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The Magazine of the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, Orthodox Church in America Volume IX, No. 2 Summer 1993



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A Pastoral Epistle From Bishop Herman

The Bicentennial Year:

A Time for Growth and Maturity in Church Life



eginning in September of this year, Orthodox Christianity in North America will be marking its Bicentennial with celebrations throughout the continent. First in Alaska, where missionaries came in 1794 with the precious Faith of our Fathers, the history of our Church will be recalled and relived with much pomp and circumstance.

And rightly so. The evangelizers from Russia followed in the sacred footsteps of the Apostles centuries before them. The founding hierarchs and pastors who spread the Truth that established the universe number with the Fathers of ages past. And the faithful who built the humblest of parish churches and the most magnificent of cathedrals—with their time, talent, and treasure—and sometimes even with the sweat and toil of their own hands—have likewise earned their place both in history and in the Liturgy as “the ever-memorable founders, builders, and benefactors” of each holy house.

The tiny mission that began at Kodiak has grown into a vast and expansive Church that encompasses all fifty of the United States as well as Canada and Mexico. Not only parishes, but also monastic communities—for both men and women—serve as centers of spirituality throughout the continent. And seminaries have been established to continue the legacy of preaching the Good News of the Holy Gospel and “rightly defining the Word of Thy Truth.”

And the soil which was first touched by Orthodox Christians two hundred years ago has since become sanctified by, first, the presence in the flesh, and now, the hal-

lowed relics of six American saints, officially canonized by the Church: Herman of Alaska, who brought Orthodox Christianity and monasticism to this land; Innocent, Metropolitan of Moscow, who served as the first Bishop to shepherd the flock in North America; Juvenaly of Lake Iliamna and Peter the Aleut, the holy martyrs who consecrated this land with their blood; Nikolai of Zhicha who brought the divine wisdom to both St. Tikhon's Seminary and Monastery; and Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow, who cared for the faithful of this land as their metropolitan and who founded the community at South Canaan.

FACING THE FUTURE

This coming festive Bicentennial Year of Jubilee will be marked with ample opportunity to remember and revere the memory of all those valiant souls who gave of themselves, in whatever ways, in establishing Holy Orthodoxy in America. We rightfully rejoice in paying tribute with great esteem to all those who have handed down to us the rich legacy of our holy traditions.

This year-long celebration also serves as a time of challenge for the future. Our rich and glorious past and our ancient Holy Faith provide us with the strength both to face the century yet to come and all that it may hold, and to take our rightful place in the history of the Orthodox Church. St. Paul calls us to this awesome vocation: “You are fellow citizens of the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ Himself as the chief cornerstone. In Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God

lives by His Holy Spirit” (Ephesians 2:19-20,22).

Throughout the Bicentennial celebration, these words of the Apostle Paul should ring in our ears both as a loving reminder and as a stern warning of our mission and purpose as the Church of Christ at



the dawn of the twenty-first century. If we were to measure the success of Orthodoxy's two-hundred-year mission in America, some would want to do so in terms of numbers—counting churches and parishioners, hierarchs and clergy, institutions and associations.

Saint Paul, however, seems to have different criteria for membership and the consequent success of a living, growing Church. From his perspective, we need to ask ourselves such questions as: Are we truly alive in Christ? Are we fellow citizens of the saints? Have we built up the household of God?

And, as we chart the next century of the Orthodox mission in America, our goals and purpose become ever more clearly self-evident. In fact, there are no alternatives. Complacency has no future. Living in the past is a death wish.

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The Bicentennial Year

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We must be demonstrably apostolic and ardently evangelistic. We cannot selfishly think only about ourselves, but we must also focus our attention and our energies on those outside the safe confines of our parish churches. We must be instruments of the Holy Spirit Who desires that "all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth." After all, is that not exactly what Saints Herman and Innocent and Tikhon did?

A WAY OF LIFE

How can we meet this very serious challenge? By living—in a very practical way—in practice, the life in Christ. Jesus tells us: "You will know them by their fruits" (Matthew 7:16). Our Holy Orthodox Christianity is not merely a set of beliefs or a composite of customs but a very real *way of life*. We live in union with Our Saviour; in everything that we think, say, or do, we serve His glory. Our life in Christ is meant to be a sacrament of grace; in it we are renewed each day in all that we do on this earth and become prepared for the eternal life with Him in the Kingdom.

In the sacred mysteries of Baptism, Chrismation, and the Holy Eucharist that we receive the moment of our initiation as Christians, "we are begotten and formed and wondrously united to the Saviour," St. Nicholas Cabasilas tells us, "for they are the means by which, as Paul says, 'in Him we live, and move and have our being'" (Acts 17:28). Baptism confers our being in Christ; anointing gives us the gift of new life, movement, in the Holy Spirit; and by partaking of the Bread of Life and the Fountain of Immortality do we continue to live in Him.

The challenge of the Bicentennial of Orthodoxy is—for us as individual Christians, families of faithful, parishes of believers and a national Church—to recommit

ourselves, to commit ourselves anew to the life in Christ we first received the day of our initiation in the Faith. Only by such spiritual renewal—at every level—can we hope to respond properly and to live up to the vocation to which St. Paul says we are called in his Epistle to the Ephesians.

PERSONAL SPIRITUALITY

Spiritual renewal begins with the individual Orthodox Christian, called to be a saint, "an imitator of Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1). And prayer is essential to the spiritual life and renewal, because it puts us in the presence of God. Jesus Himself gives us the example, praying frequently both morning and evening (Mark 1:35 and Luke 6:12). Saint Paul urges us: "Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you!" (I Thessalonians 5:16-18).

In twentieth century America, where so much of our lives are cluttered with the things and the ways of this world, we need, more than ever before, a schedule or routine for prayer each day. This should include a few moments of prayer once we rise in the morning, to come before the Lord and renew our contact with Him. Then after we wash our bodies, we can nourish our souls with fifteen to thirty minutes of prayer and Scripture reading. Throughout the day, life presents us with occasions and opportunities for conversation with God through short prayers, imploring His help, thanking His goodness, praising His glory. At every meal, of course, and before every task, as well, we need to ask His blessing. Then, in the evening, we can again return to a longer period of prayer, reading the Scripture, Christian fellowship and the like. We need to labor with prayer, to wrestle with God as Jacob did. Prayer makes us alive to God.

A second guideline for personal spirituality is righteous living. All too often we are good in the hopes of

getting to Heaven. But Scripture tells us, "Be holy, for I the Lord your God am Holy" (Leviticus 19:2). To be holy means not to allow sin to work in the heart—to be free from evil. In a world so full of temptations and so confused by Satan, how can we do this? How can we choose what is right, and avoid what is evil? We must simply ask this question in every situation: What would Jesus want me to do or say or think? He would not want me to steal or cheat, speak lies or gossip, think lustful or greedy thoughts. As Christians, we must be courageous and steadfast against evil inclinations, unworthy thoughts and external temptations, because of the Christ Who lives in us. Since we have broken with sin, we must not again come under its power.

In life it is hard enough to be holy, let alone when situations become difficult. Many of us actually do well by ourselves or as long as everyone else behaves in a Christian manner. But as soon as someone else's human imperfections appear or difficulties arise, many of us seem to shift gears and begin to criticize, find fault, grumble, and perhaps become self-righteous, resentful, or despondent. Saint Paul exhorts us, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). With God's grace, we can bring good out of evil when we react to everything with Christ's love and forgiveness. We are to affirm others, not humiliate or reject them. The spirit of complaining or condemning is not Christ's way. Scripture tells us, "Welcome one another . . . as Christ has welcomed you" (Romans 15:7), and "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the Law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

Finally, in our spiritual renewal, we need to give all the glory to God in every situation. In our thoughts and words and actions, He must be "Number One" for us and for others. We give glory to Him when we long to learn more and more from Him and of Him; we honor Him when we let Him take the lead and we follow;

we exalt Him when we serve Him and thank Him and praise Him. We know that nothing of spiritual worth can be accomplished without Christ. He said so Himself: "Without Me, you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Realizing this is true humility. And in that humility we die to our self and live united with Christ. We are but His servants, seeking His will, His purpose, His timing. We must say with St. Paul: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself up for me" (Galatians 2:20-21). This is the essence of personal spirituality.

FAMILY VALUES

In this Bicentennial Year, our Orthodox Church must celebrate one of God's most precious gifts—the family—in a confused land where there has been and continues to be much debate about "family values." Scripture tells us that after God created first Adam and then Eve, He charged them to "be fruitful and multiply" (Genesis 1:28), to create a family. The Bible charts the workings of God amid family situations—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for example. Both John the Baptist and Jesus grew up in families totally dedicated to serving God. Timothy received the faith from his family (II Timothy 1:5). And from Tradition we learn of the role of the families of St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom, and Blessed Augustine in nurturing them in the Faith.

The Christian family has been called God's spiritual laboratory where He seeks to show us His love and build up spiritual relationships. It has been called a workshop of God's Kingdom. Christian love starts with Christ, flows to the husband and wife, and touches their children. In this scheme, the husband-and-wife relationship is the primary instrument of God's love. The Church has always maintained and must continue to affirm the oneness of marriage as a Christian

sacrament. The husband and wife are to love one another, cleave to each other, and cultivate their relationship as Christians.

Thus, the couple needs to develop their personal relationship with the Lord and with each other. They need to be together—to talk together, to eat together, to walk together, to pray together, and to share together, so that the unity of marriage is actually practiced, not just a theory on paper. The couple must work together at their spiritual partnership, merged in Christ and His Church, and share their love with their children and the local parish and Christian society.

Christian parents are to deal with their children as God our father deals with us. Such a relationship involves mutual love, bonding, and closeness, but also personal integrity, freedom, and independence. This means that children deserve the freedom to express themselves, to be listened to, and to show their feelings. Parents, however, are in charge of the household, not the children; thus, parents must stand for what is right, yet be always ready to forgive and start anew, just like the Father of the Prodigal Son. Parents need to provide the proper climate for children to grow as Christians and affirm their own personal commitment to Christ as they grow to maturity.

The Christian home must be a place of family devotions. If parents practice their faith, and encourage their children to join them, it will not be difficult to share devotions as a family. Prayer at mealtimes is a good beginning; reading Scripture and discussing the Sunday sermon or other topics of faith promote spiritual growth; preparation for Holy Confession and Holy Communion and fasting during times prescribed before great Feasts—as a family—is also most beneficial.

The Orthodox Christian family needs to be a viable part of the local Body of Christ, His Church on the parish level. Together, at the Sunday Liturgy, the other Sacraments,

services on feast days, and fasts, patron saint days, and memorial services for family members, the family should come to Church and receive the Sacraments together as a family. Everyone in the household should grow in the Faith by attending the parish religious education programs—Sunday School classes, adult Bible study, and other sessions, in fulfillment of Jesus' divine commission "to teach them all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20). And finally, the Orthodox family needs to be a part of the "fellowship of the saints"—the social life of the parish, if you will—its various ministries, organizations, and activities. There their love for Christ and each other can best be replicated and shared by other such Christians and their families.

PARISH RENEWAL

If we are working at personal spiritual renewal and the spiritual renewal of our families in this two hundredth year of Orthodoxy in North America, and we are an integral part of the parish family, such spiritual renewal will be an outgrowth on the parochial level. A committed Christian with a good voice will enhance the church choir. A Church School teacher who is growing in the life of Christ will reflect that in the classroom. A parishioner who is really filled with the Holy Spirit will greet and welcome a newcomer to the parish with the zeal of which the Scripture speaks.

For some parishioners who may not seem interested in parish renewal, and for those who are, we do need programs to deepen the meaning of Christ in our lives—programs of worship, education, and ministry. Each of these must enhance the experience of Christ in our parish life and our personal spiritual lives as well. Everything we do must be for His glory, whether it be singing, teaching, caring for the sick, bak-

Continued on the next page.

The Bicentennial Year

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ing, raising funds, or building new edifices. In all that we do in the parish, we must ask: How does this program or goal glorify Christ and His work and His Church?

Together on the parish level, the pastor, the parish council, and the members of the congregation must work collaboratively for the greater glory of Christ. We must no longer speak of "our plans" or "our programs," "our resources" or even "our parish." Rather, we must together see it as His plans, His programs, His resources and His parish . . . for we know from the Scripture that it is His Church.

Our parishes, like our families and ourselves, must fully surrender to Christ. We must live for Him first and foremost—and totally; we must give of our time, our talent and our treasure, just as St. Juvenaly and St. Peter the Aleut gave their whole life. Insofar as we turn to Him in prayer, proclaim His Name, love Him, and do everything for His glory . . . to that extent will Christ Himself guide our parish and its programs.

Once our parish reflects this spirit, we should not stop there. Almost every one of us has someone in his or her family who does not go to church anywhere on a regular basis. Nearly all of us knows someone who used to belong to our parish, who no longer comes, yet goes nowhere else to church. Every single one of us knows a friend or acquaintance, a neighbor or co-worker, someone at the hairdresser's or at the gym—who has a problem at work or in marriage or with finances, or is in poor health, or is troubled—and does not have the Lord, does not pray, does not go to church anywhere, does not have the bounties of God's grace in the Holy Mysteries. These are the "unchurched" who make up more than half the population of this country. These are the people we need to invite to our beautiful

churches, to our spiritually moving Liturgy, to our vibrant parish, to share our precious Orthodox Faith in this Bicentennial Year. Is that not what the Russian missionaries did with the Aleuts of Alaska?

Outreach programs, Greeters' ministries, and Lost Sheep programs need to be activated in our parishes in the spirit of St. Innocent, the first shepherd of the North American flock. On the parish level, all of us need to evangelize others—share with them the Good News of Orthodoxy, which has been called "the best kept secret in America." For too long in this country, we have debated over how "American" to make our Orthodoxy. We need rather, as we move into the third century in this land, to concern ourselves with making America "Orthodox" for the greater glory of Christ Who told us: "You are My witnesses . . . to the very ends of the earth" (Acts of the Apostles 1:8).

DIOCESAN GROWTH

In the quote from Ephesians mentioned above, St. Paul calls us members of the "household" of God. In Greek that term "household" is *oikia*—a family. On a larger scale, we find the term *paroikia* for "parish." And on an even larger scale, we discover the word *di-oikia* for "diocese," coming from the same root-word.

In Orthodoxy, we tend to see the "diocese" or the "national church" as some foreign entity "out there," somehow opposed to the local parish. That, however, is not the way it is either theologically or historically. At every level, we experience the "household of God"—as a national Church, a diocese, a parish, or a family. All are part of God's family—different only in size. A parish is a group of families in Christ, sharing the Faith; the diocese, a collection of parishes, sharing the Faith; and so on.

Just as we have an obligation to support our family—and our parish family as well—we have an obliga-

tion to support the Diocese and the national church—morally, administratively, and financially. How else can the Church grow here in America, as it has for the past two hundred years, from that mission on Kodiak Island to the vast Church that shines from sea to sea—if we ourselves do not support it?

Remember, St. Paul praised and the Lord blessed the Church of Philippi for assisting the missions in Macedonia and Thessalonica (Philippians 4:15-16). We need to join their ranks and help a mission church get started and be planted deeply in the Vineyard of Christ. We need to do so with the same zeal that the Saints of America missionized, the same zeal with which the founders and builders of many of our parishes constructed new churches, sometimes with their own bare hands and talents!

In return for their generosity, St. Paul prayed for the Philippians that "God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). May that blessing be ours for supporting our local diocese and all its efforts and programs, and the national church as well for all that she attempts to do for the growth of Holy Orthodoxy in this land. The reality of the modern world is that new parishes and new programs cannot be started and continued without funding. Perhaps no one knew that better than Patriarch Tikhon.

NURTURING VOCATIONS

A final aspect of the Bicentennial challenge remains. All the work of renewing our Faith at all levels cannot come to fruition without one more important element: priests to serve the Church and to do the work of the Lord. In an age that is so strongly secular, vocations in our parishes seem to be few and far between. We need to take an aggressive approach to reverse that trend.

The "vocations crisis" in our

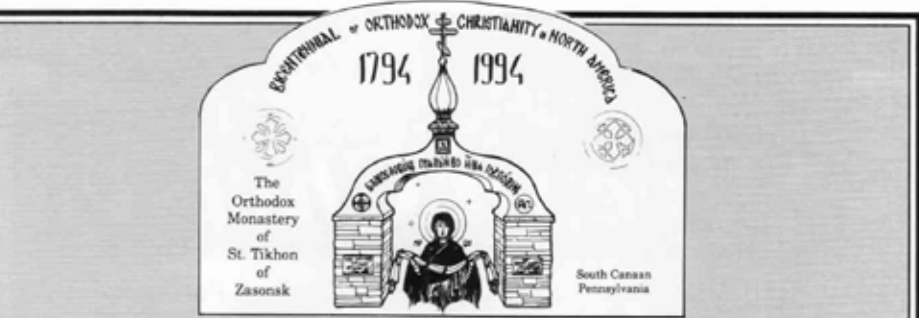
Church is a two-fold problem. Not only is the number of seminary graduates who are being ordained very small, but the number of priests serving our parishes well beyond the age of retirement is higher. We cannot overwork the Grace of the Holy Spirit forever.

All of us must pray sincerely to Christ the High Priest to call more men to the Holy Priesthood and Diaconate who will say "yes" to the call of His service. Each of us should personally make every effort to encourage altar boys and other potential vocations to follow in the footsteps of the apostles in laboring for the Lord and His Holy Church.

Concomitantly, we need to support the Seminary Appeal taken each year in our parish. Our generosity is a token of our support of the men who do say "yes" to Christ. How important is the Seminary? Look back to the efforts and the words of Patriarch Saint Tikhon and Saint Nikolai of Zicha, who founded and taught the communities at South Canaan.

Perhaps most important of all that we can do to promote vocations, is not to destroy one. Each of us must always maintain, through our own personal spiritual renewal, a pious Christian attitude towards the priesthood and the episcopacy—and never do or say anything that might damage a potential vocation by our negative behavior towards the Church or those who serve the Altar.

Years ago it was considered an honor to have a son become a priest. Parents prayed for such a thing, and nurtured every possibility. Today too many people are critical of the Church and the priesthood over the dinner table; too many people are too materialistic to see the riches of priestly service; not enough people are doing the work of promoting vocations—in their daily



Prayer For The Bicentennial

O Lord our God glorified in the Most Holy Trinity, we come to You with this Song of Praise, Glory, and Thanksgiving. We are ever grateful for the manifold blessings and gifts You have bestowed in such abundance upon us, Your humble people in North America. As we celebrate the Bicentennial of Orthodox Christianity in North America, we remember with thanksgiving our forebears who, carrying the Gospel of Christ, came to North America with missionary zeal and love of God.

They established here the Orthodox Church. They planted firmly the Holy Cross in North America, and by this sign they converted the souls of the Native Americans who received them. You poured into the hearts of this newly-baptized people the gifts of the Holy Spirit, setting their hearts on fire with the love of Christ. In the simplicity of this love, they grew and persevered in the Holy Orthodox Faith, becoming the first harvest of Your sowing of salvation in

North America.

Now, as we celebrate the coming of Orthodoxy to this land, We pray that You will strengthen us in Faith and kindle in us fervor to continue the Holy Work that was begun here two hundred years ago. Grant growth in life and faith and spiritual understanding to all those who pray with us, O Loving Master. With this growth, teach us how to put our faith into action, that this land and its people may come to the knowledge of Truth. By the Grace of Your Son, our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, and the communion of Your Holy Spirit, make our celebration witness to Your wonderful, loving deeds. In this, may Your One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church in North America be established, strengthened, enlarged, and preserved in peace, so that Your Holy Name may be glorified: Father without Beginning, Only-Begotten Son, and Life-Creating Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages and ages.

prayer life, in their actions and at parish meetings, and in their support of the Church and its apostles.

A FINAL WORD

The celebration of the Bicentennial of Orthodox Christianity in North America is truly more than pomp and circumstance. It is a challenge of our commitment to Christ, spiritually renewed in this year of jubilee. In virtue of our Baptism, we are called to that commitment. Every Liturgy re-

sues that call: "Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed, and glorious Lady Theotokos, and ever-virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us commend ourselves and each other, and all our life unto Christ our God."

Saint Herman of Alaska echoes it again centuries later: "Let us at least promise ourselves that from this very minute we will try to love God more than anything else and to fulfill His Holy Will." This is the work that lies before us, until the Lord comes again.

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 Orthodox Church in America

Volume IX Number 2 Summer 1993

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Your Diocese Alive

Produced by the Publications Department of The Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, Orthodox Church in America, Diocesan Center, South Canaan, Pennsylvania 18459. (717) 937-4686, under the direction of His Grace, Bishop HERMAN.

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 Photography Martin Paluch

Editorial and Subscription Office - Alive in Christ, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, South Canaan, Pennsylvania 18459. (Home) (717) 876-1241.

Distribution - The magazine is distributed free of charge within the Diocese. Those living in other areas may subscribe for \$12/year.

Deadline for the next issue of Alive in Christ is November 15, 1993. Please submit all articles (typed, double spaced), pictures, Parish news, etc . . . to Alive in Christ, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, South Canaan, PA 18459.

In the Fear of God, and with Faith and Love, Draw Near!

Year after year, faithful Christians, Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike, travel from across the country to come to the beloved St. Tikhon's Monastery in order to be spiritually refreshed and uplifted, illumined, as it were, by the mystical presence of Christ. This year's eighty-ninth Annual Memorial Day Pilgrimage was no different. Indeed, all the services and events of the weekend were truly Christ-centered. The theme of the pilgrimage was taken from the words of the Divine Liturgy, "In the fear of God and with faith and love, draw near." This most powerful exclamation guided all of the faithful through a spiritually rewarding experience.

On Friday, May 28, the annual pilgrimage formally opened with the celebration of Vespers and the singing of "O Gladsome Light" which liturgically expresses the reality that the eternal presence of the Light shines forth the mystical presence of Christ. Following Vespers, the beautiful service of Matins was held (also in the Monastery church). This service gave the visiting faithful time to place themselves in the presence of Christ and to glorify God through prayer. After the vigil service, an Akathist to St.

Tikhon of Zadonsk was sung with a procession around the Monastery Church. How beautifully the community sang the refrain, "O Holy Hierarch Tikhon pray unto God for us." To conclude the opening of the pilgrimage, the faithful venerated the precious relics of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk.

On Saturday, May 29, at 9:00 a.m., a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the Monastery Church by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius; His Beatitude, Metropolitan Anthony of Chernigov and Nizhen of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church; Bishop Arkady of Kuril; His Grace, Bishop Herman; and local clergy. The responses were sung by St. Tikhon's Seminary Choir under the direction of Fr. Deacon Michael Bondar. The Liturgy was followed by a procession of the clergy and faithful to the Monastery Well for the Blessing of Water, a wonderful experience for all who attended. Later in the afternoon, graves were blessed. It is these services that enrich the lives of so many of the pilgrims who come to St. Tikhon's Monastery for a taste of the richness of the Kingdom.

The seventh Sunday after Pascha, May 30, opened with the joyous celebration of the Hierarchi-

cal Divine Liturgy at 9:30 a.m. In his inspiring homily, Metropolitan Theodosius spoke of the historical and theological significance of the Ascension of Jesus Christ. Historically, he noted, the event was strange, perplexing, and incomprehensible—yet it was a real event in the lives of real people. "The disciples truly witnessed the departure of Jesus on the Mount of Olives. Gradually, the meaning of what they had experienced became clearer to them—above all after the descent of the Holy Spirit who guides them and us into the understanding of truth. The Ascension then became not only a historical event, but an event of theological meaning."

Metropolitan Theodosius asked the question: "What does the Ascension say about God?" He answered, "It says first of all that He descended. He left heaven to come down to earth. In other words, He could not bear to look at the world from a distance. He looks at the world that He created to share His own life in love, in joy, in peace, in harmony, and what does He see? Misery, suspicion, pain, brokenness, despair, hopelessness. Man is broken from other human beings and

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Beginning of the Hierarchical Liturgy .



Protodeacon Stephen Howanetz chants the Epistle.

In The Fear Of God

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creation, broken within, broken from God. God could not endure this. As it says in the service of Baptism, 'God could not endure to behold mankind oppressed by the Devil.' His response is to descend into the world and share life with His creatures—He comes to share life not as He created it to be, but as it has become, as it has been deformed and mutilated. And by sharing that life, by drinking that cup of life down to the very bitterest last drop, He brings new hope to every aspect of fallen life, including suffering and death."

His Beatitude went on to say that the Lord's Ascension "is at the same time a promise to send the Holy Spirit as Comforter, as Guide, as assurance of Christ's never-ending presence." And finally he stated that "Christ's Ascension is also a promise to return."

51st Annual Commencement at St. Tikhon's Seminary

The fifty-first annual academic commencement of St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary was held in the Seminary Auditorium with His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius addressing the graduates. He presented to them an excerpt from the journal of Father Yakov Nesvetov, the first native American priest and a contemporary of St. Innocent. The Metropolitan went on to describe the pastoral work of Father Yakov, who is being considered for canonization by the O.C.A., and challenged the graduates to model their lives after the example of Father Yakov's pastoral faithfulness and zeal.

His Grace, Bishop Herman then presented the graduates with their degrees and academic accomplishments. The Diploma in Orthodox Theology was awarded to three of the graduates, Michael Demko, the Rev. Nicholas Dotson, and Brother James (Miller). The Master of Divinity Degree was awarded to Riasa-

phor Monk Marc (Mollard), Riasaphor Monk Alexis (Trader), and Rev. Dea. Alexander (Frederick) Younes. Riasaphor Monk Alexis (Trader) received a special award for highest academic achievement throughout his studies at St. Tikhon's Seminary.

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Anthony, also addressed the assembly, sharing with them his love and concern as a shepherd of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

Sunday evening at 5:00 p.m., a Grand Banquet was held at the Genetti Manor in Dickson City,



The faithful receiving the Eucharistic gifts.



Walter Shymansky conducts Memorial Day Choir.



Akafist Male Choir sings at the Divine Liturgy.

celebrating the fifty-first academic commencement and the twentieth anniversary of consecration of our beloved Diocesan Hierarch, His Grace, Bishop Herman, to the Holy Episcopacy. Toastmaster for the

evening was the Very Reverend Robert Kondratik, Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America. Greetings and congratulatory messages were offered by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius

(printed elsewhere in this issue), and by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Anthony, Very Rev. Vladimir Fetcho, Dean of the Wilkes-Barre Deanery, Very Rev. Eugene Vansuch, pastor of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, Bethlehem, Very Rev. Joseph Martin, Dean of the Frackville Deanery, and Very Rev. John Kowalczyk, Diocesan Secretary, and His Excellency, Bishop Timlin of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Scranton. On the dais, accompanying the Bishops, honored clergy and graduates, were the distinguished members of the Board of Trustees of St. Tikhon's Seminary.

His Grace, Bishop Herman, responded to the kind words of all who spoke, and said that his life over the past twenty years as a Bishop has been touched by many different people. He stated that the great joy of serving the church is that it "provides an opportunity for people to get together in peace and in joy." He reflected on his personal spiritual journey and how he became closer to God and a servant of the Church. The Annual Pilgrimage, noted Bishop Herman, has provided an atmosphere of prayer where people can come and share their joys and sorrows. He thanked all those gathered and reminded them of the Lord's Great Commission and of the responsibility to love one's neighbor and to continue the work of the building-up the Church of Christ, working together for the salvation of all of mankind. Before the evening concluded, many people offered congratulations and their gifts of love and appreciation to Bishop Herman.

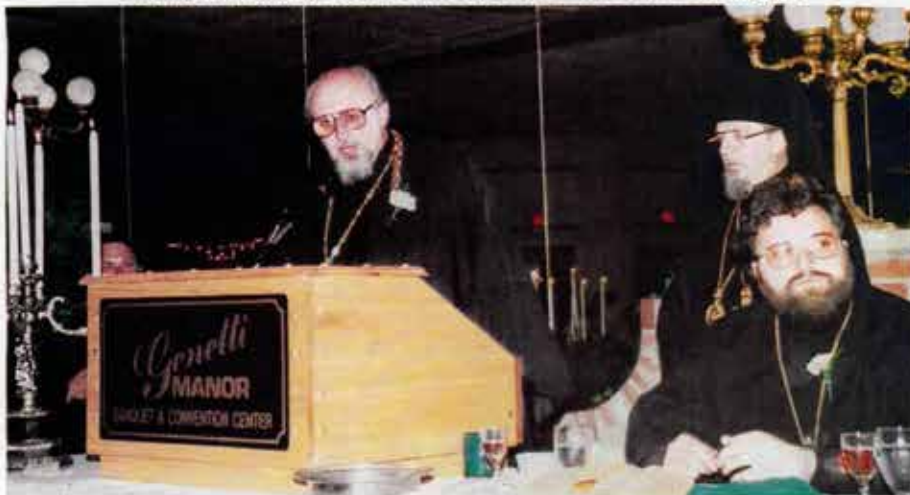
On Memorial Day, May 31, at 7:30 a.m., the first Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Monastery Church by the monastic and diocesan clergy. The responses to the service were sung by the seminary choir.

On account of the inclement weather, the traditional procession began at 9:30 a.m. from the Monastery Archway. The Hierarchs,

Continued on the next page.



Bishop Herman welcomes Metropolitan Anthony of Chernigov.



Archpriest Joseph Martin congratulates Bishop Herman on 20 years in the Episcopate.



Bishop Herman cuts anniversary cake.

Address Delivered By His Beatitude Metropolitan Theodosius At St. Tikhon's Seminary Commencement

Soon we will be inaugurating the bicentennial of Orthodox Christianity in North America. As we approach the bicentennial, it is important to look at the rich history—the events and personalities which make up our two hundred years of existence on this continent. And it is for this reason that I would like to share with you today a passage buried in a journal deep in the archives of the Church in Alaska, and only recently translated, which was recorded by an itinerant native Alaskan priest in the tiny village of Amlia on the Aleutian chain, on November 26, 1842.

"On the occasion of the Feast of St. Innocent, I held the vigil. In the morning, prior to Liturgy, I baptized an infant . . . Then all the children were gathered in the chapel and I spoke to them about God's love for people, especially for children . . . Afterwards, I celebrated the Divine Liturgy, at which fifty adults, who had come to confession, were joined to the holy mysteries. Later, I visited the cemetery and sang a requiem for all who had died there since my last visit. The rest of my time today was spent performing weddings. I celebrated eight weddings. After the ceremony, I instructed the newlyweds on the meaning of marriage and the duties of husband and wife. Thus, I concluded my activity here."

Vigil, confessions, baptism, instruction, liturgy, memorial services, weddings, and all of this on one single day. Here we have a tiny glimpse of the tremendous labor carried out by one priest who will surely become better known to all of you over the next

few years, Father Yakov Nesvetov—the first native American priest, a contemporary of St. Innocent Veniaminov, and highly regarded by him. For thirty-six years he kept a daily journal of his pastoral work. The Orthodox Church in America is considering his canonization as a vivid example of zealous pastoral labor and leadership.

He was born in 1802 on the island of Atka in the Aleutian chain. His parents were pious Orthodox Christians, an Aleut mother and Russian father, who, as reader of the community on Atka, arranged for him to attend the seminary in Irkutsk. Upon graduation, he married a Russian woman, Anna Simeonovna, was ordained priest, and on May 1, 1828, returned to his native village. From there, he served a parish 2,000 miles wide, all the outlying Aleutian Islands. He worked closely with Fr. John Veniaminov (St. Innocent) who had arrived at Unalaska four years earlier. In a report many years later, Bishop Innocent wrote that Fr. Yakov was "a person of piety, energetic, and in a word, a true Christian," who brought to his pastoral work a profound love and understanding of his people and culture. He shared many of St. Innocent's interests—translating, making scientific observations about the climate, culture, geography, and animal life. He was skilled at carpentry and building, wood carving, and iconography. But above all, he was a skillful pastor who felt responsible for the souls entrusted to his care as he traveled from island to island.

Father Yakov stayed in Atka another eight years, until the end of 1844, when Bishop Innocent appointed him to begin a new chapter in his pastoral life, this time among the Yupik Eskimos and Athabas-

can Indians of the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers. He labored there for twenty years, learning new languages, translating, building churches, and above all, preaching the word of God, incarnating it into the culture of the native people so well that Orthodox Christianity, to this day, is not viewed as "white man's religion," but the religion of the native people. Until his health and eyesight failed, he continued to lay the foundations of Orthodoxy in southwestern Alaska. He died on July 26, 1864, at the age of sixty.

Today we are called to serve under conditions vastly different from those faced by Father Yakov. He was the first missionary for Christianity to several distinct, but homogeneous native cultures. We face an American culture of incredible diversity and complexity, permeated by secularism, with thousands of denominations. As Orthodox, we are a tiny and splintered minority. We are one percent of the population, and yet others who share that one percent status have much more visibility and clout. Yet even under such different conditions, there is much we can learn from Father Yakov's zeal for Christ, his endurance in the face of difficulties and disruptions, his faithfulness to the pastoral calling, and his love for the people he served.

My dear spiritual children, as you finish this year's course of studies, and as some of you graduate, I commend to all of you the life of Father Yakov Nesvetov. Through his prayers, may we be faithful laborers in whatever part of the Lord's vineyard to which we are called that we may serve.

In The Fear Of God

Continued from page 9.

priests, and faithful made their way to the pavilion church for the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy. The re-

sponses to the Divine Liturgy were sung by two choirs. The Akafist Russian Male Chamber Choir sang half of the responses together with a group of approximately forty-five

dedicated priests, choir directors, and laymen who gathered to share their talents in singing under the competent direction of Mr. Walter Shymansky. The two choirs added

to the overall beauty of the Liturgy as their voices joined in unity to sing the treasures of Orthodox liturgical music. The pavilion was full to capacity as all of the faithful listened to the inspiring words of the homily of the day. His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius spoke on the theme of the pilgrimage. He noted the fact that many of the faithful of the Orthodox Church in America over the last twenty-five years have responded to our Lord's call to break bread with Him in the Holy Eucharist:

"It is by Christ's commandment and not just by his invitation, that we draw near in spite of our weaknesses, sins, and doubts . . . We draw near to communion in order to abide in Christ and to have Him abiding within us. This of course, is not magic; we must desire His presence within us. This brings me to the three conditions for making Communion truly holy: fear of God, faith, and love. Faith and love are self-evident, but fear of God is not something we readily accept. After all, if God is love, how can we speak of fearing him? Nevertheless, we find in Scriptures constant reference to the fear of God as 'the beginning of wisdom.' But fear in this

sense is best understood not as terror, but as reverence and awe. We have the 'fear of God' when we accept Him as Master, Lord, and Father; when we seek to follow His commandments, do His will, and desire to be with Him and know Him. Indeed, the Old English 'færan' means to 'lie and wait'; those who fear God lie in wait to do His commandments. In contrast, the person who does not fear God has no interest in His commandments or His revelation. 'What I want, when I want it' is their motto. For such a person who does not humbly seek forgiveness and repent of his ways, Holy Communion is wrong and even dangerous. As St. Paul said, 'That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died' (I Cor. 11:30). God is love, God forgives those who repent 'seventy times seven,' but He is not manipulated by anyone."

The pilgrims were touched by these words of the Primate of the Church, and many approached the chalice to partake of our Lord's most precious Body and Blood. They were renewed in their understanding as to why we are called to draw near to Christ in communion. Truly, what a beautiful theme for

the pilgrimage! It was expressed in the homily and felt by the faithful who drew near to our Lord, especially during the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy on that rainy morning at St. Tikhon's Monastery and Seminary, in South Canaan, Pa.

At 1:30 p.m., a Molieben to the Most Holy Theotokos with anointing of the sick, the infirm, and other pilgrims was held in the pavilion. The responses to the healing service were sung by members of the Bicentennial Male Chorus under the direction of Fr. Daniel Kovalak.

Many of the faithful gathered to listen to the words of His Grace, Bishop Herman, who spoke about the brokenness and sickness in the world and, in general, the reality of suffering. Bishop Herman put into words how people feel when they suffer with spiritual or physical ailments or when they experience the death of a loved one. He explained that we are to reach out to God for strength and healing, not only in our time of need, but consistently throughout our daily lives. With this, many drew near for holy anointing with the "oil of gladness." A glorious end to another pilgrimage to St. Tikhon's Monastery!

—Priest Emilian Hutnyan



Seminary graduates with faculty.

Thirtieth Diocesan Assembly Convenes



Clergy commune during Liturgy at Diocesan Assembly

St. Tikhon's Monastery/Seminary was the setting for the thirtieth Diocesan Assembly of the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania. The day began with the Divine Liturgy and Molioben concelebrated by His Grace, Bishop HERMAN, the Diocesan Deans, Frs. Joseph Martin, Vladimir Fetcho, and John Udics, Fr. John Kowalczyk, Secretary/Treasurer of the Diocese, and Fr. Michael Lepa. The Bicentennial Choir, directed by Fr. Daniel Kovalak, sang the responses to the Liturgy.

Following the Divine Services, the Assembly delegates gathered in the Seminary for registration, a continental breakfast, and fellowship.

The Assembly was declared open by Bishop Herman at 11:30 a.m. with prayer and the Bishop's Bless-

ing. Thirty-three clergy and twenty-nine lay delegates attended the Assembly, along with several alternates and observers.

Father Vladimir Fetcho, Rector of St. Nicholas Church, Olyphant, and Mr. John Zoranski of Holy Resurrection Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre, were elected vice-chairmen. Fr. David Shewczyk, Rector of Holy Resurrection Church, Alden Station, and Mrs. Marie Proch of St. Basil Church, Simpson, were elected secretaries.

Delegates prepared for the Assembly by studying a packet of reports mailed to them prior to the Assembly. The packet included the agenda, minutes of the previous Assembly, the proposed budget and reports by the Diocesan officers, deaneries, and several departments. An opportunity to discuss and ques-

tion each of the reports was given during the Assembly. The minutes and all reports were accepted by the Assembly.

Bishop Herman's report highlighted the morning session. After welcoming the delegates to the thirtieth Assembly, he pointed out the activity of the various departments and their concern for the Diocesan faithful. His Grace noted that we are near the end of the first year of a three-year program of spiritual enrichment. The program focuses attention on the pastor, faithful, and finally, evangelism. The Diocesan Demographic Study and the Administrative Summit of the Orthodox Church in America convened at St. Tikhon's Monastery/Seminary also highlighted the year. The results of these activities reveal that our Diocese is no different

from others in the problems we face. In noting another decrease in Diocesan membership over the last year, His Grace told the delegates that it is time to resume responsibility and take a serious approach to see what we can do for the building up of the Church.

The Demographic Study conducted during the past year was an action taken to demonstrate the effort being made to face today's challenges. Bishop Herman thanked those who completed the survey and questionnaire, and for offering advice and criticism. He also thanked Fr. Eugene Vansuch for his labors and those who assisted him with this project. His Grace expressed his gratitude to the clergy and parish councils for distributing the materials. Bishop Herman also expressed his regrets and apologized for the few who did not participate in the study as they were requested to. He noted, however, that these people will not be forgotten. All the responses were read and they will help us to create an agenda of what we must do.

His Grace reported on the upcoming Bicentennial celebration that will begin in September. Several schedule changes have been made due to the shortened visit of His Holiness Patriarch Aleksey II. The Patriarch has cut his planned visit twelve days due to problems in his homeland. He will not be able to visit our Diocese, but, it is hoped, will be on the East Coast and attend Orthodox Education Day at St. Vladimir's Seminary, if possible. Further announcements about the Bicentennial will be forthcoming. His Grace noted that the Celebration gives us an ideal opportunity to show others what we have in our Faith. He encouraged everyone to participate in and promote the celebration. One such effort is already being made by the Bicentennial Choir. Bishop Herman thanked Fr. Daniel Kovalak and those singing with him for their effort. Fr. Kovalak can be contacted by those wishing

Continued on the next page.



The Church gathers for her annual diocesan convocation.



Clergy and laity at the Diocesan Assembly.



Archpriest Vladimir Fetcho addresses Assembly.

Diocesan Assembly

Continued from page 13.
to arrange a concert date.

Ground was broken for new churches in Stroudsburg and Wallingford. His Grace encouraged the faithful to pray for the fruitful end of these projects. Perhaps these churches can be consecrated during the Bicentennial Celebration.

Bishop Herman offered a very



Gene Havrilak gives auditor's report.

energetic schedule for the upcoming year. The schedule includes summer camps, clergy conferences, a clergy wives conference, the Annual Lecture Series at the Seminary, as well as additional lectures within the deaneries, a Church School Conference, an Altar Boy Retreat, a Marriage Encounter, a Monastic Conference, Family Day, and a National Youth Rally. He also noted the possibility of a "Youth Exchange" with the Church of Russia, and a Diocesan Pilgrimage to the northern part of Russia. The National FROC Convention will be held in the Frackville Deanery over the 1994 Labor Day weekend. The history of our Diocese probably will be published for the Bicentennial Celebration.

His Grace acknowledged the fine work of Matushka Isabel Anderson in her work with the Department of Religious Education. She will be relieved of her duties in the Depart-

ment in order to pursue other labors. Matushka Frances Vansuch has been appointed to the position.

Bishop Herman reported that there are several priests who are ill at this time, and asked for the faithful to pray for them. Dr. Daniel Donlick will retire from his work at St. Tikhon's Seminary due to ill health. Fr. Paul Ropitsky was hospitalized, and Fr. Stephen Karaffa was scheduled to undergo surgery.

In closing his report, Bishop Herman expressed his gratitude to the Diocese for the acknowledgment of his twentieth anniversary as Bishop. He also thanked all who labored with him during the past year.

The remainder of the agenda for the morning session was concluded with the acceptance of reports by the Diocesan Council Secretary, Diocesan Treasurer, and Diocesan Auditors. The proposed budget for 1994 of \$115,425 was passed with no increase in the assessment.

Other reports were made from the Deaneries, the Departments of Religious Education, Missions, Publications/Public Relations, Youth, and Insurance, and were accepted by the Assembly.

The session adjourned for lunch at the Monastery Dining Hall. The delegates enjoyed the meal and good fellowship.

The Assembly reconvened at 2:00 p.m. The Metropolitan Council report was the first order of business and was accepted as presented. The remainder of the Assembly was devoted to the Demographic Study.

Father Vansuch began the discussion about the Demographic Study by informing the delegates that the study was put together with the input of Bishop Herman and the Diocesan Council. Each parish was responsible for distributing the study to parishioners. Some difficulties were encountered in distributing the materials and the return deadline was extended. A file was made for each parish as the surveys and questionnaires were returned. All of the returned sur-

veys were read and the information was compiled. The results of the study were reported to the Diocesan Council and distributed to this Assembly. A copy of the results was mailed to each parish council president in the Diocese. The report is given in two parts—Demographic Study and Survey Questions.

Father Vansuch rated the response good in that this was the first time that such a study was conducted. He reported that all 962 responses were read by His Grace, and by Fr. Vansuch and those who helped him, including Fr. Joseph Martin, Fr. John Udics, and Fr. David Shewczyk. Questions three and four were also reviewed by lay members of the Diocesan Council.

The parishioner response show a great concern about parish life and reflected the appreciation for the opportunity to share thoughts about



Marie Hudock gives insurance report.

parish life. Father Vansuch also noted the parishioners' concern that nothing will be done to face these problems and challenges. He stated that something will be done as Bishop Herman is committed to working on these concerns. In his closing remarks, Father noted that our diocese comprises one-fifth of the membership in the Orthodox Church in America. Our problems are a microcosm of the whole Church. The floor was then opened

to delegates to question and to offer comments to Fr. Vansuch and a panel of those who worked on the study. Comments centered on the need for educating the faithful about the life of the Church and educating the community about Orthodoxy. Clergy and parish councils need to work together to discuss the issues about parish life and then be ready to come together in projected parish council conferences to discuss the issues.

Bishop Herman then reminded the delegates that it is time for every bishop and priest to assume the responsibility entrusted to them. He said that we must give fully of ourselves and at least make the attempt. His Grace stated that he will first meet with the clergy and ask them to meet with the faithful to discuss matters. Reports will then be prepared for a proposed Parish Conference to be held in Bethlehem. He asked for the cooperation of all and for prayers that these

efforts may be fruitful.

In closing remarks, His Grace encouraged strong support for the Bicentennial celebration by saying that every parish should participate. Yet another opportunity is given to bring back those who are inactive and bring others into the parishes. He contrasted the situation today with that faced by the Founders of our parishes. They were able to sit down as a family and look to the needs of all. They built the churches for themselves and for their children. Today, we seem to have taken advantage of their labors without recognizing that there is still much that needs to be accomplished. Bishop Herman spoke of the need for stronger public relations, again noting the work of the Bicentennial Choir. He said the best public relations, however, is to be visible to those around us. If people see Christ within us, they will join us in our march for salvation. His Grace then noted that this was the

first time that a Diocesan Assembly has labored so long over spiritual, rather than material, concerns. Bishop Herman thanked all who participated in the Assembly. He asked for the full support of every priest and layman to do his share for the building up of the Church.

Father Fetcho again congratulated His Grace on his twentieth anniversary, and thanked him for leading the Diocese in prayer on this day and for his challenging words.

The Diocesan Assembly was adjourned with prayer and the blessing of Bishop HERMAN.

The delegates proceeded to the Monastery Church for Vespers. All are hopeful that the results of the Assembly will inspire the delegates to encourage the entire Diocesan Family to share in the Lord's work for the building up of parishes, the Diocese, and the Orthodox Church in America.

—Priest David Shewczyk

Is Our Lord Calling You To The Holy Priesthood?

For further information please call or write
the Seminary Registrar

Fr. Daniel Donlick, at:
St. Tikhon's Orthodox
Theological Seminary
South Canaan, PA 18459

Phone (717) 937-4411



The Findings Of The Survey

The first Diocesan Demographic Study and Survey Questionnaire has been completed, with the results published in time for the Diocesan Assembly held this past June. The Assembly spent much of the afternoon session devoted to my report and the information compiled based on the results. It is important that one not jump to any firm conclusions based on the report, since the response represents a little over thirty percent of our Diocesan faithful. Considering that this is the first time our Diocese has undertaken a project of this magnitude, I consider this degree of participation response a very good one and am encouraged by the sincerity and interest on the part of our diocesan faithful.

There were many questions asked of me at the Diocesan Assembly and at other times following the Assembly. I will attempt to reiterate the questions and answers for the benefit of our readers.

What were the final response numbers from our parishes?

Deanery	Demographic Data	Questionnaire
Frackville	284	210
Philadelphia	257	228
Wilkes-Barre	632	524
TOTAL	1173	962

Who received copies of the report?

At the May 19, 1993 Diocesan Council Meeting, it was decided that a copy of the report be sent to each parish priest, each parish council president, and each diocesan assembly delegate. The report was included in each parish packet for the Diocesan Assembly. If the parish council president was not the delegate, he received a copy in a separate mailing.

If I want to know the results from my parish, where do I go for the report?

As indicated in the previous answer, any parishioner wanting to know the results of his parish response may contact the parish priest, council president, or Diocesan Assembly delegate.

What are some of the highlights from the Demographic Study?

The 30% response rate revealed the following statistical information:

49% of the respondents are over the age of 55.

35% of the respondents are between ages 20-54.

2.5% of the respondents are shut-ins.

28% reported they are very active in their parish.

41% reported they are somewhat active.

26% reported they are not active beyond the Divine Liturgy.

5% reported they are not active at all.

Do the faithful feel very close to their parish?

57% responded they feel very close.

31% responded they feel somewhat close.

4% responded they are not close at all.

4.5% responded they are not sure how they feel.

Parish membership revealed that:

1% of the respondents are members of their parish less than one year.

8% responded they are members one to five years.

8% responded they are members

five to ten years.

81% responded they are members ten years or more.

Additional statistical information revealed that:

30% of the respondents walk to church.

73% must drive to church.

15% depend on someone to drive them to church.

6.5% have children in college.

Average miles, one way to church:

Frackville Deanery - 6.8 miles.

Philadelphia Deanery - 12.5 miles.

Wilkes-Barre Deanery - 8.0 miles.

Average minutes it takes to go to church, one way:

Frackville Deanery - 12 minutes.

Philadelphia Deanery - 21 minutes.

Wilkes-Barre Deanery - 14 minutes.

Who read the survey questionnaires?

At first, all 962 responses and the letters attached to them were read by Father Eugene Vansuch. To help compile the report for the Diocesan Council and Diocesan Assembly, His Grace, Bishop Herman, gave his blessing to allow Fathers Joseph Martin, John Udics, and David Shewczyk to read the answers to questions three and four, under the guidance of Father Eugene. The purpose of the additional readers was to verify the results with Father Eugene. At the Diocesan Council meeting it was decided to have the lay members of the Diocesan Council read the same answers and review the responses

to help them prepare for the Assembly. Father Eugene met with Dr. Alexander Pianovich, Mrs. Marie Proch, and Ms. Paula Lahutsky one evening for this review. Mr. John Zoranski was unable to attend due to work commitments.

When this was accomplished, the survey questionnaires were turned over to Bishop Herman to read in preparation for the Assembly.

Who read the answers to questions one and two regarding the life of the parish?

The survey answers to questions one and two were read only by Father Eugene Vansuch and His Grace, Bishop Herman. Father Eugene prepared an individual parish profile of the results listing the total number of responses along with the reasons given supporting the comments made by the respondents. These profiles were given to Bishop Herman for his direct personal attention. No other persons were given copies of the profile as the responses have to do with the individual parish life and only the Diocesan Bishop has the authority to address these parish matters.

What is going to be done as a result of these responses?

This is a very good question as several responses voiced a pessimistic attitude expressing a concern that nothing is going to be done. On the contrary, the Diocesan Council and Diocesan Assembly were advised by Bishop Herman that attempts to address these concerns will be made through the following:

A. Direct Personal Involvement. Where the circumstances warrant the personal attention of His Grace, he will meet with the parish priest and parish council to address the issue and area of concern. His Grace is well aware that his involvement is going to be necessary in certain parishes.

issues are the following:

B. Meetings with Diocesan Clergy. His Grace announced at the Diocesan Assembly the scheduling of three Clergy Retreats. These two day retreats are set well in advance to allow diocesan clergy to place them on their calendars in order that they will be in attendance. It is at these retreats that His Grace will deal with the clergy regarding the many pastoral concerns expressed by the faithful. (Note: an accompanying article on the first clergy retreat appears in this edition.)

C. Parish Council Conferences. His Grace announced at the Diocesan Assembly the scheduling of two Diocesan-wide Parish Council Conferences. The first conference is scheduled for Saturday, October 30, and will be held at Northampton County Community College, Bethlehem, Pa. The conference is not limited to parish council members and is open to all interested parishioners. The laity must share in the responsibility for addressing the concerns of our Diocese in order that our parishes and deaneries will remain strong entities.

D. Educational means. Ongoing education is the most effective method of instructing our faithful. Articles on the basic teachings of the Orthodox Faith will appear in diocesan publications; there is also the possibility of preparing short copy-ready articles for use in parish bulletins. These articles could deal with topical issues. Also, parishes will be encouraged to establish Adult Education Programs and to involve parishioners when the parish priest makes these educational programs available, either on a parish or deanery level.

What areas of concern are the most important for our diocese to address?

Based on the survey, the top ten

1. Membership
2. Get younger generation to come to church.
3. Address social issues.
4. Educating the public on Orthodoxy: getting involved in community affairs.
5. Church attendance.
6. Educate the youth.
7. Care and outreach to the elderly, disabled and needy; financial needs of the elderly.
8. Adult education: active church life, services, and education.
9. More TV, newspaper, and radio coverage.
10. Financial matters; financial restraint.

The list goes on and covers two pages, producing some very interesting comments expressed by our faithful.

What suggestions were made to help improve the Diocese and Deanery?

The response to this question fills three and a half pages. Based on the survey, the following areas received the most attention:

1. Better communication between priest and parish: accessibility to parishioners; accountability; explaining changes when they are made. More regular visitations by the Bishop, even the Metropolitan. Involvement by the Bishop. Communication of problems, issues to the people. Better communication between the O.C.A. and the parish; between the diocese and the parish.
2. Orthodox education on all levels in the parish—youth through adult.
3. Continue present programs: *Alive in Christ*, parish council conferences, three-year plan, summer camps, church school conferences.
4. Better management of financial matters; simplify services.
5. More effective public relations to be done by our hierarchs and clergy; rotation of clergy, including the hierarchy.

Continued on the next page.

SPECIAL SECTION: The Diocesan Demographic Study And Survey Questionnaire

6. You are doing everything possible, the people need to respond. Offer special programs, diocesan meetings, conferences at other sites in the diocese other than St. Tikhon's; better publicity and public relations.

In reading through all 962 responses, all comments were recorded and categorized with regard to questions three and four. Every comment was recorded and thus appears in the Demographic Data Report prepared by Father Eugene.

The faithful of our Diocese are to be commended for taking their time to let us know their feelings and

concerns. Several wrote two and three-page letters which they attached to their responses. The responses revealed that our faithful answered honestly, openly, and with a sincere, loving concern for their parish priest, parish, deanery, and diocese.

As the coordinator of the Survey, I am very pleased with the results. I thank all parish rectors, council members, Diocesan Council members, and faithful for their support and response to our Diocesan study.

I offer a special thanks to His Grace, Bishop HERMAN, who has given and continues to give his full

support with this diocesan project. He is to be commended for his willingness to address the issues and concerns within his diocese. He cannot meet this challenge alone. It will require the effort of all diocesan faithful: bishop, priests, and laity.

The initial work of the Demographic study is completed. The second stage now begins with the challenge lying before each of us. May the Lord direct our work and guide our efforts as we work together in strengthening the Body of Christ—His Holy Church.

—Archpriest Eugene Vansuch

Analyzing The Findings Of Our Survey

The Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania recently conducted a survey both to gain demographic data and to obtain information from the faithful regarding local parish life as well as life within the deaneries and the diocese. The survey contained four questions which provided an opportunity for written responses. Two questions dealt with local parish life, while one dealt with life in the deaneries and the diocese and the other asked for suggestions for improving life within the diocese. The focus of this article is to consider the information gained in response to the latter two areas, specifically, concerns regarding deanery and diocesan life along with suggestions for improvement.

The recent demographic survey completed by the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania is testimony to the commitment of His Grace, Bishop Herman, the Diocesan Council, and the faithful of the diocese to furthering Christ's Holy Church in Eastern Pennsylvania and in America. Nearly one thousand of our five thousand members completed the questionnaires regarding the status

of the diocese and deaneries. While one-fifth or twenty percent may seem like a low response, it is nevertheless representative of those faithful who received the surveys and cared enough to offer their thoughts, opinions, and concerns regarding the diocese and deaneries.

In many ways the concerns expressed resemble those heard today in other Christian churches, primarily membership issues, needs of the younger generation, and needs of American society. In addition, some of the issues raised in the responses seem unique to Orthodoxy. These issues include educating the public about Orthodoxy, increased publicity through the print and broadcast media, and participation in the Holy Eucharist. Throughout the responses the need for education within our own membership was expressed repeatedly. This is indeed a positive indicator, pointing out the strong desire among the faithful to better understand Orthodoxy in order to live according to the teachings of Christ and His Church.



Paula Lahutsky

The overall essence of the responses was primarily focused on spiritual matters of varying form. While the day-to-day (or Sunday-to-Sunday) operation of the churches also was addressed, most of these concerns were presented in a way that showed a direct tie to spiritual growth. It is clear that those who responded truly love the Orthodox Church and were willing to examine the life of their own parish, deanery, and diocese. Self-examination is not an easy task, nor is it something done lightly—as evidenced by our own experiences preparing for the sacrament of penance. In a similar way, the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania has

conducted this survey as a tool in examining its strengths and weaknesses in order to better serve the faithful who are seeking Christ's salvation. The information obtained through the survey will help us recognize our own imperfections so that we may, with God's help, rectify them, not justify them.

The Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania has many strengths upon which we may build. The strong desire of the parishioners to be aware of the activities within the diocese, the desires of the faithful to have frequent and regular interaction with the bishop, and the overwhelming love for Orthodoxy emerge as obvious strengths across our three deaneries. The love of Orthodoxy and the conviction that it is the true faith is evident in our longing to share our faith with others and to bring others to the true faith. Our love for each other is also evident as the surveys show a desire for increased inter-parish activities and interactions. It is clear that we enjoy and benefit from fellowship with each other through Lenten mission services, lectures, and other similar inter-parish events. Requests for more of these opportunities are certainly a healthy indication that we want to spend our precious time with others who share our faith.

Many of the programs currently in place in our diocese were also pointed out as strengths. These include the diocesan publication *Alive in Christ*, St. Tikhon's Children's Summer Camp, the activities of the Department of Religious Education (church school conferences, picnics), and the parish council conferences. Those who avail themselves of these opportunities recognize the value of each of them. There remains a need to increase participation in the already existing programs, while modifications to these programs are also possible in order to reach more members.

Our love and concern for others

also emerges as a strength as some respondents note the need to serve the less fortunate in our society. Outreach to the homeless, substance abusers, unwed mothers, abused children, and the mentally ill is also seen as an avenue by which we may serve our Lord. Extending ourselves to these populations as well as to those suffering with AIDS or other potentially terminal illnesses is yet another way in which our membership wishes to let others see Christ in us. Programs of this nature are already in place in some churches within our diocese. Others are recognizing that this is now an area in which effort is needed.

Within our diocese there is a significant number of older people, senior citizens, retirees, and other special groups. The large number of these individuals constitutes a strength in that these members have a wealth of experience to offer to the younger generation. Their voices need to be heard and their wisdom recognized as they are the ones who sustained our church through many difficult, trying times. It is vital that this older population continue to be appreciated and acknowledged as pillars of the diocese. Along this line, this population also possesses specific needs which must be addressed. These needs are pointed out in the surveys and clearly are warranted. Inter-generational activities may be beneficial to all involved, while special programs for senior citizens may also meet the needs specific to this generation.

Respondents to the survey identified areas in which our diocese needs to improve. Many of these legitimate concerns are shared across the diocese, while some may be specific to a given geographic area. Across the diocese we seek to keep the "younger generation" in the Church and to return those who have fallen away from the Church. We see this kind of concern expressed repeatedly in the survey. This relates directly to the mem-

bership issue which was the most frequently mentioned concern. This ties in as well with requests for more youth education and youth programs. It is frustrating to those who know how much the Church can provide to an individual, to see others not benefitting from the spiritual sustenance available to those who seek it. We know that in today's society a variety of forces attempt to pull us in directions that lead us away from the Church. The survey respondents recognize that the Church is competing with secular ideas which many young people find appealing. Is it possible to compete with such forces? How do we communicate to the younger generation that true happiness can be found only in Christ? What kind of disciples are we? Does the younger generation see Christ in us to the extent that they want to be like us? Do we "turn off" the youth by behaviors and practices they believe to be unimportant? How do we reach our young people so that we can guide them, sustain them, and prepare them to carry on the Orthodox faith when we fall asleep in the Lord and Orthodoxy is in their hands? We must face these and similar questions if we are to embrace seriously the mission of Orthodoxy. We must respond quickly and steadfastly if we hope to prevent any more of our young people from leaving the true faith. It is our responsibility to recognize the realities of today's society and to take action accordingly.

Have we been negligent by not dealing with these issues all along? Have we dealt with these issues ineffectively? Have we even recognized that these issues exist? We must ask ourselves these and similar questions as we address the concerns voiced in the survey. A complacent attitude will not be acceptable if we take our commitment to Christ seriously. We are blessed in this diocese with creative thinkers, willing workers, and de-

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voted leaders. This combination of forces in conjunction with reliance on spiritual guidance will advance the cause of Orthodoxy in our diocese and beyond. Each of us who boldly, yet humbly, calls himself an Orthodox Christian can and must contribute his talents as we rapidly approach the twenty-first century.

Matters relating to the clergy comprise an area of interest based on the survey replies. In some instances we find a call for improving the quality of sermons, while others seek continuing education for priests. Enhanced communication between the clergy and the faithful along with increased interaction between the priest and his parishioners were also cited as needs. Some survey respondents also called attention to the need for adequate clergy compensation. The relationship between the clergy and the faithful is in many ways unique and delicate. It is clear from the surveys that the respondents favor working closely with the clergy in furthering the Church and in confronting their own spiritual struggles. Frequently the parish priest is the first person to whom we turn when we face personal problems, when we examine spiritual issues, or when we are unsure about a "religious question." As we seem to rely on our priests for a wide range of areas, it is understandable that we see a need for them to be adequately prepared to provide the support, education, and guidance we seek.

For many years we have turned to the resources and facilities at St. Tikhon's Monastery and Seminary to help us grow educationally, spiritually, and to share in fellowship as well. We are indeed blessed to have within our own diocese these valuable institutions. Conversations with Orthodox believers who reside in other dioceses reveal the wealth of opportunities within our reach compared to those who live far from anything resembling a "Center of

Orthodoxy." Nevertheless, our diocese stretches across a large geographic territory, with some faithful traveling many hours to reach St. Tikhon's. Consequently, we hear a call to provide programs and opportunities in the southern and western areas of the diocese. The faithful residing in these areas long to have access to that which the northeastern portion of the diocese has enjoyed for many years. Diocesan lectures, meetings, conferences, celebrations, and liturgical services held in all three deaneries are important to our members and will enhance our visibility as well. The respondents from the Philadelphia and Frackville Deaneries appear eager to show their hospitality to fellow Orthodox Christians from the north and welcome the opportunity to host diocesan activities.

Pan-Orthodox activities present another area of interest according to a number of respondents. While we see some in place and thriving, in some instances we need more. Our Orthodox brothers from other jurisdictions may be among our greatest untapped resources. It is vital that we cooperate with each other and share in the many blessings of the Orthodox faith. The survey respondents who noted this need seem to be on the forefront of advancing Orthodoxy in America.

Financial matters ranging from budgeting and management to assessments and dues were set forth in the responses. These topics often evoke strong feelings and opinions with a wide variety of suggestions attached. We are becoming increasingly aware of the concept of stewardship and seem eager to find an effective way to be good stewards. Our Lord tells us, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21).

Questions regarding liturgical practices, concerns about length of services, and similar topics are reflected as issues faced within our

parishes. It appears that the survey respondents want to assure that the true practices of Orthodoxy are preserved and wish to learn more about how to do so. As each parish is unique, varying practices have been noted within the diocese and beyond. Clarifications and explanations will assist in this area as we seek to better understand the beautiful, rich liturgical life of our Church. An active liturgical life seems directly tied to the overall well-being of a parish.

It is apparent that the recently completed survey yielded an abundance of ideas, suggestions, opinions, and concerns. This is precisely what was hoped for when the survey was initiated. It is important to His Grace, Bishop Herman and to the Diocesan Council that our diocese move forward in advancing Christ's Holy Church. The survey is but one tool with which we may work toward this end. The responses are being taken seriously as we begin to address the issues of today. We are reminded that this is simply a starting point with a great task remaining before us. In many ways it may seem to be an overwhelming task, yet we know that with God all things are possible.

The Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania is planning a variety of initiatives in response to the issues raised through the survey. Several clergy conferences will be held in the coming year as well as parish council conferences. Programs for clergy wives will continue as well. The diocese is committed to providing opportunities for the youth of the diocese so that they may benefit spiritually, socially, and educationally from interactions with each other. Events for Orthodox of all ages will be held in each of our three deaneries to minimize the distances traveled. Inter-deanery activities are likely to occur as well. These are but a few of the ways in which issues will be addressed.

From September, 1993 to September, 1994, we will celebrate the Bicentennial of Orthodoxy in North America. Special events to commemorate this milestone will enhance our opportunities to grow together. We may wish to seize this time as an occasion to do more than merely look back on two hundred years of Orthodoxy in America. Instead, we may wish to use this time to ask ourselves, "Where will Orthodoxy in America be two

hundred years from now?" Will there be concerns about the loss of members or will we be the major faith in America? Will we be recognized as the true faith—or will Americans wonder what the Orthodox church is all about? Will anyone even care?

The survey may serve to inspire each of us to take action individually and all of us collectively. We may be grateful for our strengths and may use them productively. Likewise, having begun to recog-

nize our weaknesses we are now approaching a point where we may begin to remedy them. The faithful are encouraged to continue to express the needs, concerns, and issues having an impact on the life of the church. We see that we are not alone and that many of us share common concerns. Together, and with the blessings of our Lord, we will strive to do His will as we seek salvation through Jesus Christ.

—Paula Lahutsky

Can We Make A Difference?

As a member of the Diocesan Council, I was making my fourth trip to the Monastery for an Assembly meeting. I had been a delegate from Holy Resurrection Cathedral several times before Bishop Herman appointed me to the Diocesan Council, and each time I asked myself "Can we make a difference?" During the Liturgy, I noticed some new faces and recognized many familiar ones. At the end of services I was convinced that, with all of us working together using the leadership we had assembled for this meeting, we could make a difference!

After our morning coffee break, the meeting moved quickly through the first five topics. The study packet had included a report covering the last fifty or so weeks of the busy schedule of His Grace as Bishop of Eastern Pennsylvania. It reported our Bishop's many visits to his flock, trips to Miami to arrange the most successful Tenth All-American Council held July, 1992, and two academic degrees conferred upon His Grace, a Doctor of Divinity received at Nashotah House in Wisconsin, and the second, a Doctor of Business Administration from Robert Morris College, his alma

mater. Also mentioned was Bishop Herman's appointment as leadership of the Orthodox delegation for Christian Unity Week, his address at Marywood College for the annual pro-life breakfast, and his participation at the Annual March for Life in January. These were a few highlights of His Grace's busy year.

I reflect on this enormous and growing schedule and challenging life that Bishop Herman lives and breathes and can only conclude that he manages it by being "actively dissatisfied." His Grace has always taken the great challenges confronting him and fine-tuned his actions so that everyone in his flock can fit in just right, can belong, be comfortable. He instills in all of us a desire to work as diligently as he does for the person next to us. This is my feeling each time I attend the Diocesan Assembly. We gather once a year to hear the problems of the Diocese and the solutions which are offered. Many are complex, a few are basic; however, the feeling prevails that "we can make a difference" with this leadership that is our Diocese.

St. Seraphim said we possess everything needed to show forth the same fruits of faith and work



John Zoranski

the same marvelous works that were done by the Saints in the past; all that we lack, he said, is a "firm resolve." St. Herman of Alaska, a contemporary of St. Seraphim, said "From this day, from this hour, from this moment, let us love God above all." It is with this in mind that we all hope to bring a renewed spirit to the work of the Lord so that, sharing in this labor, we can grow spiritually and make progress in building the House of God, the household of faith. Bishop Herman offers this spirit, this resolve: At each Assembly he has instilled the confidence needed, "From this day, this hour, moment, for God!"

Bishop Herman, in his three-year

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plan outlined for us last winter, demonstrated His firm resolve to move the Diocese ahead to where it can make a difference for all of us and for all the people of Eastern Pennsylvania. The first year of the plan is focused on the spiritual growth of the parish priest, that person in our lives who is on call every hour of every day. Our clergy are being offered reinforcement, encouragement to study and give renewed attention to preaching and needed pastoral work, and to increase their knowledge of the services of the Church to foster "growth in life and faith and spiritual understanding" among their flocks. In this demanding world, the Lord is asking everyone to sacrifice a little extra. His Grace stated that clergy and faithful must make this spiritual effort with joy that will be pleasing to God. Our pastors need our support, they need to see us at services not only during troubled times, but to share the joyful times also. In this sense, it is very clear in my mind, "we can make a difference!"

The second year will focus on the spiritual growth of the parish. The key to this is without question an increase in the frequency of participation in Confession and Communion, since they are at the center of our faith. Each parishioner will be asked to enrich his liturgical life through spiritual reading and study. This will, under the guidance of our pastors, help guide us in our personal prayers and devotions. The priest and the faithful will also seek ways to improve community life and to serve one another, to "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." We need to know who we are: our origin, how we came to be in our present condition, what we are called to become, and how Christ has made it possible for us to achieve this. Working together, the priest and laity grow closer in that common goal all of us seek each day, to "make a difference" in our Church life, and in our life with our

families, and in all areas of our life.

Year Two will not be easy; however, it will offer a challenge which the strong cannot deny themselves: an opportunity to renew their love of Christ while helping each and everyone in their parish, their diocese, and the Orthodox Church in America.

As we begin to celebrate the two hundredth year of the Orthodox Church in America, we have to ask ourselves, "Where are we?" and "Where are we going?" Our second year plan as outlined by His Grace will define these questions for all of us only if we work with diligence and prayer. The seventh All-American Council asked her members to answer similar questions in 1983:

1. Does the growth of the Church continue in America today?
2. Does it happen in your parish?
3. Are you personally contributing to it?
4. Are you helping those who try to promote growth?

The time has come for parish life to renew itself, for each of us to stand up and be counted, to learn from others and to share our strengths with each other. In this way, "we can make a difference."

Year Three will focus on parish evangelism—how we can bring people back to the Church. "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (St. Matthew 9:37-38). Here we can help our pastors with the harvest, by spreading the word first by example in attending Church every Sunday, practicing more frequent communion, attending vesper services, praying and reading the Bible, and making a sincere effort to support the Church in a more charitable manner. The parish must ask itself, "Do we reach out to those around us, liturgically and in other ways?"

This program has a beginning but it has no end. It is intended to be the beginning of a permanent

strengthening of our spiritual lives, one which you will wear on your shoulder for all to see and believe. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." Those of us attending the Assembly have been filled with enthusiasm for these proposals. The challenge will be to implement the programs at the parish level and to spread the enthusiasm we feel. We will emerge stronger as individuals, stronger in our parish communities, and better able to face those temptations which surround us every day.

Everyone should know that our Diocese is alive and well with strong leadership and strong discipleship. Waiting won't make it happen! Year One opened with a spiritual renewal, a two-day Diocesan Clergy Retreat held just before Great Lent. A retreat was also held for clergy wives two weeks earlier and covered many subjects for those in attendance.

This entire three-year program unfolds at the same time the national Church has held the first Administrative Summit, in which they worked at identifying the obstacles to our Church's upward mobility in growth. Recently, we all received the Demographic Data and Survey Questionnaire from the Diocese. Questions one and two of the questionnaire dealt with your parish; those results are being prepared for each parish priest along with Bishop Herman for a response. Questions three and four dealt with Diocesan concerns and possible improvements. Every response was read by more than one person and placed within a category of concern as a conclusion.

The Diocesan census figure for 1993 is 5,437 adult members. This Demographic Study response was forty percent, the Questionnaire response was eighteen percent. From the data, the top three concerns listed as most important for the Diocese to address are:

1. Membership.
2. Getting the younger generation to come to church.
3. Addressing the social and moral issues.

Can We Make A Difference???

The Bishop's plan for renewal through the implementation of the three-year program is a strong affirmative response to these concerns.

Other concerns voiced in the survey point towards Year One: the renewing the spiritual energies of priestly vocations. Of the first thirteen concerns, seven are concerned with the priesthood. The goal of Year One to the Diocese—its Bishop, its clergy and faithful—is to continue our support of the priesthood.

The second phase, building the parish spiritually, is a necessary growth from the first year's effort. Again, our Diocesan leadership has

heard the concerns and addressed them before the survey was printed. The chief three responses to the question "What suggestions would you offer to help improve the Diocese and the Deanery?" were:

1. Better communication between priest and parish. Communication of problems and issues.

2. Orthodox education at all levels in the parish.

3. Continue with *Alive in Christ*, Parish Council conferences, church school conferences, summer camps.

The third phase is that of parish evangelism. Only by example can we create a desire in those fallen away and in the unchurched to enter into a life in union with Christ.

If we want to make a difference, let us begin today. For those who responded to the survey, the challenge should be rewarding. They will follow the plan by:

- Offering support to their priest.
- Becoming more active in their church life.
- Use all they have learned and begin to reach out to those who need them most.

Christ told his disciples (that is, us), "You are the light of the world." We are the difference which will make the three-year plan successful. We are the reason the Diocesan Assembly was productive and rewarding. A sense of responsibility develops inside when our efforts are being creative for our Church. There could not be a better time than now, the beginning of the Bicentennial year, to renew our life and commitment to the Church. A difference can be made—by us, the faithful, and the Bishop and clergy of our Diocese!

—John Zoranski

Voice Of The People

The voice of the people shall be heard. *Communication*: the ability to understand the thoughts and feelings of another living being can enable us, in our thoughts and deeds, to transcend our limitations.



Nina Berry

Communication: aiding, guiding, nurturing, teaching: Reflections on the Survey and the Bicentennial

Early this year you may recall having received the Demographic Study and Survey Questionnaire from the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania. Nothing of this kind had been issued in recent memory. Perhaps the need hadn't arisen for the gathering of such information. Perhaps we were comfortable with the status quo—how we felt about ourselves and how the world felt about us. Maybe we weren't comfortable with certain issues but felt that our concerns would not be validated. Maybe we didn't care.

Now we Orthodox have had an opportunity to voice concerns by responding to the survey and questionnaire. The response was favorable. According to the findings, "Using the Diocesan census figure for 1993, 5,437 adult members, the Demographic Data response repre-

sents approximately a forty percent response." The Survey Questionnaire elicited information from eighteen percent of the concerned members. These concerned members found these tools for information a valid way to express current as well as past concerns.

The Holy Church is drawing near to her bicentennial milepost on the North American continent. The Bicentennial should truly be a celebration of our Orthodox heritage. Yes, I said—"should be" a celebration. But too few have made it so.

Unless you are of Native American descent, your ancestors, like mine, came to these shores, strange yet promising to them, to begin a fresh life. They brought steamer trunks and bundles filled with precious necessities—necessities material in nature—and yet most im-

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portantly and not forgotten like flotsam, they brought their souls' necessity for nurturing their lives within the Holy Church. This, plus the circumstance that many were unable to communicate in what was, for them, the foreign tongue of the new land, impelled them to begin quickly to organize and build churches in which we pray today.

Orthodox churches expanded both in membership and in their architectural dimensions (to accommodate the growing numbers of people) in the early years. The needs of the Orthodox Christians—from Alaska and the Canadian provinces to the melting pot of the American towns and cities—were met.

Yet many of us find ourselves treading water as we deal with social issues within the family of churches. Our lives touch the lives of many people in many spheres of life—church, community, work, school, and so on. *Communication*, by aiding, guiding, and nurturing, helps us and helps others to know that Orthodox Christians living in this land have maintained the integrity of their faith and the communion in love which it brings.

The survey and questionnaire carried out by the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania may well serve as a window . . . a window for Orthodox Christians to look with concern at our world, and a window through

which we may also look at ourselves. For by looking at ourselves critically, we can know in what direction we need to go in the future. The Bicentennial celebration marks the completion of one portion of a job well done, and heralds a future holding out the promise of accomplishing yet more in the name of our Lord—for the glory of God, the spread of His kingdom, and for our souls' salvation. With Him to help and guide us, we can do this—for as our Lord said, "He who believes in me shall do the works that I do, and greater works than these shall he do" (John 14:12).

—Nina Berry

To The Venerable Hierarchs, Reverend Clergy and Faithful of The Orthodox Church in America

The Church's liturgical year begins on September 1st, about the same time that everyone is preparing to send children back to school, resume regular work schedules, parish programs, and so forth. For the Orthodox Church in America, September will also mark the beginning of our year-long bicentennial celebration. In September 1794, the first Orthodox Church in North America opened in Kodiak, Alaska, with the arrival of eight missionary monks from Russia.

On September 1st we also commemorate St. Simeon the Stylite. As a Syrian desert dweller of the fifth century, he couldn't seem more remote from Kodiak in 1794, let alone America in 1993 and our bicentennial, but an incident in his early life is instructive for our own approach to celebrating the founding of our Church. He had been praying at night for guidance about the way of salvation, and after falling asleep, he dreamed that he had dug a large pit, like the foundation of a house. And he heard a voice say "dig deeper." He kept digging and then stopped. Again the voice: "dig deeper." He stopped a third time

when the foundation seemed right, but again the voice said "dig deeper." He then kept digging without stopping until he was told the foundation was ready and he could now build the house. St. Simeon accepted all of this to mean that the foundation for spiritual life lies in hard work and "digging deep."

It is my hope that all Orthodox Christians will look at the bicentennial as a God-given moment set before them to "dig deeper." Toward this end, the service of prayer for the bicentennial could become a regular part of the year's worship, reflection, and thanksgiving. The bicentennial could be a profound significance for our Church if it prompts us to learn more about our history and seriously ask ourselves its meaning for us in the present. We can also be inspired by the men and women of the past who built their lives around prayer and worship and service. And this spirit of dedication, sacrifice, and service in the Name of Christ is what we need most of all at this moment in our history. But this will not happen automatically. Individuals and parishes will have to **choose** this

way of life, and **decide** to look beyond their personal and parish walls to the needs of others.

There are many needs to be served, and each parish must find its own way to address particular needs in its community. But every parish of the Orthodox Church is capable of addressing one of the most pressing needs in America today: spiritual homelessness. You, and your parishes, can reach out to those many who are looking for something they have found nowhere else on the American religious scene: a spiritual home, a spiritual life that endures beyond the grave and embraces their whole being—when it began in Jerusalem in the first century, when it came to Alaska in 1794, and what it still offers today.

Brothers and sisters, may God bless you, your families, your parish and diocese, and your celebration of the Bicentennial of Orthodox Christianity in America.

With love in Christ,
+THEODOSIUS
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and
Canada

Orthodox Church in America Holds Administrative Summit

St. Tikhon's Seminary, June 1-2, 1993

On June 1 and 2, St. Tikhon's Seminary was the site of a unique meeting of leaders of the Orthodox Church in America. The Tenth All-American Council, held in Miami, Florida, in the summer of 1992, mandated this meeting to begin to find solutions to the problems facing our Church and its administration today. The meeting included His Beatitude our Metropolitan Theodosius, the Holy Synod of Bishops, and the Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America, the Diocesan Chancellors, the Deans, the Metropolitan Council members, and members of the Chancery staff. Over seventy people—a virtual *Who's Who* of the Orthodox Church in America—attended the meeting, so the complete list is too long to print here.

The weather was beautiful—clear and breezy, the temperature pleasantly moderate—perfect early summer weather. We assembled in the auditorium of Saint Tikhon's Seminary, the site of the First and Second All-American Councils, and of many Diocesan Assemblies, lectures, and other educational events. At the head of the room was a small podium, and in front of it were ten round tables with chairs. Surrounding the tables were large black-board like panels, which proved to be cloth-covered plastic foam sheets for use with push-pins—large moveable bulletin boards. This was to be the arena for our endeavors.

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius, solemnly led us in a *Molieben*, asking the Holy Spirit to guide us in this difficult task. All present sang the responses most movingly.

The Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America, Archpriest Robert Kondratik, read us a statement of purpose for the meeting. This can best be summed up in the text of the resolution of the Tenth All-American Council, which reads in part: "Recognizing that a wide diversity, even a polarity of opinions exists within the Orthodox Church in America about the understanding and implementation of the Church's administrative problems; and recognizing that some bishops, priests, and parishes emphasize local diocesan, and even parochial, church life and work, while others insist on the need for a strong and active Orthodox Church in America with coordination and consolidation of programs and policies between dioceses and parishes on the level of the Church as a whole (including issues of finance and administration, as well as such issues as liturgical practices, education, and mission); and recognizing further that this diversity within the Church may not only indicate differences of a practical sort, but rather may manifest different understandings of the nature of the Church and its work, the Tenth All-American Council resolves that the Orthodox Church in America undertake in the next triennium a process of discerning God's will with respect to the Church's administrative policies and structures, and take measures to resolve the long-standing administrative problems which inhibit the Church's mission, demoralize her clergy and faithful, and contribute to her decline in membership; and that this process be inaugurated at an Administra-

tive Summit . . . to focus on identifying obstacles that prevent us from achieving common goals and articulating a common vision . . ."

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius, then addressed the assembly. He said that our task is to find the source of the demoralization spoken about in the resolution, and a catalyst to reverse that demoralization. He noted with emphasis that there is a spiritual dimension to this problem—that discerning God's will is not reducible to administrative policies and procedures. The solution will come through spiritual effort—both personal and corporate spiritual efforts. We need to look for God's will in our hearts, but here we are being called to find God's will in communion with each other. In the Synod of Bishops and in the central and Diocesan Church administration, the emphasis is on clergy and people gathered around the bishops. On the parish level, it is the Eucharistic community where we look for God's will through having Christ foremost in our daily life. The power of life in Christ is in servanthood, with Jesus as teacher and example of that ministry. It is our conviction that life in Christ is life in community. God the Father led the people of God to salvation; Jesus appears and does His teaching to groups; the Holy Spirit is sent to the community, the Church. The purpose of Church order is to further communion, not isolation. If there are troubles in the Church, then bishop, priest, and layman are all at fault. And bishop, priest, and layman together must all look to find the

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Administrative Summit

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solution to these problems. Here, at this Administrative Summit, perhaps we will initiate the process of discerning God's will in regards to administrative matters.

His Beatitude then introduced Mr. Michael McKibben, author of *Orthodox Christian Meetings*, as the Facilitator for the Summit. (By the way, *Orthodox Christian Meetings* is available at St. Tikhon's Bookstore, and this author thinks it should be required reading for every pastor and parish council member.)

When we came into the auditorium, we naturally sat with acquaintances and friends, but the first order of business was for everyone to count off, one to eight. Each table had a number on it, and we were sent to the table with the number we received when we counted off. This broke up our usual little groups. Mr. McKibben told us that each table had a 'facilitator' of its own who was in charge of the program for that table. And one of the bishops came to sit at each table.

At the Administrative Summit, we were presented with a highly organized and carefully scheduled plan. Each of us was given a folder containing a booklet with a statement of the Program Objectives and Program Process, a schedule for the Summit, the booklet of the minutes and resolutions of the Tenth All-American Council, a list of the resolutions of the Tenth All-American Council as prioritized by the participants of the Council at its last session, and a chart which came to be called "The Big Picture."

Mr. McKibben began by reminding us that "through sharing our fellowship in Christ, the objectives of this Summit are: to list and prioritize obstacles that prevent us from achieving common goals and articulating a common vision; to identify the participants' expectations of the Metropolitan, the Holy Synod, the All-American Council, and the Metropolitan Council; and

to define the results expected and the scope of activity for the Administrative Task Force."

The Program Process was fascinating. To begin, we were reminded that we all shared a common vision of the Church, that there is diversity of opinions and viewpoints, that each person's perspective is unique and is to be carefully considered, that we have a common desire to find consensus, and that all people here are qualified to be here. These may be 'givens' but they require a *spiritual effort* to be realized, he said.

Mr. McKibben then presented us with "official" requests: that there be no sermons, no lectures, that we suspend judgment and listen to each other, that we work for and dig for the pearls in the comments of others, that we limit comments to fifteen or twenty seconds, that we be on time (and we even selected a U.S. Federal Judge to be our official 'let's get started' timekeeper), that we participate with enthusiasm and that we NEED constructive dialogue, that we should be constructive and not just critical, and that we not be intimidated by the presence of bishops. And **no one's** ideas would be left out—no matter how obscure or "way out."

Each table was to operate as a "break out" group. We were each given a black magic marker. On the tables were stacks of canary yellow 3" x 5" index cards. At each session, the boards were labeled with orange cards to remind us of the subject of that session, and below each session topic card, 'header topic' cards were placed. We were to write our suggestions on our yellow cards which would be pinned up on the boards under the header topics.

Then, when all ideas had been put forward, we would collate the cards. Those cards which had ideas similar to other ideas would be eliminated. And when each table finished with consolidation of its ideas, the boards, loaded with idea cards, would all be put together and consolidated.

We were given a number of green circular adhesive dots. During the breaks, we were to place one dot on each of the ideas (cards) of our choice in order to identify what we considered to be OUR priority issues—for example, the top administrative priorities of the national church; or the top areas needing the most urgent attention. By adding up the 'dots' we would see which ideas the Summit identified as the priority ideas. The results would be printed up and distributed.

According to Mr. McKibben, the benefits of this process are that it is inclusive, giving equal time to both quiet and vocal persons, no one's ideas go unexpressed, the process focuses on clarifying intent and thinking and avoids a rush to judgment, and it facilitates finding a consensus.

After explaining the process, Mr. McKibben turned to the chart called "The Big Picture." At the top were listed God the Holy Trinity and Ordo—Heavenly Worship. The various considerations we use to accomplish our Christian duties, such as Holy Tradition, Holy Scripture, the Ecumenical Councils, Typicon, Canons, Liturgical Worship, Rubrics, Icons, Hymnography, Rules of Prayer, and so on, along with the considerations of Vision, Identity, Goals, Objectives/Projects, Activities/Procedures and Actions, all are part of the Big Picture. But, we spent most of our time on items not on this list, things which Mr. McKibben identified as *details*. What we need to do is to take time out and look at the Big Picture in order to put the details into priority and perspective.

After a break, we went to work.

The topics we considered were simple, but crowded with considerations.

The first topic we considered was "Obstacles." The topic headers were Structural Incompatibilities, Ongoing Communications, Meetings and Agendas, Unrealistic Expectations, Surroundings and Culture, Stewardship, and the use of Exper-

tise—skills and talents, Leadership, Implementation, Common Direction, and Other. There was always an 'other' header to catch ideas which were good ideas, but not strictly on topic. And we were always free to add more header topics, as we thought of them.

After lunch, we tackled a second topic: The Participants' Expectations of The Metropolitan, the Holy Synod, the All-American Council, and The Metropolitan Council: each of these with the sub-headers: By Statute, By Practice and in Future; Relationships between these "headers"—those which Work, those which Don't Work; and our Expectations of Others not listed.

We broke for Vespers in the Monastery Church. We were privileged to be able to celebrate Vespers in the presence of the relics of Saint Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow, founder of Saint Tikhon's Monastery, one of its heavenly protectors. The Monastery Church seemed more beautiful than ever: the highly polished wooden floors, the late-afternoon sunlight filtering through the stained glass, the pleasant breeze, the simple singing by the choir of the monks to which we added our voices, all made the service a great spiritual joy and blessing. As we left, we venerated the holy relics before they were returned to their home.

After supper, the next session was to address the question of the Administrative Task Force. The header topics were Results Expected, Delegated/Authorized Empowerment, Scope/Boundaries/Responsibilities, Duration, and Budget and Resources. A very strange thing happened: the procedure broke down, possibly because we'd been asked too much too soon. Mr. McKibben was puzzled as to why so few of us were willing or able to come up with ideas for this topic and he asked us "What are you afraid of?"

The meeting reverted to the usual format of certain people coming to a microphone, making sermons and

emotional pleas, but not accomplishing any of the set goals of the Summit. For more than an hour, everyone who came to the microphone explained his particular fears and doubts.

But it was difficult to feel fears and doubts. It was easy to see how people would revert to their old way of doing things, if they were not looking at the spiritual dimension of this Summit. It was obvious that the Holy Spirit was present, at our petition, and was guiding us. How could anyone fear falling when we were being held up by the Holy Spirit?

The next morning, after starting with prayer, we were back on track: we spent the morning sessions completing our task, considering the topic Action Planning and then the question of the Administrative Task Force. The facilitators had been up most of the night reworking these questions and making them easier to deal with. Our last task was to evaluate the Summit and to write down any comments we had.

And at the end, after a service of prayer and thanksgiving, His Beatitude thanked us for the work which was done, and the Administrative Summit was adjourned.

The lists of ideas which were finally typed up and duplicated for us were strikingly similar to ideas presented in the Questionnaires received from the faithful of our Diocese, and discussed at our last Diocesan Assembly. There were so many ideas at the Summit that not all the responses can be printed here—but we can list the 'top eight.'

The top eight "*Obstacles which prevent us from achieving common goals and articulating a common vision*" were identified as:

1. A basic lack of trust that operates between central administration/diocese/parish.

2. An inability to follow-up and implement decisions.

3. Lack of leadership training for both clergy and laity.

4. Isolationism: parish from deanery from diocese from national

Church.

5. Ongoing communications—is there actually a common vision?

6. Develop inter-Orthodox programs that serve all Orthodox parishes in a given area.

7. Lack of mission: to unchurched, minorities, handicapped, those in neighborhood Churches, America in general.

8. Conclusions seem already made prior to meetings—useless.

And the top eight "*Participants' Expectations of...*" were:

1. Relationships that don't work: diocesan sovereignty.

2. Of the Metropolitan: review diocesan actions to see if they are in line with OCA vision.

3. Of the Metropolitan: have more than a symbolic role within the Synod of Bishops.

4. Of the Holy Synod: accountability.

5. Of the Holy Synod: present a unified voice that goes back to each diocese.

6. Of the Holy Synod: accept the leadership of the Metropolitan.

7. Of the All-American Council: must limit the agenda to three or four solid ideas achievable in the next three years.

8. Of the Holy Synod: provide liturgical stability and unity.

Those called to represent our Diocese at the Administrative Summit were His Grace, our Bishop Herman, the three Deans of Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania: Archpriest Joseph Martin of the Frackville Deanery, Archpriest Vladimir Fetcho of the Wilkes-Barre Deanery, and Archpriest John Udics of the Philadelphia Deanery; the Diocesan Secretary-Treasurer Archpriest John Kowalczyk, and our Diocese's representatives to the Metropolitan Council, Archpriest John Mason and Mr. John Zoranski.

This Administrative Summit was not just another meeting. It was a truly extraordinary event which spoke loudly and clearly of problems and came up with solid ideas

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The Precious Cross Of Christ

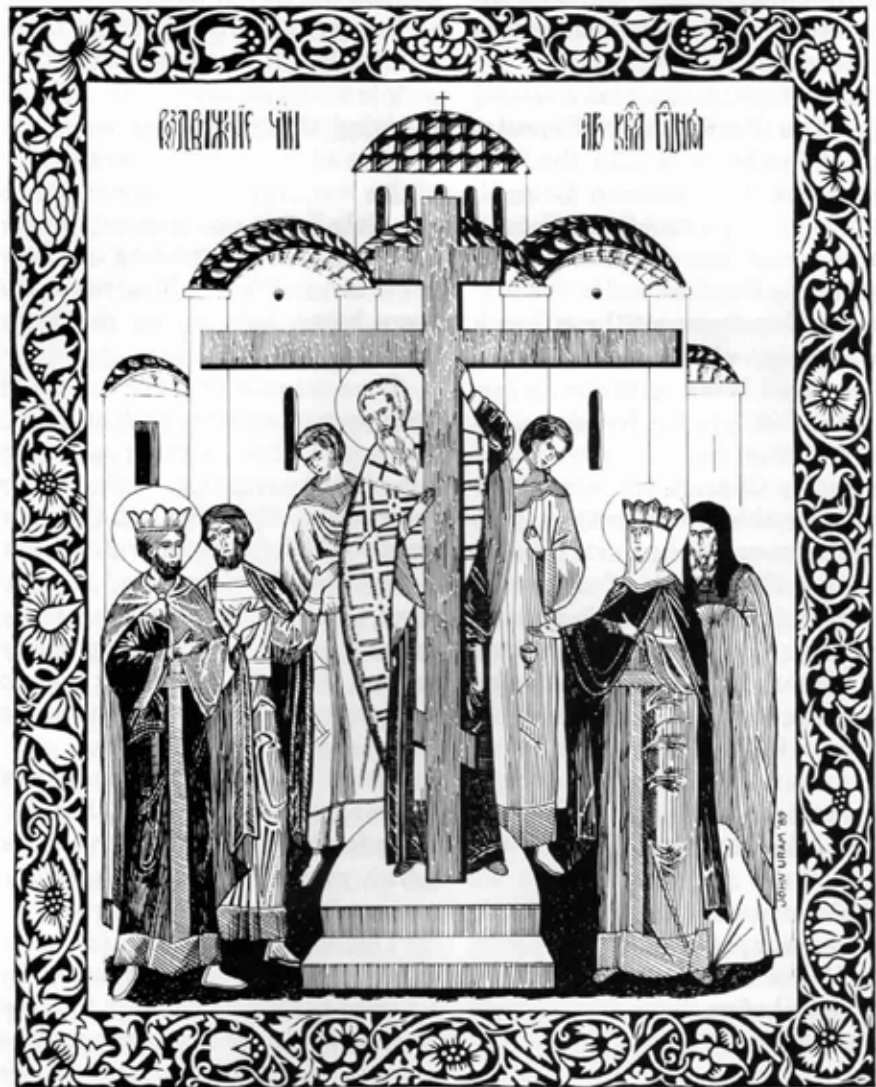
O Thou thrice-blessed and all-worshipful Cross of Christ, all we the faithful venerate and magnify thee, being joyous at thy divine Exaltation. But as the trophy and unconquered weapon that thou art, by thy grace, protect, cover, and shelter those who cry to thee: Rejoice, O Wood most blessed.¹

If there is one universally recognized symbol common to Christians throughout the world, it is the Precious Cross.

All Christians are aware of the fact that Jesus Christ was crucified on a cross in the first century of this era. In the Orthodox Church, this event is commemorated annually on Holy Friday. In addition to this day, however, various other days are set aside specifically to commemorate and celebrate the Cross and all that it means in our life as Christians. One of the most outstanding of these days dedicated to the Life-Giving Cross is the day of its Exaltation (lifting-up), or Elevation, celebrated each September 14.

On this bright and triumphal day are commemorated two events connected with the Precious Cross of Christ: the first, the finding of the Cross on Golgotha and the second, the returning of the Cross to Jerusalem from Persia. We turn now to *The Prologue from Ochrid*, by Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic (St. Nicholas of Zicha), for a precise look at these historical events.

"Staying in the Holy Land, the holy Empress Helena decided to look for the Precious Cross of the Lord. An old Jew called Judah was the only person who knew the whereabouts of the Cross, and, under pressure from the Empress,



he revealed that the Cross was buried under the Temple of Venus that the Emperor Hadrian had built on Golgotha. The Empress ordered that this idolatrous temple be pulled down, and then, digging deep below it, she found three crosses. While the Empress was in uncertainty about how to recognize which cross was the Lord's, a funeral procession passed by. Then Patriarch Macarius told them to place the crosses one by one on the dead man. When they placed the first and second on him, the dead man remained unchanged, but when they placed the third on him, he was restored to life. By this, they knew that this was the

Precious and life-giving Cross of Christ. After that, they placed it on a sick woman, and she recovered. Then the Patriarch raised the Cross aloft for all to see, and the people sang with tears: 'Lord have mercy!' The Empress Helena had a silver casing made, and placed the Precious Cross in it.

"Later, King Chozroes conquered Jerusalem, took the people into slavery and carried the Lord's Cross off to Persia, where it remained for fourteen years. In 628, the Greek Emperor Heraclius was victorious over Chozroes and brought the Cross back to Jerusalem with great ceremony. Entering the city, Heraclius

¹ Kontakion 1 of the Akathist Hymn to the Precious Cross.

was carrying the Cross on his back, but suddenly the aged Emperor was unable to take another step. Patriarch Zacharias saw an angel directing the Emperor to take off his imperial robes and walk beneath the Cross along the way that Christ had walked, barefoot and humiliated as He had been. He passed this vision on to the Emperor, who stripped himself of his raiment and, in poor clothing and barefoot, took up the Cross, carried it to Golgotha and placed it in the Church of the Resurrection, to the joy and consolation of the whole Christian world."

The services of this special day also refer to the appearance of the Sign of the Cross in the sky, as witnessed by the Emperor Constantine in the year 312, shortly before his victory in battle over Maxentius. At that event, the Lord spoke to Constantine with the words "By this sign conquer," and the Emperor had the image of the Holy Cross emblazoned on the shields of his entire army.

Various other appearances of the Holy Cross in the sky have been recorded in Holy Tradition, including an appearance at Jerusalem in the year 351, during the time St. Cyril was Patriarch of that city. The Cross is said to have reached from Golgotha to the Mount of Olives, and was almost two miles long. This miraculous sign remained in the sky for a week.

This testimony concerning the centrality of Christ's Holy Cross within the Christian life can be supplemented with scores of accounts of miraculous occurrences resulting from contact with the Precious Cross itself, one of the splinters taken from it, an image of the Cross work around the neck or used in prayer, or even making the Sign of the Cross either over someone or something, or on our own person. This Invincible Trophy, our Weapon of Peace, permeates all of time and every place in order to reveal the awesome magnificence of Christ the Lord in an infinite

variety of ways.

As we can see, the cross, originally an instrument of cruel torture and feared by a great many prisoners and enemies of the state power, has been transformed into the cause of joy and gladness for Orthodox Christians everywhere. In fact, this transformation is so complete and so universal, that our Tradition speaks of the Precious Cross as none other than that very same Tree of Life which was planted in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve had access to this wonderful source of life right up until they partook of the other, inaccessible tree . . . The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Genesis 2:9, 15).

But, once our ancestors committed that infamous act of disobedience, God prevented their (and our) access to the Tree of Life itself—he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword on guard (Genesis 3:24). This was the state of affairs until Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Lord of the Universe, hung and died on that very same Tree of Life. In so doing, He has restored to us our refreshment, joy, and consolation. Our Lord has presented us once again with the glorious and precious gift of LIFE! This newness of life is perfectly present in the Holy Cross.

So our celebration consists of far more than a series of historical events associated with the Precious Cross. Rather, it is a cosmic commemoration of a life which far exceeds the boundaries of time, space, and our own universe. Even before the fall, Adam experienced the Tree of Life only in a partial and limited way. Now, with the coming of God in the Flesh in the Person of Jesus Christ, all of the fullness of *His Divine Life* reaches out to us from the outstretched arms of the Precious Cross. The text of the Feast of the Exaltation itself proclaims this reality: "Through the Cross, O Lord, today Thou hast raised us up again, who were plunged continually in the gloom of our forefather. Unrestrained greed thrust down our nature into error: but now we have

been restored to our full inheritance by the light of Thy Cross which we, the faithful, magnify."²

Focusing on our own participation in the Life of the Cross, we respond just as did those early Christians in Jerusalem who fell in tears before the shadow of the Cross with the cry "Lord have mercy." Picture the Precious Cross elevated high above—as it was on Golgotha that afternoon when the Savior of the universe was willingly hung upon it. There are no words adequate to express his amazing act of mercy. It shows God's infinite love for us. When we reflect on this, how can we do anything else but prostrate before the Sign of our salvation and humbly ask for God's mercy?

To be able to speak or even think these precious words (Lord have mercy), requires genuine humility. Unfortunately, this virtue has all but disappeared from our planet. Even the Precious and Holy Cross itself is boldly misused as a cheap decoration, as jewelry, no different from any bracelet or cufflink. It seems fashionable to display all sorts and sizes of crosses as necklaces, pins, or even earrings. Pride and egotism, not humility, are the driving forces behind such "fashion statements." Instead, humility instructs us to wear the holy and victorious Cross of Christ close to our hearts, even if it is only the Lord Himself Who sees it. If we are living the life of the Cross each day then it is *that* example which will mark us as humble Christians under the protection of the Sign of the Cross. The use of our magnificent Cross, granted to us by the Master, Jesus Christ, must always reflect the majesty and dignity of so great a trophy.

To wear the Cross of Christ is both a great honor and a heavy burden, yet one marvelously lightened by divine help—for our Lord said, "Take my yoke upon your shoulders . . . for my yoke is easy

² Ode 9 of the Second Canon of Matins.

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The Precious Cross Of Christ

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and my burden is light.”

Similarly, if we prostrate before the Holy Cross physically, then we had better realize what that act of prostration implies, in terms of the life we lead. We Christians are called to take seriously the reason we lie there before the Holy Cross. If we can do this so readily, then we should not flinch from defending this image against those who would mock and spit upon it. We are Orthodox Christians—members of the army of Christ; our greatest weapon is the Cross, and we should not be ashamed of it, but should have a serene sense of confidence and courage in using it and calling upon its power often.

To make the Sign of the Cross upon our person is the beginning (before meals, before sleep, before getting out of bed, before driving, and so on). There can be no shame in signing ourselves with this unconquerable ensign. But again, it is not for display or to satisfy our conceit that we should be willing to show the world that we have accepted the Cross of Christ. Rather, we should expect to be persecuted for standing beneath the Cross against the enemies of Christ. By scorning the earthly shame and signing ourselves accordingly, we win eternal glory, knowing that Christ Himself will not be ashamed when it comes time to bless us with this same sign at the hour of our judgment. “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me” (Matt. 16:24). This is a lifetime commitment filled with difficult burdens and treacherous dangers, but *there is no other way*; the life of the Cross is the “narrow path that leads to life” (Matt. 7:14).

The narrow path reveals to us the way of acceptance, the way of obedience, the way of suffering in order to be glorified. For just as Pascha follows Holy Friday, Resurrection follows Crucifixion and salvation follows suffering and death.

Unless we bear this in mind, we will continually question our own crosses (Why me? What did I do wrong to deserve this? and so on). It is helpful to keep in mind the Jews of old and other unbelievers who could not—would not—believe that God would take human flesh, and so they scorned Christ. They could not imagine that God would allow Himself to have that very flesh which He assumed, be torn and broken by spikes and whips. Rejecting our own crosses places us in the company of those who could not accept the truth.

As Christians we are inspired by the knowledge that our crosses are the best and perhaps the only way for us to pass through the treacherous waters of this life. Whatever trials and griefs we encounter, we are able to utilize these very burdens just as Christ utilized the Cross in order to gain victory over death. So the way of acceptance and obedience is, to be sure, the way of Christ. Father Alexander Elchaninov states, “It often seems to me that the thorns and thistles on our life’s course are ordained by God in order to cure specifically our soul. I see this with absolute clarity in my personal life.”³ Our Cross is a personal gift—to think of it in this way is a great blessing—which is the specific medicine Christ uses to restore our spiritual health.

Our personal Crosses—our trials and tribulations—should not, however, be used as measurements of how blessed we are. More often than we think, others around us bear heavier Crosses than we; in humility, we should assume that our cross is lighter than that of others. Each soul is different; we cannot look into the souls of others. It is prideful and unfair to compare our sufferings with those of others. Nor should we pray that we might be given heavier cross, but for that one which will be best to bring about our salvation—for the Lord knows what is best for us. As Metropolitan Philaret of

Moscow prayed, “I dare not ask either a cross or a consolation.”

To help bear another’s cross as our own, though, without the pride and show of being noticed, is to begin practicing real Christian spirituality. This is what it is to live the virtues of the Beatitudes. As the Apostle urged, “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” Again, to live the Life of the Cross is to die to ourselves.

Perhaps the most mysterious aspect of the Cross is that it is a doorway or portal from the old to the new. Just as death itself is a passageway from corruption to incorruptibility and from the present time into eternity, so is the Precious Cross of Christ a bridge between two realities. The death of Christ on the Cross is followed by and linked to, the Resurrection and new life which are possible only through the Cross and death, so that even on the feast day of the Exaltation itself we strictly fast: it is both feast and fast. While we dwell in the flesh on earth we are living in both realities, the old and the new, and we long for the day when death will truly be no more. In striving for that day and that condition we let go, little by little, of that which ties us to the present reality. In straightening our backs beneath the weight of our own crosses we steadily approach the portal of Christ’s Cross—which carries us ultimately into eternal life.

All of this and more is signified by the stark, wooden image on a distant hillside. All of history cannot contain the salvific power of the Cross, and pales in significance compared to it. The angels in Heaven encircle the life-bringing Cross in fear and trembling. And all that we can do is fall down before the Exalted Image of our own salvation and burst into an ever-resounding chorus of “Lord, have mercy.” This Image is the inexpressible, true, and praiseworthy Holy Cross.

—Priest Gregory Horton

³ *Diary of a Russian Priest.*

Diocesan Clergy Discuss The Church's Mission



Bishop Herman instructs clergy.

In his Pastoral Epistle to the faithful of our Diocese, which appeared in the Winter, 1992, issue of *Alive in Christ*, His Grace announced a special three-year program of spiritual growth for our Diocese. According to His Grace:

"Year One will focus on the spiritual growth of the parish priest. Our priests are asked to seek God's guidance and to focus their attention on their spiritual growth, efforts in prayers and devotions, and in spiritual reading and study. They are asked to increase their knowledge about the services of the Church and to give special attention to preaching, to any needed pastoral work and to do whatever that will foster 'growth in life and faith and spiritual understanding' among their flocks."

Not long after his Pastoral Epistle, Bishop HERMAN announced the first two-day Diocesan Clergy Retreat for 1993, which took place at St. Tikhon's Seminary on February 24 and 25, with Fr. Thomas Hopko as the Retreat Leader. A complete report of the Diocesan Clergy Retreat appeared in the 1993 Paschal edition of *Alive in Christ*.

As part of the overall program on Spiritual Growth, our Diocese undertook to conduct a survey

among the faithful seeking their honest input and comments on the life of their parish. This was done during the first three months of this year. The faithful were asked to respond to four questions, two dealing with an assessment of life in their respective parishes and offering ways of improvement, and the remaining two asking comments on life in their Deanery and the Diocese.

Nearly eighteen percent of the Diocesan faithful responded to the survey questionnaires expressing their concerns and offering suggestions and comments on the life of their parish and ways to improve and strengthen parish life. The faithful showed their support by offering favorable comments indicating an appreciation for the pastoral work done by their parish priest. In situations where there was concern over parish life, the faithful offered suggestions for improvement. The responses also provided valuable insight into the many concerns found in the hearts and minds of our Diocesan faithful.

In preparation for the Diocesan Assembly held this past June, His Grace read through all the survey responses and reflected on the many areas expressed by our faithful. At

the Assembly, Bishop Herman announced a calendar of events scheduled for 1993-94, with the intent of addressing these concerns with all members of the Diocese. Included in this calendar are three clergy retreats, each scheduled for two days.

Within one month of the Assembly, the first clergy retreat was held. Twenty-seven diocesan priests gathered at St. Tikhon's Seminary on Wednesday, July 28, and Thursday, July 29, with Bishop Herman as the Retreat Leader. Being the spiritual father of his Diocesan priests, His Grace spent the two days with his priests reflecting on the priesthood and on our priestly vocation through talks, discussions, and daily liturgical services.

The recently completed Diocesan Survey revealed the status and condition of our Diocese as seen through the eyes of the faithful who responded. While only eighteen percent responded, it was clear that those who did, took the survey very seriously. Our parishioners are concerned about their parishes, not only now but also for the future. There is much work to be done as nearly half of our Diocesan parishes responded that their parish is

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Diocesan Clergy

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"definitely declining." This is a very serious matter; as His Grace stated, "The responses confirmed what has been in my heart and mind; there are no great surprises. Thus, we have got to begin our work and each priest needs to begin to fulfill his call to the priesthood." He included himself when he made this statement.

He noted that every priest has an obligation to look at himself. How does the priest look at his own vocation? The priest needs to remind himself every day what it means to be a priest, by spending time each day on this personal reflection. On the day of ordination to the Holy Priesthood, each priest accepted this priestly vocation, one which will remain with him to the end. Nothing should be put ahead of it as our family and personal things belong secondarily to our priesthood.

In the spirit of love and concern, Bishop Herman shared with his priests the following areas of concern expressed by the faithful (note that these are not necessarily in order of priority):

1. Need for strong pastoral leadership; need for the priest to be a pastor to all parishioners.
2. Emphasis on counseling and being patient with the faithful.
3. More involvement with the life of the parish.
4. Know the people and their needs: pastoral visitations to shut-ins, etc.
5. Guidance by the parish priest with religious education for all age levels.
6. Improve lines of communication between priest, parish council, and parishioners.
7. Emphasis on church discipline. The faithful are to be instructed on the basic teachings of the church.
8. Quality of sermons: preparation and delivery.
9. Limitation on the number of years members should serve on

parish council as well as limitation on years a priest serves a parish.

10. Parish priest needs to be known in the community.

11. Need to address the issues of our time which lead to moral decay in our society.

The Retreat was the first opportunity the priests had to hear the responses to the survey. Many expressed appreciation to the bishop for sharing these concerns. The comments will provide the priest with much food for personal reflection on how he will personally respond to the concerns expressed.

His Grace stated that he is going to meet privately with some parish priests and parish councils where the survey indicated the need for his own personal intervention. He did not single out any priest or parish in particular but rather dealt with the concerns in a general manner. His Grace is concerned about his parish priests and their families and encouraged each of them to reflect seriously on their vocation and not be afraid to share with him their personal situations.

Year Two of the three-year program will deal with the spiritual growth of the parish. In order for the parish to experience any growth, the priest, as the head of the parish, must lead by example. Bishop Herman was very concerned over the many comments shared regarding the lack of trust in the priest, especially with confidentiality. He emphasized extreme caution in this area. The priest needs to be very careful to safeguard this feeling of trust. Just as our Lord led and taught by example, the parish priest needs to lead by example and must try to imitate Christ in all he does, whether it be at services, meetings, counseling, coffee hours, social activities, or in other settings. It is very clear that our faithful want to follow the teachings of Christ and need the priest to lead them and to help them transform their lives. The element of trust is extremely important with this transformation and growth.

Following the Thursday morning Divine Liturgy, the last session dealt with some practical suggestions for addressing the concerns expressed by the faithful:

1. Timely articles in *Alive in Christ* dealing with subjects to educate the faithful on the basic teachings of the Orthodox Faith.

2. Offer short prepared copy-ready articles which could be used as bulletin inserts by all diocesan parishes.

3. Prepare a standard program for premarital counseling which could be used within a deanery; possibly offer the program several times a year.

4. Need for the priests to support one another through prayer and personal communication.

5. Encourage more frequent participation in personal confession by the priest with his spiritual father.

6. Consistency in liturgical practices throughout the Diocese. His Grace reported that the Holy Synod is preparing a Priest Handbook which will address these issues.

7. Statements from the Holy Synod of Bishops regarding current issues, e.g., cremation. His Grace announced the Holy Synod of Bishops will issue a statement on this subject at the Fall session.

8. Guidelines on practical sacramental practices, such as "Who can be Godparents?" "Who can or cannot be in a wedding party?"

9. Sermon preparation and delivery. His Grace suggested the next clergy retreat will devote time to the topic "Priest as Homilist." He announced the next clergy retreat will be Wednesday, Nov. 10, and Thursday, Nov. 11.

Bishop Herman encouraged the idea of priests and/or choirs exchanging parishes one Sunday. This could be done within each deanery.

His Grace emphasized the importance of each priest making a self-examination regarding his pastoral work. The priest needs to ask: "What have I accomplished in the parish?" "What have I accomplished for myself?" "What I am

doing, is it working?" As priests, we need to take a serious look at ourselves and be willing to make changes in our lives whenever necessary. We need to acknowledge our shortcomings, repent and do something about it. One of the things a priest could do is talk about the life of his parish with the parishioners at the Annual Parish Meeting. His Grace would like to see this topic as an item on the agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting. The priest and parish councils need to encourage discussion on the status of the parish and what might be done to enhance the parish life.

As you draw near to the end of my article, be assured that if you were one of the respondents to the

survey questionnaire, your comments were read by Bishop Herman and Fr. Eugene, and were greatly appreciated. Those who did not respond can be assured that the Bishop and Diocesan Clergy are taking the responses very seriously and have begun to take the necessary steps to address these concerns. The solutions and answers will not come overnight, but the process has begun.

Please pray for His Grace, Bishop HERMAN, your parish priest, his family, and all our diocesan priests and their families. They need your prayers and support. If we are all to respond to the call for spiritual growth, we must be willing to pattern our life after Our Lord and

Saviour and a) replace our complaining with positive action; b) convert criticism of one another to forgiveness of one another; c) allow humility to overshadow our pride; and d) let our hurt and anger be healed with care and love.

When we undertake these changes we will then live the words of the Divine Liturgy to "love one another that with one mind we may confess". . . our Orthodox Faith. Thus ends this chapter of the Clergy Retreat and we look forward to the next opportunity of coming together with our spiritual father as we continue our quest for spiritual growth.

—Archpriest Eugene Vansuch

Administrative Summit

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for answers and solutions. At the end of the meeting, our Chancellor, Fr. Robert Kondratick asked for people to volunteer to work on the Administrative Task Force, which will produce a report containing proposals for specific solutions to

our most pressing administrative problems. It will be interesting to see the results of the Task Force, and how it will assist us in our carrying out the Lord's work. In our Bicentennial Year, we're not only looking at our past and remember-

ing those who built our foundations, but we're building on those foundations, and remembering that "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain" (Ps. 127:1).

—Archpriest John Udics, Dean

Father Michael Lepa Makes Fiftieth Consecutive Pilgrimage to St. Tikhon's Monastery.

In 1943, the late Michael and Mary Lepa carried their young infant son Michael on the thirty-eighth Pilgrimage to St. Tikhon's Monastery. Ever since that day, Fr. Michael has not missed a single Memorial Day Pilgrimage. Recently, Fr. Michael had a double celebration: his fiftieth birthday and fiftieth Pilgrimage to St. Tikhon's Monastery. Father Michael has served many parishes in the Diocese, and presently he is the rector of St. Andrew's Church in Dallas, Pennsylvania. Congratulations, Father Michael!

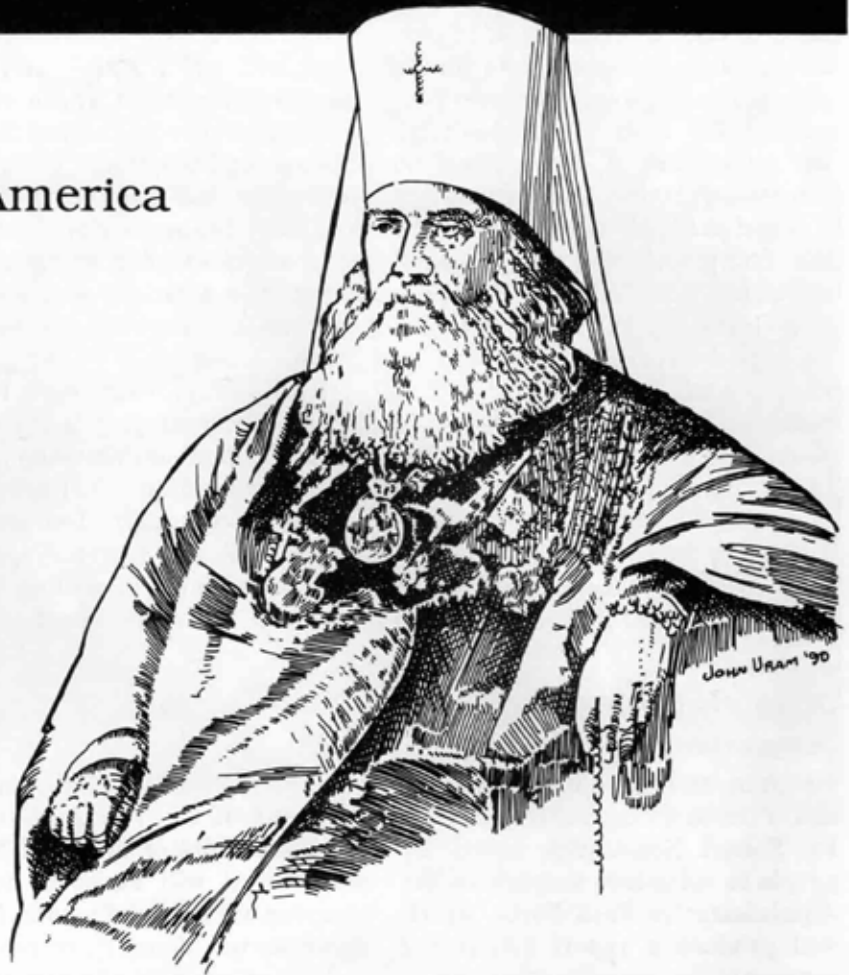


Discerning The Way: Reflections On Orthodox Mission In America

(Editor's note: The first part of this article appeared in the preceding issue of *Your Diocese Alive in Christ*.)

Mythos is invaluable for any culture, inasmuch as it provides for cultural continuity and serves as a useful framework for discussion. But it is also important to discern the presence in *mythos* of elements of prejudice and bias, for in a way it becomes a useful tool for cultural "search and destroy" missions, utilized by the dominant culture to undermine and undercut parallel and competitive cultural contexts and presumptions. The awareness of this aspect of *mythos* allows us to compensate adequately for antagonistic cultural bias as we establish alternative and indispensable conceptual frameworks within which we can profitably carry out our own discussions.

In unquestioningly and passively accepting the validity of an assumed Protestant *mythos* not only of the religious dimension of American history, but also of a normative "denominational" view of Christianity, the Orthodox in America unwittingly acquiesces to a cultural and religious bias that is, in its very essence, inimical and hostile to the Orthodox world-view. We, of course, appreciate at least four reasons why this is so: we live in a "Western" cultural environment for which "Eastern" Christianity has been, generally speaking, at least until the last few decades, frankly strange and foreign; the cultural bias of an essentially Protestant America is forcefully proclaimed in the schools, in the media, in the entire dominant culture; it is also true that the political exigencies of the Cold War



have in their own way skewed and further obfuscated the issue; finally, we should realize, "native" American-born Orthodox are only just beginning to move into positions of real economic, social, intellectual, and political power, where they can intelligently exert some degree of balancing influence on the dominant culture.

Earlier we spoke of the Russian colonization of North America as being the proper background for understanding St. Innocent's life. Indeed, we should remember that Father John Veniaminov, nurtured in Russia, in the Orthodox cultural tradition mediated by the Church, did not, by arriving in Alaska, thereby leave or abandon this conceptual framework. For him, the political boundaries of the Russian empire and the ecclesiastical boundaries of the Russian Orthodox Church remained always in-

tact. He was thus neither "immigrant" nor "political refugee," nor even "missionary in a foreign land." As missionary, furthermore, he was not an aberration of Russian Orthodox culture, but rather, its benchmark in exactly the same way as were, in their own time, St. Sergius of Radonezh or St. Stephen of Perm. Nor did he share many of our own cultural presumptions, which—unwittingly, perhaps—are in themselves a curious blend of notions imbibed from Anglo-Protestant America and our own immigrant psychology.

In discussing the significance for us of St. Innocent, it is important that we continue to move beyond the purely external aspects of his life—which, in any case, may already be irrelevant to our own time and culture—into an internal conceptual framework which retains its intrinsic validity and meaning

even in our own day: a life of apostolic endeavor (biographical context) lived within the ethos of the Orthodox Church (theological/cultural context). We must be careful, though, that we do not permit our own preconceptions in this sphere to obscure from us the face of the real man behind the image on the icon: the face of Father John Veniaminov, later Bishop, Archbishop and Metropolitan Innocent, who arrived in New Archangel (or Sitka) on October 20, 1823, when he was only thirty-six years old.

The glimmering of individual events that comprise the substance of his biography affirms a truth that we are called to contemplate again and again: it is not some extraordinary supermen that are called to sainthood, but, rather, average and ordinary human beings who are submissive to God's will, and who in faithfulness and in struggle with themselves, manage to overcome the limitations of human nature and of their individual personalities.

For Saint Innocent, Truth was not abstract and generic, but had both Face and Name. It is a Face which we, too, have come to both know and recognize, the Face and Name of the Incarnate God-Man, Jesus Christ. As St. Innocent forcefully asserts in his *Indication of the Way into the Kingdom of Heaven*, the existential plight of humanity on earth can be resolved only in Christianity, that is, in faith in Jesus Christ, in living life according to His precepts. In this, St. Innocent walks on common ground with the Apostles and the Fathers of the Church:

"People were not created merely to live here on earth like animals that disappear after their death, but to live with God and in God, and to live not for a hundred or a thousand years, but to live eternally. But only Christians can live with God; that is to say, those who *rightly believe in Jesus Christ*. Everyone, whoever he may be, desires and seeks prosperity and happiness. To

desire what is good for oneself and to seek prosperity or happiness is part of man's nature, and therefore it is not a sin or vice. But we need to know that here on earth there has not been, and is not, and never will be, true and perfect happiness and prosperity . . . No one will ever find true happiness and prosperity without God or outside God . . . We are strangers on earth, pilgrims and travellers; our home and fatherland are there in heaven, in the heavenly Kingdom; and there do not exist on earth things which could perfectly satisfy our desires . . . God alone can fill the heart and soul of man and quench the thirst of his desires. And so, do you wish to live with God there, in the Kingdom of Heaven? *Be an Orthodox Christian.*"¹

There can be no doubt that for St. Innocent the concept "Christian" was fully synonymous with the concept "Orthodox," or that, furthermore, "Christianity" as such was to be found exclusively in fold of the Orthodox Church. This was not mere "denominationalism" on his part. This is the traditional witness of the Church of Christ.² In fact, the Church herself, St. Innocent observes, can be understood in the parable of a "colossal wonderful building. Its height reaches to heaven itself. The entrance to it is

¹ Innocent, Bishop of Kamchatka, the Kurilian and Aleutian Islands, *Indication of the Way into the Kingdom of Heaven* (Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1990), pp. 3-4. Further page references will be to this edition and will be given in parentheses in the body of the text.

² The question of "Christianity" vs. "Church" is, in fact, one of exceptional significance. In this respect, I should like to refer the reader to a wonderful article by an exceptional Orthodox theologian, the late Archbishop Ilarion (Troitsky), martyred in the Solovki concentration camp in the late 1930s, entitled *Christianity or the Church* (trans. and reprinted: Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1985). Archbishop Ilarion writes: "The teaching of Christ is a teaching not only about the re-creation of a separate moral person, but also about the re-creation of a perfect society, that is, about the Church. . . . Since this teaching is a teaching about love, then its realization again creates a community because love is a foundation which binds and does not disunite. *Outside the Church and without the Church, Christian life is impossible.* Without the Church, the Christian teaching alone remains an empty sound, for Christian life is Church life. *Only in the life of the Church can a person live and develop. . . . Christianity is not concerned with the interests of reason; but only those of the salvation of man.* In Christianity, therefore, there are no purely theoretical tenets. Dogmatic truths have moral significance, and Christian morals are founded on dogma. . . . The Church is that point at which dogma becomes moral teaching and Christian dogmatic become Christian life. The Church thus comprehended gives life to and provides for the implementation of Christian teaching. *Without the Church there is no Christianity; there is only Christian teaching which, by itself, cannot renew the fallen Adam*" (p. 15-17).

somewhat hidden and without guidance not everyone can find it . . . This building was the work of the wisest Architect, and it was made for the very purpose of enabling people to ascend to heaven and paradise itself" (pp. 17-18).

In our relativism and denominationalist culture, in which the Orthodox claim to a unique knowledge of the Truth appears exclusivist and pretentious, St. Innocent's understanding of salvation as being contained only within the Orthodox Church would appear unpopular and questionable (and, one suspects, even somehow "undemocratic"). As a culture, after all, we prefer to be syncretistic and eclectic, conferring on ourselves the right to "pick and choose" particular religious verities which we then individually accept or reject. This, after all, is the "American way," is it not?—a deeply ingrained Protestant legacy to our society. But is precisely this theologically-biased legacy that we are called to overcome if Orthodox mission to our society is to be taken seriously.

The *Indication of the Way* can be seen as a spiritual testament of our "apostle and enlightener" for those who follow; it can be used as a guidepost of sorts, an intuition, of what is to be said and how it is to be presented. In a way, we can even say that it is a peculiarly "American" catechism, written for America, and meant to be used by all of us who follow in his path. It is a unique piece of writing. In classifying it, it is easier, perhaps, to begin by saying what it is not. It is thus not a theological treatise on salvation or other aspects of Orthodox doctrine; nor is it a historical excursus on the Orthodox Church. It is not mystical poetry, or a liturgical compilation of Orthodox prayers and melodies. It is not an ascetic manual for monastics; nor a concise "question-and-answer" catechism of the traditional variety. In fact, for us today it reads with a somewhat strange theological flavor, for its style of writing

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hearkens back to a period when Orthodox theology was most "western-like."

But having said what the work is not, we should suggest what it is. The *Indication of the Way* is a work which would best fit in the category of writings of Orthodox spirituality,³ much like *The Way of the Pilgrim* attributed to one of the Optina elders. In essence, it is a deeply personal celebration of Jesus Christ, written by a man who, paddling his kayak alone in the tremendous expanses of the Northern Pacific, or traversing on foot the wilderness of Alaska, not only came to know Him intimately and to love Him, but also had an intense need to share Him with his readers and his entire flock. "I divide my book into four parts," St. Innocent writes, "1) On the benefits which Jesus Christ has granted us by His death; 2) How Jesus Christ lived on earth, and what He suffered for us; 3) The way by which we must go into the Kingdom of Heaven; 4) How Jesus Christ helps us go by this way, and how we can receive this help" (p. 5). It may sound somewhat strange to hear the term "benefits" applied to the "work" of Jesus Christ on our behalf, but this is, after all, as we have noted above, only outward trappings of a "westernized" Orthodox terminology, multiplied by the peculiarities of translation. We will understand him better if we continue reading the text itself:

"By His *teaching* Jesus Christ scattered the darkness and errors of the human mind, and enlightened the whole world with the light of the Gospel . . . By His *life* Jesus Christ has shown us the way . . . which Adam lost, and at the same time has shown us how we must seek it and how to follow it . . .

By His *passion* (suffering) and *death* Jesus Christ has redeemed us from the debts which we had to pay to God and which we would never have been able to pay; and He has made us, who were slaves of the devil and of sin, children of God. And those torments which we, as transgressors of the will of God, would have had to suffer, He bore for us. By His *death* He delivered us from miseries, from future torment and eternal death . . . By His *resurrection* Jesus Christ destroyed the gates of hell and opened to us the gates of Paradise..and He conquered and crushed the power of the devil and death, our enemies. So now those who die in faith and hope . . . pass from vain, corrupt, and temporal life into a life that is bright, incorruptible and unending; while for the conquest of the devil and for driving him away we have *the cross* and *prayer*. By His *ascension* Jesus Christ glorified the human race; for He ascended into Heaven with His body which He will always carry or wear. Finally, by the *grace* and *merits* of Jesus Christ we can now go into the Kingdom of Heaven . . . that is, we can all freely and truly receive the Holy Spirit and be filled with Him. [For] Without the Holy Spirit it is impossible to go the way Jesus Christ went when living on earth" (pp. 7-8).

Having methodically listed the "guideposts of salvation," however, St. Innocent refocuses our attention on the ultimate goal: the blessedness of those who choose to follow the Lord, the joy of being with Jesus Christ throughout eternity:

"But what the Lord has prepared for us there in heaven, no one can tell or imagine. We can only say that those who believe in Jesus Christ and follow His commandments will, after their death, live with the Angels, the Just and the Saints in heaven, and will see God face to face. They will rejoice with pure, constant and eternal joy, and they will never know weariness, or sorrow, or worry, or torment, or suffering. At the end of the world

they will rise with their bodies and will reign with Christ eternally . . . Blessed and most blessed is he who follows Jesus Christ throughout his whole life, because he will certainly be there where Jesus Christ Himself lives. Happy is he who cares and tries to imitate Jesus Christ, because he will receive help from Jesus Christ. But unhappy is he who has no desire to follow Jesus Christ, and excuses himself by saying that *it is difficult to follow Him*, or, *he has not the strength for it*, because such a person deprives himself of the grace of God and, as it were, pushes away the helping hand of Jesus Christ. But woe to the man who opposes Jesus Christ and is obstinate and, in a manner, rises up against Him, because the lot of such people is *in the lake of fire burning with brimstone*" (pp. 8-9).

It should be clear to us by now that for St. Innocent the way of salvation, the "way into the Kingdom," is always a deep and personal encounter with Jesus Christ that moves from a moment of external contemplation to encompass and fill one's entire life. In essence, then, the encounter both begins and ends in an act of devotion and love. "*Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind and with all thy strength*; and *Love thy neighbor as thyself*" (pp. 9-10).

The emotional movement of our soul in compassion leads, in turn, to a fuller "spiritual empathy," as it were, true love, directed not only to the person of Jesus Christ, but also to one's fellow man. It leads one to give assent to a life of personal imitation of the Lord in self-sacrifice (literally, the sacrifice of one's self): "The way into the heavenly Kingdom is Jesus Christ Himself . . . But as to how we must go by this way, listen to what Jesus Christ Himself says: *Whoever wishes to follow me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me*" (p. 15). And still the emotional stimulus of love is not all that is required. Beyond the emotions, there must arise an intellectual component that

³ Bernard McGinn observes: "Christian spirituality is the lived experience of Christian belief both in its general and more specialized forms . . . Spirituality, both as lived experience and as reflections on that experience, is a broader and more inclusive term than either asceticism or mysticism." See: Bernard McGinn and John Meyendorff, eds., *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century* (New York: Crossroad, 1985), Introduction, p. xvi.

encompasses the rational mind in the movement of the self to the Lord.

"And so, before following Jesus Christ you must do the following: You must study attentively the foundations of Christianity, that is, the actual books of Holy Scripture on which our Orthodox faith is founded. You should know *where they come from, who wrote them and when, how they were preserved and have been handed down to us, why they are called Divine and Sacred*, and so on . . . Such study of the faith is by no means opposed to faith, but on the contrary it is the binding duty of every Christian, when he reaches maturity, to know his faith thoroughly . . . How many Christians or, rather, how many people baptized in the name of Jesus Christ have perished or are perishing only because they have and had no desire to turn their attention to the foundations of our Orthodox faith! But not all people can to the same degree make a study of the faith, but each should do so according to his ability, knowledge, and enlightenment" (p. 16).

Rational knowledge, however, though necessary in itself, can prove to be dangerous if it moves beyond a certain fine ethical boundary that is circumscribed by humility of the mind. Therefore we must be careful not to force knowledge, to "pry" into areas which we are incapable of understanding and which will remain closed to our mind: "You must study the Holy Books in simplicity of heart, without any prejudice, without curiosity, impartially and not beyond the limits of your mind; you should not try to penetrate and know what has been hidden from us by the wisdom of God . . . Do not pry into what is hidden from us. Believe implicitly, without doubt or reservation, all that Holy Scripture teaches" (p. 16).

True love of Christ, as experienced in a personal encounter with Him, moves me to transform my life in such a way as to make it resemble more and more the model offered in

the Scriptures, as well as to *live* my life according to this model. "Try to have and stir up within you a desire to do what Holy Scripture teaches. And if you have not this desire, fall at the feet of our Savior Jesus Christ and with fervent prayer implore Him to give it to you. But on no account resist when grace calls you to the way of salvation" (pp. 16-17).

For the Christian who embarks on this way, however, the journey becomes both painful and difficult. For many the pain and difficulty become stumbling blocks: "Many ask in perplexity: 'Why is the way to the heavenly Kingdom so difficult?' and 'Why must a Christian bear such heavy crosses?' To these and similar questions the Christian should always reply that it is pleasing to God" (p. 17). But also because:

"The Kingdom of Heaven is the very highest beatitude, and the greatest glory and honor, and the most inexhaustible riches . . . How can such an unspeakable treasure be obtained without labors? . . . The Kingdom of Heaven is a reward, and the very greatest reward; and where is a reward given free and for nothing? Jesus Christ entered into His glory through sufferings; consequently we too can enter there only by the way of sufferings. Both the Christian and the non-Christian, the believer and the non-believer carry the cross [i.e., it is a basic human condition]. The only difference is that for the one the cross serves as a cure and as a means of inheriting the Kingdom of Heaven, while for the other it becomes a chastisement, penalty, and punishment. For the one, crosses gradually become lighter, sweeter and are finally turned into crowns of eternal glory; while for the other they become heavier and more grievous . . . To a sinner everywhere will be in hell. On the other hand, whoever feels real, heartfelt joy will rejoice both in a palace and in a hut, and even in prison, because his joy is in his heart" (pp. 26-29).

Thus, following the Fathers, St.

Innocent teaches that the Kingdom of Heaven is not a *place*, but rather a *state of being*. Here we face an apparent paradox: our internal state cannot change without a personal encounter with Jesus Christ; yet a personal encounter with Jesus Christ cannot be without painful consequence to our souls. To be remade in the image of Christ requires the giving up of one's old self, which is, as the Apostle teaches, corrupt through sin, and the putting on of a new self. To be able to give up the self, however, requires that as a necessary first step one be capable of seeing into the depths of the soul, that one see oneself for what one truly is—not in abstract contemplation of human sinfulness and failure, but in order that the work of spiritual healing and restoration may begin. In fact, seeing oneself for what one really is becomes one of the most painful experiences on the "way into the Kingdom."

"We can never see the state of our soul in all its nakedness or vividly realize its danger without special grace and help from God, because the interior of our soul is always hidden from us by our self-love, prejudices, passions, worldly cares, delusions. And if it sometimes seems to us that we see the state of our soul ourselves, yet we see it only superficially and no more than our own reason and conscience can show us . . . When the Lord is pleased to reveal to you the state of your soul, then you begin to see clearly and to feel acutely that with all your virtues your heart is corrupt and perverted, your soul is defiled and you yourself are only a slave of sin and the passions which have completely mastered you and do not allow you to draw near to God. . . . And in proportion as the Lord reveals to you the state of your soul your interior sufferings will also increase" (pp. 21-22).

One must bear these interior sufferings courageously, because they cleanse us of false understand-

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ing, fraudulent and self-serving emotions, spurious accomplishments, and other erroneous attributes of the soul, which the Church collectively labels as "sin":

"Sin is a wound which does not heal itself without medicines; and in the case of some people this wound is so deeply and dangerous that it can only be healed by cauterization and amputation. That is why no one can be cleansed of his sins without spiritual sufferings . . . Sin is the most horrible impurity and abomination in the eyes of God; but nothing abominable, vile, and unclean can enter the Kingdom of Heaven" (p. 28). The sufferings which we undergo in the process of inner purification and cleansing—or, as St. Innocent terms them, "interior crosses"—become necessary aspects of our spiritual movement to perfection in resemblance of Jesus Christ.

"Blessed, a hundred times blessed is the person to whom the Lord grants to bear interior crosses, because they are the true healing of the soul, the sure and safe way of becoming like Jesus Christ, and consequently they are a special and manifest favor of God, and they show clearly His care for our salvation" (p. 23).

Salvation, then, lies not in a simplistic and purely external emotional acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as one's "personal Saviour," as some fundamentalists would have it, but rather is attained after a difficult inner journey and painful restructuring of the self. Lest we fall under the weight of our suffering, or lose hope in the possibility of the success of our spiritual endeavor, the Lord allows us to seek comfort and consolation for our soul. We are cautioned, however, to be prudent and wise in seeking consolation. "In these troubles of yours . . . do not seek consolation among men unless the Lord specifically indicates it and sends you His chosen servants. Ordinary people, that is, those who are not experienced in

spiritual matters, are always bad comforters, even in ordinary sorrows, and still more in spiritual sorrows and troubles which they do not even understand. In this case they are more likely to do you harm than to comfort and relieve your sufferings. The Lord Himself is your Helper and Comforter and Guide; run to Him alone, and in Him alone seek consolation and help" (p. 23).

To the person who courageously bears the burden of suffering, and does not accept false consolation, the Lord sends "the Holy Spirit Who will strengthen and guide him and lead him further" (p. 20). "The Holy Spirit, as God, the third Person of the Holy Trinity, is also Almighty, like the Father and the Son. He vivifies, animates, and gives creatures their powers. He gives animals *life*, men *mind*, and Christians *high spiritual life*" (p. 30).

Some of the most splendid and spiritually edifying passages in *The Indication of the Way* have to do with the work of the Holy Spirit in the process of salvation of man. From both a literary and a doctrinal point of view, these passages are within the deep and rich tradition of such great Fathers and Teachers of the Church as St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, and St. Symeon the New Theologian.

"When the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in a man, He gives him *faith* and *light* . . . A person who has within him the Holy Spirit feels in his soul an extraordinary light, previously quite unknown to him" (p. 30). The Holy Spirit, furthermore, produces *true love* in man's heart. True love in the heart is like a pure fire or warmth that sets a person aglow; it is the root which produces within him all good works. For a person animated by true love, there is nothing difficult, terrifying or impossible; for him, no commandments are hard, and all are practicable" (p. 31).

One does not receive the Holy Spirit according to personal merit, but always as a "free gift sent by the

mercy of God for the salvation of men" (p. 31). "No one can say definitely how or when you will receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Gift of God, and gifts are given unexpectedly when it is pleasing to the Giver of gifts, and He distributes them to whom He wills. Therefore those who think that they will receive the Holy Spirit in some special manner or at some special time are very mistaken; and those who invent their own means of obtaining Him, not only will not receive the Holy Spirit but also take upon themselves a terrible sin" (p. 34). At the same time, however, it is clear that in St. Innocent's understanding the Holy Spirit is to be found only in the Orthodox Church. "It is necessary to say," he writes, "that only a true believer can receive the Holy Spirit, that is, a person who confesses the Holy Orthodox Catholic faith, and who confesses it aright, without any addition, diminution or change, but as the Holy Apostles delivered it to us, and as it was defined and confirmed by the Holy Fathers in the Ecumenical Councils" (p. 34). St. Innocent lists seven "true and recognized means of receiving the Holy Spirit, according to the teaching of the Holy Scripture and the experiences of great Saints": 1) purity of heart and chastity; 2) humility; 3) listening to the voice of God; 4) prayer; 5) self-denial; 6) reading and listening to the Holy Scripture; 7) the Sacraments of the Church and especially Holy Communion (p. 34).

"Every faithful soul is filled with the Holy Spirit, if she is cleansed of her sins and not blocked or closed by self-love or pride. For the Holy Spirit always surrounds us and wishes to fill us" (p. 34).

An absolute requirement for maintaining the working within oneself of the Holy Spirit, is prayer. "True prayer brings with it a sweet consolation of heart, so that many Holy Fathers stood for whole days and nights in prayer, and in their sweet rapture they did not notice

the time or the length of their prayer. For them prayer was not a labor, but a pleasure. But it is not easy to reach such a state, especially for anyone who from childhood has given free rein to his passions and stifled his conscience. But what in the world, what science or art, or what consolations are acquired by us easily, quickly and without toil? And therefore pray in spite of the fact that you do not experience in prayer any consolation or pleasure but only toil—pray and pray diligently with all possible fervor, train yourself in prayer and in conversation with God; try as far as possible to collect and control your wandering thoughts, and little by little you will feel that it is becoming easier and easier for you, and then you will experience delightful consolations. If you are sincerely in earnest, the Holy Spirit, seeing your efforts and the sincerity of your desire, will soon help you . . . Only those who have no desire to pray can find no time to pray" (pp. 38-39).

Even after one learns personal and individual—"interior"—prayer, St. Innocent reminds us, there still exists a deep need for "external" community prayer with the entire body of Christian faithful. The full power of community prayer, as also its ultimate significance, St. Innocent teaches, is to be found in the Sacraments of the Church, especially in the Holy Mysteries of Communion: "Jesus Christ said: *He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood, dwells in Me, and I in him; he has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day* (John 6:56, 54). That means that he who *worthily* communicates of the Holy Sacrament is mystically united to Jesus Christ. In other words, whoever receives the Body and Blood of Christ *with true repentance, with a clean soul, with the fear of God and with faith* at the same time receives the Holy Spirit Who enters the soul . . . The Christians of the first centuries, feeling the importance and profit to the soul of the Holy Mysteries, used to communicate of the

Holy Body and Blood of Christ every Sunday and every festival; and that is why among them there was, as we are told in the Book of the Acts, one heart and one soul" (Acts 4:32) (pp. 42-43).

We have returned, once more, to the idea of the Church as vehicle *sine qua non* of our salvation—not to an abstract and theoretical "Christianity," not to an "invisible" and thus virtually intangible mental principle, but to the living and tangible Orthodox Church which we experience in its many facets in our daily lives.

Saint Innocent is fully comprehensible only from inside the Church, as priest and bishop, as pastor and teacher. Otherwise he remains just a historical curiosity to those who are interested in studying certain more or less obscure cultural and ethnic aspects of the history of Alaska. And it is here, indeed, as part of our Church, that St. Innocent—the man, the teacher, the bishop—becomes for us the touchstone for testing things that need be tested.

Unfortunately, it needs to be said that one of the very first "victims" of our sojourn in Protestant America has been, precisely, the Church. In contemplating the realities of our being in America, and posing the necessary questions about Ortho-

dox mission in America along the lines that have been suggested here, we are called, perforce, to think about the Church as the quintessential "Pillar and Foundation of the Truth." The Bicentennial of Orthodoxy in North America is thus, in reality, a jubilee of the Church in North America. As such it represents an important milestone for all of us, especially for those who truly understand the deeper significance of this event.

It is, of course, a call for personal commitment to the faith—to Orthodoxy—as well as a call for inner spiritual renewal. But it is also a call for commitment to the Church, to the Ark of Salvation, which has been established by Christ, and which, according to His faithful promise, will not be overcome even by the gates of Hell. May the Way indicated for us by St. Innocent help us to build and accomplish our salvation both as individuals, and as a community of faithful—the one and undivided Church of Christ sojourning on our continent.

—Archpriest Alexander S. Golubov⁴

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On May 14, Bishop Herman received the Doctor of Business Administration Degree from his alma mater, Robert Morris College, Pittsburgh, Pa. His Grace completed his studies at Robert Morris in 1954.

Bicentennial Male Chorus Shares The Faith



From its humble beginnings as a "pick-up" choir that could sing at various diocesan services, the **Bicentennial Male Chorus** has become a requested performing group within our Diocese. So far in its short history, it has performed not only in Orthodox Churches, but in those of other faiths, and even at the Muhlenberg College Chapel in Allentown. Beginning in September, several concerts are already scheduled for the coming year, the Bicentennial of Orthodoxy in North America. This is the event from which the choir takes its name.

The Chorus was organized in the fall of 1992. Father Daniel Kovalak, pastor of Holy Cross Church, Williamsport, developed the idea and, with the blessing of Bishop Herman, set about making it a reality. The initial thought was to put together a group of capable singers to perform English liturgical hymns as an outreach for Orthodox parishes to their local communities, thus paying tribute to the Bicentennial. Traditionally, Orthodox music has been a tool for evangelization. Thus far the Chorus has received favorable reviews in achieving this stated purpose.

A typical concert of the **Bicentennial Male Chorus** features "Orthodox Liturgical Treasures." The Chorus has continually

built up its repertoire to be flexible in adjusting to the Church's liturgical cycles in order to use the cycles themselves as teaching tools in their performances. Each selection is appropriately introduced and explained by one of the chorus members. In this way, not only the music, but the *context* of each hymn can be appreciated by the audience.

Each concert also includes an intermission during which the host priest may "preach" to the audience and educate them concerning the Bicentennial. Normally, a free-will offering is received, which goes to the Diocese to support the Bicentennial calendar of events. (The Chorus receives **no** financial remuneration.)

Each of the three deaneries of our Diocese is represented in the Chorus. Though this often makes it difficult to schedule concerts and rehearsals, frequent communications among Chorus members is effective. And the commitment of Chorus members to their "work" is substantial as they travel, some for hours, merely to rehearse.

The members of the Chorus are: **Fr. Daniel Kovalak**, director; **Fr. David Shewczyk** (Holy Resurrection, Alden Station), **Fr. Dea. Nicholas Wyslutsy** (St. Tikhon's Monastery), **Martin Paluch** (St. Tikhon's Seminary), **David**

Brzuchalski (All Saints, Olyphant), **Fr. Dea. Steven Howanetz** (St. Nicholas, Olyphant), **Fr. John Onofrey** (St. Herman's, Shillington), **Fr. Gregory Horton** (Holy Trinity, Catasauqua), **Nicholas Lezinsky** (St. Nicholas, Bethlehem), **Fr. Daniel Ressetar** (Christ the Savior, Harrisburg), **Fr. Emilian Hutnyan** (St. John's, Edwardsville), **Fr. Eugene Vansuch** (St. Nicholas, Bethlehem), **John Hawranick** (St. John's, Edwardsville), **Fr. John Maxwell** (Ss. Peter and Paul's, Uniondale), **Gregory Sagan** (St. John's, Nanticoke), and **David Kessler** (Holy Resurrection, Wilkes-Barre).

Queries regarding concerts may be directed to: Fr. Kovalak, 1725 Blair Street, Williamsport, PA 17701. Sample programs and publicity materials are available upon request. The Chorus also has recently made a recording which will be released in the fall.

Our Diocese offers thanks to the dedicated members of the **Bicentennial Male Chorus**—parish clergy and choir directors—who make the time to participate in this unique outreach through music in spite of their often hectic parish and personal schedules. They are truly a tribute to God, to our Faith, and to our Diocese.

—Father Daniel Kovalak

Official

Released:

Rev. Nicholas Dotson to the Diocese of the West

Assigned:

Rev. David Mahaffey as Acting Rector of St. Michael Church in Old Forge, PA

Awards:

Priest Daniel Kovalak to Archpriest

Celebrations:

20th Anniversary - St. Mark Church - Wrightstown, PA - October 24, 1993

80th Anniversary - Assumption of the Holy Virgin Church - Philadelphia, PA. - October 17

Appointment:

Mat. Frances Vansuch as Chairperson for Department of Religious Education

Conferences:

Clergy Wives Conference -
September 25 - South Canaan, PA. -
St. Tikhon's

Parish Councils - October 30 -
Bethlehem, PA

Clergy - November 11-12 -
South Canaan, PA - St. Tikhon's

Church School Teachers - November

Altar Boys Retreat - November



Bicentennial Committee



Bishop Herman in Moscow, Russia meets with Patriarch Aleksy II on his up-coming visit to the United States for the Bicentennial of Orthodoxy celebration.

Holy Martyr Vladimir, Metropolitan Of Kiev

Early in the sunny morning of June 27, 1992, the relics of Saint Vladimir, the Metropolitan of Kiev and Galicia, the first Holy Martyr in the period of pre-revolutionary Ukraine, were transferred to the Far Caves of the Kievian Caves Monastery (Lavra).

Metropolitan Vladimir (in the world Vasily Nikiforovich Bogoyavlensky) was born on the first of January, 1848. He attended theological school, seminary, and then the theological academy in Kiev, where he was an outstanding student known for his diligence and for his modest and peaceful disposition as well. He spent several years as a seminary instructor and parish priest in his home district of Tambov. In 1886, he suffered the loss of his wife and only child. He subsequently became a monk, taking the name Vladimir. He became the abbot of the Holy Trinity Monastery in Kozlov. In 1888, Archimandrite Vladimir was made vicar Bishop of the Novgorod Diocese.

Serving as Bishop of Samara in 1891-92, St. Vladimir displayed vigor and initiative in his response to twin tragedies of famine and cholera that befell the district in that period; he organized a committee and other charitable efforts to relieve the suffering and services to pray for deliverance from this misfortune.

After a five-year period of service as exarch of Georgia, Archbishop Vladimir was appointed Metropolitan of Moscow in 1898, a post which he held for fourteen years. The future hieromartyr was then transferred to St. Petersburg, where for three years he held the post of Metropolitan of that city, and also presided over the Holy Synod of the Church of Russia.

In 1915, he became the Metropolitan of Kiev. After his service in



Petrograd, this appointment was equivalent to an honorary exile. Metropolitan Vladimir had fallen into official disfavor because of his struggle against Gregory Rasputin and the evil forces he represented.

In Kiev, Vladika Vladimir did not find the desired peace, either. The revolution of 1917 broke out.

In the night of January 23, 1918,

the Bolsheviks occupied the Lavra. A crowd of armed people rushed into the monastery. They began driving the old monks out onto the snow, tearing off their clothes and shoes and whipping them. The armed soldiers and sailors (with cigarettes between their teeth) broke into the church during the service and with obscenities started the so-called "search." The plundering lasted all night. At dawn, before the Liturgy, Vladika Vladimir was again performing the Akathist in honor of the Dormition of the Mother of God. That was the last church service of Metropolitan Vladimir.

The next day early in the morning, the women who were going to

the Lavra for worship found the mutilated body of Metropolitan Vladimir. The oldest hierarch of the Church, the first Holy Martyr of "the new time" was lying on the snow between the fortress banks, a thousand steps away from the monastery.

On January 29, 1918, before the burial of the martyr-metropolitan,



Procession with the relics of the holy martyr Vladimir.

Archimandrite Tikhon gave a speech. His message is timely and relevant even in our day. He said in particular:

"All his life Metropolitan Vladimir was bearing a heavy cross of persecution for the truth of Jesus Christ, and that is why he did not deserve this last great sacrifice of a martyr's death. No, brothers, in our great sorrow, in profound endurance, in open repentance and in heartfelt grief, let us say here by the grave of the Holy Martyr: Are not all of us to blame for the death of our Archbishop, are not we responsible for this evil, was it not for our instruction that the Lord allowed his suffering? Did not the Lord allow this heinous crime to take place so that all of us could realize to what extent we have become savage and lost our humanity, to what degree we have forgotten all that is pure

and sacred? So that after seeing all this we could come to our senses and establish a basis for the new state and Church, not in a fratricidal war, but with tears of repentance!

"Brothers and sisters, as we come to understand how far we have gone in our sins, disorder, and anarchy, to what horrible crime and destruction they have driven us, what sacrifice they have required, let us hurry not only to wash our sins away with tears of repentance, but also to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance: peace, forgiveness, harmony, love, and lawfulness. And then the Lord will indeed temper His justice with mercy, and not only this place, but also all our long-suffering land will have the desired peace, rest, and bliss. Amen."¹

¹ Based on materials from the book *A Wreath for the Grave of Metropolitan Vladimir*, published in St. Petersburg, 1918. —translated by Ludmila Ellis

Troparion, Tone 2.

O virtuous guardian of the Orthodox faith and zealous keeper of Christ's commandments, Holy Martyr Vladimir, loving Christ with all your heart, you tended your flock properly, and died a martyr's death with gentleness. Now in honor and glory, pray for the salvation of our souls.

Kontakion, Tone 4.

Showing yourself a model of Christ's mercy, you have been a protection and shelter for your flock, O Father Vladimir. You have suffered in humility and kindness. Blessing your godless torturers, you have forgiven them. Therefore, intercede before Christ our God for peace to our spirit, and His mercy on us.



Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev conducts service for Holy Martyr Vladimir.



Parish gathers for groundbreaking.

Saint Herman's Church Marks Anniversary and Breaks Ground

The St. Herman of Alaska Orthodox Church was founded by a small group of dedicated Orthodox Christians who came together from diverse ethnic backgrounds with the goal and purpose of establishing an Orthodox Christian parish in Delaware County, Pennsylvania (western suburbs of Philadelphia), which would truly reflect our American heritage. As we now are about to commence the celebration of the Bicentennial of Orthodoxy in North America, it is fitting that we at St. Herman's are also celebrating the groundbreaking of our new church which is to be built on our newly procured property in Edgemont Township, Pennsylvania.

As we celebrate the Bicentennial, we call to mind the group of monastics from the Valaam Monas-

tery on Lake Ladoga in Finland who planted the seed of Orthodoxy in this great land. Primary among this original group of monks is our own blessed Father Herman of Alaska, who worked among the native peoples of Alaska on Kodiak and Spruce Islands, spreading the message of the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ among the Kodiak Aleuts. In the same spirit, we at St. Herman's, a parish composed of various and contrasting ethnic groups, have come together as Orthodox Christians to build in this Bicentennial year a new church to the Glory of God and in honor of St. Herman of Alaska, one of the original evangelizers of America. We at St. Herman's have much to be thankful for during these past twenty years, for our beginnings

were extremely modest; however, with perseverance and hard work, we were able to accomplish much for the upbuilding of Christ's Church here in Delaware County.

Our history begins with the first Divine Liturgy, which was celebrated on Sunday, September 30, 1973, by Fr. Nestor Geeza, who was the Dean at that time. The first Liturgy was celebrated in the Episcopal Church of the Atonement in Morton, Pennsylvania, which would be our home for the next four years. The parish was granted missionary status, and the Orthodox Church in America, which had received its autocephaly in 1970, would become our sponsor spiritually, administratively, and financially. It was at our first meeting that our name and Patron Saint, Blessed Father Her-

man of Alaska were chosen. For nearly a year, the late Father Archimandrite Sebastian (Gyza) served as the pastor in charge of our small community, traveling from St. Tikhon's Monastery each week-end to serve the Divine services. During this period, not one service was missed by our pastor and weekly attendance was almost one hundred percent of our membership.

In August 1974, Father Dionysius Swencki became our first permanent resident pastor, joining our new parish family. In 1978, Father Dennis was transferred and we welcomed Father Joseph Toroney and his family to our parish home, by then located in Wallingford, Pennsylvania, a facility which we purchased in 1977. In 1982, our parish welcomed our third pastor, Father Claude Vinyard, who guided us through the full payment of our mortgage, and led us in our celebration of the tenth anniversary of our community which by now had grown significantly.

In September, 1987, we welcomed Father John Perich as our new pastor, and his family, and in December of that same year we launched our New Valaam Building Fund for the express purpose of purchasing new property and erecting a new church for our ever-expanding parish family. After a few years of fundraising, we have been able to procure property in Edgemont Township, Pennsylvania, a distance of some twelve miles from our property in Wallingford. We were able to pay for the property in cash, without a loan. This indeed was a tremendous feat for a small parish such as ours!

We at St. Herman's have been blessed with a large number of children, and have a very energetic and active Sunday School program which is supervised by Mrs. Suzanne Hammerer. We have strived to continue to witness to the outside community, and have worked very hard in numerous charitable projects throughout the years.

St. Herman's parish was also blessed over the years with the prayers and help of various other priests who, though not pastors of our parish, have served as spiritual guides for many of our faithful: Fathers Vladimir Borichevsky, Andrew Goidich, Lawrence Farley, and especially the newly departed and ever-memorable Archpriest Alexander Fedoronko, who attended all services in our church for the last five years of his earthly life. May his memory be eternal!

Our celebration and our groundbreaking occasioned a joyful and spiritually rewarding weekend. On Saturday, June 12, 1993, His Grace, Bishop Herman of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania, our diocesan hierarch, arrived to celebrate the Great Vespers service which was attended by a large number of our parishioners, and by the many guests who had come for the celebration from near and far. Among those in attendance on that evening were Father James Laliberte of the St. George Greek Orthodox Church in Lima, Pa., along with Father Anthony Bassoline of the Ss. Peter and Paul Albanian Orthodox Church in northeast Philadelphia, both close friends of our parish over the years. The Great Vespers service was celebrated by our pastor,

Father John Perich assisted by Deacon Nicholas Wyslutsky from St. Tikhon's Monastery Church who accompanied His Grace. Following the Vespers, a fellowship hour in the Church Hall gave everyone the opportunity to renew old acquaintances and friendships.

On Sunday morning, the faithful gathered in our small but beautifully decorated church for the arrival of Bishop Herman, who was greeted with rose petals by the children of our Sunday School. Mr. Ralph Bitsko, our Church Warden, greeted the Bishop with the traditional bread and salt of hospitality, and Mrs. Lu Ann Motel, our vice-warden, welcomed him with a bouquet of flowers.

Following the traditional greeting by the pastor, Father John with the hand-blessing cross, His Grace entered the church to celebrate the hierarchical Divine Liturgy. Protodeacon Michael Stulpin of St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Cathedral in New York, served as senior deacon for the services. Protodeacon Michael is the father of one of our parishioners and is often with us in the celebration of the Divine services when his busy schedule as a medical doctor permits.

At the conclusion of the majestic
Continued on the next page.



Groundbreaking ceremony.

Twentieth Anniversary

Continued from page 45.

Liturgy, His Grace thanked all the parishioners for a most beautiful service and especially thanked the choir under the direction of Mr. Gregory Hubiak. Following the dismissal, His Grace presented awards to the following individuals for the work they have accomplished for the upbuilding of the Church in our area: Anastasia Jabkowski, Margareite Hendrick, Suzanne Hammerer, Anatole and Cynthia Bredikin, Ann Boris, Andrew Toroney, John Smarsh, John Krowzow, and Ann Woodring. Ribbons were also presented to the widows of early members of St. Herman's parish: Claire Brown, Dorothy Sissons, Sonya Krowzow, and Joan Godun. Special St. Herman of Alaska commemorative coins were presented to the Church Warden, Ralph Bitsko, and the Anniversary Coordinator, Don Motel, for their untiring efforts on behalf of the parish.

After a brief coffee hour, everyone proceeded to the new property where His Grace, together with the clergy, blessed the new ground and planted the Cross in the ground. His Grace was very happy to see the great numbers of children and the large number of faithful who received the Precious and Holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Shortly after the groundbreaking, we all went to the Concordville Inn for the Grand Banquet, along with the guests and dignitaries. The banquet was well attended by many friends of our parish, especially parishioners from St. Stephen's Orthodox Catholic Cathedral in northeast Philadelphia, who joined with us in our celebration. Our Dean, Father John Udics, was unable to attend due to previous commitments, but celebrated a Molioben of Thanksgiving at the Assumption of the Virgin Mary Church in Philadelphia on our behalf, and for this we are indeed thankful. Attending the banquet also were our former pastor, Father and Matushka Jo-



Ground is broken for new church.

seph Toroney, Father and Matushka Dennis Rhodes of St. John Chrysostom Albanian Orthodox Church in Philadelphia, and others.

The Balalaika Russe entertained the banqueters with Russian and Gypsy songs. We were blessed on that day with beautiful weather. In the various speeches and remarks that were offered, all offered thanks first of all to Almighty God for the past twenty years, and the hope and prayer that the next twenty years would be even better. His Grace, Bishop Herman, spoke very

candidly about the history of the parish, and expressed his appreciation and love for those who sacrificed so much for the Glory of God. Indeed, in this Bicentennial year, we at St. Herman's have much to be thankful for, and we hope and pray that we will be able to continue our efforts to proclaim the Gospel of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ here in Delaware County.

Just this July, our parish was able to enter into an agreement for the sale of our existing property, so it seems we have no other recourse than to start building as soon as possible, for there is no turning back now. O Holy Father Herman of Alaska, pray to God for us!

Those of you who would like to donate towards the construction of a new parish church of St. Herman of Alaska in the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania in this special Bicentennial year, please write to: St. Herman of Alaska New Valaam Building Fund, P.O. Box 373, Wallingford, PA 19086.

All donations will be greatly appreciated by our small but energetic community. May God bless all the members of our diocesan family as we embark on the celebration of the Two Hundredth Anniversary of Orthodoxy Christianity in America. Glory be to God for all things!

—Priest John Perich



Father John Perich presents holy icon to Bishop Herman.

New Plan Allows For Future Expansion

Holy Trinity, Stroudsburg, Charts Course

It's been a little while since the reader has been briefed as to the progress of the Building Project at Holy Trinity Parish in Stroudsburg. As may be remembered, the groundbreaking activities last year were preceded by all manner of interesting yet foreboding experiences but were completed, by the Grace of the Holy Spirit and the Christian good will of everyone concerned, in a manner that demonstrates conclusively the mutual love that exists between God and His precious children.

A great deal has happened since that day in October 1992, when we at Holy Trinity Parish formally began our epic journey to creating a new "House of Worship" in the Pocono Mountains. For a short period we did little more than bask in the warm recollection of the outstandingly successful groundbreaking activities—including the outdoor Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, concelebrated by His Grace, Bishop Herman and so many diocesan and visiting clergy, and attended by scores of faithful parishioners and friends—and what glowing warmth still remains in that blessed remembrance.

In recent months all manner of related activity has been occurring at the parish. A Building-Project Steering Committee has been formed and is actively involved in designing and conducting a comprehensive fundraising program. Fundraising must be done first, as the ultimate design of the building project will depend entirely on how much money is available for use.

Initially, probably because of the outstanding success realized in purchasing the needed building site, two rather large structures were contemplated: a single-floor church



Building committee.

building spacious enough to seat two-hundred-plus worshippers, and a single-floor parish hall, connected to the church by an enclosed walkway. A very large paved parking lot was also planned.

It was obvious to everyone that what was being designed was what everyone envisioned as a finished product or a completed architectural package on the property. But due to extremely poor returns on the fundraising front, what is evolving is a lot less ambitious in scope. Although many economists make light of the significance of the current downswing in the national economy, it is taken very seriously by most Orthodox Christians. As a result, the donations are not as plentiful as was hoped—and naturally, as a further result, significant changes are being made in the design of the new church facility.

The separate church hall is being put on hold. In its place, a much smaller basement has been added to the church building. The church building itself has been reduced in size, but room for future expansion is part of the reconfigured design.

What has not been reduced, it should be duly noted, is the enthusiasm and dedication of the parishioners at Holy Trinity Parish to the project.

Timbers will most likely be cut this fall and allowed to cure over the long winter months. In the spring, construction will begin in earnest, and before the end of 1994, the Bicentennial of Orthodoxy in North America, a Consecration, with hierarchical Divine Liturgy, will be celebrated in the new church building. There will probably be no furnace installed, and there may well be no electricity or running water as they will have to await additional fundraising. And it may well be the only Liturgy celebrated in the new facility until the following spring. But once again, with the continued help of our heavenly Father, this project will be completed.

His Grace, Bishop Herman, has given his preliminary approval to both the original and the modified version of the project, and he has lent his wholehearted support and encouragement for its successful

Continued on page 61.

Saint Anthimus the Blind, the New Ascetic of Cephalonia

Saint Anthimus the Blind, the new ascetic of Christ, was born in 1727 at Lixoria in Cephalonia, an island of the Ionian Sea. At his baptism, his pious parents, John and Atsuleta Kourouklis, gave the name Athanasius to their son. When Athanasius was seven years old, he became blind in both eyes following a smallpox epidemic in that region. Desiring the healing of her son, this pious mother not only offered fervent intercessions before God, but also asked the priest of the Church of the Holy Apostles to celebrate forty Divine Liturgies. When the priest neared the completion of the last Liturgy, and uttered the words, "With the fear of God, with faith and love draw near," the young Athanasius suddenly exclaimed that he beheld the priest clothed in a red chasuble bearing the chalice in his hands. In truth, the child was miraculously healed in his right eye so that he could now read and acquire divine knowledge which he would later use for the benefit of others.

For a while, Athanasius was a sailor like his father, but soon he abandoned this profession to consecrate himself solely to God and to asceticism, taking the name Anthimus in monasticism. We do not know how he became blind again, but we do know that this bodily blindness always came by Divine Providence, for the soul of Athanasius was inflamed with Divine light through which he enlightened many souls around him.

At the time of this new blindness, the Saint had a vision. While he was fervently praying before the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, two young men clothed in luminous robes appeared before him and ordered him to accompany them to that place where the Lord bade him. Finding himself before the Queen of



Heaven, the Saint wanted to prostrate himself before her, but the Mother of God forbade him, saying: "Depart from here, for thou dost pray unto me continuously for the

restoration of thy sight, and this would not be profitable for thee." But when the two young men intervened in the Saint's behalf, the Queen of Heaven said to him, "O Anthimus, I have decided to restore partially thy sight on account of thy numerous prayers and great piety. But know that in receiving this sight which is fleeting, thou canst lose that which is eternal."

Thus, Saint Anthimus was almost completely blind during his entire earthly life. Nevertheless, he possessed a spiritual sight and light, so that he knew with exactness in which spot it was meet to build a monastery or to construct a church. This he would indicate each time to those planning the building. Similarly, he received from God the gift of clairvoyance through which he predicted the future and called by their name men hitherto unknown to him. By the light of his life and his evangelic teachings, he illumined even greater multitudes of souls around him.

Becoming a monk around the age of twenty, Saint Anthimus dwelt first upon the Holy Mountain of Athos, then he began the missionary work which God had inspired him to undertake. He settled at Chios where he taught the people the Gospel of Christ while living one year upon this island in great asceticism. There, he would nourish himself with merely a few crumbs of bread and sleep on the very floor of the Church. He then went to Paros, where, by his prayers, he saved the passengers on a ship that was on the verge of sinking because of a great storm. Having heard of this miracle, the inhabitants of Paros received Saint Anthimus with love and respect. The Saint in turn rewarded them for this greeting by manifesting an even greater zeal to spread the Gospel.

After having visited a number of islands in the Aegean Sea, he departed for Jerusalem on a pilgrimage. Upon returning to the island of Castelorizon, he decided to build a monastery there. He did not, however, have the material resources necessary to accomplish this work, so he fervently prayed unto God Who granted him what was needed in this way.

At that time, the island suffered from such a drought that death threatened every living thing. The Saint prayed unto the Lord who answered his prayers by letting an abundant rain fall upon the island. Giving thanks unto God, the inhabitants helped the Saint to build the monastery of the Holy Great-martyr George (1759) that exists even until our times.

From there, Saint Anthimus went to the island of Astipaleiou, where he received the revelation to found a monastery in honor of the Most Holy Theotokos. Facing again the problem of materials, he learned by the gift of clairvoyance that the field of an inhabitant of the island had the materials necessary for building the monastery. He thus prayed unto the Lord that the owner would let him have his field, which was indeed fulfilled. When the construction was complete, nuns settled in this convent (1760). Saint Anthimus then departed for Mount Athos so that the Athonite Monks would make him a reproduction of the icon of the Mother of God of Ivron called "Portaitissa,"¹ destined for the monastery that he founded. Having returned to Astipaleiou, he soon had to leave the island, for the enemy of the race of man could endure neither the work of the Saint nor his asceticism. Hence, the devil led certain inhabitants of the island to slander him by spreading the rumor that he had impure relations with the nuns. Later, the chastisement of God struck the slanderers.

Between 1766-1767, a terrible earthquake shook the island of Cephalonia and destroyed the

monastery of Saint Parasceva, among others. Returning to this, the island of his origin, Anthimus decided to rebuild the monastery with the help of seven nuns who were gathered around him, the hegumen of the monastery, and several other good souls.

When the restoration of the monastery was complete, the Saint introduced the common life.² Soon, other nuns came to join the original group. As for Anthimus, he settled in a narrow cell, located in a cave below the church of the monastery. He slept on a board and undertook the rare and difficult type of asceticism of wearing iron chains in secret.

The Saint visited still other places in Greece, founding the Monastery of Saint Anthony the Great in Crete (around 1770). At the time of this stay in Crete, he revealed himself as a great wonder-worker. Among other miracles, he restored sight to a blind woman by the sign of the Cross. Not possessing bodily sight himself, he granted it to others by the grace of God. On another occasion, he blessed a sterile woman who later bore a child.

After the foundation of two other monasteries in the islands, he preached the Gospel with zeal in the Peloponnese and helped the faithful there with his miracles.

Upon his return to Cephalonia, Anthimus received three letters from the inhabitants of a village in the Peloponnese who asked him to come and put an end to their strife. He started out on the route, but a storm prevented the ship from docking at his place of destination, so that the voyagers had to land at another village which was inhabited by thieves and robbers. As soon as the thieves saw the boat approach the shore, two from among them leapt onto the ship with the intention of sacking it. Saint Anthimus' traveling companions were frightened, for the robbers were armed, but the man of God brought them peace with faith. Turning

towards the thieves, he called them by name saying unto them: "You are Christians, and you live by killing and looting? Woe unto you, for a terrible end and eternal torments await you!" Hearing such words as well as their own names called out by a blind man moved the robbers to throw down their weapons, and ask forgiveness of the Saint. Anthimus then taught them the Christian virtues and reprimanded the priest of their village who was with them. Although he then continued his journey, he suddenly asked the boatman to change his course and return to Cephalonia, saying unto him: "God does not want me to take care of this affair about which they have written me, but He wants me to return and die in my monastery." This prediction was quickly fulfilled. Returning to the monastery, he was attacked by jaundice and prepared for his rest in the Lord. He called his spiritual children and predicted his imminent end: "The hour has come, my children, to go there where the Lord commands me. You must not be frightened, for death is inevitable and common to all. Rather than being frightened, it is better to force yourself to hold on to your monastic promises and vows. One is the goal that you must have in this life: to please God and to save your soul."

After having thus taught his spiritual children, Saint Anthimus reposed in the peace of the Lord, the fourth of September, 1782, at the age of fifty-five. Twenty years after his repose, his relics were uncovered. They are now found in diverse places among which are the Monastery of Saint Parasceva and that of the Portaitissa in the Peloponnese.

The Saint was canonized by the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 1974.

On this day, we also commemorate our Holy Father Nilus of Calabria.

In the year 910, Saint Nilus³ was born into one of the most illustrious

Continued on the next page.

¹ The Keeper of the Gate.

² I.e., the cenobitic life.

Saint Anthimus Saint Nilus

Continued from page 49.

families of Rossano, the capital of Calabria and one of the rare Italian cities which had escaped the threat of Saracen conquest through the protection of the Mother of God. As Nilus' parents died soon after his birth, he was entrusted to the care of his elder sister who provided him with the best possible education. His delight was in solitude which enabled him to give himself over to the reading of the Holy Scriptures and the Lives of the Saints. This in turn kept him far from the depraved morality of his time. Nevertheless, without a spiritual guide, the young man let himself fall into the trap of pleasure, and fell in love with a young girl of the city by whom he soon had a daughter. But, when Nilus was suddenly healed of a sickness as he crossed a river, he understood that God was calling him to a more perfect way of life. He immediately abandoned all that bound him to the world and set out for the Monastery of Mount Mercury in order to become a monk. Nilus could not remain there, however, since the acceptance of the young aristocrat would bring down severe retaliations upon the monks. Being compelled to continue on his way, Nilus went to the Monastery of Saint Nazarius where, after forty days, he received the holy monastic schema. Some time later, he was able to return to Mount Mercury and thus he placed himself under the spiritual direction of the venerable ascetics John, Zachariah, and Fantinus.⁴ There, his spiritual fathers severely tested his obedience. Beholding both his zeal to renounce his own will and his love for solitude, they soon gave him the blessing to withdraw into a nearby cave where at all times he would stand

without worldly cares before the invisible God as if He were visibly before him.

During his sojourn in this cave, Saint Nilus set out with fiery zeal to subject his flesh to the laws of the spirit. Refraining from the use of wine and cooked food, he would often remain two, three, and even five days without eating. From the morning till the third hour, he would give himself over to calligraphy which enabled him to enter more deeply into the Holy Scriptures and the works of the Fathers. From the third till the sixth hour, he would stand before the Cross, reciting psalms and making one hundred prostrations (metanias). From the sixth till the ninth hour, he would sit down, reading and meditating upon the Scriptures and the Holy Fathers. Then, he would celebrate Ninth Hour and Vespers after which he would leave the cave taking a small walk and allowing his senses to contemplate the beauty of creation and to glorify God in His works. He then partook of his meager meal of bread, dried vegetables, or fruit. After granting his body at most an hour of sleep, he would spend the whole night in prayer, reciting the entire psalter and making more than five hundred metanias. He ended his Vigil at dawn by chanting Nocturn and Matins (Orthros).

Nilus lived in great and strict poverty being clothed all year round in a rough tunic of goat's hair which he changed only once a year when it was covered with lice. Despite these ascetics exploits, the Saint descended each day more deeply into the abyss of humility by condemning himself in all things and by considering how he dwelt in solitude on account of his weakness while the cenobitic monks transcended him by their works. Many were the tears he shed. Continuous were his struggles against the assaults of the demons who tried to lead him into temptation by making him accept imaginations or false visions. Once Nilus was about to abandon his cave, but along the

way he hung an old coat upon a tree and prostrated himself before it as if it were his spiritual father who was asking him the reason for his departure. Confounded and without an answer, Nilus then returned to his cave being encouraged with the knowledge that his Elder's prayers were upholding him. After more than ten years of struggles, and above all after more than ten years of humbly offering up his weakness to the Lord, God granted him mastery over the temptations of the flesh and the grace of blessed dispassion. His reputation became great throughout the region and he was admired as much by the Saracens as by the Christians.

As the demon was constantly held in check by the Saint through invisible warfare, the demon turned to external means to assault him. Thus, the evil one inflicted sicknesses upon Nilus to keep him from fulfilling his daily tasks, but Nilus resisted all the attacks. When the demon took away Nilus' voice to keep him from reciting the psalms, the Saint immediately counterattacked with silent prayer. One night, the evil one even appeared to Nilus visibly, beating him and leaving him barely alive. Nevertheless, the Saint continued to pray. Saint Fantinus finally persuaded Nilus to return for a while to the monastery on account of his health. Nilus obeyed, but as soon as he was restored to health, he returned to his seclusion, despite the desire of the brethren to make him their Hegumen.

Soon, Nilus agreed to take a young man named Stephen as a novice. Towards Stephen, Nilus was hard and exacting, but never angry. As a father attentive to the upbringing of his son, he made the inner man grow in Stephen by strengthening him in asceticism, renunciation, and humility. To help the young man in his struggle against sleep, Nilus made him a stool with only one leg, and forbade him to use anything else as a seat. Hence, whenever Stephen began to

⁴ Saint Nilus is not listed in the Byzantine Synaxaria. We add him here not only for his own sake, but also to highlight the importance of Byzantine monasticism in Southern Italy, the region which together with Sicily, remained within the Orthodox Church until the 15-16th century.

Saint Fantinus is commemorated on August 30. He ended his life in Thessalonica, thus serving as a link between these two quite distinct regions of the Christian world.

be overcome by sleep, he would fall to the ground. Though this may seem hard, the love of Saint Nilus for his disciple was very great. In fact, when the Saracens pillaged Fantinus' Monastery and Nilus thought that his disciple had been captured and delivered to slavery, he would rather deliver himself over to the barbarians than to be separated from his disciple.

Around 956, a new Saracen invasion compelled Nilus and some of his disciples to leave their cave. Thus, they set out for the outskirts of Rossano where they settled in the small chapel of Saint Adrian. Soon, twelve other disciples were added to their number. Although the monastery was thus established, the brethren continued to live in the same poverty and austerity that Nilus maintained in his cave. Despite his love for the brethren, Nilus found the common life difficult. With fondness, he recalled the sweetness of solitude. Nevertheless, he drew to himself a great host of visitors and leading figures throughout the empire by his wisdom, spiritual discernment, and unerring knowledge of the Mysteries of Scripture. He received them all without being a respecter of persons, teaching them with the words which the Holy Spirit placed in his mouth. All who came before him were left speechless with admiration before his knowledge. When they brought the sick and the possessed to be healed by his prayer, Nilus humbly resisted, agreeing only to anoint them with the oil of an old vigil lamp blessed by a priest. When they were healed, the Saint attributed the miracle to the prayers of the Church. Thenceforth, he healed not only a great number of the sick, but he also came to the aid of those who suffered injustice. He did not hesitate to leave his cave to go to the city or to cover great distances by foot in order to make righteousness and justice reign. When the inhabitants of Rossano revolted against the authorities, Nilus personally intervened and exhorted the Magistrate Nicepho-

rus to forgive them. He acquired such a reputation that at the death of the Bishop, the people wanted to take him as the successor. In fact, the Saint was able to escape being acclaimed Bishop by the people only by retreating deep into the mountains.

Now as the inhabitants of the region continued to make donations to the monastery despite the protests of Saint Nilus, the monastery eventually grew quite affluent. At last, when the Saint was honored by the court of Constantinople, he

"Whether we eat or whether you fast, we all do this for the Glory of God."
—Saint Nilus

decided to flee into Latin territory where he was unknown. There in Campania, he hoped to recover that life of peace and austerity necessary to find God. Yet even here, his renown proceeded him. When he reached the monastery founded by Saint Benedict at Mount Cassino, the Latin monks received him with great solemnity "as if Benedict himself had arisen from the dead." They allowed him and his disciples to use a dependency close to the large monastery where they could celebrate the services in Greek: "So that God could be all in all." Nilus composed a service to the glory of Saint Benedict and came with his monks to the large monastery to celebrate with his monks an all-night vigil according to the Byzantine typicon. At the close of the feast, the Latin monks broke their customary discipline and hastened towards Nilus with spiritual questions. While remaining steadfast in the Faith of the Holy Fathers, Saint Nilus showed a great openness of spirit with respect to the differing Greek and Latin practices. On the question of the Latin fast on Saturday, he responded: "Whether we eat or whether you fast, we all do this for the Glory of God."

Now, when Nilus beheld the increasing wealth and ease of life at the Monastery of Saint Michael of Vallelucia, he departed from that monastery bringing with him all

who preferred to follow the straight and narrow way of the Gospel. Thus, he set out for the Duchy of Gaetia where he founded the Monastery of Serperi on a barren mountain. There, he and his companions devoted themselves to harsh labor and unceasing psalmody. Assailed more and more frequently by sickness, the aging Saint did not stop growing in his asceticism. He often fell into an ecstasy and would not respond to questions except with verses from the Psalms or words from the Divine Liturgy. When he

returned to himself, they would ask him where he had been. To this, the Saint would reply that he is but a rambling old man. Despite his seclusion, he continued to intervene before those in authority so that justice and mercy might reign. Thus, when the pope and emperor chastised Philagathon the Calabrian for attempting to seize the papal throne, Nilus himself went to Rome to intercede in his favor. The Emperor Otho III was so greatly impressed by the Saint that he went to visit him in his monastery some time later. To the sovereign's propositions to provide material support, Nilus responded: "Of thy kingdom, I have no need. What I seek is the salvation of thy soul."

Ten years after Serperi was founded, Nilus again left that which attached him to the world. He went to the outskirts of Rome to the Monastery of Saint Agatha deciding to die therein. Being soon joined by his disciples, he designated one of them as a successor and peacefully prepared for death. After devoting his last two days and nights to prayer alone, he committed his soul to God (September 26, 1005). His body was soon translated three miles into the present-day Monastery of Grotto Ferrata (Crypto-Ferris) where Saint Nilus is considered to be the founder and where his disciples continued to live according to the Byzantine Tradition.

Who Needs Encouragement?

It was almost ten o'clock on a warm summer evening. The cars were gone from the church parking lot, which was amazingly clean, "picked-up," after all the happy hectic activity just completed. Father Benjamin walked slowly around the classically simple structure of St. Matthew's Orthodox Church, its white walls, blue-tiled roof, and gracious gold dome glistening in the moonlight. As he approached the side porch of the rectory, he was surprised to hear voices coming from the hammocks on the screened patio. For the moment he'd forgotten he had guests—his twin nephews had come to spend the summer with Matushka and him. Ron and Rick had readily volunteered to help at the annual festival for missions. They both wanted to aid in sharing information about the Church around the world, and to encourage others to reach out to their Christian brothers and sisters in any possible way, whether by sending physical supplies, by going as a volunteer teacher, medical worker, or builder, by donating money for the many needs, or by becoming ardent prayer warriors for Christ's Kingdom! Their enthusiasm had been so contagious that more teenagers than ever before had rallied to work for the project.

Father Benjamin was so impressed with their eagerness to serve! All day he had caught glimpses of them as they were working—Ron with the very knowledgeable Mr. Sotera and his state-of-the-art audio-visual equipment used to tell the stories of Orthodoxy around the world, and Rick with Mr. Campbell, the elderly custodian who lovingly cared for the church grounds and for all who used them. Both had asked for their

specific assignment. Now Father was eager to hear their response to the events of the day.

Walking quietly up to the boys, he asked with a chuckle, "Are you going to spend the night here?"

Ron struggled to sit up, "Oh—Hi, Uncle Ben! We couldn't get any farther!"

"Yeah," added Rick, "these two hammocks were waiting for us with open arms—and we couldn't resist."

"Good for you," responded Fr. Ben. "Think I'll just stretch out here on this lounge and hear what you thought of the day . . . if you're not too tired. By the way, where's Aunt Beth? Is she still in the church?"

"No," Ron replied. "She's in the house fixing everyone a cool drink—thought we all might need it. Here she comes."

Both boys climbed out of the hammocks and hastened to meet their aunt who was carrying a tray of drinks, plus samples of leftover goodies!

"Hi, Honey," called Fr. Ben. "This is great. I can't remember if I had supper tonight or not."

"I thought so," Aunt Beth said, smiling, as she put the refreshments on the picnic table.

After a hymn, Father Ben blessed the food and then for a few minutes

everyone relaxed and satisfied their hungry tummies. Father Ben finally said, "That was wonderful, just to stretch out a bit—and eat! Is it too late for you guys? Shall we chat a bit . . . a sort of debriefing? I'm really eager to hear your impressions of the day."

Rick piped up, "Not too late, now that my stomach is satisfied. We like to go over things at night. Often do it at home. It's a good thing Dad and Mom are night owls."

Aunt Beth chuckled, "Oh yes, I know your mom from home. Your grandpa was always telling her to turn off her light at night!"

"Dad still reminds her that some things will wait till tomorrow," Ron agreed.

Rick added eagerly, "The day was great. The response of the people to the mission challenge was tremendous. I couldn't believe how many people signed up to donate supplies."

"Yep, four college students are applying for serving on one of the traveling work teams to Africa and Haiti during school break," said Ron.

Aunt Beth quickly added, "Financially, it's a great success—both with the offerings and the food tables. Best year out of the ten since we've started."



Boys seem to be winning at the D.R.E. picnic.



D.R.E. picnic held in Williamsport.

"So many signed cards to be prayer warriors it was overwhelming," Fr. Ben continued.

A pause in the stimulating reflections ended when Ron said, "I'm sure glad all turned out so well. Everything would have been perfect if . . ."

"Yes, go on, Ron," said Father.

"Well, I don't like to mention this, but Mr. Sotera...sure have to say he knows *everything* about electronics, audio-visual equipment, etc. Yet, nothing pleased him. He could handle any emergency. But, boy, he sure doesn't know how to handle people! Two of the guys that were working left early, saying they'd never have volunteered to help if they'd have known about how cranky he was! We couldn't do

anything right. And if, by chance, we did something okay, he never said 'Thank you.' I was the last one to leave him—everyone else took off as soon as the programs were over. I carried boxes and trunks to his car, at least ten trips. All I heard was, 'Hurry,' 'No, here—not there,' 'Be careful, don't tip that.' In fact, he didn't even say good-bye. So, Uncle Ben, if I come next year, don't ask me to help him, even though electronics is my special love!"

Father Benjamin sat quietly and Aunt Beth responded, "I'm sorry you had to work so hard, Ron. Reminds me of my teen years and our youth group. We had a hard-working advisor—always had good activities—well-organized and supposedly the latest things for youth.

We enjoyed these events and often worked very hard on the projects she planned for us. But it was funny; we would hear her telling people about the wonderful youth group, even boasting about our industriousness and good efforts, but, you know, I cannot remember her ever telling us that we'd done well. She'd just smile and give us something else to plan for. Motivation but no encouragement. Sometimes we could have used a dose of that too!"

"Well," chimed in Rick, "my crew sure didn't lack for encouragement, even though our job wasn't technically prestigious. We sure had a *great* time cleaning up tables and discussion rooms and the parking lot with Mr. Campbell. He kept us guys laughing all the time; he can really make fun out of a lot of 'dirty' work. People who leave half-filled cups of soft drinks sitting under chairs and tables, or stuff napkins into a cup of coke ought to be on a clean-up crew once! But Mr. C made it a game, kept telling us we were the "greatest" because we helped clean up. He had a hug and a 'hi-five' for each of us as we left. I'll work for him any day, Unc!"

"Keen observations, guys," Fr. Ben responded. "You've seen the blessing of being encouraged. We all need to receive it and to give it!

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Maybe not—the girls seem to be holding their own.

Who Needs Encouragement?

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Say, guess I'd better quickly add how thankful Aunt Beth and I are for all your work today—or I'll be guilty of not practicing what I preach. You see, I've learned over the years that the Church's outreach only thrives under ENCOURAGEMENT!"

READ FROM YOUR BIBLE -
Proverbs 15:1-9; Matthew 12:33-37;
James 3:2-18.

THEME VERSES - "A word fitly

spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver" (Proverbs 25:11).

"Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones" (Proverbs 16:24).

Something to talk over with your family:

What is encouragement? Who should give it?

Why is it important?

What can happen if we don't give encouragement?

St. Paul, in his various letters, often wrote words of encouragement to the various groups of believers, to

strengthen and help them. Read a few of these—I Corinthians 1:1-9; Philippians 1:1-6; I Thessalonians 1:1-10. See how many others you can find. Follow Paul's example at home, at church, with your friends...

Our Lord Jesus Christ, thank you that by encouragement from families and friends, but particularly from Your Holy Scriptures, we may learn to live our lives in a way pleasing to You. Help us to encourage others whenever we can. Through the prayers of the Theotokos and all the saints. Amen.

—Matushka Isabel Anderson

Summer
Camp Has
Biggest
Year Yet

Have you often wondered what a day at St. Tikhon's Camp was like? Let's look at Camp—1993! Besides happy laughter, ceaseless chatter, and shrill whistles, as friendships were made or renewed, the hours were filled with activities of all varieties. Reveille began the day—the early-bird fishermen of boys' camp

were up long before this—and was quickly followed by morning prayers, in which Fr. John Anderson unfolded the year's theme, "ABC's of Our Orthodox Faith" (Authority, Baptism, Commandments, Divine Deliverance, Eternal Life). To breakfast from prayers; then the campers headed back for



Going for a hike.

the dreaded but necessary room clean-up and inspection. Morning workshop began at 10:15. Counselors and C-I-T's (counselors-in-training) helped the boys and girls, who were divided into age groups, to study the worksheets which were introduced by Matushka Isabel Anderson. A special study for each day's letter had been prepared. The main thrust of this year was to discover (1) how our faith comes from the Bible and (2) how to use the Holy Scripture for private study. Campers were strongly encouraged to get a new Orthodox Study Bible for themselves. As an outgrowth of these workshops, the girls prepared a program for Friday evening, sharing some of the ideas they had learned during their classes. Songs, poetry, and art-work were all used in their presentations, which were enjoyed by His Grace, Bishop Herman, camp staff, visiting parents, and friends.

Following daily workshop were water activities: swimming, boating, and fishing. Lunch at 12:30 was always eagerly anticipated and enjoyed. This year meals were held in the Monastery Trapeza for the girls because of the almost one hundred people who needed to be fed, and in the Seminary Dining Room for the nearly seventy folks involved with boys camp. After lunch, peppy activities filled the afternoons—a new feature designed by Rex Carpenter, compass courses; hikes; basketball workshops; crafts (sun visors, sun catchers, bead work, plus painting the hay wagon's rack); fly tying for fishermen; and of course, more water sports. Supper, with three cookouts per week and one day featuring Fr. Andrew Shuga's pizza, was always eagerly anticipated. Evening doings included pinatas, hay rides (Bishop Herman enjoyed both of them!), washer board contests, folk dancing, and some cool dips on hot days! Evening prayers tied up the day.

Do you wonder that, come Friday PM, counselors didn't have too

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Ethnic dancing.



Boys' camp.



Girls' camp.

Summer Camp

Continued from page 55.

much trouble getting people to sleep?

Again campers enjoyed the lovely facilities of the Metropolitan Leonty Dormitory camp rooms. Indefatigable Martin Paluch, as always, accomplished the difficult task of directing the two weeks with his usual finesse and care. It was with much gratitude he welcomed the assistance of Matushki Myra Kovalak, Stephanie Onofrey, and Eugenia Perich, Mrs. Joanne Bohush, Kay Fedirko and Evelyn Suhoski, Frs. John Onofrey and John Maxwell, Dea. Andrew Diehl and Dea. David Mahaffey, Albert Paquet, Mike Mellon, Seminarians Greg Hatrak, Greg Sagan, and Greg Sulich as counselors, plus these former campers who wore the whistles: Mary Maxwell, Lina Yacovelli, Stacey Keeney, Mike Bench, Jason Vansuch, Matt Sysak, Mike Stavrou, Mark Siciliano, Joe Getzie, and John Schilling. C-I-T's, some of whom were kitchen help during the second week, included Natalie Hatrak, Ana Hojnicky, Daria Kovalak, Tanya Rezanka, Sarah Rhodes, Anna Semon, and Kazi Bonczar. Kitchen staffers *par excellence* included Jennie and Ted Sagan, Lynn Chrush, Rex Carpenter, Fr. Andrew Mayba, and Kay Fedirko. Many people did double, triple jobs! Friends who came for special events were Lynda Anderson (folk dancing), Ken Gula (basketball workshop), and Ken Karbo (fly fishing information and fly tying). Matushka Elizabeth Wyslutsky served as camp nurse, and her brother, Nick Finley—on Navy leave—helped both weeks.

A feature of both weeks was the traditional washer board contest, so ably run by Wes Sudia (who brought this event to St. Tikhon's). Winners this year were:

- Girls: Singles - Kyra Comroe
- Boys: Singles - Sam Kedala
- Girls: Doubles - Amanda Suhoski, Katrina Welter
- Boys: Doubles - Michael Ogbazi,



Matushka Isabel directs girls' choir.



Prayer before meal.



Fun and fellowship.

Jeremy Soroka.

Runners-up:

Girls: Singles - Natalie Schilling

Boys: Singles - Michael Ogbazi

Girls: Doubles - Kyra Comroe,

Stephanie Majchrzak

Boys: Doubles - Eugene Naumkin, Peter Rezanka

The girls' singing the Saturday liturgy again was a heartwarming worship experience. Bishop Herman gave each camper a lovely medal-

lion as a remembrance of 1993 Camp, plus the booklet, "A-B-C's of Our Orthodox Faith," for family use.

A full, busy year. Our camp song sums up how all feel about the privilege given to campers, counselors, and staff alike:

Come and sing to God our King - Alleluia.

Praise and thanks for camp we bring - Alleluia.

To St. Tikhon's camp we come -

Alleluia.

To meet old friends and make new ones - Alleluia.

At the camp each year we grow - Alleluia.

More of Jesus Christ to know - Alleluia.

For the summer camp we love - Alleluia.

We give thanks to God above - Alleluia.

—Matushka Isabel Anderson

Nurturing the Orthodox Family

"The modern family is the building block of society."

"The contemporary family is slowly decaying."

We have all been exposed to such clichés that underscore the importance and endangerment of the family. Yet we seem to be at a loss about how to enhance the family structure. To respond to this dilemma, we need to consider facts about the current status of "the family" and clarify how we can nurture the Orthodox family in our own homes.

The psychological profiles of family members, in general, reflect a lack of emotional fulfillment, entanglements, and enmeshed relationships. As a people, Orthodox Christians whose roots are based in traditional cultures—for instance, Greeks, Russians, Serbians—tend to dismiss such alarming problems as alien to both the culture and tradition.

There is no question that in the United States, Orthodox Christian Americans have felt the impact of American cultural issues: drugs, alcohol, suicide, changing sex roles and role confusion, sexual promiscuity and its epidemics, as well as modern day epicureanism and hedonism have all made an impact. It may be helpful to recognize that these are all spiritually-originated disorders. They are often symptoms of disordered homes, and indelibly

engrave their pathology on otherwise healthy children. The presence of these disorders and their symptoms is often less visible in the relatively affluent or the more culturally endowed people of our time. Middle-class America is insulated, or chooses to be insulated, from the reality of inharmonious homes. We do this by means of material comforts and worldly success—cushioning ourselves until "somehow," "out of nowhere," a symptom pushes through the facade in the form of a divorce, drugs, or suicide. In this way, comforts blur our vision of the importance of our spiritual lives.

I am suggesting that spiritual vitality is at the heart of the Orthodox family. But what exactly is spiritual vitality, and how do we know if spiritual vitality exists in our homes?

One test of spiritual vitality in our homes may be answered by asking direct questions: "What do I believe?" and "How are my beliefs made manifest in my life?" Our answers to these questions could be a barometer of our spiritual vitality and of our genuine life in Christ. Frequently, many families have no explicit beliefs and lack meaning and purpose. Life becomes simply a series of temporal stimulations. This ambiguity in life seems to be implicit in our culture, but it also defines what it means to be "existentially sick." If a family has no direc-

tion, it cannot be going anywhere. And if we understand the Devil (etymologically, *diavolos*, as the one who divides) as the author of chaos, this setting provides the breeding ground for trouble.

Many families perceive that they are "achieving" if children "get" married, "have" a family, and "make" money. To be sure, many try this and find that it secures neither the marriage nor the family. Nor does it make family members more fulfilled in their lives. Families' resources are exhausted with the expectation that such pleasures and luxuries as vacations, recreation, and extravagant homes will constitute "success." What is discovered, again, is that in spite of such efforts, the family and its members are neither secured nor protected.

Clearly, a family is not simply the product of a wedding ring or children; it is rather a process and an experience of some complexity and "something more." One psychologist identifies this "something more" as *pothos*, a virtuous yearning, or a "passionful" pride.¹

Such filial love is expressed with equivalent power by Sen. Paul Tsongas of Massachusetts, who prematurely retired from the Senate in his early forties after learn-

¹ J. Papajohn, *Pothos. Alumni Lectures* (Brookline: Holy Cross Press, 1974).

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Nurturing The Orthodox Family

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ing that he had a chronic, terminal lymphoma. He wanted to spend his last years with his family. Tsongas stated, "I've yet to meet anyone who chose family over career and regretted it. No one on his death bed ever said, 'I didn't spend enough time with my business.'"²

Yet, if we are able to speak objectively, we must recognize that there is nothing unique about culturally-based love in the family. Jews maintain this love, secular humanists endorse it, and, as a native of Cicero, Illinois, the "work place" of Al Capone, I can attest that even the Mafia practice it. Caring families are not necessarily Orthodox families. There is, however, another dimension in the Orthodox family which may help us to understand its finer elements. What matters is the degree to which the *pothos* of the home is influenced by the essence of the faith.

We need to ask: Is mere influence enough? Have we realized the potential power of our faith in marriage and the family? Or, more directly: Would it not be better for us to experience the full essence of the Orthodox family rather than merely to be influenced by it?

THE ESSENCE OF THE ORTHODOX FAMILY

It should not be surprising to us that Jesus Christ had hardly anything to say about the basic family, as a building block, since a family is not defined by its structure but rather by its substance. The New Testament speaks of "God's household" and the "family of believers" (Ephesians 2:19, Galatians 6:10). Scriptural reference addresses what *fills* the home. For the Christian, the essence of the family, of life, is achieved in the spirit of God. A home based upon the resources of human beings alone does things



that human beings do. A home based upon the resources of God does things beyond human imagination.

Therefore, the Orthodox family and home must recreate the particular elements which distinguish the Church; it must reflect the marks of the Church. As Orthodox Christians, we must see family life flowing out of the life of the Church, not vice versa. For when disordered homes influence the Church, entire congregations may lose their course. The priority must be God, who provides direction. Left to human design, the family becomes lost in the forces and values that surround it.

What are the elements of the Church? What marks of the Church should families properly manifest in the home? Holiness. Humility. Love. And action.

HOLINESS

St. Paul writes "to the saints" in his epistles, referring to Christians

as those people who believe and work as they believe. Such are holy people, not perfect, but people who bring "God's power" into their daily lives. Christians who do not take their holy identity seriously lose their greatest asset—the chance to be in the process of experiencing and achieving their potential. It is through such holiness that we can be made into "new beings," thereby experiencing the "God-vision," *theoptia*, to know a resurrected existence.

St. Gregory the Theologian says, "It is a good thing to speak of God but still better to purify oneself for God." A Christian home is one where family members learn how to affirm their goodness, and to correct their sins. Homes must convey holiness through the experiences of respecting, valuing, and caring. We can do this practically by understanding both our sins and our virtues. By acknowledging our "state," and improving our "selves," we

² P. Tsongas, *Heading Home*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1984).

embark upon the process of acquiring holiness. In so doing, we take God and faith seriously.

HUMILITY

When St. Augustine was asked to describe the Church, he said, "The first thing that I can say about the Church is humility. The second thing that I can say about the Church is humility. The third thing that I can say about the Church is humility." Certainly humility is the virtue upon which all other Christian characteristics are built. Humility sets the stage for listening. If one can be humble, and listen, he or she can hear God, "other," and self.

Most of what we know about the communication gaps between parents, children, and generations stems from the problem of poor listening. The individual is often so absorbed in his or her own thoughts that the needs, wishes, and concerns of others are rarely heard, let alone understood.

When we practice humility, we are open to God's grace and the contribution of others. We are able to hear the voices that influence us—both inside and outside of our own minds. With humility, we can hear the needs of our family and respond in kind. Humility is a harbinger of love.

LOVE

The Greek word for community, *koinonia*, literally means communication. In the faith, as we communicate, we are bonded as a unit. Communication is therefore the process of love. One of the greatest diabolical attacks on the family is poor communication: husbands against wives; fathers against sons; and brothers against sisters. Through effective communication, love can nurture the wholeness of the family unit. The family, like the Church, must be a community, having a common unity. Christian communication, intimacy, and love cannot be separated from the love of

God, as it is God who models and fuels "good relationships." Such family spirituality requires that we pray and talk about our relationship with God.

At the same time, love in the home needs to be expressed and experienced as a friendship. The definition of "friendship" that I prefer is two circles that overlap one another, and one of those circles is divided in two. The drawing is accompanied with the maxim, "A friend doubles your joys and divides your sorrows." This concrete definition of a friend can also serve as a test for those who care about us. Indeed, those who love us double our enthusiasm and divide our pain. Such a definition of friendship should be modeled and experienced by the members of a family. Friendship of family encourages, comforts, and enables each member to grow.

One Christian family prays openly together at the end of each day. If the husband and wife are arguing, they bring the "issue" to prayer, because above all else they agree to pray together. In this way, their pattern of seeing arguments from a single point of view is broken by their commitment to God through communication. Through loving communication and friendship we share quality time with one another. Saint Paul insists, "Love is longsuffering, love is kind; love is not self-seeking, it is humble and is not puffed up . . . But it rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (I Corinthians 13:4-7). These characteristics of love provide the kind of solid reinforcement upon which a Christian home is built.

ACTION

Christ says, "You shall know them by their fruits!" (Matthew 7:16). In the Epistle of St. James, we learn, "Faith without works is a dead thing!" (James 2:17). The criteria for eternal life, according to Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, are

our works: feeding the hungry, giving shelter to the homeless, visiting the prisoners, and caring for the afflicted (Matthew 25). Doing works bears witness to our faith.

By living in an Orthodox family, a child learns how to be cared for in the home so that he or she may give care in the world. The product of our family reflects the degree to which we have made the effort to connect the things we say or believe to the things we do. An Orthodox family integrates faith and life; it is real and ideal. It is holiness, humility, love and action. Such are the marks of the Church, and they are also the critical dimensions of the family. These qualities constitute our Christian identity and ultimately our well-being.

Nurturing the Orthodox family is critical for the individual and society. By drawing upon the natural, spiritual resources of the Orthodox faith, the sustenance of the individual, the home and the Church are assured and all are nurtured.

—John T. Chirban³

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The deadline
for the
next issue of

Alive in Christ
is
November 15, 1993

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18459

Archimandrite Sophrony Falls Asleep In The Lord

On this past July 11, Archimandrite Sophrony, the spiritual elder of the Monastery of St. John the Baptist at Tolleshunt Knights, England, fell asleep in the Lord. Father Sophrony was well known throughout the Orthodox world as the compiler of the writings of St. Silouan and the author of his life. And to those who were privileged to be acquainted with him personally, he was known for the spiritual love and joy which his presence called forth and radiated from him.

LIFE OF FATHER SOPHRONY

Archimandrite Sophrony was born on September 23, 1896, of Orthodox parents in Russia. He began a career as an artist, first in his homeland, and after the Revolution he went to Paris. Here the aspirations of his heart moved him to seek a life in Christ. He first enrolled in the newly-opened Paris Orthodox Theological Institute; the formal study of theology, however, did not satisfy his interior longing, and he soon set off for the Holy Mountain where men strive not for thirty-fold, or sixty-fold, but one hundred-fold—for the deification which is possible here and now.

Father Sophrony came to the Holy Mountain in 1926, and it was there that he spent the next twenty-two years of his life; fifteen at the Monastery of St. Panteleimon (where he was a close disciple of St. Silouan the Athonite), and seven years in the desert area. Failing health compelled him to leave his cave, and it was at this time that the idea came to him to write a book about his teacher, Staretz Silouan. With this purpose in view, he returned to Paris, where, having fallen ill, he underwent an operation in which most of his stomach was removed. Thus, it was not possible



Archimandrite Sophrony

for him to return to the Holy Mountain. Without hope of living very long, he was given refuge in a Russian old-age home, where he assisted the priest who served at the resident chapel.

It was here that a Swiss convert who had read the **Way of the Pilgrim** and had an interest in the Jesus Prayer, sought out as a teacher an Athonite monk of whom he had heard and who was living at this old-age home. Having met Father Sophrony, he decided to follow him as his guide in Christ, and soon afterward he was joined by another man of like aspirations. These two were allowed to live at the old-age home, and as food, ate what was left over from the patients. Soon a number of disciples gathered around Father Sophrony and they began holding services in

which they repeated the Jesus Prayer out loud because of the lack of service books. When their manner of life began to produce a conflict with the functioning of the old-age home, they sought a place to establish a residence. A spiritual child in France donated a house with about ten acres of land that at one time had been a rectory for a nearby church which had not been in use for many years. A few nuns who also resided at the old-age home, along with several laymen, accompanied Father Sophrony in his move into this location at Tolleshunt Knights near London. This was in the mid-1950s, and at that time, Father Sophrony did not expect to live long.

For many years, visitors from around the world have come to visit the Monastery of St. John the Baptist, as it came to be called. At first, it was primarily to see an Orthodox elder, Father Sophrony, but as time went on and the community grew, many came to visit the community as well. Out of the aforementioned small root, a rather unique monastic community has evolved consisting both of monks and nuns. It is a multi-ethnic community; there are members from twelve countries. They have a form of common service which is special and known only in their monastery—they say the Jesus Prayer together in their cycle of community services.

With the death of Father Sophrony, the number of the community was twenty-five. But thirteen days after the death of Father Sophrony, the eldest nun, Mother Elizabeth, also passed away. She was a little older than Father Sophrony, and being sickly, she was confined to a wheelchair for many years. Knowing that death would soon overtake each of them, Father Sophrony said that he would go first and then she

shortly afterwards.

LAST DAYS AND BURIAL OF FATHER SOPHRONY

The burial service of Archimandrite Sophrony took place at 2:00 p.m., July 14, in the main church of the monastery, and he was interred in a crypt on the monastery grounds which was especially built for the burial of the members of the community. There were in attendance an estimated four hundred or more persons consisting of hierarchs and presbyters of the local Greek and Russian Churches, along with the local faithful. From overseas, there were monastics from the monasteries of Simonopetra and Gregoriou on Mount Athos, St. Arsenios in northern Greece, St. Silouan in France, and the convent of Karea in Athens. Also present was one of the

fathers of our monastery of St. Tikhon in South Canaan—this was a fitting tribute as Father Sophrony shared a spiritual link with St. Tikhon's for many years, having been ordained to the diaconate in 1930 by the former rector of our seminary, St. Nicolai of Zicha.

Serving for the burial were the clergy of the monastic brotherhood of St. John the Baptist, while the responses were sung by the sisters in English, Greek, and Slavonic. Father Sophrony was not embalmed, and as is customary with priests and monastics, his face remained covered. Only his right hand was visible which remained soft and retained a healthy color. The burial service, including the last kiss and procession to the crypt (to which only Father Sophrony's monastics went), lasted a little more than four hours. It is of interest to

note that the community had recently discovered from local authorities that the only legal way they could bury anyone on their grounds was to build an underground crypt. When plans were made for its construction, Father Sophrony said, "I will not go until it is ready." And when the work was well in progress, the workmen notified the Abbot that it would be ready for the first burial on July 12. When Father Sophrony was told, he replied, "I will be ready." And so on July 11, at approximately 8:00 a.m., during an early Liturgy held at the monastery, Father Sophrony reposed in the Lord.

Grant rest in blessed repose, O Lord, to Thy servants the newly departed Archimandrite Sophrony and Mother Elizabeth, and make their memory to be eternal!

—Hieromonk Gregory

New Plan Allows For Future Expansion

Continued from page 47.

completion to everyone involved. To that end, we at Holy Trinity Parish, take new heart and will not falter in our missions to the Orthodox faithful in the Poconos.

When the first Church building was constructed on Kodiak Island in 1794, there was no furnace, no electricity, no running water, and there was no parking lot; and there was no plan for any of these modern "necessities." There was, however, a dream, and a great deal of joy,

there was a certain unshakeable dedication to contributing to the establishment and future growth of the True Faith in the new world. We are the very essence and realization of that dream. In Alaska, so many years ago, there was no fundraising, there was no second or third plan: land was cleared, timbers were cut, the Church was built and the birth of Orthodoxy in America was consecrated. Thanks be to God, and with His continued blessing and

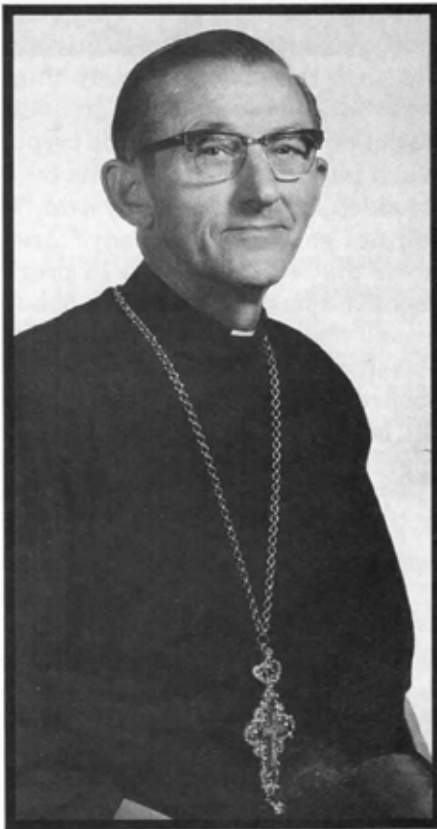
the support of all who share our vision, we in Stroudsburg will emulate that humble, yet courageous, example.

If you would like to be part of the continued growth of Orthodoxy in America through this small and blessed project, please send your donation to: Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, P.O. Box 832, Stroudsburg, PA 18360. And may our Heavenly Father bless you for your goodwill.

—Archpriest Neal J. Carrigan



Metropolitan Anthony of Chernigov with Governor Robert Casey in Harrisburg.



Father Alexander Fedoronko

Saint Paul the Apostle, in his second letter to the young pastor Timothy, looks over his years of service to Christ and writes, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me, but also to all who have loved his appearing" (II Tim. 4:7-8).

The secret of life is not where you begin but where you finish. Sometimes that means that you "keep on keeping on" even when it would be so much easier to simply throw up your hands in futility and despair and walk away. That means that you "hang in there" and see it through, when a person of lesser determination, lesser courage, lesser character, would cut his losses and see an escape. That is true in marriage, in raising children, in pursuing one's dreams and aspirations in one's chosen vocation, in battling disease and the frailties of old age, and in a host of other areas

A Eulogy For Father Alexander Fedoronko

Delivered April 4, 1993

of life, including the challenge of being faithful to Jesus Christ.

St. Paul never gave up. In spite of shipwrecks, numerous beatings, and imprisonment, he remained faithful to his calling, to be an evangelist, a missionary, a servant, a preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, much like the man, the Archpriest Alexander, whom we have come to honor this evening in celebrating this funeral service.

The words of the hymn following the reading of the Third Gospel for this service *sing* to us as if from the mouth of the departed himself: "Do not forget me, my beloved brethren, when you sing to the Lord, but call to mind *our brotherhood* and pray fervently to God that with the righteous the Lord will give me rest."

Few things in life of real value are acquired without momentous effort or consecrated determination. My relationship with Father Alexander began only some five and one half years ago when I was assigned as the pastor of St. Herman of Alaska Orthodox Church in Wallingford. Father and Matushka Fedoronko would attend our small church for Vespers services in those days and would usually come here to St. Stephen's Cathedral for the Divine Liturgy on Sunday mornings. As time passed, Father and Matushka became closer and closer to St. Herman's, soon attending most, if not all, liturgical services in our tiny church. It was during that time that I got to know the ever-memorable Father Alexander. In order to know and understand the greatness of this man, one must first learn something of his past.

Father Alexander was born in Coaldale, Pennsylvania, in the year 1916—the son of the late Archpriest Joseph Fedoronko and Matushka

Sophia Selecky, who were immigrants from Galicia, a province in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. Father Alexander's father was from a peasant Galician family from the town of Chertez, while his mother came from a family of a long line of priests from Peremyslo.

His early years were spent in a variety of parishes his father served—from Mayfield, Pennsylvania, to Springfield, Vermont, Jeanette, Pennsylvania, and eventually to Philadelphia in 1921. Father Alexander once stated that his father was like the proverbial stone—"he had to just roll along gathering no moss." Life in our parishes in those days was very difficult and Father Alexander, along with his brothers and sisters, did their utmost to live as normal lives as possible as PK's during the turbulent years of the Russian Orthodox Church in America following the Revolution—years in which there was a collapse of Church stability and order.

In 1934, unable to find steady employment and anxious to attain some stability, the young eighteen-year-old Alexander Fedoronko set out to enlist in the U.S. Navy. On the day of his physical, the examining officer noticed that he was a nail biter, so he asked him to hold out his hands straight in front of him, which he did. But whether because of anxiety or apprehension, fear or just plain nervousness, his hands and fingers began to quiver, and the officer looked at him and said, "Sorry son, we can't take you, you're just too nervous." He pleaded with the man to no avail, and then returned home.

Shortly thereafter, he tried to enlist in the Marines. Everything went beautifully until the examin-

ing officer put him through the same routine. "Raise your arms, stretch out your hands": sure enough, his fingers shook and his career in the U.S. Marines ended.

Accepting the fact that God had other plans for him, the young Father Alexander sometime during the winter of 1936 and the spring of 1937 decided that he wanted to enter a theological school to prepare for the Holy Priesthood. For many years, his father had talked to him about the possibility of becoming a priest; it wasn't until this time, however, that he finally gave it serious consideration. His major problem now was where to go. There were no Orthodox theological schools in America at that time: St. Platon's Seminary in Tenafly had closed in 1924 because of the lack of funds and no new school had opened as yet. With the help of Archbishop Vitaly, Father Alexander, along with two other American boys, entered the St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Seminary in Sremski-Karlovci in Yugoslavia. At that time, the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile had its headquarters there, and the Patriarch of Serbia was the protector of the Russian diaspora in that country. So with a stipend from the Church, the young Alexander Fedoronko set out for Yugoslavia in the fall of 1937.

Studying under very primitive conditions, and lacking an adequate knowledge of Serbian and Great Russian, Father Alexander would often write home about the sometimes insurmountable problems faced by an American in an Serbian seminary. With determination and constant zeal, however, Father Alexander not only excelled in his studies, but doubled up on courses in order to advance to a higher level, and completed the six-year course in four years. During the summers, he would continue his studies, trying to cram as much as he could in the course of the day.

It was often said by Father Alexander that it was during his years in seminary that he developed dia-

betes, which remained with him the rest of his life. He once wrote that after finding out that he had diabetes, he met a man on the town square who said to him, "Don't worry young man, I've known people to live five years with diabetes." He later recalled that momentarily he was comforted, for it was wartime and even but one more year of life seemed so precious to him.

In April 1941, shortly after the bombing of Belgrade by the Germans, Father Alexander successfully completed his course of study at St. Sava's Theological Seminary, earning the distinction of being the only American ever to accomplish this. Others were there before him, but whether because of the difficult dietary and disciplinary regimens, or because of scholastic inability, or simply because of cultural or geographical differences, they had been unable to complete the program. Father Alexander always gave thanks to Almighty God for the strength and perseverance and patience that enabled him, as he once stated, "to complete the good fight."

During the war years following his graduation from seminary, Father Alexander, although academically qualified for ordination to the Holy Priesthood, still had not found himself a wife. On Christmas Day, 1943, while singing in the Church choir of his father's parish in Terryville, Connecticut, Father Alexander spotted in the soprano section the woman who would become his wife of forty-eight years—Matushka Mary, his beloved helpmate who would always be by his side. On September 30, 1944, they were married in the Terryville church. Shortly thereafter, on October 8, 1944, Father would be ordained to the Holy Diaconate. This day was a momentous day in the life of the Orthodox Church in America for another reason: it was the day on which the church was observing the hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of the Valaam Mission in Alaska and the estab-

lishment of Holy Orthodoxy on the American continent. Metropolitan Theophilus, assisted by eight bishops, concelebrated this historic Liturgy, assisted by some twenty priests including Father Alexander's dad, Father Kukulevsky, and my own grandfather, Father Pishtey. Being led around the altar by the late Protodeacon—later Priest—Innokenty Semeff, Father Alexander was ordained to the Holy Diaconate amid the thunderous proclamation by the clergy of "Axios! Axios! Axios!"—He is worthy! He is worthy! He is worthy!

He often recalled the great exhilaration and thrill he felt on that day, from being given the honor to be ordained on the celebration of the church's hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary. Only recently, he spoke to me about this auspicious occasion in his life, and hoped that with God's help he would be able to serve on the two hundredth anniversary of Orthodoxy in America in 1994—adding, however, the age-old Russian proverb, *Celovek predpolahayet, Boh razpolahayet!* ("Man proposes, God disposes!")

Only a day or two after his ordination to the Holy Diaconate, he was informed that he would be ordained to the Holy Priesthood on October 22, 1944, by Metropolitan Makary. Following his rather subdued ordination on that day, he was assigned to his first parish, St. Nicholas Church in Hammond, Indiana.

Father Alexander recalled that he was so nervous during his first Liturgy that he can recall that while serving the Proskomedia, at the Table of Oblation, the sexton came up behind him and said, "Father, you forgot to light the candle on the zhertvennik." All in all, their life in Hammond, Indiana, though far from easy, was indeed successful and rewarding, and they accomplished much for the growth of the parish. It was also while there that they had their first child, a daughter Alexandra, of whom Father was

Continued on the next page.

Father Alexander Fedoronko

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exceedingly proud.

Unable to live on their meager salary, Father accepted another appointment to St. Nicholas Church in Kenosha, Wisconsin, in February, 1948. Unlike his first parish, the Kenosha parish was considered a large parish, with a choir director, a functioning choir, and a church committee that functioned more like a board of directors than a church council. Things were not very easy for Father at first, but after a period of education and taking valiant stands, he was able to temper the situation in the parish and bring it into some ecclesiastical order. It was during these years that they had a son Paul, who brought much joy to his parents during their lifetime.

When the parish in Kenosha had grown spiritually, numerically, and financially, and a true vision of the Orthodox Church had developed among the laity, he was transferred in November, 1955, to St. Michael's Church in Philadelphia—the same parish that his father had served many years before. For many years, Father Alexander labored in his pastoral ministry, striving constantly, as the pastor of St. Michael's, to teach and educate the people through his sermons on the importance of the American Church, and on the future of Orthodoxy in America, and on the need to use the English language and accept the new revised calendar. He felt that the future of our church was in the youth. He was an ardent supporter of the FROC and its many programs. Concerning his own ministry, he once wrote, "The priestly ministry is of such a solemn and sacred nature that no man, however much he may apply himself, can adequately represent the Christ Whom he symbolizes as he stands before the altar of God. This is a gift which can only be given by Him."

During his years of priesthood, though awed and inspired by the liturgical and sacramental minis-

tries, he also constantly and vehemently emphasized the importance of the pulpit, saying that we Orthodox Catholics underestimate the power of the pulpit, we seem to think that the externals of Orthodoxy—rituals, tradition, iconography—are in themselves sufficient for the preservation of our true faith. Jealously guarding these externals, we often forget that the heart and the substance of our faith and Church is Jesus Christ, and that if we are to be his disciples it is not enough to exclaim "Lord, Lord," but to do the will of his Father in heaven in our preaching and our pastoral ministries.

While pastor of St. Michael's, and later as pastor of the newly founded St. Stephen's Cathedral of the Orthodox Church in America following a turbulent and trying period, Father Alexander persevered in his effort to serve God and his people as both a spiritual Father and good shepherd who leads his flock.

Probably no greater accomplishment in his life could surpass the building and dedication of this beautiful Cathedral that he, along with the dedicated people of this parish, built to the Glory of God. Together they gave of themselves unselfishly so that future generations of Orthodox Catholic children could learn about Jesus Christ and His Gospel as proclaimed by the One Holy Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church.

He always believed that future generations of Orthodox should remember the many sacrifices and gifts made by these dedicated founders and beautifiers of this magnificent Cathedral. It was once said that God has created us to dream. This is the first thing we need to see. The people who make a difference in the world are the people who dream. The founders of this parish had a dream, a vision of the future of Orthodoxy in this great country; they made their dream and the dream of Father Alexander a reality with the help of Almighty God.

In life we must step out on faith and with God's help make our dreams a reality, as did Father Alexander.

Well over a decade since his retirement from the active ministry, Father Alexander had a serious concern for the future well-being of the Orthodox Church in America. Both he and Matushka Mary continued to attend the All-American Councils, including the last one held in Miami in 1992. Concerning the future he wrote:

"Although we have had four All-American Church Councils during this time, all of which have dealt with the declining conditions in the Orthodox Church in America—the one in 1983 having the theme 'Church Growth,' the Council in 1986 given the task of 'Evangelization,' the Council in 1989 'Reflecting on the Past—Planing for the Future,' and the 1992 Council 'Discerning God's Will,' we have not corrected the causes of our continuous decline in Church membership, and the resulting deficiencies in our budgetary needs. We continue to flash the S.O.S. signals, but do little to help rescue ourselves from the depths of our self-inflicted doldrums.

"We sometimes speak of oversimplification in the attempt to solve problems. Well, in the Church, I think, we are perhaps guilty of overcomplicating matters. We like to speak or write about church-related issues in a pontifical, pietistic, pie in the sky manner, which usually tends to cloud an issue more than clarify it. At the last four councils, we've printed and preached reams of programs, had remedies to solve the problems of our Church, but unfortunately nothing seems to be working.

"That I think, is because we remain blind to what are basically the needs of our Church and its people. Theological treatises extolling the beauty and the truth of Orthodoxy are not the solution to our problems, nor is the addition of ceremonial or ritualistic symbolisms, but rather a down-to-earth rapport and loving relationship with

the little ones, the people of our parishes who, of late, in too many of our communities are looked upon with disdain. And, what is of the utmost and ultimate importance, is for the Church to realize and return to Christ's primary purpose for coming to live among us— "To seek and to save those who are lost."

My task of eulogizing Father Alexander is now approaching its conclusion. But if I did not say the things that I did, I would not have done what Father would have expected of me. For if you knew Father Alexander as I did, you would know that he wanted the truth spoken and the story to be correct. So you see, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, here before you is a man, a husband, an Archpriest, a sinner, and most of all, a lover of God's creations, a man whose whole life and being was the Church of Jesus Christ.

I just want to reiterate what I stated in the beginning of the eulogy—the secret of life is not where

you begin, but where you finish. The real challenge of life is to be at your best even when it doesn't seem to matter. Father Alexander had not simply persevered. He gave everything that was in Him to the end. His life was a study in excellence. He could look back with satisfaction not only because he had "fought the good fight," but also that it was a "good fight." This is the meaning of character: to be able to say, "I had some tough breaks and I had some heartbreaks along the way, but I gave it my best shot." Such dedication will always earn a reward. Few things in life of real value come easily. It is vital then that we have a worthy purpose to which we give our lives. It is the saddest of all conditions to have no real purpose for which to live. St. Paul had a purpose, Father Alexander had a purpose, a purpose that helped him persevere when others would have chosen the easy way out. He had a purpose that drove him to excellence in all things even when it

didn't seem to matter. His purpose was to serve Christ.

What a wise and fortunate choice that was! We retire from our jobs, our children grow up. But the service of Christ is for all eternity. For as St. Paul writes, "Henceforth is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all those who have loved his appearing."

Servant of God, Father Alexander, Well done!

Rest from thy loved employ!

The battle has been fought, the victory has been won!

Enter thy master's joy!

The pains of death have now passed,

Labor and sorrow have now ceased.

And life's long warfare is closed at last.

Thy soul, Father Alexander, has found its peace.

—Priest John Perich



Bishop Herman with Metropolitan Anthony on his recent visit to the Ukraine.

Daily Devotions

SEPTEMBER

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|-----|------------------------------|--|
| 1. | 1 Tim. 2:1-7 (New Year) | Luke 4:16-22 (New Year) |
| | 2 Cor. 9:12-10:7 (Daily) | Mark 3:20-27 (Daily) |
| 2. | 2 Cor. 10:7-18 | Mark 3:28-35 |
| 3. | 2 Cor. 11:5-21 | Mark 4:1-9 |
| 4. | 1 Cor. 2:6-9 | Matt. 22:15-22 |
| 5. | 1 Cor. 16:13-24 | Matt. 21:33-42 |
| 6. | 2 Cor. 12:10-19 | Mark 4:10-23 |
| 7. | 2 Cor. 12:20-13:2 | Mark 4:24-34 |
| | 2 Cor. 13:3-13 (Wednesday) | Mark 4:35-41 (Wednesday) |
| 8. | Phil. 2:5-11 (Nativ. Theol.) | Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28 (Nativ. Theol.) |
| 9. | Gal. 1:1-10,20-2:5 | Mark 5:1-20 |
| 10. | Gal. 2:6-10 | Mark 5:22-24,35-6:1 |
| 11. | 1 Cor. 2:6-9 | Matt. 10:27-11:1 |
| 12. | Gal. 6:11-18 | John 3:13-17 |
| 13. | Gal. 2:11-16 | Mark 5:24-34 |
| 14. | 1 Cor. 1:18-24 (Elevation) | John 19:6-11,13-20,25-28,30-35 (Elevation) |
| 15. | Gal. 3:15-22 | Mark 6:7-13 |
| 16. | Gal. 3:23-4:5 | Mark 6:30-45 |
| 17. | Gal. 4:8-21 | Mark 6:45-53 |
| 18. | 1 Cor. 1:26-29 | John 8:21-30 |
| 19. | Gal. 2:16-20 | Mark 8:34-9:1 |
| 20. | Gal. 4:28-5:10 | Luke 3:19-22 |
| 21. | Gal. 5:11-21 | Luke 3:23-41 |
| 22. | Gal. 6:2-20 | Luke 4:1-15 |
| 23. | Eph. 1:1-9 | Luke 4:16-22 |
| 24. | Eph. 1:7-17 | Luke 4:22-30 |
| 25. | 1 Cor. 10:23-28 | Luke 4:31-36 |
| 26. | 2 Cor. 6:1-10 | Luke 5:1-11 |
| 27. | Eph. 1:22-2:3 | Luke 4:37-44 |
| 28. | Eph. 2:19-3:7 | Luke 5:12-16 |
| 29. | Eph. 3:8-21 | Luke 5:33-39 |
| 30. | Eph. 4:14-19 | Luke 6:12-19 |
| | Eph. 4:17-25 (Friday) | Luke 6:17-23 (Friday) |

OCTOBER

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|-----|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. | Heb. 9:1-7 (Theotokos) | Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28 (Theotokos) |
| 2. | 1 Cor. 14:20-25 | Luke 5:17-26 |
| 3. | 2 Cor. 6:16-7:1 | Luke 6:31-36 |
| 4. | Eph. 4:25-32 | Luke 6:24-30 |
| 5. | Eph. 5:20-26 | Luke 6:37-45 |
| 6. | Eph. 5:25-33 | Luke 6:46-7:1 |
| 7. | Eph. 5:33-6:9 | Luke 7:17-30 |
| 8. | Eph. 6:18-24 | Luke 7:31-35 |
| 9. | 1 Cor. 15:39-45 | Luke 5:27-32 |
| 10. | 2 Cor. 9:6-11 | Luke 7:11-16 |
| | Heb. 13:7-16 (Fathers) | John 17:1-13 (Fathers) |
| 11. | Phil. 1:1-7 | Luke 7:36-50 |
| 12. | Phil. 1:8-14 | Luke 8:1-3 |
| 13. | Phil. 1:12-20 | Luke 8:22-25 |
| 14. | Phil. 1:20-27 | Luke 9:7-11 |
| 15. | Phil. 1:27-2:4 | Luke 9:12-18 |
| 16. | 1 Cor. 15:58-16:3 | Luke 6:1-10 |
| 17. | 2 Cor. 11:31-12:9 | Luke 8:5-15 |
| 18. | Phil. 2:12-16 | Luke 9:18-22 |
| 19. | Phil. 2:17-23 | Luke 9:23-27 |
| 20. | Phil. 2:24-30 | Luke 9:44-50 |
| 21. | Phil. 3:1-8 | Luke 9:49-56 |
| 22. | Phil. 3:8-19 | Luke 10:1-15 |
| 23. | 2 Cor. 1:8-11 | Luke 7:2-10 |
| 24. | Gal. 1:11-19 | Luke 16:19-31 |
| 25. | Phil. 4:10-23 | Luke 10:22-24 |
| 26. | Col. 1:1-2,7-11 | Luke 11:1-10 |
| 27. | Col. 1:18-23 | Luke 11:9-13 |
| 28. | Col. 1:24-29 | Luke 11:14-23 |
| 29. | Col. 2:1-7 | Luke 11:23-26 |
| 30. | 2 Cor. 3:12-18 | Luke 8:16-21 |
| 31. | Gal. 2:16-20 | Luke 8:26-39 |

NOVEMBER

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|-----|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. | Col. 2:13-20 | Luke 11:29-33 |
| 2. | Col. 2:20-3:3 | Luke 11:34-41 |
| 3. | Col. 3:17-4:1 | Luke 11:42-46 |
| 4. | Col. 4:2-9 | Luke 11:47-12:1 |
| 5. | Col. 4:10-18 | Luke 12:2-12 |
| 6. | 2 Cor. 5:1-10 | Luke 9:1-6 |
| 7. | Gal. 6:11-18 | Luke 8:41-56 |
| 8. | 1 Thess. 1:1-5 | Luke 12:13-15,22-31 |
| | Heb. 2:2-10 (Angels) | Luke 10:16-21 (Angels) |
| 9. | 1 Thess. 1:6-10 | Luke 12:42-48 |
| 10. | 1 Thess. 2:1-8 | Luke 12:48-59 |
| 11. | 1 Thess. 2:9-14 | Luke 13:1-9 |
| 12. | 1 Thess. 2:14-19 | Luke 13:31-35 |
| 13. | 2 Cor. 8:1-5 | Luke 9:37-43 |
| 14. | Eph. 2:4-10 | Luke 10:25-37 |
| 15. | 1 Thess. 2:20-3:8 | Luke 14:12-15 |
| 16. | 1 Thess. 3:9-13 | Luke 14:25-35 |
| 17. | 1 Thess. 4:1-12 | Luke 15:1-10 |
| 18. | 1 Thess. 5:1-8 | Luke 16:1-9 |
| 19. | 1 Thess. 5:9-13,24-28 | Luke 16:15-18; 17:1-4 |
| 20. | 2 Cor. 11:1-6 | Luke 9:57-62 |
| 21. | Eph. 2:14-22 (Daily) | Luke 12:16-21 (Daily) |
| | Heb. 9:1-7 (Entry) | Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28 |
| 22. | 2 Thess. 1:1-10 | Luke 17:20-25 |
| 23. | 2 Thess. 1:10-2:2 | Luke 17:26-37 |
| 24. | 2 Thess. 2:1-12 | Luke 18:15-17,26-30 |
| 25. | 2 Thess. 2:13-3:5 | Luke 18:31-34 |
| 26. | 2 Thess. 3:6-18 | Luke 19:12-28 |
| 27. | Gal. 1:3-10 | Luke 10:19-21 |
| 28. | Eph. 4:1-6 | Luke 13:10-17 |
| 29. | 1 Tim. 1:1-7 | Luke 19:37-44 |
| 30. | 1 Tim. 1:8-14 | Luke 19:45-48 |

DECEMBER

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. | 1 Tim. 1:18-20; 2:8-15 | Luke 20:1-8 |
| 2. | 1 Tim. 3:1-13 | Luke 20:9-18 |
| 3. | 1 Tim. 4:4-8,16 | Luke 20:19-26 |
| 4. | Gal. 3:8-12 | Luke 12:32-40 |
| 5. | Eph. 5:9-19 | Luke 17:12-19 |
| 6. | 1 Tim. 5:1-10 | Luke 20:27-44 |
| | Heb. 13:17-21 (St. Nicholas) | Luke 6:17-23 (St. Nicholas) |
| 7. | 1 Tim. 5:11-21 | Luke 21:12-19 |
| 8. | 1 Tim. 5:22-6:11 | Luke 21:5-7,10-11,20-24 |
| 9. | 1 Tim. 6:17-21 | Luke 21:28-33 |
| 10. | 2 Tim. 1:1-2,8-18 | Luke 21:37-22:8 |
| 11. | Gal. 5:22-6:2 | Luke 13:18-29 |
| 12. | Eph. 6:10-17 (Forefathers) | Luke 14:16-24 (Forefathers) |
| 13. | 2 Tim. 2:20-26 | Mark 8:11-21 |
| 14. | 2 Tim. 3:16-4:4 | Mark 8:22-26 |
| 15. | 2 Tim. 4:9-22 | Mark 8:30-34 |
| 16. | Titus 1:5-2:1 | Mark 9:10-16 |
| 17. | Titus 1:15-2:10 | Mark 9:33-41 |
| 18. | Gal. 3:8-12 | Luke 13:18-29 |
| 19. | Heb. 11:9-10,17-23,32-40 | Matt. 1:1-25 |
| 20. | Heb. 3:5-11,17-19 | Mark 9:42-10:1 |
| 21. | Heb. 4:1-13 | Mark 10:2-12 |
| 22. | Heb. 5:11-6:8 | Mark 10:11-16 |
| 23. | Heb. 7:1-6 | Mark 10:17-27 |
| 24. | Heb. 1:1-12 | Luke 2:1-20 |
| 25. | Gal. 4:4-7 (Nativity of Christ) | Matt. 2:1-12 (Nativ. Christ) |
| 26. | Gal. 1:11-19 | Matt. 2:13-23 |
| 27. | Heb. 8:7-13 | Mark 10:46-52 |
| 28. | Heb. 9:8-10,15-23 | Mark 11:11-23 |
| 29. | Heb. 10:1-18 | Mark 11:23-26 |
| 30. | Heb. 10:35-11:7 | Mark 11:27-33 |
| 31. | Heb. 11:8,11-16 | Mark 12:1-12 |

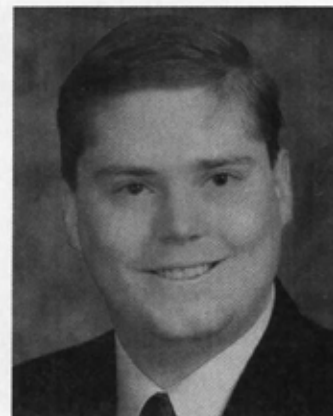
We Salute Our 1993 Graduates



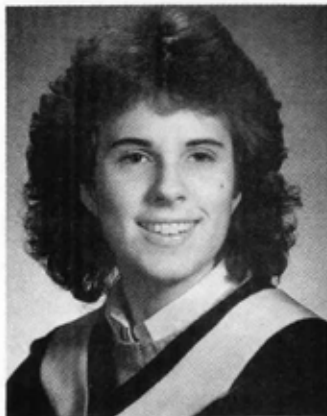
Barry Michael Benczkowski
University of Virginia
Holy Trinity Church
Wilkes-Barre, Pa.



Edward J. Bosack III
Minersville Area High School
Ss. Peter and Paul Church
Minersville, Pa.



Stephen Brophy
University of Scranton
St. Michael's Church
Jermyn, Pa.



Christine M. Bushick
Florida Institute of Technology
St. Michael's Church
Mt. Carmel, Pa.



Jennifer Cook
Pottsville High School
St. Mary Church
St. Clair, Pa.



Jill Cook
Pottsville High School
St. Mary's Church
St. Clair, Pa.



Michael Evanina
Marywood College
St. Nicholas Church
Olyphant, Pa.



Stephen Evanina
Valley View High School
St. Nicholas Church
Olyphant, Pa.



Matt Evans
Lakeland High School
St. Nicholas Church
Olyphant, Pa.



Kira Gallick
Hanau American High School
Hanau, Germany
St. Basil's Church
Simpson, Pa.



Stephanie Hasinus
Northwest High School
St. John the Baptist Church
Nanticoke, Pa.



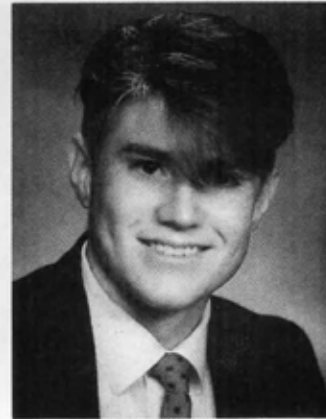
Matushka Cynthia Horton
Kutztown University
Holy Trinity Church
Catasauqua, Pa.



Tamara Jadik
Princeton University
St. Michael's Church
Old Forge, Pa.



J.H. Nicholas Kapelan
James M. Coughlin High School
Holy Resurrection Cathedral
Wilkes-Barre, Pa.



Gregory Kelly
Emmaus High School
St. Nicholas Church
Bethlehem, Pa.



Julianne Kovall
Abington Heights High School
St. Michael's Church
Jermyn, Pa.



Alia Ayn Lambert
Stroudsburg High School
Holy Trinity Church
Stroudsburg, Pa.



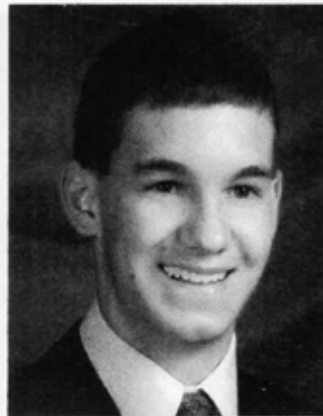
Holly J. Lambert
Moravian College
Holy Trinity Church
Stroudsburg, Pa.



Peggy (Puschak) Lampman
Bloomsburg University
St. Mary's Church
Coaldale, Pa.



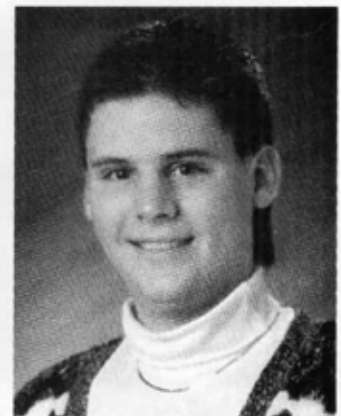
Andrew Motovloff Miller
Dallastown Area High School
Christ the Saviour Church
Harrisburg, Pa.



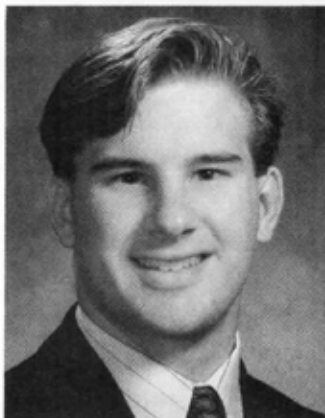
Daniel C. Miller
Whitehall High School
Holy Trinity Church
Catasauqua, Pa.



David J. Peckham
Central Columbia High School
Holy Annunciation Church
Berwick, Pa.



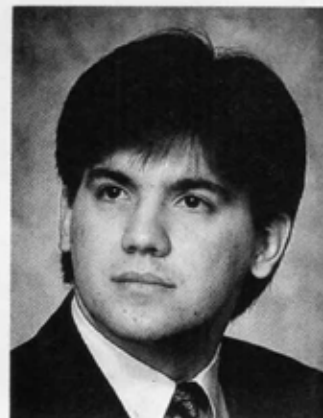
Joshua Petorak
Valley View High School
St. Michael's Church
Jermyn, Pa.



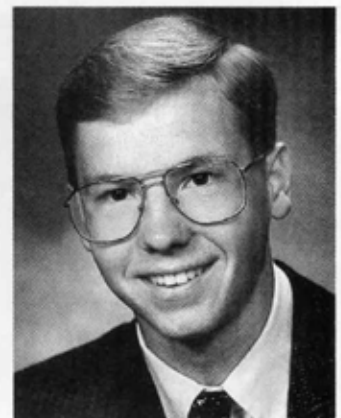
Keith Pleck
Coughlin High School
Holy Resurrection Cathedral
Wilkes-Barre, Pa.



Rebecca Ann Sichak
Wyomissing Area High School
St. Herman's Church
Shillington, Pa.



Theodore Sidorlak
Widener University
St. Mary's Church
Coaldale, Pa.



Stephen Andrew Stafiniak
Salisbury High School
St. Nicholas Church
Bethlehem, Pa.

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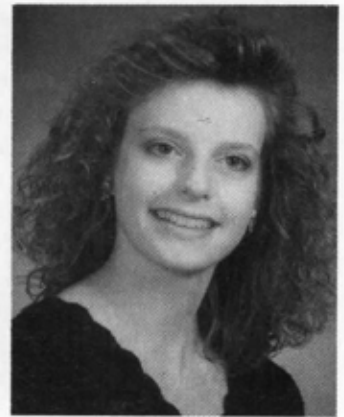
Daniel Paul Strafursky
University of Scranton
All Saints Church
Olyphant, Pa.



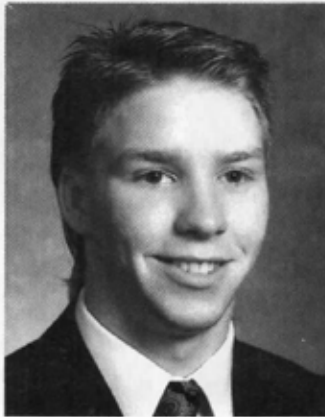
Claudia Urbanc
Danville Area High School
Holy Annunciation Church
Berwick, Pa.



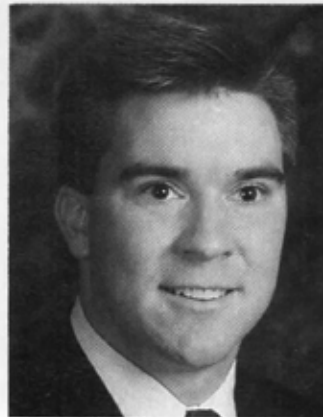
Larissa (Lorchak) Verta
Marywood College
St. Mary's Church
Coaldale, Pa.



Deborah Wancio
Gettysburg University
St. John the Baptist Church
Nanticoke, Pa.



Benjamin Washburn
Mechanicsburg High School
Christ the Saviour Church
Harrisburg, Pa.



Joseph Washburn
Shippensburg University
Christ the Saviour Church
Harrisburg, Pa.



Steven R. Wood
Northern Lebanon High School
Christ the Saviour Church
Harrisburg, Pa.

Pictures not available:

Nicholas Butler
Nazareth Area High School
St. Nicholas Church
Bethlehem, Pa.

Christopher Chrysovergis
University of Pittsburgh
Holy Cross Church
Williamsport, Pa.

Kristin Gingrich
Penn State University
St. Nicholas Church
Bethlehem, Pa.

Alexis Mihailoff
Freedom High School
St. Nicholas Church
Bethlehem, Pa.

David Monarek
Parkland High School
St. Nicholas Church
Bethlehem, Pa.

All In The Diocesan Family

ALDEN STATION

Holy Resurrection Church

Parish Activities: The annual Chicken Barbecue will be served on Saturday, September 25. Dinners will be served from 4:00 - 6:30 p.m. and take-outs will be available.

Bright Monday Vespers were served for the Orthodox patients at Clarks Summit State Hospital by Father David Shewczyk, Orthodox Chaplain for the hospital. Each year the Vespers is celebrated, followed by the distribution of Easter food plates to the patients.

BETHLEHEM

St. Nicholas Church

Baptisms and chrismations: Chase Andrew Jubinsky, daughter of Andrew and Courtney Jubinsky, December 20, 1992; Katherine Rose Larsen, daughter of Egon and Jane Larsen, April 24; Elias Sergei Haseiecz, daughter of Nadine Hasenech and Paul Willistein, July 18. Barbara Wolfel was chrismated June 5.

Anniversary Congratulations: to Frank and Theresa Horvath on the celebration of their fiftieth wedding anniversary on August 28.

Parish Activities: The parish welcomed Metropolitan Anthony of Chernigov for a visit on the eve of the Feast of the Ascension of Christ. The Akafist Choir from Russia was hosted on the first weekend of their American tour, April 24 and 25. Following the Divine Liturgy, they were guests at a parish luncheon in their honor.

St. Tikhon's Seminary Choir visited on Mother's Day as part of the parish's Seminary Sunday. The Lehigh Valley Sr. "O" Club hosted the National FROC Bowling Tournament the weekend of May 21-23 in Mechanisburg, Pa.

The Church School honored its graduates with a special parish luncheon on Sunday, June 13. All graduates were presented with a copy of the book: *The Orthodox*



Fr. Eugene Vansuch welcomes Metropolitan Anthony of Chernigov to St. Nicholas Church, Bethlehem.



Fr. Peter Gillquist with Fr. Gregory Horton, pastor of Holy Trinity Church, Catasaquaque.

Church: 455 Questions and Answers.

Plans are being made to visit our sister parish in Klin, Russia over the Thanksgiving holiday.

CATASAUQUA

Holy Trinity Church

Baptisms and chrismation: Zachary Alexander, son of Edward

and Holly Bachert, on May 8.

Special Birthday Greetings: to Mary Muha who celebrated her 101st birthday on May 10.

Parish Activities: The Lehigh Valley Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood sponsored a four-day visit by

Continued on the next page.

All In The Diocesan Family

Fr. Peter Gillquist, Chairman of the Department of Missions and Evangelism of the Antiochian Archdiocese on April 29 - May 2. On Saturday, May 1, Father Peter served the Divine Liturgy in Catasauqua; a luncheon was held afterward. Father Peter was interviewed by a Christian radio station and local talk show, and gave lectures in nearby churches and colleges. He also visited the largest Christian bookstore in the country, located in the Lehigh Valley, to promote the new Orthodox Study Bible.

COALDALE

St. Mary's Church

Congratulations to Adam Biro-sik who was presented with the Chi-Rho Club Scout Award on Sunday, March 21. Adam is the son of Michael and Barbara Birosik. His scout unit leader is Mr. Betran Berk.

Wedding Anniversary Congratulations: Olga and Ben Macalush, forth-fifth anniversary, on May 10; Kay and Paul Maliniak, fortieth, on May 16; Mary and John Pavlick, sixty-second anniversary on June 1; Helen and William Evetushick, forty-fifth, on June 7.

On Sunday, May 24, Church School Classes ended for the year. A service of thanksgiving was held for



Metropolitan Anthony visits St. Mary's Church in Coaldale on June 2.



Church School Children at St. Mary's Church in Coaldale.



St. Mary's, Coaldale - Adam Birosik receives award.

the children and teachers. Awards were presented to the children who had the highest cumulative test score average for the year and for perfect attendance. The annual trip to Knoebel's Amusement Park was held on July 24.

HARRISBURG

Christ the Saviour Church Baptisms and chrismations:

Danat Ogbazgi, the daughter of Letekidan and Habtemariam Ogbazgi, April 4; Derek Robert, the son of Lauren and Michael Pawlush, May 1. Timothy M. McMahon was chrismated June 19.

FRACKVILLE
Holy Ascension Church



On June 1, Holy Ascension Church hosted Metropolitan Anthony of Chernigov.

JERMYN

St. Michael's Church

Baptisms and chrismations:

Stephanie, the daughter of Stephanie and Ken Kashuba, on August 22.

Wedding: Patricia Hanchak and Thomas Cadwalader were united in marriage on August 21.

Parish Activities: Metropolitan Anthony and Bishop Herman, together with area clergy, celebrated the Divine Liturgy on the Feast of the Ascension of Christ. A dinner was served for the honored guests following the services.

The new Orthodox Study Bible was introduced to the children of the parish during the annual summer Bible session held the week of August 15.

The Good Samaritans of St. Michael's participated in the Annual Carnival held at Clarks-Summit State Hospital, and the St. Michael's outreach to Farview State (Forensic) Hospital participated in the Annual Carnival held there. The two groups visit the respective hospitals every month.



First Confession class in Harrisburg.



Procession to St. Michael's Church.



Joseph Krenitsky, President of St. Michael's parish, Jermyrn, welcomes Metropolitan Anthony and Bishop Herman.

Deadline for the next issue of
Alive in Christ
 is November 15, 1993.

All In The Diocesan Family

OLYPHANT

All Saints Church

Parish Activities: On All Saints Sunday, June 13, the parish celebrated its Patronal Feast and Youth Sunday. Under the guidance of Matushka Francis Vinyard, the children read the hours, rang the Church bells, sang responses to the Liturgy, read the Epistle, made the collection, and lit candles. After the Divine Liturgy, the annual dinner was held at the Genetti Manor in Dickson City; entertainment was provided by the youth of the parish. Matushka Francis Vinyard was the guest of honor at the banquet and was recognized for her hard work with the youth of the Church.



Kazi Bonczar, President of Jr. R Club 105, presents \$300.00 gift to All Saints Church.



St. Herman's Church, Shillington - Father John Onofrey receives the Stout family into the Orthodox Church, through Holy Chrismation, on the eve of Pentecost.

SIMPSON

St. Basil's Church

Wedding: Daria Proch and David Roat were united in Holy Matrimony on Sunday, May 16, at St. Tikhon's Monastery Church in South Canaan, Pa., by priests David Shewczyk and Leo Poore.

WALLINGFORD

St. Herman's Church

Baptisms and chrismations:

Alexandra Stump, the daughter of Katherine and Russell Stump, Jr., March 14; Daniel Pesolyar, the son of Alan and Nancy Pesolyar, May 23; Ryan Matthew Lord, son of Shirley and Robert Lord, June 20.

On Lazarus Saturday, the Church School held its annual Lenten Retreat. Afterwards, Father John Perich gave a lesson in decorating Easter eggs, or *pysanky*, and children made cheese pascha for their Easter baskets. Bright Monday has been designated as the "Children's Pascha" with their full participation in the Paschal Liturgy and the procession that follows.



Fr. Claude Vinyard blesses children's Easter baskets at All Saints Church, Olyphant.



Metropolitan Anthony and Bishop Herman with visiting clergy, and priests of the Deanery at St. Stephens Church, Philadelphia.

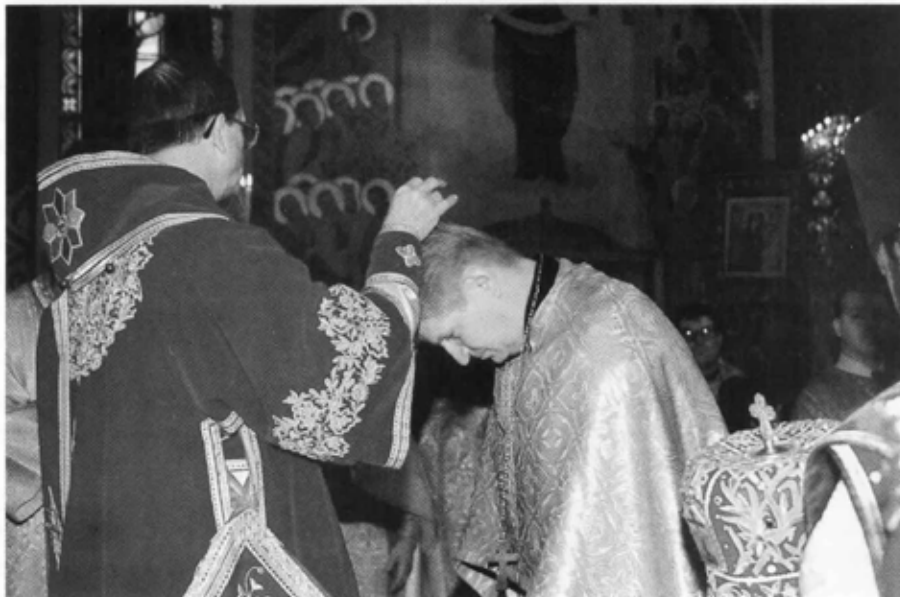


Bishop Herman visits St. Basil's Church in Simpson.



Choir at St. Basil's Church in Simpson.

SOUTH CANAAN
St. Tikhon's Monastery Church



On Bright Tuesday, Bishop Herman elevated Priest Neal Carrigan to Archpriest.

WILLIAMSPORT
Holy Cross Church

Wedding: Lenora and Peter Georges were united in Holy Matrimony on May 23.

Parish Activities: As a part of a Pastoral Fellowship Program, Seminarian Peter Dubinin, a senior at St. Tikhon's Seminary, worked for the summer at Holy Cross Church. He preached during the services, accompanied Father Daniel Kovalak on his rounds, and produced a weekly bulletin insert entitled "Peter's Page."

The new Orthodox Study Bible was introduced to the parish and local community at a special program held on July 15. Following a brief worship service, talks were presented describing the special features of the new Bible, and offering a general introduction to the Orthodox approach to Bible Study.

IS OUR
 LORD
 CALLING
 YOU
 TO THE
 HOLY
 PRIESTHOOD?

For further information
 please call or write
 the Seminary Registrar,

at:
 St. Tikhon's
 Orthodox Theological
 Seminary
 South Canaan, PA 18459

Phone (717) 937-4411



On Bright Tuesday, Bishop Herman awards Priest Stephen Karaffa the Kamilavka.

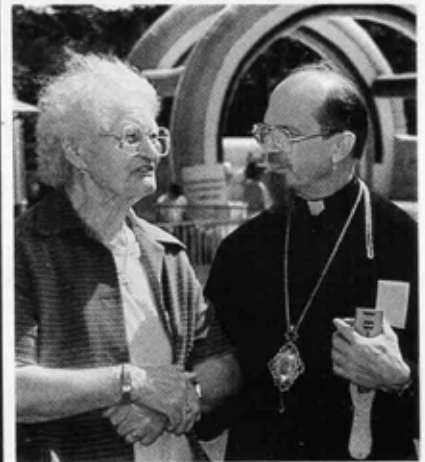


Vigil for the service of the Burial of the Most Holy Theotokos on the eve of Dormition.



Church School children at St. Herman's, Wallingford, display Easter eggs.

**Friends of St. Tikhon's
sponsor bazaar at
Holy Trinity Church
in Wilkes-Barre**





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You are invited to attend
The 23rd Annual Adult Education Lecture Series at
St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary
South Canaan, Pennsylvania

Theme:

Celebrating the Bicentennial of Orthodoxy in North America

**THE APOSTOLIC MISSION TO AMERICA:
An Overview of Mission, Education, Music, and Family**

Tuesday, October 5, 1993

**THE APOSTOLIC MISSION TO AMERICA,
YESTERDAY AND TODAY**

Speaker: Father Michael Dahulich,
Instructor in New Testament, St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary

Tuesday, October 12, 1993

**THE ROLE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
IN THE MISSION OF OUR CHURCH**

Speaker: Father Stephen Belonick
Rector, Dormition of the Virgin Mary Church, Binghamton, New York

Tuesday, October 19, 1993

THE MISSION OF SACRED MUSIC IN ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

Speaker: Michael Soroka, Choir Director
Dormition of the Virgin Mary Church, Binghamton, New York

Tuesday, October 26, 1993

**THE ORTHODOX FAMILY AS THE BRIDGE
FOR THE MISSION TO AMERICA**

Speaker: Father Daniel Kovalak
Rector, Elevation of the Holy Cross Church, Williamsport, Pa.

Lectures begin at 7:00 P.M.

REGISTRATION FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Registration Fee: \$12.00 per person; \$100.00 for a group of 9 or more per Parish. Please make checks payable to: **St. Tikhon's Seminary**. Return by September 28, 1993 to **St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary, South Canaan, PA 18459** or present at the Registration Desk at the Seminary on Oct. 5, 1993, from 6:00 to 6:45 p.m.