

**Our Faith: Orthodox Christianity at St. Michael's  
Woonsocket, Rhode Island  
Winter, 2008 (Fr. Anthony Perkins)**

**Session Three: Church Architecture and the Movement of the Faithful**

**Opening Prayer:** O Heavenly King the Comforter, Spirit of Truth, Who art ev'rywhere, Treasure of good and Giver of life. Dwell within us, Lord hear our prayer. Cleanse us from ev'ry impurity. Save our souls, God of mercy.

**Opening Scripture:** Psalm 29:1-2; Proverbs 31: 30; John 12: 3-8

**Summary of Scripture:** The Glory, Power, and Love of God for us.

**Today's Lesson: Beauty will Save the World**

**Questions for consideration:**

- What purpose do architecture, icons, vestments, and music serve? What is it about beauty that is salvific? Why did Dostoevsky say that it would "Save the world"? The emissaries from Kyiv's reaction to worship in Constantinople's St. Sophia?

**Basic Orthodox Architecture**

- **The Temple is Sacred Space.** Think of Moses and the burning bush. The Arc of the Covenant. The Holy of Holies of the Temple in Jerusalem. It is set aside. [We are also temples, but this is meant to elevate us... NOT to degrade the physical temple!]. So nice to have an Orthodox Temple that was designed as such!
- **Basic Orthodox Architecture (the Arc of Salvation)**
  - Narthex: vestibule. Transition space from the world to heaven on earth.
  - Nave: the central portion where the faithful worship. Contains pews, tetrapod, candle stands, place for confession, banners, etc.
  - Altar/Sanctuary: Eastern-most section. Holy of Holies. Altar Table with Tabernacle and Gospel Book are central. Also includes the Table of Oblation.
  - Iconostasis: Divides and unifies the altar/sanctuary and nave. Symbolizes unity of the faithful through Christ. Holy Doors in middle represent "Gates of Paradise". Note that Christ comes out to us (not the other way around). Deacon doors on side are most commonly used doors. Specific icons in various places.
  - The Dome: symbolizes "God with us" and the union of heaven and earth. Compare to steeple.
- **Icons, Frescos, and Stained Glass**
  - Our icons/frescoes include: (NAVE) Guardian Angels, Saints Andrew, Volodymir, & Nicholas; Baptism of Rus'; Gregory, Basil, & John; Elizabeth and Zacharias; Joachim & Anna; George, Catherine, & Dmitri; Baptism of Christ; Antony, Olha, & Theodosius; (NARTHEX) Sacrifice of Isaac, Healing through Moses in the Desert; (ALTAR) Trinity, Nativity, Birthgiver of God, Prophet John, Angels, Apostles, & Feasts. (CEILING) Michael, Cherubim, Birthgiver of God, Cross and chandelier
  - Our stained glass include: the Four Evangelists, anchor of Christ, Cross on Calvary, trident.
- **Vestments for Servers and Holy Things**
  - Common day things/people become icons of something better.
  - Colors have theological significance.
  - Don't forget the *rushniks*!
- **The Movement of the Faithful**
- **The Music of Orthodoxy**

**Discussion: The role of beauty in our lives.**

**Next week: Church Architecture and the Movement of the Faithful**