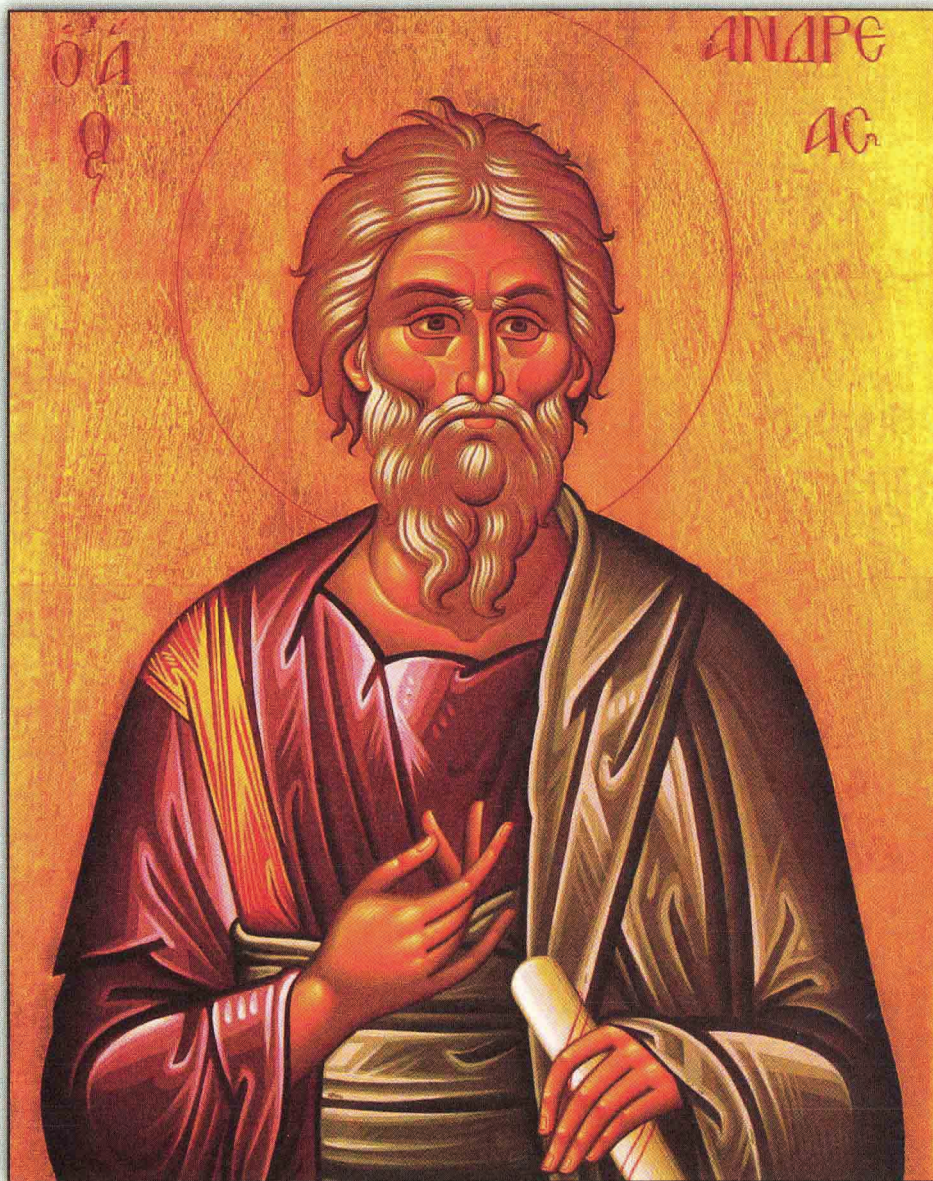


TWENTY FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
THIRTEENTH SUNDAY OF LUKE



Icon of Saint Andrew -- November 30th

November 27, 2011

24TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE HOLY GREAT MARTYR JAMES THE PERSIAN; OUR VENERABLE FATHER PALLADIUS

Tone 7

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 28 - DECEMBER 4

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28 – VENERABLE MARTYR, STEPHEN

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy ✙ Margaret Bankston (2007)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1 – HOLY PROPHET NAHUM

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy ✙ Yaroslava, Mykola, Ivan, Emilia, Anastasia, Tetiana, Lydia,
Valentin, Yosyf; Req: Laryssa

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3 - HOLY PROPHET ZEPHANIA

Please Note - No Vespers this Day

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4 – 25TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST;

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy For All Parishioners

Christmas Bazaar - December 18

To ensure an adequate amount of varenyky for everyone, place your order for varenyky, kolach, kutia and makivnyk today! St. Nicholas will visit our parish and distribute gifts to all the good children on December 18.

Greeting Cards

Christmas Cards and various other greeting cards are for sale in the Church Hall. Please see Mary Kitt to purchase.

Social Committee

Olga and Michael Miller have volunteered to be the co-chairs of the Social Committee. If you have any suggestions for the Social please contact them at (858) 483-3294.

On Refusing to Judge Others

Fire and water do not mix, neither can you mix judgment of others with the desire to repent. If a man commits a sin before you at the very moment of his death, pass no judgment, because the judgment of God is hidden from men. It has happened that men have sinned greatly in the open but have done greater deeds in secret...

– St. John of the Ladder

Welcome Visitors

We warmly welcome all those who are visiting us today. It is good to have you all with us!

From Last Monday's Feast – an Epilogue

The five ways in which the Virgin Mary prepared herself during her time in the Temple to become the Mother of God were: 1) studying the Word of God, 2) working with her hands, 3) tending to the needs of the poor, 4) fasting to subdue the flesh to the spirit, and 5) communing with God in prayer. Contrast her example with the Christmas preparations so prevalent today: 1) the crazy atmosphere of Black Friday X-mas shopping, 2) secular “holiday” parties which, in an effort to be politically correct, forget the Reason for the Season – Christ Himself, and 3) the pressure to celebrate Christmas entirely at home without giving thanks and praising God in Church. Without question, the Church was wise to give us the great example of the Virgin Mary during the Nativity Fast. Let us honor her by following her ways.

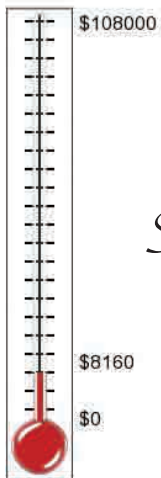
Sunday offering for November 20

Amount	Number
\$10.00	2
\$15.00	1
\$18.00	1
\$20.00	2
\$25.00	3
\$40.00	1
\$50.00	1
\$60.00	1
\$75.00	1
\$100.00	1
\$120.00	1
\$150.00	1
\$200.00	1
<hr/>	
\$963.00	17

Average / household: \$26.00

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00

Shortfall: -\$1165.00



Stewardship Pledges

HOW DOES THE DEVIL CONFIRM SINNERS IN THEIR SLAVERY TO SIN?

From Unseen Warfare

When the devil keeps a man in slavery to sin, he takes special care to darken him more and more by spiritual blindness, banishing from him every good thought, which could bring him to realize the danger of his life. Not only does he banish thoughts, which could lead to repentance and turn the man to the path of virtue, but instead of them he implants evil and depraved thoughts, at the same time presenting opportunities for committing the sin, which is most habitual to him, and enticing him to fall into it or into other more grievous sins as often as possible. Thus the poor sinner becomes more and more blind and darkened. This blindness strengthens in him the habit and constant impulse to go on ever sinning and sinning. Led from sinful action to greater blindness, and from blindness to greater sins, the unhappy man whirls in this vortex and will do so right up to death itself, unless special Divine grace is sent to save him.

If a man find himself in this perilous state and wishes to be freed from it, then, as soon as a good thought, or rather, a suggestion comes to him, calling him from darkness to light and from sin to virtue, he should immediately and without delay accept it with his whole attention and desire, and put it at once into practice with all diligence, calling from the bottom of his heart to the generous Giver of all blessings: "Help me, O Lord God, help me quickly, and let me no more linger in this sinful darkness." Let him never weary in appealing to God in these or similar words. At the same time let him also seek help on earth, by turning to those who know for advice and guidance as to how better to free himself from the bonds of sinful slavery that hold him. If he cannot do it immediately, he should do so as soon as the chance presents itself, at the same time never ceasing to appeal to the Lord Jesus, crucified for us, and to His Holy Mother, the Immaculate Virgin, imploring them to have mercy on him and not to deprive him of their speedy help. He should know that victory and triumph over the enemy lie in not delaying but in quick readiness to follow a right prompting

Weekly Discussion Group "Come Follow Me" continues today after the Divine Liturgy. We will be discussing the first Chapter, "An Invitation to the Kingdom." Everyone is encouraged to participate.

14th meeting of the Bishops of the Eastern Catholic Churches Oradea, Romania, 3-6 November 2011

This time, the annual meeting of the Eastern Catholic bishops in Europe has gathered in Oradea (Romania) about 70 participants, including bishops and experts, at the invitation of the Bishop of Oradea-Mare, H. Ex. Rev. Virgil Bercea. The theme of the meeting was the contribution of the Eastern Catholic Churches in Europe to the new evangelization. The meeting was a moment of community discernment aimed at identifying the adequate elements to meet the challenge of proclaiming Christ in the current socio-cultural context. Its results will be summarized in a report that will be delivered to the Secretary of the Synod of Bishops in view of the 13th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (Rome, 7-28 October 2012).

The meeting was also attended by the bishops of Latin rite of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Romania. During the works, the bishops have thanked the Holy Father for his initiative to include the Eastern Catholic Churches in the general intention for the apostolate of prayer, "so that their venerable tradition be known and respected as a spiritual treasure for the whole Church."

In his opening remarks, Cardinal Péter Erdő, President of the Council of European Catholic Bishops' Conferences (CCEE), the continental organism of Catholic bishops which has sponsored the meeting, stressed the importance of the meetings of the Eastern and Roman Catholic bishops and reaffirmed that the new evangelization is an opportunity through which "we are all called to awaken our faith and build a Christian community rooted in the Lord and with an intense missionary enthusiasm." For his part, the President of the Synod of the Greek-Catholic Church and of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Romania, His Beatitude Lucian Mureșan, Archbishop Major of Făgăraș and Alba Iulia of the Romanians, has contextualized the meeting by stressing that, twenty years after the fall of totalitarian regimes, "also the Eastern Catholic Churches are facing a rapidly changing society in which secularization, relativism, and migration have changed paradigms and methods not only in matter of belonging to the Church and religious practice, but also as far as the transmission and proclamation of the Gospel is concerned."

The Eastern Catholic Churches of Europe share a common history, made of marginalization, suffering and martyrdom, especially under the totalitarian regimes during which they were legally banned and suppressed. "There is no other Church in Romania that might be called "Church of martyrdom, except the Greek-catholic Church," said Mgr. Francisco Javier Lozano, Apostolic Nuncio in Romania and the Republic of Moldova.

This function of having preserved the faith at the cost of one's life, was then widely remembered by the various political authorities of the region and the city, who have highlighted the role of the Greek-catholic Church in Romania, in particular the role of the Exarchate of Oradea, in the "reconstruction of the social and moral fabric of the population, in being a point of reference and a sign of hope and understanding for many. During the meeting, the participants had the opportunity to visit some of the places that bear witness to the love of those two local Catholic churches.

In his address, Mr. Adrian Lemeni, Secretary of State for the Religious Affairs of the Romanian Government, welcomed the initiative and encouraged the work of the Church in Europe for the defense of the values which Christianity brought in it.

The New Evangelization and the Eastern Catholic Churches

On the issue of new evangelization, two orders of reflections have been the focus of our work. On the one hand, the fact that the Eastern Catholic Churches in Europe have a specific and unique contribution to make to the current debate in the Catholic Church and to the whole process, already underway, of the new evangelization. On the other hand, we have seen that they must also be aware of the challenges that the modern world brings to our mission. The crisis the world is living today is essentially anthropological in its nature, partly as a result of secularism, which led to the unjustified exclusion of God, both in the public and in the private sphere, thereby leading to a serious confusion in terms of personal identity, so that modern man often becomes unable to justify himself and find an orientation to his existence. In addition, the Eastern Catholic Churches feel confronted with these problems and, after having demonstrated the vitality of a newfound freedom, about two decades ago, now they feel challenged by these global phenomena, especially as they affect many of their faithful migrants, thus placing their respective Churches in front of new pastoral problems that require original and appropriate solutions.

In his address, Mgr. Salvatore Fischella, President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, has highlighted some of the tasks facing the new evangelization: strengthening the sense of belonging which generates a strong identity; having attention to our terminology and have a special care for "what is beautiful", for the liturgy, but also for catechesis and permanent formation. Finally, in the face of different forms of selfishness that now seem to have the upper hand, the new evangelization should encourage witnesses of solidarity and generosity, i.e. charity, through which we can express God's love for all.

The new evangelization is not made up only of words, but it implies the creation of visible signs that be able to testify and put into practice in a tangible way the presence and mission of the Church in history. An example of this dynamic mediation of the Christian message was offered by Fr. Borys Gudziak, Rector of the Ukrainian Catholic University (ucu.edu.ua/eng/), who explained to the participants the very original project of the construction of the new Catholic University. The basic idea is to create a campus where theology is translated into architecture, spirituality is lived out in the community and evangelization is implemented as in a pilgrimage.

Jesuit Fr. Marko Rupnik, a world-famous artist and Director of the Aletti Center, presented the contribution of Byzantine art in the context of the new evangelization. For this Slovenian artist, it is very important to understand the reality in which the art inserts and the function it has assumed. Unfortunately, "The art has migrated from the shrine to the palace ending up in the art galleries; it does not generate devotion but only admiration of the artist. At the same time, the art has lost its function as a symbol, putting forward the idea of concept but totally disconnected from the reality of daily life." According to the Jesuit, also the art should be able to transmit the faith, life and love. In short, what happened to the art reflects what happened to the Christian faithful, who do not know how to live their baptism in everyday life, how to live their being regenerated as sons and daughters of God, how to show a humanity inhabited by God, in short, how to show what it means to be redeemed.

Prof. Cesare Alzati, a professor at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart of Milan, in the light of the history and nature of the Eastern Catholic Churches, has identified some aspects that could be a stimulus to the rest of the Christian world. First, going beyond one's confessional frontiers, not losing one's identity, but open a dialogue with the other denominations that share the same challenges of secularization, i.e. the separation between the supernatural and present life.

A particularly important aspect is the liturgy of the Eastern Catholic Churches. In this sense, the new evangelization of Europe "has as its inevitable stage the reaffirmation of the centrality of the experience of mystery, through which man can live in history his encounter with God." In this way, even witness has a sort of "cultic teaching" as its point of departure, which gives rise to "a specific anthropology, constitutionally religious and rooted in the mystery of Christ." It has its origin in the living experience of worship and brings with it a specific way of being Christian in history: being witnesses of the mystery.

Faced with a growing secularism and consumerism in Eastern European societies, the task of the Church is, according to Mgr. Cyril Vasil, Secretary of the Congregation

of Eastern Churches, to offer to civil society, to limit the disastrous effects of a wild capitalism, the experience of the Social Doctrine of the Church "as an antidote to the poisonous effects of market economy." He also recalled that many faithful of the Eastern Catholic Churches have migrated for economic reasons, and this leads to the need to review our pastoral action in a missionary key and in the light of the current social context. In short, the pastoral contact with the faithful immigrants "should not be limited only to the service of divine worship", but should cover their living conditions. They should not feel abandoned by their own Church.

Another challenge is the "practical atheism" which is spreading out. Those to whom the Church is called to bring the Good News are people who are basically ignorant from a religious point of view, and lack of solid points of cultural reference. The question then is: how to arouse their interest in things that exceed their limited material and utilitarian horizon? Like other speakers, also the Secretary of the Congregation of Eastern Churches has stressed the human research of joy, beauty, decorum and solemnity. For this very reason, "the deep and mystical beauty of our liturgical celebrations can be a boost to the profound search for truth."

At the conclusion of the meeting, Fr. Alexandru Buzalic, Professor of Theology at the University of Cluj-Napoca, focused on the presence of lay realities in the Eastern Catholic Churches. This presence is not new, but in the dark years of communism, these realities have suffered the same fate of their pastors. Today, however, along with the revival of old associations as ASTRU (the local Catholic Action), other associations have been created. All of them want to be actively involved in the field of pastoral care, and integrate the work carried out by the clergy in various areas, particularly in the teaching of religion and in the area of diaconate.

The works were carried out in an atmosphere of cordiality and friendship, and have been enriched by some moments of prayer and the daily celebration of the Eucharist together with the local community, including the faithful of Greek-catholic rite and those of Latin rite. The liturgical celebrations, always very well cared for and intensely participated, have shown that the words exchanged in the meeting were also an expression of a lived experience. Particularly appreciated was the presence and contribution of the bishops of Latin rite of the Romanian Bishops' Conference, and the hospitality of the Latin rite Bishop of Oradea, Mgr. Laszlo Boeskei.

The 2012 meeting will be held in Zagreb from the 8th to the 11th of November, to mark the fourth centenary of the union of the Croatian Catholic Church of byzantine rite with the Church of Rome, at the invitation of Mgr. Nikola Kekić, Bishop of Križevci.

Thierry Bonaventura, CCEE Media Officer

THE ADVENT SEASON

By Archimandrite Roman Braga

A season of six weeks opens the Christmas period. The season begins on November 15. It is said that this period originated in Gaul (today's France) in the fourth century and the duration of the season varied from four to seven weeks, until an ecumenical council established the season to be 40 days before Christmas as a fasting period – Advent. Although as Orthodox Christians we do not call this period Advent as it is called in the Roman Catholic Church, the name seems proper; it consists of two Latin words: “ad venire”, meaning “to come to.” Advent's message is that God is coming to the World in the person of Jesus Christ.

This coming of Christ into the world can be understood as a past experience, a present experience or a future experience.

Past Experience

We may think of Christ who came into the world 2000 years ago as the fulfillment of the promises of the Old Testament. This is a past experience and what we do every year at Christmas time is only a commemoration, an anniversary of that event. It is good to believe that God came to Earth on Christmas day, twenty one centuries ago; it is good to stress the divinity of Jesus at a time when many believe that Jesus was just a good guy, a revolutionist, a victim of the social condition of His time. Some call Him a genius, a superstar, but many do not even consider Him God.

Many Christians are not convinced of the necessity of God's Incarnation, which was not only for the salvation of the human race, because God could have saved the world in other ways too, but His Nativity is the crowning of God's act of creation. The entire Universe has been transfigured, sanctified, and deified, for the entire Universe participated in His Incarnation. He included in His body all the physical and chemical

elements that constitute the bodies of men, plants, animals and of all the Universe. When the Bible talks about the creation of man out of dust it involves necessarily the idea that man is comprised out of all the elements of the universe – he is a synthesis of the Universe, a crowning of God's act of creation. That is why God became man, so He can transform and sanctify the entire Universe.

St. Paul says that God did not want to become an angel; He became man, making Himself like us in all aspects except sin. Sin was not given to us by God; sin is a fruit of our own choice.

The Bible also says that man was created in the image of God. It is a logical consequence of the act of creation. If man is like God then God had to become man in order to demonstrate the truthfulness of His creation.

As a young man I revolted against God. I loved Jesus Christ very much, I loved His personality, His sacrifice, I loved the theology of love, but I could not understand the “Ten Commandments”: “do not do this, do not do that, you shall not, you shall not, you shall not.” It was easy for me to see why the Jews did not keep the Commandments. It was easy for God to say: “do this, do that, do not do this, do not do that.” But we are people, we live in the flesh, we fight temptations. There seemed to be an abyss between man and God that could not be bridged. Only later I understood that Christ, through His Incarnation bridged the gap between man and God. He became man to show us that the “Ten Commandments” can be fulfilled even in our human condition; they are not impossible for us. “I am the Truth, I am the Way, I am the Life.” If man was created in the image of God then God must resemble man, He must have everything man has, except He does not have sin.

Present Experience

Most people do not understand that the coming of God is a present experience. They think that Christmas is just a commemoration like Lincoln's

birthday or Washington's birthday. Christmas is not a birthday. God must be understood eternally. Past and future do not exist in God. When Moses asked God, "What is your name?" the answer was "I am the Existing One." He who lives eternally. And if God is infinite, His acts, His gestures, are like Himself – eternal.

For instance, when we say that God created the world, we understand that His work continues. The world is not finished and will never be; God knows no rest; He works continuously, always creating new species of plants, animals, inspiring developments in science and so on.

When we say that God was Incarnate that means He Incarnates in each one of us, everyday, making us similar to Him. God may come to you this Christmas in the form of rebirth, either for the first time, if you did not believe in Him, or as a renewed birth with a deeper understanding of His divinity.

Future Experience

As a future experience, Christmas means that Christ will return unpredictably at the end of the world. "He will come again, in glory to judge the living and the dead." Since Advent promises the sure coming of the Lord, its message is "prepare, be ready." The Lord is coming whether the world is ready or not. Then how does Advent suggest that we be prepared? Through repentance, prayer and patience.

Advent is a time to become aware of one's sins; it is a penitential season, originally known as the "winter lent." During this season weddings are not allowed, not for the wedding itself, because marriage is a sacrament, but because of the social aspect of marriage. In the Winter Lent period, before Christmas, we must be filled with spiritual joy and hope. Advent stresses, not so much fulfillment, as anticipation of fulfillment: the Lord is coming. We must be like a bride, anticipating the wedding day. It is the quiet joy of anticipation and not the joy of celebrating a past event.

Of all seasons, Advent is the most difficult to observe because of the competition with the commercial world. The secular world, in fact, celebrates Christmas during Advent, not on Christmas day. On Christmas day everything is over. Even the churches fall pray to this secularization by decorating the churches and singing Christmas carols weeks before Christmas.

The coming of Christ is a culmination of a historical process coming down through the history of Israel. This is a climax of the plan of salvation. The Old Testament is a record of God's preparing the world for the coming of His Son. So Advent is the Old Testament period of the church year. The child born in a manger in Bethlehem was none other than the Son of God, the promised "Messiah." Advent makes sense only as a time of preparation for the Messiah. This child is "true God of true God." In Him God invaded the history of mankind.

Because it is possible for Him to be born again in our hearts, at Christmas, it is important that we genuinely observe this lent and be spiritually prepared for His coming.

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Thanks to Mikel Rice (See Matthew 6:19-20)

06-27-2008

**BUT STORE UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES IN
HEAVEN, WHERE MOTH AND RUST AND
SUB-PRIME MORTGAGE CRISIS DO NOT DESTROY**



**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква
Святого Йоана Хрестителя
St. John the Baptizer
Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church**

4400 Palm Avenue
La Mesa, CA 91941
Parish Office: (619) 697-5085

Website: stjohnthebaptizer.org

Pastor: Fr. James Bankston

Папox: о. Яків Бенкстон

frjames@mac.com

Fr. James' cell phone: (619) 905-5278

Many Calls for the Chosen

The first call that shaped St. Andrew's life was the very timing and place of his birth. The second call that shaped Andrew's life came through John the Baptist. Andrew must have been an alert young man longing for the coming of the Messiah when he first heard the preaching of John. Andrew's third call came from Jesus himself. The fourth call that shaped Andrew's life was to follow Jesus, to be his disciple, a student in daily contact with Jesus, walking and talking with him, listening and learning from the Master, as from a Rabbi. The fifth call that changed Andrew's life was his selection by Jesus as one of the twelve apostles, to give witness, to preach, to bring others to Christ. Andrew, the student, was chosen to become a teacher sent by Christ. His sixth call came through pious Greeks at the Passover in Jerusalem. They wanted to see Jesus, to be introduced to him. The boy from Bethsaida began using his language skills, his un-

derstanding of Greek and Roman culture, to bring Gentiles to Jesus. St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Jerome, and St. Paulinus tell us that after Pentecost Andrew became an apostle to people in the land of Greece, the bordering lands, and as tradition tells us, ultimately to Byzantium. The final call in Andrew's life was to martyrdom by crucifixion on an X shaped cross at Patras in Achaia.

Saint Andrew's vocation, and ours as well, wasn't given all at once, but gradually. Seven calls from the Lord built one upon the other throughout the course of his life. Andrew's response to each call gave new shape to his life and prepared him for the next gift of God. This courageous young man, by purity of heart and docile obedience to God's will became in St. Bede's words, "The Introducer to Christ." He introduced his brother to Jesus, and the Greeks and Scythians.