

Unity in the Church

“The Church is the unity of all worlds, earthly and heavenly, of angels and men, of the living and the dead. We obtain real communion with God and we participate in God’s uncreated energy. God does not stay in heaven, directing history from there. He directs the world with His uncreated governing energies. We do not aim at appeasing God, but to heal ourselves, so that the vision of God becomes light for us and not fire. Furthermore, in the Church we live eternal life starting from now. We do not simply await the life to come, but we experience and enjoy it from the present. The Kingdom of God, according to the Fathers, is not life beyond the grave, but communion with God, above all, the vision of the uncreated Light.”

Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos

The Illness and Cure of the Soul in the Orthodox Tradition



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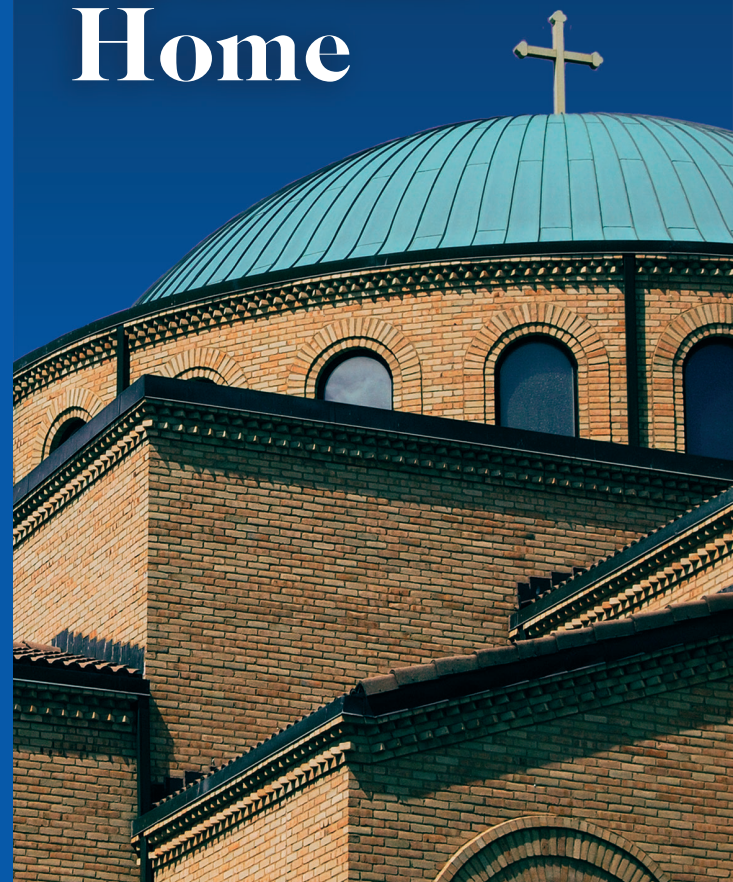
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Our Church Our Spiritual Home



Home is safe and familiar. It is where we belong. Our Orthodox Christian Church is our spiritual home. It is a place of prayer, comfort, spiritual healing, and celebration. We are at home in the fragrance of incense, the sound of hymns and prayers, the physical touch of kneeling, bowing and making the sign of the cross, and the taste of Holy Communion and antidoron (the blessed bread). You may have been brought to the Orthodox Church on your 40th day, or the Orthodox Church may have been the destination of your spiritual journey. For both, the Church is a spiritual home to which we may always return. We are brothers and sisters in Christ – a family.

One Orthodox Christian author writes about the Ekklesia (the Church), “This Ekklesia exists when the dispersed, divided, self-preoccupied people unite and become a family, where people see one another as brothers and sisters with God as their common father, and try to share whatever they have and whatever they are, and be united in heart and soul” (P. Faros in Functional and Dysfunctional Christianity).

Our Church is so much more than a building. It is where we turn for comfort, support and healing. It is where we make true Christian friends that last a lifetime. No matter where we go in the world, we can come home to the Orthodox Church to be surrounded by the same familiar elements: altar, iconostasion (icon screen), pulpit, altar table, tabernacle, iconography, baptismal font, candles and more.

Church is not so much a place as it is what we are together. We are called to be the Body of Christ to witness to God in the world. When we truly become members of the Church, transformed by our faith and worship, we become what the Church was intended to be. As Saint Paul writes to the Ephesians, “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also mem-

bers of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:19).

We enter our spiritual home not to be entertained, but to be a part of a community of believers. We receive Jesus Christ in Holy Communion. As we pray, worship and serve together, we become His Body. To be truly a member of the Church as the Body of Christ requires our presence and our engagement with one another -- in worship, study and service to others. We grow spiritually as a family. We give sacrificially as we acknowledge that all we have comes from God.

From our spiritual home we are sent out as “phosphoroi” - bearers of His light in the modern world, setting an example by our mutual understanding and love. As we do so, we pray for each other, listen and learn from each other, disagree respectfully, restore civility, and find a common purpose.

In our spiritual home, we grow together as we share our spiritual life. We give sacrificially to support our local parish because when we give of our first fruits we set our priorities on God and have a constant reminder that all we are and all we have are His.

We are stewards of the Gospel and stewards of our parish. We see our church, not as it is, but as it could be. We offer our treasure and ourselves sacrificially, so that, as members of the Body of Christ, we may reach our full potential in Him.

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