

Q&A

Q: “Fr. Alex, sometimes I see people in our Church wearing a black bracelet that looks like yarn. What is it for and what is it called?”

A: These bracelets are very special, and they are called “Prayer Ropes,” “Komvoskinia,” or “Chotkis.” The tradition of using them for prayer comes from the monks and nuns of our Orthodox Church. They usually are made of wool and usually have a system of 33 (reminding us of the 33 earthly year of Jesus’ life), 50 or 100 knots; we can also find many other number combinations. Basically, the wearer says a prayer while holding onto a knot; when he’s done he goes to the next knot to guide him to the next prayer. Typically, the “Jesus Prayer” is said: “Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.” This simple, easily-memorized prayer, being said 33, 50 or 100 times in one sitting, has an effect on the heart: it becomes repetitious within us, constant. Another key factor is that the rope gives us something holy to do with our hands while we pray—it forms a connection between hand and heart, soul and body. In addition to the important “Jesus Prayer,” I encourage people to use the knots to pray for each member of their family, their friends, and all those close to them. Finally, this Christmas season, they would make a fantastic gift for your children or anyone in your life; these simple prayer aids remind us of what Christmas is all about! **Fr. Alex would be happy to help any of our parishioners order one—just give him a call or email.**