

WEEKLY MEDITATION

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? (1 Corinthians 3:16)

A *matryoshka* is a Russian nested doll. It is made up of a set of wooden dolls of decreasing size placed one inside the other. The concept of 'temple' in the spiritual vision of the Church works a lot like a *matryoshka*.

A temple is a building dedicated to religious and spiritual activities, and especially to prayer and sacrifice. It is, so to speak, a container of the Holy, a dwelling place for God.

In the age to come, in eternity, the entire cosmos will be God's temple. Even now, in the eyes of faith, the heavens above and the world around us are His temple. And the worship of God takes place in dedicated temples - the Tabernacle and the Temple in Jerusalem in days of old, and even today in our church buildings (which we Orthodox still call temples).

The Apostle says that the believer is a temple of God. This means that our bodies are sacred and belong not to ourselves, but to God. Given the gift of the Holy Spirit in our baptism and chrismation, we are to manifest holiness in our lives - in how we act and speak and think, in how we treat ourselves and in how we treat others. Our life is to be one of *self-offering*, our hearts and minds given over to the sacrifice of praise and worship and thanksgiving to God and loving sacrificial service to our neighbor.

Within the cosmic temple of heavenly worship lies this world, and within this world are found the buildings we have built as temples, and within our temples we find ourselves, each of us a temple, and deep within each of us, nesting at the center, the altar of our heart. On the altars of all these temples - the eternal, the heavenly, the earthly, the personal - hidden now but to be made manifest in glory, the Lamb is enthroned.

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