to equal rights for women, as "un-Islamic." Germany has been at pains over the past years to better its estimated 4.3 million Muslims, who remain largely marginalized in German society. Rhein has also called for limiting extremists' reach over the Internet, citing the example of the 21-year-old Kosovo Albanian who sought out U.S. airmen at Frankfurt Airport in March and opened fire on them, killing two and injuring two others. "All of his contacts were linked to Salafi preachers, had taken part in Islam Seminars or were *Facebook* friends with Salafis," Rhein said. Germany has not suffered a large-scale terror attack, but police have broken up some rings suspected of plotting to target public transport or U.S. military bases in Germany.

**Islamabad, Pakistan:** A terrorist targeted a bank in Islamabad on June 13 because its floor tiles and their design were strikingly analogous to the sacred name, Allah, and the bank did not change them despite complaints to its management. The bomber and a security guard were killed and several people were wounded by the explosion.

**Sucre, Bolivia:** Bolivian police found a 21-year-old man locked in a wooden box by his Mennonite father for eight weeks. Johan Knelson was forced to live in the 9 feet by 6 feet box in the basement

for allegedly stealing livestock, according to his father, David Knelson. He also claimed his son was mentally ill. "I went out, and when I came back they were angry with me here at home. Some people tied me up and put me in here, eight weeks ago," the 21-year-old told Reuters. Knelson had to eat, sleep and use the bathroom inside the box. "I ate and slept here. I did everything here. I ate and drank water and washed here," he said. Santa Cruz police had to convince the Mennonite father to release his son from the box.

**Glasgow, U.K.:** Muslim leaders are planning to break away from the Scottish education system and create their own government-financed schools because the current curriculum does not include enough about Islam. The Sunday Express has learned parents are angry their children are not being given schooling according to their religious beliefs and claim teachers are even promoting "unIslamic principles and behaviours". Some have even threatened legal action to force councils to open state-funded faith schools at taxpayers' expense. Others want the "relatively affluent" Muslim community to take matters into its own hands, starting with Scotland's first Islamic high school. Australia is facing a similar situation when local Muslim émigré community demands the State fund purely Muslim schools.

**Salt Lake City, UT:** Capitalizing on the high profile of two Mormon GOP hopefuls, Mitt Romney and John Huntsman, the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints is launching a new publicity campaign centered on billboards, with the goal of softening public perceptions of the Mormon church. The new campaign features attractive billboard images of young adults with the tagline "I'm a Mormon," including digital out-of-home video consisting of brief video portraits. After testing in nine markets last summer, the ad campaign will run in at least 24 (and as many as 29) major media markets this summer. One of the first spots is running on an electronic billboard in New York City's Times Square. While the United States ostensibly protects freedom of religion, some Americans remain suspicious of its doctrines, which diverge from mainstream Christianity. In 2008, the Mormon leadership commissioned a focus group study, which found that regular Americans viewed the church as "pushy," "cultish," "secretive," "controlling," "sexist" and "polygamist."

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. June bulletin covers' sponsor is Jenny Yacko — health of family and friends.
2. We have received the first donation towards our participation in the Lake Front Fest this August. Please, plan to take part in this crucial fundraiser. At this point, we are collecting cash donations and buy soft beverages to be sold at our booth at the lake. Bring only the kinds of drinks which are on the list. Having only a specific variety o drinks makes the work of those of us who operates the booth so much easier.
3. Most of us have heard of a new trouble we have with church hall plumbing. The repair cost can be from under a thousand to two thousand dollars. Now we are appealing to all our faithful to help the parish pay this expense. Recently, we have been only taking from our savings to pay our monthly expenses and putting nothing back. Please, consider making a special donation this time to enable us to fix this plumbing problem. It is very rarely that we come out in such a way and ask for help. We are asking now. May the giving hand never be empty! *"He that giveth to the poor shall not lack; but he that hideth his eyes from him shall have many curses"* (Proverbs 28:27).