

***Women in Orthodoxy  
Past & Present***

Friday, June 20 & Saturday, June 21

***A Conference for Women of All Ages***

*Organized with the blessing of Bishop Gabriel of Manhattan*

Church of the Intercession • 14 Alvin Street • Glen Cove, NY 11542

OrthodoxWomensConference@gmail.com

703 • 405 • 5064

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**

**Friday, June 20, 2008**

11:30-12:30 Registration/Lunch  
12:30-1:00 Greeting and Opening Prayer  
1:00-2:00 “The Mother of God & Orthodox Women in Prerevolutionary Russia” - Professor Vera Shevzov  
2:15-3:00 “Being a Female Member of the Orthodox Church” - Professor Marina Ledkovsky  
3:15-3:45 “St. Kassia the Nun: Activist, Poetess, Hymnographer, & A Woman Ahead of Her Time” - Women’s Choir Director Eugenia Temidis  
3:45-5:00 “A Woman’s Life in the Church Today” - Panel discussion  
5:00-6:00 Break and/or Choir Rehearsal  
6:00-7:30 Dinner  
7:30-10:00 Evening social event

**Saturday, June 21, 2008**

8:00-8:20 Morning Prayers  
8:20-9:00 Breakfast, Announcements, Registration  
9:00-10:15 “Orthodox Women at Church in Byzantium: Glimpses of a Lost World” - Father Robert Taft  
10:30-11:45 “What is Ritual Im/Purity and Why” - Sister Vassa Larin  
12:00-1:30 Lunch  
1:30-2:30 “Orthodox Women & Their Confessors in the Russian Empire, 1700-2000” - Professor Nadieszda Kizenko  
2:45-3:30 “Russian Orthodox Women & Social Work” - Natalia Ermolaev  
3:45-4:45 Panel Discussion / Q & A  
4:45-6:00 Break / Dinner  
6:00 pm Vigil

**Sunday, June 22, 2008**

10:00 am Liturgy

**THE MOTHER OF GOD AND ORTHODOX WOMEN IN  
PREREVOLUTIONARY RUSSIA**

The image of the Mother of God historically has played an extraordinarily influential role in shaping Orthodox believers’ understanding of faith, virtue, and the Christian way of life. This talk will consider the prevalent and often complex ideas and ideals associated with her and her numerous miracle-working icons in nineteenth-century Russia that came to bear on Orthodox women’s lives in particular at that time.

**Vera Shevzov** teaches in the Department of Religion at Smith College. She received her B.A and Ph.D. from Yale University and is a graduate of St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary. She also spent a year and a half studying at the St. Petersburg Theological Academy. Her book, *Russian Orthodoxy on the Eve of Revolution* (Oxford University Press, 2004), received the Frank S. and Elizabeth D. Brewer Prize from the American Society of Church History. It has been translated into Russian and is scheduled to be published in 2009 by Dmitrii Bulanin Publishers. Her current book project is a study of Mary, the Mother of God, in modern Russian Orthodoxy from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries.

**BEING A FEMALE MEMBER OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH**

Marina Ledkovsky will speak about her own experience, include historical references, and address some views held by women converts to Orthodoxy.

**Marina Ledkovsky**, Professor (Emerita) of Slavic Languages and Literature, Barnard College, Columbia University, is the author of *The Other Turgenev: From Romanticism to Symbolism* (1973), co-author of the *Dictionary of Russian Women Writers* (1994), and of two anthologies of women's writings in Russian and English. She has contributed numerous articles, reviews, and chapters in books and journals on themes of Russian literature, poetry and linguistics, including religious philosophy and Russian Orthodox ecclesiastical music. Lately she has been concentrating on notable émigré composers of Russian Orthodox sacred music and on family history. Most recently she has been engaged in editing, annotating, and writing the introduction to the translation from English to Russian of the memoirs of Nicolas Nabokov (1903-1978), first cousin of Vladimir, and a noted musicologist, composer and champion of the Congress for Freedom of Culture during the darkest totalitarian years behind the Iron Curtain.

### **ST. KASSIA THE NUN: ACTIVIST, POETESS, HYMNOGRAPHER, & A WOMAN AHEAD OF HER TIME**

She is known by different names: Cassiane, Kassiani, Eikasia. An extraordinary, highly gifted 9th century Byzantine poetess, she has won lasting distinction as the only woman whose works have entered into the liturgical books of the Church. Young Kassia was an iconodule, an outspoken opponent of iconoclasm; a correspondent of St. Theodore the Studite; a woman of strong convictions and one who did not hesitate to express her opinions. Her forceful personality earned her a legendary rejection from the Byzantine Emperor Theophilus, but allowed her to live only for God and earn sainthood. All this, combined with her many talents and keen intellect, makes her an appealing model for today's Orthodox woman.

**Eugenia Temidis** is choir conductor at the Holy Virgin Protection Church in Nyack, New York. She sings regularly with the Synod Cathedral Choir in New York City, where she has also been guest conductor, and currently studies voice at the Rockland Conservatory of Music. Ms. Temidis is founder, artistic and musical director of the Holy Myrrhbearers Women's Choir, which had its inception in 1998, and for which she researches and arranges much of the repertoire. Eugenia holds a BA in Cultural Anthropology from Drew University and this year concludes a three-year program of study for church conductors at the Summer School of Music at Holy Trinity Seminary in Jordanville, NY. Her interests include Church Slavonic chant, order of the Orthodox divine services (ustav) and liturgical symbolism. Ms. Temidis anticipates continuing her education in the field of Orthodox music and liturgies when her five children have grown.

### **ORTHODOX WOMEN AT CHURCH IN BYZANTIUM: GLIMPSES OF A LOST WORLD**

Father Taft will present a lively description of the behavior and participation of Orthodox women in church services in old Byzantium, as reported in the very words of contemporary eyewitnesses.

**Father Robert Taft** is the world's leading expert in the field of Byzantine liturgy. A Professor Emeritus and Catholic priest of the Eastern rite, he is often invited to speak at Orthodox conferences both on the parochial and international levels. He has educated many well-known Orthodox liturgical scholars and was recently a major speaker at the International Theological Conference of the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow. Fr. Robert has great respect for the Russian Church Abroad, especially, as he says, "because the ROCOR is very good at liturgy." We are very honored to have Fr. Robert speaking at our conference.

### **WHAT IS RITUAL IMPURITY AND WHY?**

An exploration of the origins and theology of the liturgical restrictions regarding women during menstruation and after childbirth on the basis of scriptural, canonical, patristic, and liturgical texts of the Orthodox Church.

**Sister Vassa Larin** is a nun of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia in the Archdiocese of Berlin and Germany. She received her Master's Degree in Orthodox Theology at the University of Munich and specializes in the history of Byzantine Liturgy. She is currently the Graduate Assistant of Professor Robert Taft in Rome, where she is working on her doctoral dissertation on the topic of the hierarchical Divine Liturgy.

### **ORTHODOX WOMEN AND THEIR CONFESSORS IN THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE, 1700-2000**

Confession became a legal as well as a religious requirement for the Orthodox in the Russian empire in late seventeenth century. Although annual confession was mandatory for both men and women, women appear to have embraced the sacrament with more fervor. This lecture explores how Orthodox women have approached confession over three centuries, and how central the figure of the spiritual father is in women's piety. It will also consider how the experience of Orthodox women in the Russian empire differed from that of women in other Orthodox countries, where sacramental confession was not part of secular legislation.

**Professor Nadieszda Kizenko** received her B.A. from Harvard and her PhD from Columbia University. Her first book, *A Prodigal Saint: Father John of Kronstadt and the Russian People* (Penn, 2000) received the Heldt Prize. A Russian translation, *Sviatoi Nashego Vremeni: O. Ioann Kronshtadtskii i Russkii Narod*, (Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie) was published in 2006. Prof. Kizenko has published widely on topics pertaining to Orthodoxy in Russian history and culture. She is currently working on a study of confession in modern Russia.

### **RUSSIAN ORTHODOX WOMEN AND SOCIAL WORK**

This lecture traces the history of Russian women performing their Christian duty by serving the less fortunate. Russian Orthodox women - both lay and monastic - have been leaders and visionaries in the creation and activity of social services such as orphanages,

soup kitchens, schools and infirmaries. This lecture will outline general trends and highlight the work of key individuals both in Russia before the Revolution and in the post-1917 dispersion. The venerable tradition of Orthodox women serving those in need can be carried on by our Orthodox communities today; a list of Orthodox organizations doing social work will be provided.

**Natalia Ermolaev** is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at Columbia University. Her fields of interest are Russian religious thought and Russian women's writing. She is currently completing her dissertation on the poetry and theology of Saint Mother Maria (Skobtsova). Natalia is an Archival Assistant at Columbia's Bakhmeteff Archive, and is involved in several projects with Russian emigre collections. She is a member of the Holy Virgin Protection Cathedral in New York City (OCA), where she teaches Sunday school and is the parish representative for the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC).

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## A WOMAN'S LIFE IN THE CHURCH TODAY: A PRIEST'S PERSPECTIVE

**Archpriest David Straut**, the son of a Methodist minister, converted to Holy Orthodoxy from Anglicanism in 1982 in the Patriarchate of Antioch. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1986 and served as a priest in the Antiochian Archdiocese of North America for twelve years, before transferring to the Russian Church Abroad in 1998. Fr David is now Rector of St Elizabeth the New-Martyr Orthodox Church in Rocky Hill, New Jersey, an English-language Mission of the Diocese of Eastern America and New York of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. He is also the Assistant Director of the Jail Chaplaincy of Somerset County, which provides Chaplaincy Services to the Somerset County Jail in Somerville, New Jersey.

Fr David has been married for twenty-nine years to his wife Faith, whose religious background is quite similar to his own. He believes that the greatest of God's blessing to him is his wonderful Matushka. Fr David and Matushka Faith have been blessed with five children: four adult daughters and a twelve year old son. They now have two grandchildren by their eldest daughter, Emily, the Matushka of a priest in the Orthodox Church in America (OCA). Their third daughter Katharine is the organizer of this Conference. Fr David and Matushka Faith were both Religion Majors at the College of Liberal Arts of Drew University in Madison, New Jersey. While in college they took courses in Eastern Christianity and were able to study for a year in Oxford, where their Tutor was the Russian Lay Theologian, Nicolas Zernov. Fr David received his Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree from St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, New York. He also studied for two years in the Casperson Graduate School of Drew University, where his course work was primarily in Patristics and Historical Theology.

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## HOTEL INFORMATION

East Norwich Inn  
6321 Northern Blvd.  
East Norwich, NY 11732  
(516) 922-1500  
Book online at: [www.eastnorwichinn.com](http://www.eastnorwichinn.com)

Double rooms: \$140 per night  
Single rooms: \$124 per night

**\* Please book early as this is a small hotel and a very busy time of year for hotels in this area**

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## REGISTRATION

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name*

**Space at the conference is limited. Reservations held when payment is received.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Address*

**Registration payment due by May 30<sup>th</sup>**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Phone Number*

**Friday and Saturday lectures (meals included): \$45 (students \$30). One day of lectures: \$30**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*E-mail address*

**Please make check or money order out to "Church of the Intercession"**

*Will you be staying in the hotel?* \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail registration form and payment to:**

*If yes, will you need transportation to the church hall?*  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Can you provide transportation? For how many people?*  
\_\_\_\_\_

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Glen Cove, NY 11542-1810