



The Uses and Abuses of Hagia Sophia

From the Fall of Constantinople in 1453 to Erdogan's Neo-Ottomanism in 2020

Every year, the Archons of the Metropolis of Chicago, led by Regional Commanders John Manos and Gus Pablecas, team up with the Hellenic Society of Constantinople to sponsor a "Fall of Constantinople Presentation" on May 29th. This year's planned speaker was Dr. Alexandros K. Kyrou, Professor of History and Director of the Program in East European and Russian Studies at Salem State University, MA. Due to the pandemic, the event was cancelled. However, Dr. Kyrou presented an article commemorating this fateful day in our history, which can be read below:

"The Uses and Abuses of Hagia Sophia: From the Fall of Constantinople in 1453 to Erdogan's Neo-Ottomanism in 2020"

Alexandros K. Kyrou

It is no small irony that across the globe the edifice and image most widely associated with Turkey, Istanbul, and even perhaps Islam, is a sixth-century Orthodox Christian church—the magisterial Cathedral of Hagia Sophia, or "Holy Wisdom." Built by some 10,000 workers between 532 and 537, its patron, Byzantine Emperor Justinian I, inaugurated the construction of Hagia Sophia in the imperial capital of Constantinople

with the proclamation that the Church of the Holy Wisdom would be a cathedral like “one that has never existed since Adam’s time, and one that will never exist again.”

Remarkably, Justinian’s boastful claims proved to be as accurate as they were visionary. For virtually a millennium, Hagia Sophia was Christendom’s largest, most revered, and awe-inspiring church. Hagia Sophia was the unrivalled ecclesial hearth of the Christian Church before the Western schism, the physical epicenter of the Orthodox Christian world, and the wondrous, breathtaking symbol of Byzantine grandeur and purpose. Indeed, for both contemporaries and historians, Hagia Sophia constituted the greatest achievement of late ancient and medieval architecture, an enduring masterpiece that embodied Byzantine civilization’s quintessential, sophisticated respect and quest for symphony and balance between the ethereal and the physical, majesty and beauty, place and boundlessness, science and mystery, creative genius and humility. Despite Hagia Sophia’s present diminished and abused condition, it is not difficult for even today’s visitor to appreciate the description found in a famous Russian ambassadorial report sent from Constantinople in 987 to Vladimir, Prince of Kiev, of what one encountered upon entering the great cathedral: “We did not know where we were, on heaven or on earth.”

When Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453, virtually all of the city’s surviving cathedrals and churches were—after being desecrated and thoroughly plundered—forcibly seized and turned over to the Turks’ religious establishment to be converted to mosques and used as Muslim properties. The conquering sultan, Mehmet II, personally oversaw the conversion of Hagia Sophia. Crosses were demolished and exchanged for crescents, altars and bells were destroyed, icons were burned or hacked to pieces, mosaics and frescoes depicting Christian imagery were plastered over, and most of the cathedral’s priests were killed or enslaved. In time, four colossal minarets were erected to surround Hagia Sophia, producing the iconic image that has come to be globally associated with Ottoman Constantinople and Turkish Istanbul.

Mehmet took great pride in his belief that he had fulfilled Mohammed’s prophecy: “Verily you shall conquer Constantinople. What a wonderful leader he will be, and what a wonderful army will that army be!” Thereafter, Constantinople and Hagia Sophia represented for the Ottoman Turks much more than merely their empire’s capital and preeminent mosque, respectively. The conquest of Christianity’s greatest city and church was understood by Mehmet and his successors as divine proof of the leading role

in the Muslim world to which the Ottoman Empire was entitled, a belief also manifested by the Turks' subsequent relocation of the Islamic Caliphate to Constantinople.

Indeed, the purpose for the construction of the massive minarets that now tower over Hagia Sophia was to project to the world Islam's triumph over Christendom's greatest empire, city, and church. The capture of Hagia Sophia confirmed and symbolized in the Ottomans' imagination their belief in the superiority of their state and faith over all other nations and all religions, a putative affirmation of their providential role and destiny in history. Hence, the Ottoman Turks formally dedicated their greatest, most celebrated single piece of loot—Hagia Sophia—as Great Fatih Mosque, or “Great Conquest Mosque.”

Despite the Turks' conviction that their mastery over the great, coveted prizes of Constantinople and Hagia Sophia signaled their inevitable conquest of the remainder of Christian Europe, the Ottoman state showed signs of weakness by the sixteenth century and by the seventeenth century began a long, miserable decline and recession that culminated in the complete dissolution of their empire in the early twentieth century. Led by the Turkish nationalist, Mustafa Kemal, the Republic of Turkey, which emerged in the early 1920s to succeed the Ottoman Empire and to abolish the Caliphate, was officially premised on secularism. Kemal's modern Turkey rejected the Islamic theocratic system that he and his modernizing nationalists held responsible for the collapse of the old Ottoman order.

In modern Turkey, secularism has produced neither freedom for all faiths nor separation of church and state. Instead, Turkish secularism has meant state control of religion through official policies carried out by the Diyanet (the State Directorate of Religious Affairs), the governmental institution responsible for centralizing, regulating, and directing Islam in Turkish society. Likewise, the Kemalists' non-Western, non-democratic version of secularism has also meant that Turkey's non-Islamic communities and institutions (in particular, Turkey's Greek Orthodox Christians and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, respectively), inasmuch as they are regarded as impediments to universal “Turkishness,” are viewed with suspicion, treated with hostility, and subjected to a policy of steady, systematic persecution, with the goal being their final elimination. Indeed, following the Turkish nationalists' genocide and population expulsions of Christian Armenians, Assyrians, and Greeks between 1914 and 1923, the Kemalist republic inaugurated the Eritme Programmi (Dissolution Program),

which has been continued by every successive Turkish government and that aims to ethnically cleanse all remaining non-Muslim communities in Turkey. The Turkish state's implementation of this policy has included the targeted use of violence, intimidation, punitive taxation, property expropriation, and countless forms of discrimination and persecution, all intend to create unbearable conditions for Christians and Jews in order to produce their exodus from Turkey.

Clearly, the Turkish state's claims purporting its embrace of Western democratic and secular principles have not at any time aligned with Turkey's actual record of practice. Recognizing the need to produce the appearance of a secular democratic state and society when neither existed meant that secular symbols and symbolism became very important to the Kemalist nation-building project. It was, consequently, not a move that produced any resistance when Mustafa Kemal, presiding over Turkey's one-party "secular democracy," closed Hagia Sophia to Muslim worship in 1931 and reopened the historic structure as a museum in 1935. Just as Sultan Mehmet in the fifteenth century appreciated the symbolism of converting Hagia Sophia, the grandest of Christian cathedrals, to an Ottoman mosque for the furtherance of his imperial ambitions, President Kemal in the 1930s understood the symbolic value of transforming Hagia Sophia from a mosque—the quintessential iconographic symbol of the Ottoman Islamic past—to a Turkish museum for the advancement of his modern secular nation-building project at home and for the promotion of his country's Westernizing image abroad.

Since his rise to power beginning in 2002, Turkey's nationalist Islamist leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has cautiously continued to pay homage to the authoritarian principles and legacy of Kemal, as his government more and more openly draws its inspiration and aims from an idealized version of the Ottoman imperial past. Under Erdogan, Islam is steadily becoming the core of a reimagined Turkish identity, historical consciousness, and driver for state policy and purpose. According to Erdogan's neo-Ottoman agenda, Islam, through its expanding public role, will be increasingly revered and privileged by the state, while it will also be harnessed to help restore Turkey to its rightful place as a global force and as the leading state within the Islamic world.

Like Sultan Mehmet and President Kemal, Erdogan, who many observers describe as a president who acts like a sultan, recognizes the importance of symbols and symbolism for advancing Turkey's Ottoman revival. Much like Mehmet who used Hagia

Sophia to showcase the superiority of Islam and the Ottoman Empire, or Kemal who employed Hagia Sophia to demonstrate the secularization and modernization of republican Turkey, Erdogan has steadily exploited Hagia Sophia to promote neo-Ottomanism and to mark the state's public embrace of Islam and, through Islam, the promise of a return to Turkish greatness and power. In this sense, the much-reported gradual re-Islamization of Hagia Sophia over the past decade has served as a deliberate signal by Erdogan to the masses of his Islamist supporters of his commitment to realize a future in which Turkey, with Islam at the center of its public life, reigns supreme once more as a regional hegemon, a world power, and the leader of the Muslim community of nations.

In the final analysis, the importance and purpose of the Erdogan government's preparations for a second conversion of Hagia Sophia into a mosque can be fully understood only if one recognizes what the Great Fatih Mosque symbolically embodies for Turkish, especially Turkish Islamist, nationalists. For Erdogan and his followers, Hagia Sophia remains the most potent, visible reminder of Ottoman Turkey's might and glory, a rallying standard for a return to that former greatness, and a national icon to help forge neo—Ottomanism and to inspire Turkish society as its Islamist leaders move to fulfill their ambitions for Turkey in Europe, the Middle East, and the world. In that sense, the Turkish state's current exploitation of Hagia Sophia, only the most recent incarnation of the Turks' long history of use and abuse of the great Christian Cathedral of the Holy Wisdom, stands as a troubling bellwether to states and peoples worldwide committed to peace and freedom.

Alexandros K. Kyrou is Professor of History and Director of the Program in East European and Russian Studies at Salem State University, in Salem, Massachusetts, where he teaches on the Balkans, Byzantium, and the Ottoman Empire.

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 14 JUNE 2020

1ST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; SUNDAY OF ALL SAINTS; MARTYR JUSTIN THE PHILOSOPHER AND THOSE WITH HIM AT ROME—MARTYRS JUSTIN, CHARITON & WIFE CHARITA, EUELPISTUS, HIERAX, PEON, VALERIAN, & JUSTUS; MARTYR VICTORIA AT ROME; SAINT AGAPITUS—UNMERCENARY PHYSICIAN OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA

TROPARION—TONE 4

As with fine porphyry and royal purple,
Thy Church has been adorned with Thy Martyrs blood
Shed throughout the world
She cries to Thee, O Christ God: send down Thy bounties on Thy people,
Grant peace to Thy habitation and great mercy to our souls.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever,
and unto ages of ages. Amen.

KONTAKION—TONE 8

The universe offers Thee the God-bearing martyrs
As the first fruits of creation, O Lord and Creator.
Through the Theotokos and their prayers establish Thy Church in peace.

PROKEIMENON—TONE 4

READER: Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!

PEOPLE: Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!

READER: In Judah God is known; His name is great in Israel!

PEOPLE: Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!

READER: God is wonderful in His saints, the God of Israel.

PEOPLE: Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!

READER: Pray and make your vows...

PEOPLE: Before the Lord our God!

ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 4

The righteous called, and the Lord heard them.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivers them out of them all.

COMMUNION HYMNS

Praise the Lord from the heavens! Praise Him in the highest!

Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous! Praise befits the just.



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SUNDAY OF ALL SAINTS

ON THE MEND: Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Archbishop Daniel, Metropolitan Antony, Metropolitan Yuriy, Metropolitan Theodosius [OCA], Archbishop Jovan, Bishop Robert, Father George & Pani Lillian Hnatko, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Elias Warnke, Father George Yatsko, Father Paul Bigelow, Father Emilian Balan, Father John & Pani Mary Anne Nakonachny, Father Steve Repa, Protopresbyter William Diakiw, Archpriest Dionysi Vitali, Protodeacon Joseph Hotrovich, Father Adam Yonitch, Pani-Dobrodijka Sonia Diakiw, Father Paisius McGrath, Father Michael Smolynec, Father Lawrence & Matushka Sophia Daniels, Father Joe Cervo, Father John Harrold [Saint Sylvester], Father George Livanos, Igumen Patrick, Pani Mary Ann Chubenko, Father Jim Orr, Joshua Agosto and his family, Eva Malesnick, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Joseph Sliwinsky, Gary & Linda Mechtly, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Sam Wadrose, Isabella Olivia Lindgren, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Erin, Michael Miller, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Liz Stumpf, Theodore Nixon, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Linda Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, Robert McKivitz, Liz Obradovich, Halyna Zelinska [Archbishop Daniel's mother], Charlotte, Andrew Mark Olynyk, Deborah Finley, Claire Senita, Eleanor Kelly, Bryan, Nancy Barylak, Patrick Keenan, Khrystyna Chorniy, Anthony Cormier, Nathan Forbeck, Sarah Doyle, Samuel Peters, Esther Holupka, David Vallor, Henry Faraly, Julie Eiler, Dorothy Lednovich, Bob C., Allie—young girl with leukemia, Heather Kramer, Jane Wartinbee, Matthew—young man with cancer, Nicholas Orlando, Mary Ann Kuznik, Michael Pryhodzenko, Sonia Luciw, Theresa Ditto, Mary Ann Musial, Mary Pelino, Yvonne Christy, Myron & Barbara Spak, Julia Duda, Lisa Pandle, Kris & Julie Hanczar, John Kennedy, Loretta, Nancy, Carol, & Michael Sheliga, Gaelle Kelly, Irma McDivitt, Robin Young, Mckayla, Rachel, Carl & Margaret Reed, Lydia Wilson, Robert Pointon, Walter Cecelia, John Persico, Jeff Miller, Mary Kernick, Glenn Miller, Jean Marie, Donna & Walter McCrackin, Bonnie & Eugene Blair [Pani Gina's parents], David Hoenshell, Barbara Macino, Shelley Hill, Mikaela Kapeluck, Linda Cawley, Gerald Cogley, Helen Bozo, Corey Guich, Robert Vangrin, Pauline Witkowsky, Sera White, Deborah Smith, Nancy & Eric Dunik, Julian Strozh [young lady with cerebral palsy], Dr. Kirsten Ream, Patricia Corey, Michelle, Katie Swarm, Michelle, Patrick, Linda Morris, Howard Simpson, Chris, David Hiles, Jennifer, Cher Mount, Frank & Janet Horrell, Jim Wandling, Gail, Sirena Sharp, Ron Paulovich, Sandi Anderson, Lina, Shirley, Denny Mader, Ella Campbell, Tom Hyatt, Bill Janiro, Jean Symanko-Andy's sister, William Lemonakis, Alma Wyke, Lindsay Romanczak & family, Virginia Catherine Pynch, Susan Lucas, Neil Carter & family, James Paluh, Mickie Weikel, Evelyn Krempasky, Tammy Strunk, Loida Esbry, Darlene Chicka Deskins, Drew, Alice & Keith Philipa, Kateryna Kocelko, Nancy Heinbaugh, Mira Filipović, Lynn, Jacqueline, Sharon, Zan Cheng, Kristy, Elaine Ellenberger, Brandon, Anna Tranchine, Demetra, Blase Urban, Catherine Hogel & children, Jennifer & Dylan, Ron Schwartz, Lydia Wilson, Flora Tomlin, Howell Swarm, Jane Bielewicz Allred, Manny "Lazarus" Lopez, Glenn & Lucas Burlack, Katie Elizabeth, Mileva, & Michael, Deirdré Straughan, Terri Paluh, Lori & Steve Lucier, Kyranna Cherpas, Pastor Bruce Nordeen, Heather Ried, Carla Perry, Linda Elliot, Dennis McDaniel, Luke Tinsley, Brent, Tricia, Katherine Gorman, Pamela Jaquette, Sherri Walewski, Marika

Zeliszczuk, Donna Davis, Jackie Crimbchin, Marta Charron, Mary [Corba], Stella McKeag, Margie Sekelsky, Gary Howell, Fran Fulton, Gina Catanese, Bill Vizza, Jamie Swarm, Kevin Allen (from Ancient Faith Radio), Kathy Flaherty, Tori Reade-Henry's niece, Derick-Glen Burlack's neighbor, Michael, Nichole & Christopher, Ben Douglas, Dianne Donahue, Zachary, Natasha, Noah Willard, Jodi Hanczar, Gregory Cervo, Lisa Bruce, Martha Nezolyk, Kathy Cvetkovich, Judy, Will, Emma, Ginny, Ye-Jin, Maria, John & JoAnn, Jim & Kitty, Phil Bouse, Ralph & Beverly Stoker, Noah Willard, Nikola, Natalie, Nikola, & Nevenka Jovonovich, Julia Collier, Amy Kemerer, Thomas Smith, Tracy Slaugenhaupt, Louis & Teresa Bercelli, Tom Nolan, Silvia Martin, Sarah Dorning, Dena & George, Georgia, Lawanda [Evelyn's niece], Maureen Sams, John Kendall, Judi Danser, Darcy, Denis Strittmatter, Nancy, Ian Brick, Cecilia Barnhart, Logan Magorien, Pam & Gordon Grant, Debbie & Jerry Novosel, Noah Willard, Sandra Dillard, Danielle McCann, Barry [Father Jim Orr's cousin], Tim Joyce, Mike Pawlyshyn-Jeannie Stutchell's brother, Joe Samchuck—vocations, Albert Heckman, Brianna Stumpf, Stanley Porembka, David & Terry Coyne Hartnett, Mike C., Jennifer Scheirer [Nick Behun's daughter], Catherine Beecham [Father Bob's cousin], JoAnne & Dave Andrews, Rev. Peg Bowman, Pat Jennings, Tim Sams, Mike Ruzzi, Cindy M., Stephen Popichak—Fr. Bob's brother, Mary Kay Ludovicy, Pastor Sara Irwin, George Dilendorf, Andy Torick, Carol Behun, Erv Frye, William Lusherand, Bill Boretsky, Colin Kirton—Stage 4 pancreatic cancer, Clifford, Joe Veto, Paul Riley, Tonee & Sydnee Turner, Annette Paluh, Cathy Lotinsky, Monk Andrew, Jeff & Buschra Kerr, Steven—Harry Batch's cousin, Rose Mary Pavlovich—Mary Anne Kuznik's Cousin, Stella McKeag, Margaret Sekelsky, Robert Sekelsky, Robert Rodriguez, and Susan Pulcini—Father Ted Pulcini's mom. ARNOLD: Homer Paul Kline and Walter Sakol. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ... At this time, we are working with Archbishop Daniel on a plan to re-open our parish—HOPEFULLY very soon. That said, there is **NOTHING to keep us from praying...for each other, for our family and friends, and most of all for the first responders—EMTs, nurses, doctors, firefighters, police officers, and members of our military who keep us safe. Be well, and be SAFE!!! God Bless!**

Please remember ALL American service men and women in your prayers. May God watch over them and all American service men and women—and bring them all home safely!

REMEMBER—PRAYERS ARE ALWAYS FREE!

Communion Fasting: nothing to eat or drink after midnight, EXCEPT in cases where your doctor tells you to eat or drink something for medical reasons: medication, diabetes, etc. If you have a question, please ask Father Bob.

AT ANY TIME—if there is an emergency, if you have questions, or if you just need to talk, please CALL FATHER BOB at [412] 279-5640.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY, JUNE 14

OBEDNITZA UPSTAIRS

10:30 AM

1ST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; SUNDAY OF ALL SAINTS; MARTYR JUSTIN THE PHILOSOPHER AND THOSE WITH HIM AT ROME-MARTYRS JUSTIN, CHARITON & WIFE CHARITA, EUELPISTUS, HIERAX, PEON, VALERIAN, & JUSTUS; MARTYR VICTORIA AT ROME; SAINT AGAPITUS-UNMERCENARY PHYSICIAN OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA

Tone 8

Hebrews 11:33-12:2

Matthew 10:32-33, 37-38-19:27-30

*Litany in Blessed Memory of Cheryl Elswick, Walter Burlack, Ann Roman, Millie Kerr, Stella Rossi, Mary Maolie, Dianne Waryanka, Joe Karas, & Maxine Kitch—
Fr. Bob*

SUNDAY, JUNE 21

OBEDNITZA UPSTAIRS

10:30 AM

2ND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; SUNDAY OF ALL SAINTS OF NORTH AMERICA, UKRAINE, AND MOUNT ATHOS; GREAT-MARTYR THEODORE STRATELATES; SAINT EPHRAIM-PATRIARCH OF ANTIOCH; SAINT ZOSIMAS-MONK OF PHOENICIA; SAINT THEODORE-BISHOP OF SUZDAL; FINDING OF THE RELICS OF SAINTS BASIL & CONSTANTINE-PRINCES OF YAROSLAVL

Tone 1

Romans 2:10-16; Hebrews 11:33-12:2

Matthew 14:18-23; Matthew 4:25-5:12

SUNDAY, JUNE 28

OBEDNITZA UPSTAIRS

10:30 AM

3RD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; HALYCH SAINTS; ODESSA SAINTS; PROPHET AMOS; MARTYRS VITUS, MODESTUS & CRESCENTIA AT LUCANIA; MARTYR DULAS OF CILICIA; VENERABLE DULAS THE PASSION-BEARER OF EGYPT; SAINT JEROME/HIERONYMUS OF STRIDONIUM; BLESSED AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO; SAINT MICHAEL-FIRST METROPOLITAN OF KIEV

Tone 2

Romans 5:1-10; Hebrews 13:17-21

Matthew 6:22-33; John 10:9-15

The Q: A Mysterious Collection of Jesus's Sayings

Posted on [June 2, 2020](#) | by Tikhon Sysoev



Richard Burridge

There is a theory that the Evangelists Luke and Matthew used a document with the sayings of Christ that has not survived to this day. The dean of King's College London, **Richard Burridge**, the world's leading expert on the New Testament, discusses the validity of this theory.

I'm a big fan of the Star Trek TV series. "Q" in this series is a kind of symbol that appears and disappears when it wants to and can take any shape. Sometimes it seems to me that modern scientists who study the New Testament use the Q theory in the same way.

It is clear to me as a scientist that the Apostle Mark was the first to write the Gospel. I suppose that Matthew and Luke were familiar with his text. It is known that the Gospel of Mark contains 661 verses. 95% of its verses are directly or indirectly present in the Gospel of Matthew. That is how the people of antiquity worked. You can try to reconstruct it.



Evangelists Matthew, The Ebbon Gospel, around 825

Imagine that you have some authoritative source, for example, some text and you have some ideas and thoughts that you want to convey. When I study, for example, there are books all around me. I take a little bit from one book, I cite another book, and then I use those materials to create footnotes that prove the statements I made in the text. However, ancient scholars and writers didn't work that way. Imagine that you have only one scroll, for example, 10 meters long, and you can only keep one such scroll unfolded on your desk. I guess that Luke, while he was writing his Gospel, just used something from the scroll of the Apostle Mark for reference, and then he folded up that scroll, put it aside and started to use some other source. There are roughly two hundred verses in the Gospel of Luke that are identical to those we find in Matthew, but Mark has none of those. Why? The Q theory tries to explain this mystery.

It is assumed that these two hundred verses, which Luke and Matthew have in common with each other, but which Mark hasn't, were taken from some unknown document, tentatively called Q. There are many versions of how this could have happened. The most obvious explanation is that there was some missing document that contained the Savior's teaching, and that this document was at the disposal of the Evangelists.

I have no absolute certainty of its existence and it doesn't matter to me personally. I just find it more convenient to use the letter "Q" than to keep saying the bulky phrase: "The 200 verses that are present in Luke and Matthew but not in Mark." This is just a very long sentence, isn't it?

In principle, "Q" is a nice and useful shorthand. Other scholars believe the Q document may indicate a collection of Jesus's sayings that were

distributed orally and reached Luke and Matthew independently. However, this source may also have been written down. The Apostle John the Theologian writes, *And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written* (John 21:25). Obviously, the personality of Christ himself and what He did were so important to people at that time that there were probably many various documents about Him and His teachings.

However, I think it is important to remember that God inspired Christians to choose from all those documents exactly those things that through the Holy Spirit became the four Gospels, which are still relevant for us today.

This excerpt is a fragment from an interview that was conducted as part of the Seventh East-West Symposium of New Testament Scholars, organized by the All-Church Postgraduate and Doctoral Studies Center of Saints Cyril and Methodius (Moscow, September 25 – October 1, 2016).

Richard Burrige is Dean of King's College in London and a Professor of Biblical Interpretation. Translated by The Catalogue of Good Deeds

Hidden Valley-The Comforter

John 14:16-And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; (KJV)

The Lord Jesus Christ assures the coming of the Comforter to remain forever. Draw strength continuously from the assured enduring presence of the Comforter. Act with resolve and deep faith based on the hope emanating from the Comforter. Rejoice greatly and be firmly emboldened by the power found in the Comforter. Be guided in good works by the direction and life's path created by the Comforter. Cast behind any sinful and depressive thoughts and seek joy in God's Kingdom.

John 14:26-But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (KJV)

Continuously learn from and through the actions of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter. Employ good in daily life drawn from guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit. Share love of the Holy Spirit in the home, the neighborhood, and the community. Be motivated by the Holy Spirit in forgiveness of family, friends, and enemies. Address violence in thoughts and in daily life by resolute prayers to the Comforter. Confront any existing hate with forgiveness, love and prayers to the Holy Spirit.

John 15:26-But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: (KJV)

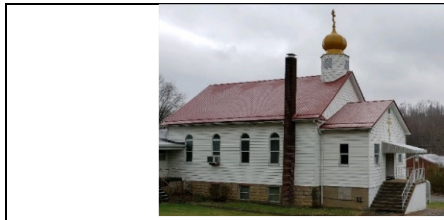
Be an example of strong faith in the Holy Spirit at home and in the community. By words and actions create a record in life revealing guidance

by the Holy Spirit. Fill life with firm prayers to the Holy Spirit bringing comfort to the self and others. Place confidence in the work of the Holy Spirit in seeking the Heavenly Kingdom. Embrace the virtues of the Godly life as the hallmark of honoring Holy Baptism. Seek Christian growth throughout life by being fully conscious of the Holy Spirit.

John 16:7-Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. (KJV)

Be very mindful of the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit at the time of Chrismation. Celebrate the great Feast of Pentecost with abundant joy in the present at all times. Recognize the constant presence of the Holy Spirit at work in God's Holy Church. Actively honor and serve God's Holy Church in all places and all the days of life. Be a faithful witness to the presence of the Holy Spirit in times of great adversity. Sign thyself with the Cross expressing deep love for Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*Afterfeast of the Ascension. Holy Martyr Thaleleus; Venerable Stephen of Pipheri
May 20/June 2, 2020. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic*



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