

## ***Orthodox Glorification of the Bogoroditchen (The Mother of God)***

Questions often asked by non-liturgical groups and non-Orthodox individuals: “Why do the Orthodox faithful worship Mary” and “why is so much emphasis found in the worship services and private prayer”?

Let’s clear up the first misunderstanding! The Orthodox faithful do not worship the Mother of God; to do so, would be a violation of one of God the Father’s commandments and therefore, would be a serious sin (reference: Exodus 20:2-3), “I AM the Lord your God... you shall have no other gods before Me.” However, the Orthodox faithful do greatly glorify and honor the Mother of God for many reasons.

At this juncture, one must interject the second question into the conversational issue, “why is so much emphasis found in the worship services and private prayer”? Once again, our emphasis is not founded on the basis of worshipping the Mother of God; but, founded on the glorifying, honoring, and demonstrating our love and appreciation of her purity; which, made possible for God the Father to find a human vessel to bring our Lord and Savior into our earthly lives (read the passage of Luke 1:26-56). It should be denoted, to not glorify, honor and demonstrate our love, would be a further violation of God the Father’s commandments and therefore a sin (Exodus 20:12), “Honor your father and mother...”.

One can interject some humor; but, still reinforce and emphasis why the Orthodox faithful pray to the Mother of God for help and assistance. As we are all the children of God; when a child is afraid to come directly to the father, he or she will go to the mother to request assistance, because a mother has the direct avenue of communication to the father, therefore, the Mother of God has that same direct avenue to our Lord and Savior as an earthly mother.

Understanding that many non-Orthodox state the premise that one is permitted to petition and pray to our Lord and Savior directly and therefore, petitioning and praying to the Mother of God is unnecessary. There is no argument by the Orthodox faithful to this premise, for in our liturgical services and personal prayers, we too, also pray to our Lord directly; however, a mother still has that direct line of communication. Further, do not servants and handmaidens of the Lord honor their earthly mothers daily? Do not they honor their mothers on her birthday, Mother’s Day and throughout the year by demonstrating their love through visiting, calling, and assisting? A course they do! So why should glorifying, honoring and demonstrating our love for the Mother of God be any different?

Finally, with reference to the discussion above; and having the two prior questions answered and proven, some non-Orthodox individuals request our justification for claiming that the Mother of God is our mother and what correlation does our Lord’s Mother have to our earthly mothers? One has only to read the Gospel John, 19:25-27; in this reading, our Lord is symbolically establishing the Mother of God, the Virgin Mary, in the role as mother of all faithful for every and all generations to come. This is how our Lord established His Holy Mother as our mother also!

***Blessed are those who hear, receive and understand the words and teachings of our Lord!***

Peace be unto all!

Right Reverend Father Zachariah