

Letter to the Laity of the Pillars of Orthodoxy Church in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.
December 12, 2010

Glory be to God for all things!

Today a great consolation was granted to our parish in spite of our sins. This past Friday was the feast of "Our Lady of the Sign". As you know, Fr John has been staying at the church and Friday evening he decided to celebrate the **Akathist** Hymn for the feast and he brought forth an icon of Our Lady of the Sign which hangs in the confessional. While he prayed, he lit some candles to petition Our Lady to console him in some of his struggles. Late that night he returned the icon to its usual place. Nothing unusual happened yesterday until Vesper time. The icons of the day were put out on the "analoý" and anointed with fragrant oil as usual. Fr Rodion sat in the confessional all through Vespers hearing confessions without noticing anything unusual. As soon as the service was over a sweet rose like fragrance was noticed in the church becoming overpowering as one neared the confessional. Upon investigation the fragrance was found to be emanating from the very icon of Our Lady of the Sign. We took it down and inspected it and visually saw nothing unusual but the sweet scent of roses was pouring from the icon. We decided to put it in the altar behind the Holy Table for the night and upon returning this morning found the icon to be still exuding the smell of roses. At this time we noticed small areas of the icon to be moist and we showed them to the few parishioners who were already in church.

Fr Rodion then called the monastery for advice and then as he was told said a Prayer of Exorcism and sprinkled the icon with Holy Water. We then proceeded to celebrate the Liturgy to see what would happen. After the Communion of the clergy the icon was again inspected and found to be still beautifully fragrant with the entire top third of the icon glistening with moisture. This was announced to the worshippers and the children recalled from Sunday School. The icon was brought into the middle of the church and a service of supplication to the Mother of God was celebrated after which the faithful were given cotton balls to take of the blessing. Following trapeza we returned to find the icon essentially dry after being wiped down with the cotton of the faithful but still powerfully fragrant. In thanksgiving we have decided to celebrate Liturgy tomorrow morning at 9 AM (Hours at 8:30) for the feast of St Andrew.

Will it continue or was it a consolation for a day? What does it mean? These things are known only to God and for a time we will say our prayers and watch for the Will of God to become apparent. If I can find some hymns for the icon I will forward them and ask that you include them in your daily prayers. Our dear Mother the All Holy One has shown us her love this day and for this we are eternally grateful and thank her from the bottom of our hearts.

Please pray for me your sinful Father