

# THE MANTLE

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## Seasonal Colors of the Church

As one enters the church each time, it can be seen that the colors of the Altar cloths and candles can change as well as the color of the priest's vestments. In the Eastern Church, there are two colors: bright and dark. The bright colors are: white, gold, blue, green. The dark colors are: red, purple and black (which is rarely used).

**White and Gold:** The East uses mostly white or gold colors throughout the year. White and Gold are for the Resurrection. Since we are Resurrection people, the resurrection is celebrated at every Divine Liturgy. Even during the Great Fast, Lent, the priest will wear white vestments on Sundays. The Altar cloths are almost always white or gold throughout the year.

**Blue:** Blue is considered the color of the Mother of God. When Marian

holy days are celebrated, the candle glass is changed to blue and sometimes the Altar cloths. The priest and the Altar servers will don blue as well.

**Green:** Pentecost is the time of rebirth. The ancient Jews used green for rebirth as a sign from God because of the harvest. They would decorate their homes with greens and lay fresh cut grass on their floors. The Eastern Church uses green for Pentecost for similar reasons. The plant life looks dead through winter and in the spring the new life buds forth in green and brightens the world. That is why many call Pentecost Sunday, Green Sunday. At one time, all of the faithful would decorate their homes with branches. Today, only the churches are decorated with



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Tetrapod at Christmas



Cross for the  
Feast of the Exaltation  
and Veneration Sunday



Grave for Good Friday

greens. Sometimes a priest will wear vestments with green on the Theophany as well because of the Holy Spirit coming upon Jesus and revealing the Trinity.

**Black:** Black was used for funerals a few decades ago. Today, some priests will wear black for Good Friday. It is prescribed as a dark color day, most will wear red or purple.

**Red:** Any day dedicated to the Holy Cross or Passion of our Lord, the priest will wear red. Also, at any penitent time the church will be dressed in red or purple, Philip's Fast (Advent) and the Great Fast (Lent). Whenever one sees the color red in church, it is a special time of preparation of the soul. The Ukrainian Catholic Church wears red for funerals too. This preparation time makes us think of our own end. Are we ready to go with Jesus if he comes like a thief in the night? Would I be ready?

The Eastern Church is a church of the senses. Color helps us to visually experience God.

## Up Coming Events:

### October:

Oct. 1 -

Parish Feast Day

Oct. 28 - 9:00 AM

Liturgy Change

### November:

Philip's Fast -

November 14 -

December 24

### December:

Dec. 9 -

St. Nicholas Visit

## Let My Prayer Rise Like Incense

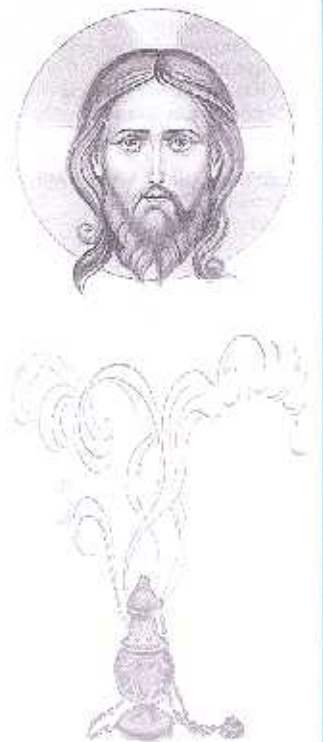
Eastern Christians use incense when they worship God. The censer itself has a basin in which there is a burning piece of charcoal. A piece of incense is placed on top of the charcoal. This produces a sweet-smelling smoke which stands for prayers as they rise to God. Psalm 140:2 says, "Let my prayer rise like incense before you...". The sweet-smelling smoke that rises from the censer tells us that our prayers are like perfume to God. He is very pleased when we pray to Him.

The act of burning incense before Jesus is also a way of showing that Jesus is our God. The early Christians would not throw a pinch of incense before the statue of Caesar. That would mean that Caesar was God. For the Christians, Jesus is God. They would offer incense only to Jesus. Because they did not burn incense before Caesar, they were thrown to the lions.

After censuring Jesus and the saints, the priest turns to the people and censes each person. By doing this he is paying respect to the image (icon) of God in each one of us.

There are twelve bells on the censer. They stand for the twelve apostles who spread the joy of the Gospel to the ends of the earth. The three chains of the censer that hold the basin, stand for the Father who loves us, the Son who saves us, and the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

Many Eastern families have a home censer which they use when the family prays together. It is kept next to the family icon. As the parents cense the home, the presence of God fills every room of the house. God is so real in Eastern Worship that He can be **seen** in the icon, **heard** in the Bible reading, **tasted** in Holy communion, **touched** as we kiss the icon, and **smelled** in the fragrance of incense. He can be experienced as a living God through all five senses. The fragrance of incense that greets us as we enter church reminds us of Jesus who "loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Eph.5:2).





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## Out of the Mouths of Babes...

Dear God,

Thank you for the baby brother but what I asked for was a puppy. I never asked for anything before. You can look it up.

Tommy

Dear God,

My grandpa says You were around when he was a little boy. How far back do You go?

Love, Mary

Dear God,

Maybe Cain and Abel would not kill each other so much if they had their own rooms. It works out ok with me and my brother.

Bobby

Dear God,

Is Fr. Joe a friend of Yours, or do You just know him through the business?

Donny

Dear God,

It is great the way You always get the stars in the right place. Why can't You do that with the moon?

Suzie

Dear God,

I didn't think orange went with purple until I saw the sunset You made on Tuesday night. That was really cool.

Elizabeth