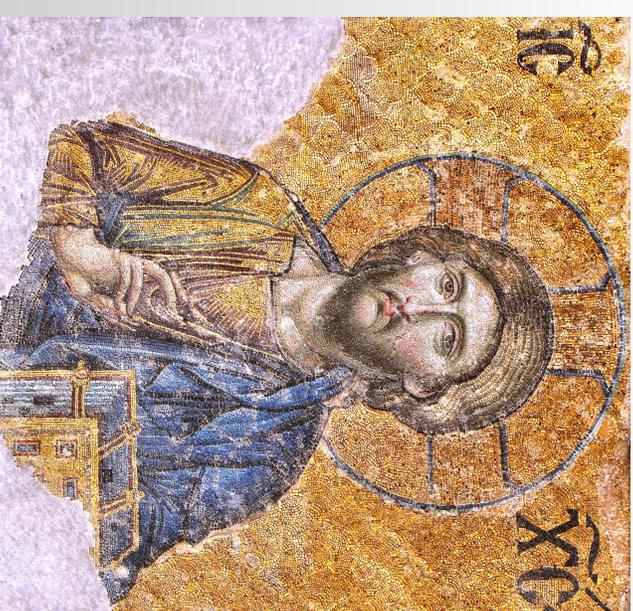


'Make Disciples of All Nations'

Orthodox Christian Life / The Missionary Vocation of the
Church



“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.”

- **Matthew 28:18-20**

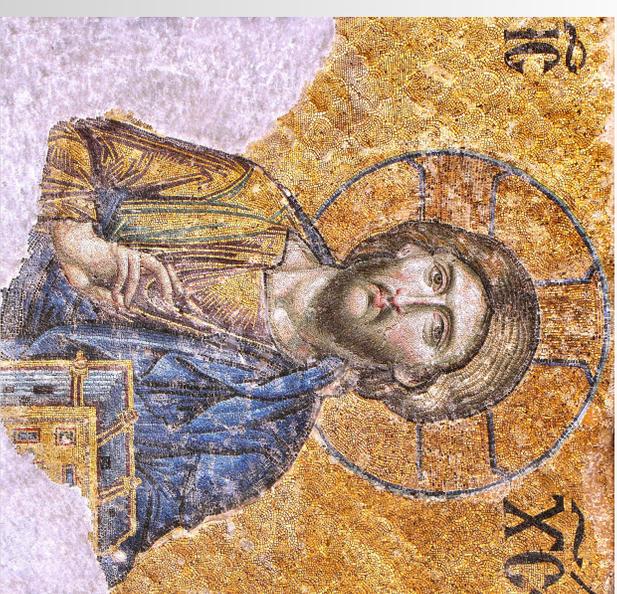
“For the Son of Man has come to **seek** and to **save the lost.**”

- **Luke 19:10**

“As the Father has sent Me, even so I sent you.”

- **John 20:21**

The work of Incarnate Son of God to seek the lost is continued until His Coming by the Church - this is an element of ‘apostolicity’ - being sent by Christ as His hands and feet.



“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations”

- **Matthew 28:18-19**

“Because ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me,’ therefore, for this reason, with this certainty, with this as the basis, ‘Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.’ The first and last word in history and in the world, ‘in heaven and on earth’ belongs to the Resurrected One. Without fear or hesitation, bring this good news to the whole creation.”

- **Archbishop Anastasios of Albania**



“Pray without ceasing on behalf of everyone. For in them there is hope of repentance so that they may attain to God. Permit them, then, to be instructed by your works, if in no other way. Be meek in response to their wrath, humble in opposition to their boasting; to their blasphemies return your prayers; in contrast to their error be steadfast in the faith; and for their cruelty display your gentleness. While we take care not to imitate their conduct, let us be found their brothers in all true kindness.”

- St. Ignatius of Antioch (d. 108 A.D.)

“There is nothing colder than a Christian unconcerned with the salvation of others.”

- St. John Chrysostom



“I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous ones who need no repentance.”

- **Luke 15:7**

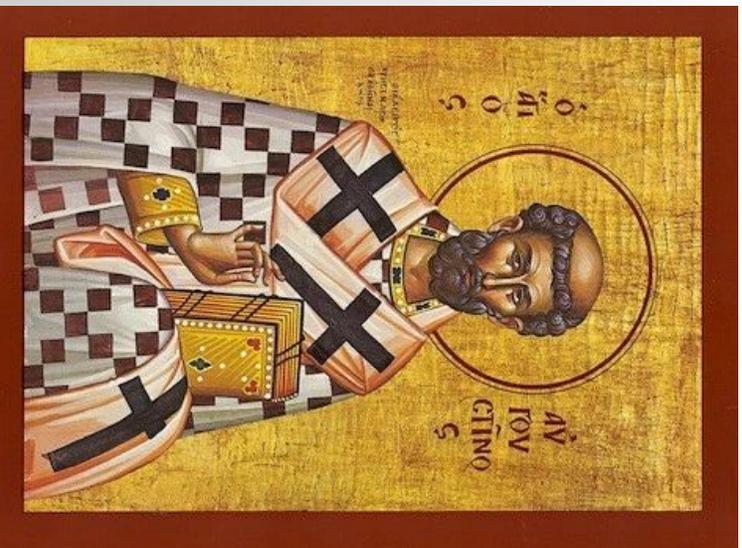
“Great indeed is the multitude [of humanity]; but yet it is little, for the Angels are many more. They are the ninety and nine sheep, but mankind is the single one.”

- **St. Cyril of Jerusalem**

“If we persuade even a few, our gain will be very great; for, as good husbandmen, we shall receive the reward from the Master.”

- **St. Justin Martyr (d. 150 A.D.)**

All have need of repentance. All of heaven rejoices over one person’s repentance.



“Whatever the measure of enjoyment yielded by the boasts of riches, and the inflation of honors, and the spendthrift pleasures of the taverns, and the contests of the theatres, and the impurity of fornications, and the pruriency of the baths, they are all things of which one little fever deprives us, while, even from those who still survive, it takes away the whole false happiness of their life. Then there remains only a void and wounded conscience, destined to apprehend that God as a Judge whom it refused to have as a Father, and destined also to find a severe Lord in Him whom it scorned to seek and love as a tender Father. But you, inasmuch as you seek that true rest which is promised to Christians after this life, will taste the same sweet and pleasant rest even here among the bitterest troubles of this life, if you continue to love the commandments of Him who has promised the same. For quickly will you feel that the fruits of righteousness are sweeter than those of unrighteousness, and that a man finds a more genuine and pleasurable joy in the possession of a good conscience in the midst of troubles than in that of an evil conscience in the midst of delights.”

- St. Augustine of Hippo



“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations”

- **Matthew 28:19**

Some highlights of the missionary work of the church may be generally divided into several ages:

- (1) Apostolic and sub-Apostolic Age: Spread of Church throughout Roman Mediterranean world/Middle East, India.**
- (2) The Age of the First Councils: Conversion of Georgia, Armenia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Europe, Great Britain/Ireland.**
- (3) Evangelization of the Slavs/Islamic Captivity: Conversion of Russia (Rus), Serbia, Bulgaria, internal preaching by St. Cosmas Aitolos.**
- (4) The Russian Imperial Missions: Expansion eastward in Russia, Alaska, Japan, and mission to China.**
- (5) Post-Soviet Era: Re-establishment of Church life in Russia/Albania/throughout ex-communist countries. Orthodoxy in sub-Saharan Africa. Global missions, including Guatemala, Asia (Thailand, Indonesia, etc.).**



“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations . . .”

- **Matthew 28:19**

Apostolic and sub-Apostolic Period:

- (1) The twelve and seventy Holy Apostles traveled widely preaching the Gospel and ordaining bishops, priests, and deacons.**
- (2) St. Matthew evangelized in the east and in Ethiopia; St. Mark preached in Egypt; St. Luke accompanied St. Paul and preached in North Africa; St. James led the church in Jerusalem; Saints Jason and Sosipater evangelized the island of Corfu - of the twelve, all entered eternal life by martyrdom, except for St. John (who died in exile on the island of Patmos).**
- (3) In the 100s A.D., St. Pantaenus traveled as a missionary from Alexandria to India to aid the Christian church which was already established there.**





Indian Malankara parish in Tamil Nadu state of India (near Kerala) traditionally built by St. Thomas.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations”

- **Matthew 28:19**

Apostolic and sub-Apostolic Period, con't:

- (1) St. Thomas preached and received martyrdom in India (also St. Bartholomew by the accounts of St. Eusebius and St. Jerome).**
- (2) In the 100s A.D., St. Pantaenus traveled as a missionary from Alexandria to India to aid the Christian church which was already established there.**



“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations . . .”

- Matthew 28:19

Age of the First Councils:

- (1) Orthodoxy was strengthened throughout the Roman world, heresy was fought by the great Holy Fathers (St. Athanasius, St. Cyril, St. Basil, etc.).
- (2) St. Frumentius was sent by St. Athanasius to Ethiopia, and the king Ezana received Christianity.
- (3) St. Gregory the Illuminator (the son of an executed rebel who assassinated the king of Armenia) returned to Armenia to preach the Gospel, leading to the conversion of the country.





“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations . . .”

- **Matthew 28:19**

Age of the First Councils, con't:

- (1) St. Ninos (or Nina) went to Georgia at the age of twelve in response to a vision of the Theotokos, and converted the entire country.**
- (2) Christianity in Georgia was strengthened by the work of the Thirteen Assyrian Fathers in the 500s A.D.**





(c. 590-651)

“He was one to **traverse both town and country on foot, never on horseback, unless compelled by some urgent necessity; and wherever in his way he saw any, either rich or poor, he invited them, if infidels, to embrace the mystery of the faith or if they were believers, to strengthen them in the faith, and to stir them up by words and actions to alms and good works. ... This [the reading of scriptures and psalms, and meditation upon holy truths] was the daily employment of himself and all that were with him, wheresoever they went; and if it happened, which was but seldom, that he was invited to eat with the king, he went with one or two clerks, and having taken a small repast, made haste to be gone with them, either to read or write. At that time, many religious men and women, stirred up by his example, **adopted the custom of fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays, till the ninth hour, throughout the year, except during the fifty days after Easter.** He never gave money to the powerful men of the world, but only meat, if he happened to entertain them; and, on the contrary, whatsoever gifts of money he received from the rich, he either distributed them, as has been said, to the use of the poor, or bestowed them in **ransoming such as had been wrongfully sold for slaves.** Moreover, he afterwards made many of those he had ransomed his disciples, and after having taught and instructed them, advanced them to the order of priesthood.”**

- **Venerable St. Bede on St. Aidan, Apostle of Northumbria**



“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations”

- Matthew 28:19

Following the earlier groundbreaking work of Saints Cyril (Constantine) and Methodius, St. (Prince) Vladimir of Rus (precursors to the modern Russians/Ukrainians, related to the Scandinavians) sent emissaries to find a religion for his people.

He rejected both Islam (due to prohibition of alcohol and his emissaries being unimpressed by the worship) and Judaism (due to the loss of Jerusalem as evidence of Divine displeasure). His emissaries then came to Constantinople and, seeing the services, “knew not whether they were in heaven or upon earth.”

The people were baptized *en masse* in the Dnieper River by the Orthodox priests, and an alliance was concluded between Prince Vladimir and the Byzantine Emperor Basil II.



“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations . . .”

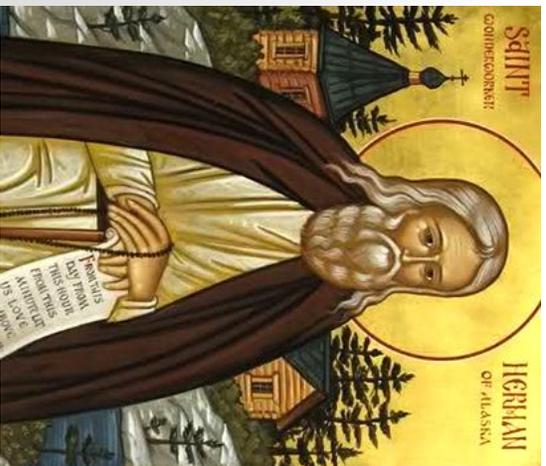
- **Matthew 28:19**

“ . . . I will build my church.”

- **Matthew 16:18**

St. Innocent of Irkutsk was consecrated bishop for the mission to China in 1721. However, he was denied entry to China by the Chinese authorities. Instead, he served in Irkutsk in Siberia, learned Mongolian, preached the Gospel, and converted many people.

He is regarded as the heavenly patron of Orthodox missions to China (and is the patron saint of the Orthodox seminary in Thailand).



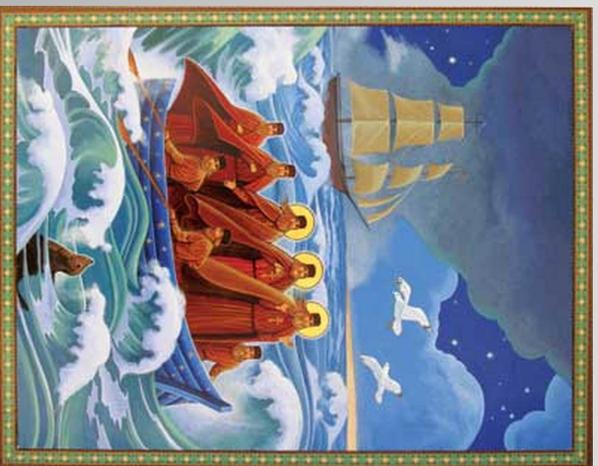
“From this day, from this hour, from this minute, let us strive to love God above all, and fulfill His holy will.”

- **St. Herman of Alaska**

A monk and spiritual son of Abbott Nazarius (the elder of St. Seraphim of Sarov), he was miraculously healed of an abscess during his earlier years, and later received the call for mission work in Alaska. He traveled over 3,000 miles to arrive in Alaska in 1794 as a member of the original mission team, which included St. Juvenaly and his brother, Hierodeacon Macarius. Many members of this mission later died in a shipwreck.

St. Herman was highly intelligent and well-read, yet twice rejected ordination and also the request to lead the mission to China, choosing the life of a humble monk and a witness to Christ. While a lay monk, he was seen as the spiritual leader of the mission due to his holiness. He cared for orphans, called people to repentance, performed miracles, defended the natives, and lived an ascetic life on Spruce Island.

At his departure from this life, those in various surrounding areas saw above his island a pillar of light reaching up to heaven.





“Only those you truly love, those for whom you are willing to lay down your life, should you help to see their sins.” - A. Tkachenko

Once when sitting on a hill facing the sea, St. (then Hieromonk) Juvenaly and his brother Hierodeacon Macarius discussed their missionary plans, as St. Herman listened. A friendly argument began between St. Juvenaly and his brother as to which portion of the vast reaches of Alaska would fall to each of them for evangelism. Upon seeing the apostolic zeal of this argument (as to who would have the privilege of undergoing the hardships of evangelizing such vast areas), St. Herman said he “went from joy to rapture.”

- Letter to Abbott Nazarius, 1795

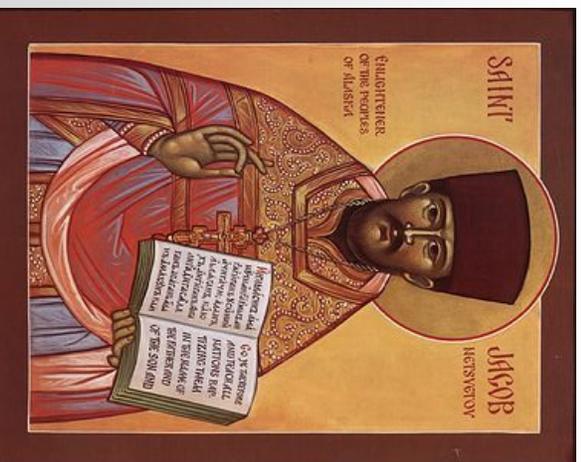
A former military officer, St. Juvenaly came to Alaska as a member of original mission team (within two years of their preaching, over 12,000 native Alaskans had embraced Orthodox Faith). He did not degrade whatever was good in the religion of the natives, but showed that Christ was the fullness of the truth. He also taught strongly against polygamy. St. Juvenaly was attacked by a group of natives on his missionary journeys; although he carried a firearm for defense against wild bears, he did not resist but made the sign of the cross and gave his life as a martyr. His killers testified that each time they thought they had killed him he rose up and came after them, calling them to repentance, until they finally cut his body into pieces.



“For the heart of man can be fully satisfied only by the love of God, and therefore God alone can fill the heart and soul of man . . . Do you want your heart to be fully satisfied? Turn it to God from Whom you have been separated by your sins.”

- St. Innocent (Veniaminov)

From Siberia, St. Innocent (then Fr. John) graduated from seminary, married, was ordained a priest, and served for several years in one of the churches in Irkutsk. After initially rejecting, his heart miraculously changed and he accepted the bishop’s call for missionaries to Alaska. He traveled over 3,000 miles accompanied by his wife, infant child, brother, and aging mother, and arrived in Alaska in 1824. He learned multiple Alaskan languages, traveled thousands of miles of ocean in a kayak to preach, baptize, commune, and care spiritually for the people (later developing rather severe arthritis from the rigors). Upon the tragic death of his wife, Catherine, he accepted monastic tonsure at the request of St. (then Metropolitan) Philaret, who arranged for the care of his children. He was then personally asked by the tsar to accept consecration as bishop for Alaska. He later was elected Metropolitan of Moscow, the highest position in the Russian church. During his travels, he met and encouraged the future Saint (then Fr.) Nikolai of Japan.



“For the Son of Man has come to **seek** and to **save the lost.**”

- Luke 19:10

Born in 1802 to a Russian father and a native Alaskan mother, St. Jacob Netsvetov attended seminary in Irkutsk, married a Russian woman, and was ordained a priest (by Archbishop Michael, the same hierarch who ordained St. Innocent). He was sent back to Alaska with his family to serve, arriving in 1829.

Upon the tragic death of his wife and loss of his house to a fire in 1836, and the subsequent death of his father in 1837, he sought to return to Irkutsk and become a monk. However, St. Innocent invited Fr. Jacob to accompany him on one of his missionary journeys, comforted him, and convinced him to dedicate his life to missionary work in the Alaskan interior.

During his final missionary endeavors, St. Jacob received 1,320 people into the Orthodox Church by Holy Baptism.

“ . . . I will build my church.”

- Matthew 16:18

The son of a deacon, Ivan (future St. Nikolai) attended seminary, received ordination, and was interested in evangelism of China. However, his interest settled on Japan, and he took an opportunity to serve as chaplain to the Russian consulate in Hakodate. He arrived in Japan in 1861, just before which time he met St. Innocent of Alaska while en route. St. Innocent exhorted him to prioritize his acquisition of the Japanese language, and personally made him a velvet cassock and gave him his own pectoral cross. He then met St. Innocent again when he passed through Japan, who encouraged him in the face of linguistic challenges.

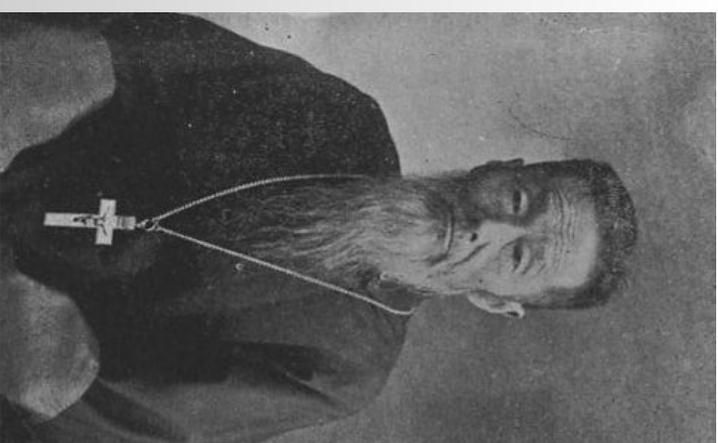
St. Nikolai organized a large group of lay catechists to spread the Gospel, and established a seminary (which included martial arts instruction in Judo).

During the Russo-Japanese war, he told the Japanese faithful that it was their duty to pray for the victory of their own nation of Japan (though he himself did not serve the Liturgy in public during the war, so he would not pray against his own country's forces). At the end of his life, the Orthodox Church in Japan numbered over 33,000.





Holy Resurrection cathedral in Tokyo was built by St. Nikolai, and is commonly known as *Nikolai-do*.



The first Japanese baptized by St. Nikolai were Sawabe 'Paul' Takuma and two of his companions. Takuma was from the families of samurai / shinto priesthood (who initially met St. Nikolai when he came with a sword to kill him). He was later ordained an Orthodox priest.

Questions / Discussion