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Glorify Him!

Your Diocese

Alive in Christ

The Magazine of the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, Orthodox Church in America Volume XI, No. 3 Winter, 1995



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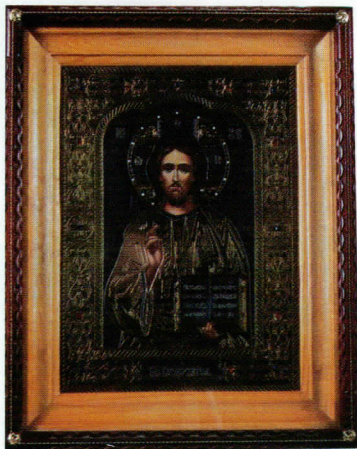
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Pastoral Epistle of His Eminence, Archbishop HERMAN

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Dearly Beloved Members of Our Diocesan Family:

As we celebrate the Glorious Feast of the Nativity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and as another civil new year dawns upon the world, we move one step closer to the Great Celebration that will



usher in the Third Millennium of Christianity, the Jubilee Anniversary of the Birth of the Messiah on Christmas Day, A.D. 2000.

Last year, you may recall, we initiated a five-year journey to the Millennium, which was inaugurated with a Year of Spiritual Renewal. Now as we begin 1996, I am calling upon our clergy and faithful alike to unite themselves in spirit and effort in making this "A Year of Strengthened Commitment" throughout our diocese.

Imitating Saint Joseph

The model of our commitment to our God and Saviour and to our Holy Church is Saint Joseph, the Betrothed. When Joseph of Nazareth became engaged to the Virgin Mary, he never dreamt that he would play so important a role in the miracle of the Incarnation, the coming in the flesh of the Only-Begotten Son of God. Who could have imagined such a thing would come to pass? For this reason, St. Joseph was visited by an angel from heaven to strengthen his commitment to the Lord and His handmaid, when he learned that she "was with Child." He, too was called upon to accept the will of God and support the Theotokos in her unique role in salvation history, and to provide for and protect the Christ Child who would come to be known as "Jesus, the son of Joseph." And the Scripture tells us that

Joseph "did as the angel of the Lord commanded him" (Matt. 1:24).

Commitment . . . support . . . providing for . . . these are words that challenge all of us to imitate St. Joseph and enable Christ to come into the lives of others as He first did so long ago in Galilee and Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan (Matt. 4:25). They call upon us to strengthen the Lord's presence among His people, in this specific time and this specific place into which God has brought us. This means using every means available for us to achieve this never-ending goal . . . just as St. Joseph did in the early years of Jesus' life on earth. Such commitment, support, and providing for us is a sacred calling from the Word of God, just as it was for St. Joseph at the time of the visitation by the angel of the Lord.

The Goals of Our Commitment

To what are we called upon for strengthened commitment and support? To the "local church" in which we serve the Living God—the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania in the Orthodox Church in America . . . to the Seminary of Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk, which is located within our own diocese . . . and to the various apostolates of the Holy Church, to which the Lord calls upon the faithful, not only in our Diocese, but in every diocese throughout the world.

Therefore, I am focusing our joint effort—as bishop, priests, and laypersons—on three major areas of "Strengthened Commitment" to the Holy Church:

- (1) An Extra-Parochial Awareness;
- (2) The Support of Our Seminary; and
- (3) Our Diocesan United Appeal.

Throughout all of 1996, I ask that these three areas of church life be the subject of your prayers, your efforts, and your kind generosity. Working together for these lofty and sacred goals will surely demonstrate clearly our renewed and strengthened commitment to Christ and His Holy

Church, and will also surely be blessed by our gracious God.

A Sense of Pride

If we are truly honest, all of us will admit that for too long our parishes have limited their vision of "the Church" to purely the confines of their own communities. This sense of "parochialism" has severely handicapped the Church, not only in terms of the possibilities of what apostolates she can undertake, but also in terms of the sense of unity in "the one Church" that our Creed so clearly expresses.

According to the teachings of the Holy Fathers of our Faith, the parish is *not* by itself the local Church. By itself, the parish cannot create a new priest, consecrate holy chrism, or even dedicate a new church building. No, the parish is *not* the self-sustaining unit of Church life on the local level—it is *the diocese* that is. And because this is so, we as member parishes of the "local church"—the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania—must recapture that understanding of the local church that is handed down by our Holy Orthodox tradition and rekindle a sense of pride in being a part of that local church, the diocese—and a pride in being a member-diocese of the greater Church, the national Church in this country, the autocephalous Orthodox Church in America.

When the last of the Twelve Apostles, Saint John the Evangelist and Theologian, fell asleep in the Lord, the first-century Christians were faced with an unprecedented crisis. With the last of the Apostles gone, what was the authority, the unity, the reality of the Church of Christ? To answer that question for the early Christians and for believers ever since, the Lord raised up the little boy whom, tradition tells us, was held in the arms of our Lord when He taught, "Whoever receives one of these little ones in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives not

Continued on the next page.

Pastoral Epistle

Continued from page 1.

Me but Him Who sent Me" (Mark 9:37). This little boy was Saint Ignatius.

What did the Bishop of Antioch, the venerable see where "the disciples were first called Christians" (Acts 11:26), say to those who embraced the faith of Christ? To the faithful at Smyrna he wrote:

"You must all follow the Bishop as Jesus Christ follows the Father, and the presbytery (the priests) as you would the Apostles . . . Wherever the Bishop appears, let the people be there; just as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church" (*Smyrnaeans*, 8, 1-2).

And to the Trallians, St. Ignatius wrote:

"Indeed, when you submit to the Bishop as you would to Jesus Christ, it is clear to me that you are living not in the manner of men but as Jesus Christ . . . It is necessary, therefore—and such is your practice—that you do nothing without the Bishop, and that you be subject also to the presbytery, as to the Apostles of Jesus Christ our hope, in Whom we shall be found, if we live in Him" (*Trallians* 2, 1-2).

And to the Christians of the ancient city of Philadelphia:

"Those, indeed, who belong to God and to Jesus Christ—they are with the Bishop" (*Philadelphians* 1, 1).

Our faithful need to renew this understanding of the Church as the local diocese—bishop, priests, and laymen working together for the Lord, accomplishing great things in His Name and laboring for the building up of the Body of Christ. Such an understanding will strengthen our pride in our Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, and all the good things that have thus far been accomplished for Christ in it, and our pride as a diocese in being a part of the greater Orthodox Church in America.

To this end, I will convene a Parish Council Conference in the diocese, which will gather together delegates from every parish in a seminar that will review the teachings of our Faith on the diocese as the unit of the Church on the local level, examine exactly how the diocese operates, and strengthen our commitment to the various goals and apostolates to which the Lord has called our diocese at this time and in this place, and how we can best

bring about their realization "in the Name of the Lord." We will ask these delegates, in turn, to go back home to their respective parishes and report to all the faithful what they learned and did at this conference, and promote that same diocesan pride and zeal to which we are called by the Holy Fathers, beginning with St. Ignatius of Antioch.

The Cradle of Our Church

The second area of strengthened commitment to which we will be called in 1996 is the support of St. Tikhon's Seminary. Almost twenty centuries ago, our Lord commissioned His Church with these words:

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you . . ." (Matt. 28:19-20).

The early Christians took our Lord seriously and went out to evangelize the whole of the then-known world. But as early as the labors of St. Paul, the problem of having men to spread the message of the Gospel plagued the Church: ". . . Whoever calls upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved. But how can they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without a preacher? And how can they preach unless they are sent?" (Romans 10:13-14).

Today, perhaps more than ever before, our Church faces a "vocations crisis"—not having enough clergy to fulfill the needs of the Church. Our Orthodox Church in America in general, and our Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania in specific—have parishes to maintain, elderly priests who are ready to retire, and future missions yet to be established. For all of these, we need priests to serve. And as we know, the number of students entering all our seminaries is down, way down, from what it was in generations past.

The problem is certainly the work of the Tempter and the pleasures of the flesh and the ways of the world with which he lures men from the service of the Church to other interests in this life. We must somehow successfully combat his efforts.

Prayer is certainly the most powerful force of all. Each and every morning and evening, all our faithful must pray for more vocations to the Holy Priesthood. This is one of the directives of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America, as it has proclaimed 1996 a "Year of Vocations" throughout the country. A text of already composed prayers for this purpose will be printed soon for your efforts in this cause.

Another way we can all foster vocations is to encourage boys who serve the altar in our parish churches—praise them for their faithfulness, thank them for their service, and tell them how wonderful it would be if they chose to serve Christ and His Church as one of His priests. How proud parents used to be to have their sons serve the altar, and what an honor it used to be for them to continue on to seminary. Today, unfortunately, serving the altar is all too often just another one of many activities competing for one's time—along with football and Boy Scouts and skiing trips. We need to recapture the pride in serving the Church that once bred vocations!

A third way to help promote seminary enrollment is more tangible. With rising costs of living, hospitalization, textbooks, etc., some men cannot afford the tuition of seminary—and more specifically, married men who must give up the jobs that provide for their families to come to seminary to study, as these "later" vocations are now more than ever more frequent. Our Church needs to provide them with full scholarships—as other institutions do—to insure that finances will not be the tool the devil uses to block yet another future priest from answering the call.

We are privileged in our diocese to be the home of one of this country's Orthodox theological schools—St. Tikhon's Seminary. It is here that the Church first cradles a priest's vocation and then nurtures it with the spiritual nourishment of the sacraments and services of the Church, the theological truths of our faith, and the discipline of priestly formation. Our diocese benefits from watching these vocations blossom, hearing their beautiful voices in praise of the Lord and being the beneficiaries of their field work in hospitals, missions, youth programs, etc.

Because all of this is true, I am calling

on those parishes, organizations, and individuals blessed by God with such an ability to commit to "Adopting a Seminarian."

By this, I mean donating to the seminary the equivalent of the room and board, tuition, textbooks, and all other costs and fees, to educate a seminarian for each year at St. Tikhon's. Imagine what a great blessing you can give to the Church—a priest to serve a flock of the Good Shepherd—through sharing some of the wealth with which God has blessed you. Think about this seriously in this Year of Strengthened Commitment—and consider insuring that no one will ever be kept from being ordained to the priesthood because of finances.

And those parishes, organizations, and individuals who cannot afford to adopt a seminarian are asked, in this Year of Strengthened Commitment, to increase their contribution to the annual seminary offering.

Our United Appeal

Finally, we call upon our diocesan family to demonstrate its strengthened commitment to Christ and His Church through the annual Diocesan United Appeal. Our diocese, which is the Church on the local level, has numerous programs that it undertakes for the glory of God, the extension of His Kingdom here on earth, and the service of His faithful people. Through your contribution to the Diocesan United Appeal, you help to make possible the missions, the gifts of charity, and the programs for youth, religious education, lay ministry, and stewardship in Eastern Pennsylvania.

Six new parishes are now flourishing in our diocese because of its mission programs. Faithful no longer have to travel long distances to attend an Orthodox Church. The True Faith is being given visible witness by a parish family in communities where it was never known. And, most importantly, a new center of missionary activity is opened for those who have not yet been exposed to the Orthodox Faith—because of your generosity. There are other areas that yet await us! Help us "make America Orthodox"!

The United Appeal also funds the diocesan work of charity—helping victims

of tragedies, assisting family members in need and providing food, clothing, and shelter to those who are without them. We are all too familiar with the Gospel of the Last Judgment that we hear every Meat-Fare Sunday, and the words of our Lord which we must fulfill: "Whatever you did for one of the least of My brethren, you did it to Me" (Matt. 25:40). The question is, how well do we fulfill them?

Additionally, our diocese provides summer camp and other gatherings for our youth; publications, workshops, and other programs of religious education; seminars and conferences for lay leadership; and programs for diocesan and parish stewardship. All these need to be funded by our kind generosity. They, too, fall under the umbrella of our United Appeal.

Sometimes we think such programs are the invention of the present hierarchy. But those of us who know the Scriptures realize that even in the time of the Apostles, "... the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea" (Acts 2:25). Paul himself tells us that the pillars of the Church, James and Peter and John, "desired that we support the poor" (Gal. 2:10). And Paul instructed the Church at Corinth, "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also" (I Cor. 16:1).

Paul also praises the Church at Philippi for assisting the missions in Macedonia and Thessalonica (Phil. 4:15-16), and this is mentioned again by the Apostle in his Epistle to the Romans (15:26). Paul promises his readers for the generosity towards the various apostolates of the Church, "God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

In this Year of Strengthened Commitment, we need to say **yes** to our missions, our works of charity, our youth, our religious education, our lay ministry and stewardship. We must keep our Holy Church alive and well; we must address the needs of our faithful at every level; and we must make sure that no member of our diocesan family ever suffers from being without our assistance.

Your financial gift to the 1996 Diocesan United Appeal will provide continued support to those who need our Chris-

tian outreach and love. We can make a difference—we will make a difference—a difference that will enable us to minister to our brothers and sisters in Christ. Say **yes** to our Diocesan United Appeal, and help make that difference, especially in this Year of Strengthened Commitment to Christ and His Church.

A renewed sense of pride and zeal for our diocese . . . an increased support of our seminary . . . and an ever greater response of **yes** to our Diocesan United Appeal . . . those are our goals for 1996—to show the Lord our strengthened commitment . . . our generous support . . . our outreach of providing for others . . . for the greater glory of God, the extension of His Kingdom on earth and for the benefit of His faithful.

As we march to the Millennium, join us as we dedicate 1996 as a Year of Strengthened Commitment and manifest your renewed faith in Christ and support of His Church in the tangible ways our diocese has set as its goals. Through the prayers of Saint Joseph the Betrothed, the model of our commitment to Christ, may the Infant Messiah, born in Bethlehem for the sake of us men and for our salvation, bless you with every good thing that comes from His hands in response to your saying **yes** to our plea.

Devotedly Yours in His Service,

+HERMAN
Archbishop of Philadelphia
and Eastern Pennsylvania

The deadline for
the next issue . . .

Your Diocese
Alive in Christ

is March 11, 1996

Please submit all articles
typed, or on disc, pictures, Parish
news, etc . . . to

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Your Diocese

Alive in Christ

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Your Diocese Alive

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Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Dearly beloved in Christ:

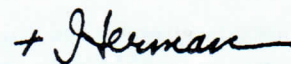
As we prepare to celebrate the feast of the Nativity of Jesus Christ, all of us are filled once again with great joy. What a consolation it is for us to contemplate the depth of God's love. So great is that love that the Son of God enters into our human nature, elevating us to an adopted sonship. It is no wonder that our hearts are filled with great peace.

Born in our likeness out of love, Christ raises us to his likeness. Transformed by the purifying power of God's Holy Spirit, we live in the certainty of a hope which will not be disappointed. The victory over hatred and violence has been won for us and the spiritual bondage of sin and ignorance has been overcome by the light that continues to shine in the darkness.

This peace, however, does not go unchallenged. All of us suffer as we read about the wars and fighting that still endure in our world. The faces of the starving and of those who are inhumanely treated haunt us whenever we see news reports. In the face of worries and fears, the radiant light of Christ shines once again in our hearts. The promise and the power of God's kingdom of peace lie in the realization that peace on earth is both the sign and effect of the peace which the world cannot give. May the glory of the Most High continue to grace our world.

Beloved in the Lord Our God and Savior—Venerable Pastors, God-loving monks and all Devout Children of our Diocesan Family, prayerfully I greet you with this Holy Feast, and may all of you be blessed during this Holy Season and throughout the New Year.

With love in Christ,
+HERMAN



Archbishop of Philadelphia
and Eastern Pennsylvania



Thirty-Second Diocesan Assembly Held in Old Forge



Archbishop Herman addresses Assembly.

The 32nd Diocesan Assembly of the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania was convened at St. Michael's Orthodox Church, Old Forge, on Saturday, October 21, 1995. The day began with the Divine Liturgy and Molioben concelebrated by His Eminence, Archbishop HERMAN, the Deans Fr. Vladimir Fetcho, Fr. Daniel Resselar, Diocesan Secretary/Treasurer Fr. John Kowalczyk, Fr. David Mahaffey, host pastor, and Fr. Michael Lepa. The responses were sung by St. Michael's Church Choir and several delegates who joined them, under the direction of Mr. Jon Black. A continental breakfast was served following the Divine Services. The Assembly participants then proceeded to St. Michael's auditorium for registration and the sessions.

The Assembly opened with prayer and the blessing of Archbishop HERMAN at 11:30 a.m. Father John Kowalczyk presented the agenda to the delegates. The agenda was accepted as presented. In addition to His Eminence and Fr. Robert

Kondratick, Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America, the Assembly was comprised of 30 clergy, 28 lay delegates, 2 Diocesan Council members, and 4 alternates. Father Vladimir Fetcho was elected Clergy Vice-Chairman, and Mr. John Zoranski was elected Lay Vice-Chairman for the Assembly. Father David Shewczyk and Mrs. Marie Proch were elected Secretaries.

Following the acceptance of the minutes of the previous Diocesan Assembly, Archbishop Herman presented his report on the life of the diocese. He noted his many visits with parish councils and the faithful. Various problems and concerns were discussed during the visits. One recurring topic was parish growth. The five-year program of spiritual growth is continuing. The emphasis of the program will be placed upon the strength of commitment to Christ and His Church in the next phase of the program during 1996. His Eminence stated that we need to look only at ourselves and our shortcomings, and not

at the faults and shortcomings of others. We first need to repent of our own sins and then look only to Christ to help us grow spiritually. He found that the faithful are truly interested in spiritual growth, and reminded them that this growth does not come about automatically. He asked the parishes to give concern not only to the material life of the parish during the annual meeting, but to spiritual growth as well. His Eminence also talked about the concerns of the smaller parishes within the diocese. If smaller parishes cannot support the life of the Church, they may have to share a priest. He suggested that all parishes encourage visitors to come and experience life in the Church. Perhaps they may embrace the faith as a result of their experience.

Archbishop Herman completed his report by commenting on the recent consecration of Bishop Innocent in Alaska. He noted that Bishop Innocent is one of our own spiritual children of the diocese. He commended the new bishop on his

strength and courage in light of the many difficulties he has faced.

Father Fetcho thanked His Eminence for his report and expressed his gratitude on behalf of the diocese to His Eminence for his tireless effort in working for the growth of the diocese and the national church. The Assembly then moved into the reports of the Diocesan Council secretary, diocesan treasurer, auditors, and the proposed budget for 1996 of \$132,125. The proposed budget included a \$5.00 increase in the diocesan assessment. The budget was passed after a brief discussion.

Father Robert Kondratick, Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America, presented his report on the state of the national church. He first extended the greetings of His Beatitude, Metropolitan THEODOSIUS to Archbishop HERMAN and the clergy and faithful of the diocese. His Beatitude could not attend the Assembly as he was participating in the Albanian Archdiocesan Assembly. He hopes to be present at next year's Assembly.

Father Kondratick noted that the Diocese of Eastern Pa. is one of the most stable dioceses in the Orthodox Church in America. He commended the good work of the clergy and faithful of the diocese. He extended his gratitude to Archbishop Herman on behalf of the entire Church for his work as Chairman of the Preconciliar Commission of the 11th All-American Council held in Chicago this past July. He encouraged the delegates to study the reports of His Beatitude and the Chancellor given at the All-American Council. He expressed his hope that the All-American Council delegates reported the Council's work to the parish councils and parishioners. Extensive coverage of the Council was given in the *Orthodox Church* newspaper. Much work was done to make the Church accountable at all levels during the last triennium. Father Kondratick briefly discussed the five working units in the Orthodox Church in America. All Council resolutions are assigned to the proper unit. The next All-American Council is scheduled for July 1998 at a place to be determined. He encouraged the parishes to place the Council's date on the calendar now and begin to budget and plan for the next Council during the next three years. By doing so, each parish will fulfill its responsibility to be represented by the

pastor and lay delegate. He noted that the FROC is now under the omophorion of the Holy Synod of Bishops. The FROC was asked to consider dovetailing its 1998 convention with the next All-American Council.

Father Kondratick asked that all parishes carefully review their liability insurance. A new videotape about liability insurance can be made available to the deans so that it can be shown to all clergy at deanery meetings.

A Personal Assistance Program is now in effect for clergy and church workers. The new program was extremely active during September, the first month of the program. The bishops will get a full report about the use of the program. The Orthodox Church in America has been asked by other churches for information on our program. This personal assistance program is not a substitute for the bishop or spiritual father.

Father Kondratick briefly spoke about other areas of concern in Church life. The pension program has met with great suc-

cess as it has exceeded the \$10 million dollar mark; no pension board members receive a salary. He discussed the need for vocations to the holy priesthood. 1996 will be devoted to prayer for the nurturing of vocations in the entire Orthodox Church in America. There is also great concern in other areas of Church life, such as Church growth, youth activities, and missions. He announced that Archbishop Herman will now be a member of the Lesser Synod, and formally thanked Fr. Daniel Kovalak who served on the Metropolitan Council and Church Administration.

Father Kondratick then addressed several issues concerning external affairs. The bishops are very active in external affairs. His Beatitude and Archbishop Peter met with Pope John Paul II during his recent visit to the United States. Archbishop Peter and Bishop Seraphim will travel with SCOPA to Rome and Constantinople concerning Orthodox Church unity.

Father Kondratick stated that some difficulties have arisen after the historic meet-

Continued on the next page.



Archpriest Vladimir Fetcho chairs morning session.



Opening of the Assembly.

Thirty-Second Diocesan Assembly

Continued from page 7.

ing in Ligonier and these have been reported in the *Orthodox Church* newspaper. The Orthodox Church in America is the only Church to make such extensive reports to its people on this matter. He also noted the tensions in world-wide Orthodoxy between Constantinople and Moscow over the churches in Estonia, the Ukraine, and Moldova. Problems also exist with the Holy Sites in Jerusalem. A great problem exists in the Church of Georgia where there is a great lack of heating oil for the upcoming winter. He briefly discussed the I.O.C.C. and its great charitable works, the upcoming Environmental Conference, and the Orthodox Christian Mission Commission with its heavy concentration in international missionary work.

Father Kondratich concluded his report by encouraging the delegates to be focused during these difficult times and to be clear on what is happening. Too much negativism exists in many areas of Church life. He exhorted the delegates to be enthusiastic about Church life. Our enthusiasm is up to us. No one can do our work for us. He pointed out that many dioceses have raised assessments more than the Diocese of Eastern Pa. Father then entertained questions from the Assembly.

After a break for lunch, the remainder of the Assembly was devoted to the reports of the deaneries and diocesan departments. All of these reports were sent to the delegates well in advance of the Assembly. The Assembly accepted all reports with gratitude. Archbishop Herman commended the work of the Department of Religious Education. He asked the pastors to increase their support of the department's events. He said that one of the best gifts that we can give to our youth is the opportunity to meet others at the various events.

A discussion of the reporting of the parish census revealed that some parishes may not be making a true and accurate report of membership. Some parishes may be deleting members who have reached a certain age. Anyone over the age of eighteen must be reported in the parish census regardless of their being in college, the armed forces, or over the age of sixty-five.

The Archbishop asked all parishes to be sure that their census is true and accurate. Visits should be made to inactive members so that they may become encouraged to be more active in all areas of church life. Perhaps parishes can show an act of love by paying the assessments for those in college and the armed forces. The national church will be pursuing ideas for "fair share" giving. It was noted that the assessment is placed upon the parishes and not the individuals. In a discussion of how other Orthodox Churches approached assessments, it was pointed out that the assessment in the Greek Archdiocese is \$200 per family, and in the Antiochian Archdiocese every baptized member is assessed \$28.00 regardless of age.

A reminder was given about the reconstruction of the Metropolitan Platon Chapel at St. Tikhon's Monastery. More funds are needed to begin work on the chapel. Archbishop Herman has spoken to

the Holy Synod of Bishops about the reconstruction of the chapel.

Before adjourning, His Eminence thanked all who gathered at the Assembly. He spoke of his willingness to meet with the faithful to discuss Church life. Parish visitations on Sundays do not always afford adequate time to discuss pressing issues in detail because of the time needed for services and meals. He suggested that evening meetings be scheduled. He again reminded the delegates that the annual parish meetings must include discussion about the spiritual life of the parish and not be limited to business matters. The Archbishop concluded by asking the delegates to work for the glory of God and the thanks that can come only from Him. The Assembly was then closed with prayer and the blessing of Archbishop Herman.

—Priest David Shewczyk



Delegates in session.



A few words with the Chancellor.

The Challenge of Christmas

A Patristic Perspective



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At Christmas we celebrate the “great mystery of godliness.”¹ We rejoice that God the Word “appeared in flesh,” took on a body and became man. The specific event is Jesus Christ’s birth

¹ 1 Tim. 3, 5-16.

in the flesh as man and for this very reason in the Orthodox Church we celebrate at Christmas this specific event, which is preserved and interpreted in the thought and texts of the Fathers. The Fathers encourage us to attain to a personal partici-

ipation in the mystery and event of the incarnation of Christ which took place “for us and for our salvation.” The following is an attempt to understand the message of their teaching through some of their

Continued on the next page.

The Challenge of Christmas

Continued from page 9.

writings.

Until the fourth century the Nativity of Christ and Theophany were celebrated together by the Church on January 6. Referring to this common feast, St. Gregory the Theologian reminds us of how the event should be celebrated: "Therefore let us celebrate not with much festivity but with godliness; not in a worldly but in a sublime, celestial fashion; not according to our desires but according to His, rather to those proper to our Master; not manifesting our weakness but rather our healing; not according to our creation but rather according to our re-creation."² In St. Basil we also find the same exhortation to live the mystery "in silence" and godly reverence. This he stresses in his address on "The Holy Nativity of Christ," saying "Let us approach with reverence the Incarnation of the Lord."³ The fullness of human existence is revealed in the language of blessed silence. "The Nativity of Christ should be honoured in a way appropriate for God."⁴ For in the resonant silence the mystery is lived inexpressibly and indescribably. Any rational explanation is a rape and violation of the mystery and attempts, as it were, to force the inexpressible divine condescension and to deny the gift which came from the Manger. "While the Magi adore Christ, Christians discuss how God became flesh and what is the nature of the flesh, and whether the Man who was conceived is perfect or imperfect. Let us keep silent in the Church of God on such useless and unnecessary things; let us glorify those things which we believe; let us not have curiosity concerning things which should remain unspoken."⁵

We keep silent about the superfluous things but not, however, about the truth and the gift of the mystery which is approached, interpreted, and set out by the Fathers from an apophatic point of view as is customary in Orthodox theology. The majority of patristic homilies on the Nativity of Christ begin with one basic confession which has passed over into the hymnology of the Church: "Behold, a strange and wonderful mystery . . ."⁶ The

paradoxical nature of the event precludes any interpretation and prohibits it being the object of inquiry and presupposes its existential relationship and focus. It is not an event that can be interpreted and understood by man's reasoning faculties. This, of course, is not to underrate human reason but to give priority of place to gratitude and humility, both of which are required in approaching the event. When a person accepts with humility the intellectually inconceivable gift of life and lives in its richness, then the least he can offer is his gratitude and thanks, instead of being preoccupied with how to perceive logically something which, of its nature, is infinitely beyond intellectual understanding.

To render thanks and to glorify the holy mystery of the Incarnation belong naturally to the Christian ethos. The mystery exists and operates independently of how we choose to approach it intellectually. The more genuinely a person accepts it, the more authentic he becomes. This explains the apophatic point of view of the Fathers vis-a-vis the mystery of the Incarnation, for it is intrinsically bound up with the Incarnation's saving message for man. When the Fathers speak about the Incarnation it is not then from the point of view of a theoretical Christology, but in terms of the re-creation and renewal of man in the body of the Church. So their language too is apophatic and glorifies. Their words are personal and true, bathed in the light of a living knowledge of God.

Their apophatic standpoint leaves no room for the question that asks, "Were it not for the fall might the Incarnation never have taken place?" Just as the creation from non-being reveals the infinite love of God, in the same way the Incarnation belongs to his saving economy [plan of salvation] and is the final stage of his plan for the creation. This is why Saint Maximos the Confessor distinguishes two periods in the history of divine economy. The first is brought to a close and ends with the Incarnation when God comes down and becomes man. The second is the period of man ascending to the glory of deification. "In short, there are on the one hand those centuries leading up to God's coming down to man and on the other hand those which lead to man's going up to

God."⁷ So, from the beginning, the Incarnation is part of God's saving plan for creation; the Incarnation is its final destination and its "preordained divine purpose."⁸

The biblical teaching which sees Christ as the "firstborn among many brethren"⁹ in whom all things find their completion, is developed and brought out in the texts of the Fathers.¹⁰ St. Maximos sees the great preordained mystery revealing God's will in the fact that all created beings were fashioned for their existence in Christ, for their completion, that is, in the life of Christ, the God-man.¹¹ St. Nicholas Kavalas also maintains that the reason for the creation of man lies in the hypostatic union of the two natures in the person of Christ, which was foreknown by the divine economy. So man "from the outset was fashioned in such a way so as to be able to accept God."¹² The world and man are created by God in anticipation of the theanthropic union which would be realized in the person of Christ. This perfect completion and renewal of all things in Christ is the revelation of mystery, which was "kept for long ages in silence but now brought to light."¹³ Again in the words of Nicholas Kavalas, "At the beginning of creation man's nature was fashioned for the renewed man."¹⁴

The Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries in particular contributed enormously to shaping the Church's Christological doctrine which was authentically expressed in the Definition of Chalcedon, which describes the unconfused and unchangeable union of the divine and human natures in the person of Christ. The persistence of the Fathers on this point had as its purpose to instill in the consciousness of all those created by the Word of God, the reality and truth of the new salvation brought about by the Incarnation. St. Gregory the Theologian offers the surest answer to the matter in an expression which is now a classic in theology: "That which is not assumed is not healed; but whatever is united to God, this can be saved."¹⁵ This succinct interpretation is an

⁷ *Questions and Answers to Thalassios*, PG 90, 320B.

⁸ *Ibid.* PG 90, 317D.

⁹ Rom. 8, 29.

¹⁰ See Col. 15, 16.

¹¹ See *Questions and Answers to Thalassios*, PG 90, 621B-C.

¹² *On Life in Christ*, Sermon 2, PG 150, 521A.

¹³ Rom. 16, 25.

¹⁴ *On Life in Christ*, Sermon 6, PG 150, 637A.

¹⁵ Letter 101, PG 37, 181C-184A.

² Sermon 38, PG 36, 316A.

³ PG 31, 1457C-1476A.

⁴ PG 31, 1457C.

⁵ *Ibid.* PG 31, 1473C.

⁶ 9th Ode of Christmas Matins.

attempt, in simple language, to uncover the real and human dimension of the event of the divine Incarnation. The hypostatic Word of the Father, without losing the divine essence and without undergoing change—which would have been both harmful for human nature and constituted the ultimate offense to the divine essence—comes down and takes on flesh as God-man, preserving every aspect of both natures in an indivisible and unconfused union.

Christ's divine nature assumes corruptible human nature, which it did not have before, and inexhaustibly empties into it his incorruptible divinity. An unconfused union is thus realized. Christ accepts as bride human flesh, and becomes incarnate.¹⁶ Out of infinite love for man He becomes the precise object of his love; true man, that is, and philanthropist *par excellence*.¹⁷ He did not consider it beneath him to be clothed in the work of his own hands. And for man it is a great glory, as his creation, to become clothing for his Creator. Just as in the original creation it was not possible for man to exist before God had taken the clay into his hands, so would it have been impossible for the corruptible human body to be renewed had not man's flesh become the clothing of his creator. Perceiving this truth, Saint John Chrysostom states: "He who broke the bonds of sin is wrapped in swaddling clothes, for this is his will. For He wishes to transform dishonour to honour, to clothe the inglorious in glory, to project as virtuous that which was utterly scornful. So He assumes my body that I might receive his Word; and taking my flesh offers me his Spirit, thereby providing me with the treasure of life. He takes my flesh that I might be sanctified; He grants me his Spirit to set me free."¹⁸ And Saint Gregory Palamas, in his homily on "The Coming Down in the Flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ" indicates that the pre-eternal, boundless and almighty Word and all-powerful Son of God could have released man from the clutches of death and subjugation to the evil one without himself assuming human nature. However, this saving scheme whereby the Word of God becomes Incarnate was the most suited to our own na-

ture, the most conformed to our human weakness. For God saves man embracing and assuming his nature.¹⁹

The tragic state of mankind after the fall is expressed by the Fathers as one of autonomy and loss of communion with God since real existence and real life are directly dependent on a true relationship with God.²⁰ The Fathers saw the tragedy of man after the fall chiefly in decay and death, to which are due man's personal and social drama. Lack of meaning to life, loneliness, worry and distress, pain and social injustice, wars and the ecological crisis all poignantly manifest how far evil, the passions, and sin have entered the life of man after the fall and how tragic their consequences have been for him. It is necessary to realize the magnitude of the loss and the catastrophe brought by the fall of man in order to comprehend the extent of divine love for mankind which was made manifest by the Incarnation of Christ.²¹ Therefore, the Incarnation of the Word does not only witness to God's boundless philanthropy, but strikingly reveals the tragedy of man. With the self-emptying (*kenosis*) of the Word we know of the wealth of God's love, but we also see the tragic dimensions of the human catastrophe. We dare say that true knowledge of man is only attained with the Incarnation of the Saviour. Only when we become aware of the tragic dead end brought about by ignorance of God and sin can we understand the saving dimensions of the mystery of the Incarnation. Only when we are fully conscious of the problem of mankind can we know the Incarnate Saviour and understand the extent of his mercy.

So when we speak about the Nativity of Christ we are actually speaking about our own rebirth, and in confessing the Incarnation we are confessing our own possibility of deification. That which the Fathers particularly stress when interpreting the event is the self-emptying of the Word. This divine self-emptying corresponds of course to the fulfillment of human nature. The emptying of divine love means at the same time man being filled with divine life. St. Athanasios the Great succinctly expresses this great reality resulting from

the divine Incarnation, saying: "God became man that we might be made god."²² God came down to man that man might be raised up to God. God shared our human nature that we might share the divine. God became the Son of man so that man might become the son of God. God becomes man so that man might be deified.

The astonishing consequences of the divine self-emptying for human nature which Christ assumed are also pointed out by other Fathers. St. John Chrysostom states that "God became man and man became God,"²³ while St. Gregory the Theologian reiterates: "The very rich becomes poor; He becomes poor because He puts on my flesh in order that I might gain his divinity. He who is complete empties himself . . . so that I can participate in his fullness."²⁴ God's impoverishment means man's enrichment. The divine life in the flesh makes possible the deification of human nature. That the Word puts on human nature makes man a participant in the divine nature. The Incarnation operates as philanthropy, descent to earth and self-emptying for man, so that man can find his way back to the "likeness" and go up to God. Therefore, the Incarnation of the Word is characterized as "renewal of nature"²⁵ and "miracle above all miracles."²⁶

St. Basil, comparing the initial creation of the world and of man with the re-creation offered by the self-emptying of the Word become flesh, considers the latter far greater than the former. He points out that neither the composition of the heavens, the earth, the sea and the air, nor the creation of the other great elements heavenly or beneath the earth, reveals the power of God the Word—through whom all things were created—as much as does the economy of the Incarnation and His condescension to the baseness and lowliness of human nature.²⁷ At the initial creation God gave man his "image" and appointed him to be the steward of nature. However, when after the fall he becomes subject to corruption, the Word of God comes down and is joined with man in a

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²² *Sermon on the Incarnation of the Word*, PG 25, 96.

²³ PG 52, 789.

²⁴ *On the Epiphany*, PG 36, 325C.

²⁵ St. Gregory the Theologian, *Sermon 39*, 13, PG 36, 348D.

²⁶ St. John of Damascus, *Sermon on the Nativity of Theotokos 10*, PG 96, 676D.

²⁷ *Homily on the Holy Nativity of Christ*, PG 31, 1457C.

¹⁹ Homily 16, PG 151, 189BC.

²⁰ See Ireneo of Lyons, *Against Heresies 4*, 20, 5, PG 7, 1036A.

²¹ See Athanasios the Great, *On The Incarnation 4*, PG 25, 104A-C.

¹⁶ See Methodios Olympou, *Symposium*, PG 18 136A.

¹⁷ Maximos the Confessor, PG 91, 1048A.

¹⁸ *Sermon on the Nativity of our Savior Jesus Christ*, PG 56, 389A.

The Challenge of Christmas

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hypostatic union, Himself assuming human nature and communicating to it all the qualities of His divine nature. St. John of Damascus characterizes this as the "second communion" since the "first communion with God" was broken.²⁸ At the beginning, the miracle of the creation from non-being was accomplished, and now the miracle of theanthropic life is being performed. Then it was the fall which took place and the disobedience of the first Adam, while now the second Adam, Christ, becomes the new first ancestor of the human race with perfect obedience to God the Father, and is therefore incomparably greater than the first. This is why Nicholas Kavalas writes: "The old is not the model for the new but the new Adam the model for the old."²⁹ The theology of the Fathers of Orthodox Church and the ethos it represents do not limit the Incarnation to a biological or biographical fact of Christ's life nor distinguish between its historical and its saving dimension. The Orthodox Church and her theology know only one living Jesus Christ, the God-man, Son and Word of God, who "sittest on high with the Father and is here invisibly present with us." He is inexhaustibly offered in the Holy Eucharist in order to give life to man and incorruptibility to the creation. In this action of the Church, Christ is constantly, continually and inexhaustibly emptied for the life of the world.

In this manner the mystery of the Incarnation is not only a historical fact, which took place just once "at the time of Herod the king."³⁰ It became simultaneously the new reality of the world, the new leaven which mystically transfigures and leads the world to its archetypal beauty until the end of the ages. The Church is the confirmation of the Incarnation, giving incorruptibility to the creation, eternity to time, deifying man and continually offering to the Word His divine flesh in thanksgiving. This is the mystery of the perpetually re-occurring Incarnation, which the Holy Spirit accomplishes within the Church. If this personal, ecclesiastical relationship is absent, the Incarnation remains a mere historical event without special interest or any particular consequences

for man's life.

The Holy Fathers particularly underlined this perspective on the Incarnation as it is fulfilled in the holy mysteries and the liturgical life of the Church. Therefore, when they speak about Christ, they are simultaneously speaking about the Church, and connecting the basic events of the life of the Incarnate Word with the very being of the Church. Participation in the ecclesiastical life is considered as experience and participation *par excellence* in the life of the Incarnate Lord. St. Symeon of Thessalonica in his work "On the Holy Sacraments" emphasizes the dual nature of the holy mysteries—their material and their spiritual element—and he considers it in relation to the union of the two natures in the hypostasis of Christ. This union in the mystery of the Incarnation is apparent in the Church's every mystery and rite, performed for the salvation of the whole man as soul and body together.³¹ The Church is not the "mystical" body of Christ, as it is presented in the Pope's encyclical letters and accepted by the Roman Catholic Church, nor are the holy mysteries mere symbols which channel divine Grace, as their scholastic theology maintains. The Church is the *real* body of Christ, and every Divine Liturgy and holy service constitutes a new action of Christ's Incarnation in the world. It is a perpetual assuming, healing and rendering incorrupt of every ill and corruptible element of this world: "for that which is not assumed, is not healed." For precisely this reason all the holy mysteries, but particularly the holy Eucharist—the greatest mystery of the Church—are performed not only "for the remission of sins" but firstly "for life everlasting." Fulfilling the economy of our salvation, Christ came to the earth to create the conditions for life to be born.³²

Although baptism is considered in biblical and patristic tradition as an image of man's participation in Christ's suffering and resurrection,³³ the Incarnation is the fundamental theological precondition of this teaching. Baptism as a new virgin birth from the Holy Spirit, is a re-occurring Incarnation in the womb of the Church which repeats, as it were, the role and work of the Theotokos. However, the Holy Eu-

charist expresses and reveals in a more dynamic way the mystery and economy of the divine Incarnation. The change of the bread and wine into Christ's body and blood is a perpetual Incarnation throughout the ages.³⁴ The Holy Eucharist uninterruptedly continues the mystery of the divine emptying. In this event the corruptible creation is offered to the Incarnate Word in order to continue the miracle of the theanthropic union. The unconfused and indivisible union of the uncreated divinity with created nature is realized in the Holy Eucharist. In this way "the bread and the wine and the water of the prothesis [the table where the Proskomedia is performed—Ed.] through the invocation and the descent of the Holy Spirit are transfigured, becoming the body and blood of Christ and we have not two things but just one."³⁵ So the Holy Eucharist, and the Church generally, is the ultimate consequence of the Incarnation.

These are the basic consequences of the Incarnation and of the presence of Christ on earth—consequences that penetrate the whole of humanity and every man. As St. John of Damascus emphasizes, Jesus Christ "didn't save only one kind of people, as did Moses, helping the Hebrews to escape from Egypt, passing them through the sea in order to liberate them from the slavery of Pharaoh. Christ saved the whole of humanity from the corruption of death and the tyranny of sin. And he saved all people not by force but by persuading them with mildness, patience and forgiveness, so as to be able to choose themselves the way of virtue and be glad struggling for it. Having previously idolized sin, some now accept to suffer for the sake of virtue and obedience to God."³⁶

These are the Saints, who are "justified in the Spirit" and "received up into glory"³⁷ together with the Incarnate Christ, witnessing either by their martyrdom or their ascetic and spiritual life—indeed by their whole being—the great reality of Christ's coming to the earth. Because, as one of these saints says, Nicholas Velemirovich, bishop of Zhicha and

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³⁴ See Nicholas Kavalas, *On Life in Christ*, Sermon 4, PG 150, 620.

³⁵ St. John of Damascus, *On the Orthodox Faith*, book 4, 13, PG 94, 1145A.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ 1 Tim. 3, 16.

²⁸ *Sermon on the Nativity of Theotokos* 8, PG 96, 670.

²⁹ *On Life in Christ*, Sermon 6, PG 150, 680A.

³⁰ Matt. 2, 1.

³¹ PG 155, 179.

³² Gregory of Nysas, *Sermon on Epiphany*, PG 44, 586.

³³ Rom. 6, 4.

Consecration of Bishop Innocent

The bright warm sun illumined Alaska's largest city as hundreds of Orthodox faithful and clergy crowded into magnificent St. Innocent Bicentennial Cathedral September 16, 1995, for the consecration of an auxiliary bishop for the Diocese of Alaska at the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy. Five hierarchs, forty priests, and five deacons participated in this event which attracted Orthodox faithful from across North America. Representatives from other Christian churches were also present for the historic consecration.

Events commenced on Thursday with the opening of the Diocesan Assembly of the Orthodox Diocese of Alaska, Orthodox Church in America. Chaired by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius, *locum tenens* and administrator of the diocese, more than one hundred fifty people, including clergy and lay delegates from around the diocese, assembled at St. Innocent Cathedral for the two-day convocation. Members heard an extensive report from Metropolitan Theodosius, who reviewed developments since last February 28, when His Grace, Bishop Gregory presented to the Diocesan Council a nominee, Father George Gula, for the office of auxiliary bishop for the diocese. The diocesan council unanimously approved the nomination of Father George as auxiliary for the diocese, and his name was submitted by Bishop Gregory to the Holy Synod of Bishops in New York on March 22, 1995. At this spring session, Father Gula was canonically elected Bishop of Anchorage, Auxiliary to the Diocese of Alaska, and his consecration dates were set for September 15-16, 1995, at St. Innocent's Cathedral. On March 30, 1995, Father Gula was tonsured a monk by Abp. Herman at St. Tikhon's Monastery, taking the name of Innocent, after St. Innocent of Moscow, Enlightener of the Aleuts and Apostle to America. The next day he was elevated to the rank of Archimandrite in preparation for episcopal consecration.

In chairing the first day's sessions, Metropolitan Theodosius also reviewed



Bishop Innocent.

the series of events leading up to the retirement of His Grace, Bishop Gregory, who by now had been elevated at the spring session of the Holy Synod to the rank of Archbishop. As it was definitively shown by documentation, the decision of Archbishop Gregory to retire and not participate in the consecration of a new auxiliary was clearly his own. Mr. Andy Ebona, a lay delegate from Juneau, expressed the will of the assembly and moved to accept the Metropolitan's report on recent events in the diocese. In addition to the financial report of the treasurer, Father Peter Bourdukofsky, delegates also heard a report from Father Paul Merculief, Acting Dean of St. Herman's Seminary. Father Paul outlined the work of the search committee to find a new permanent Dean, and explained the financial strains the school is presently experiencing.

On the second day of the diocesan assembly, participants heard reports from parish priests who traveled hundreds of miles to be with their bishop, brother clergy, and diocesan faithful. Moving testimony described the profound zeal and hard work of Orthodox people through-

out the state. Priests and lay delegates extended warm invitations to the bishop-elect to visit their parishes as soon as possible after his consecration. Two documents were unanimously approved and released by the assembly during the second day's plenary session. The first was a declaration of unity and joy at the election and consecration of Bishop Innocent; the second was a letter to Archbishop Gregory extending the good will of the diocesan assembly and inviting him to return to serve with the new Auxiliary.

On Friday evening, the guest hierarchs, clergy, and faithful assembled to hear the bishop-elect read his acceptance of election. The episcopal candidate was led from the altar to the center of the Church by Archimandrite Innocent (Fryntzko) and Archpriest Nicholas Molodyko-Harris. In a moving presentation, Archimandrite Innocent (Gula) described his difficult journey over the years, waiting for a sign from above to show him where his work for the Church should take place. When he was assigned to the Diocese of Alaska on September 8, 1994, he was appointed Chap-

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Consecration of Bishop Innocent

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lain at St. Herman's Seminary on Kodiak. It was here that Father Innocent realized his new home had been found, and the Lord's will was to be fulfilled. He quickly developed a warm and fatherly relationship with the students of the seminary, and eagerly learned the ways of his new friends in America's northernmost region.

At long last the day of consecration, Saturday the 16th of September, 1995, arrived. Joining Met. Theodosius in the celebration of the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy were the following hierarchs: His Eminence, Abp. Kyrill of Pittsburgh and Western Pa.; His Eminence, Abp. Herman of Philadelphia and Eastern Pa.; His Grace, Bishop Job of Chicago and the Midwest; and His Grace, Bishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada. Prior to the Liturgy, the nomination from the Diocese of Alaska was read to the congregation by Archpriest Nicholas Molodyko-Harris, Cathedral Dean and Diocesan Chancellor. The Act of Canonical Election from the Holy Synod of Bishops was read by Protopresbyter Robert Kondratik. His Beatitude, in the presence of the other hierarchs, clergy, and faithful, then questioned the bishop-elect regarding his understanding of the Holy Trinity, Christology, and other Orthodox doctrine.

The Hierarchical Divine Liturgy began as even more people crowded into the large cathedral. As the time grew near for the episcopal consecration, the bishop-elect was led in front of the altar, where Metropolitan Theodosius and his four co-consecrators laid their hands upon Archimandrite Innocent. By the mercy and will of God, and through the assent of His Holy Church, Father Innocent became His Grace, Bishop Innocent, Bishop of Anchorage and Auxiliary to the Diocese of Alaska. As testimony to his new authority and position in the diocese, his first act was to ordain Deacon Stephen Epchook, a fourth-year seminarian at St. Herman's, to the holy priesthood. At the conclusion of the Liturgy, Metropolitan Theodosius presented the new hierarch with his episcopal staff and instructed him to ascend his cathedra for the first time. For more than two hours the new bishop blessed the children and adults who formed lines to greet their new bishop and receive his

archpastoral blessing. Many traveled thousands of miles to be with the new bishop. Father John Fencik, a Carpatho-Russian priest from Bayonne, N.J., told reporters, "I came to be with my friend during his finest hour." A delegation of laity from Seaford, Long Island, where Father Innocent was instrumental in establishing an Orthodox mission parish, came to Alaska and participated in every service.

At the Saturday night Vigil, the newly-consecrated Bishop Innocent presided



Bishop Innocent

with clergy from the diocese. Two choirs responded, one in English and Slavonic, the other in Yupik. At one point during Matins, Alaskan priests began singing the

Polielei, or "Praise the Name of the Lord" in a local melody in the Yupik language. Visitors from the lower '48 were astounded not only by the beauty of this hymn, but also by the deep spiritual awakening brought about by this great display of faith and love for the Church. Again, hundreds lined up to venerate the Gospel and festal icon and to receive the blessing of their new bishop, throughout the remainder of Matins.

On Sunday, September 17, Bishop Innocent celebrated his first Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at St. Innocent Cathedral. During the Liturgy, he ordained subdeacon George Berczkin to the holy diaconate. Again the Cathedral was filled beyond capacity. As on Saturday morning, faithful stood patiently for more than two hours to greet their new bishop. Following services, a testimonial banquet was held at the Anchorage Hilton.

Throughout the four days in Anchorage, visitors, observers, and honored guests witnessed the tremendous expression of faith, unity, and obedience expressed by the clergy and faithful of the Diocese of Alaska. Father J. Michael Williams, an indigenous Alaskan priest from Juneau, captured the feeling of most when he said, "We are here today because of the Holy Spirit, and our love for God and the Church, and our unanimous confession of unity today is an expression of the Spirit's direction in our lives as Orthodox Christians. We cannot resist that motivation in our lives."



Archbishop Herman welcomes Bishop Innocent to St. Tikhon's Monastery Church.

The Christ the Savior Cathedral in Moscow

A Symbol of Russia's Faith,
Blown Up in Atheistic Hatred,
Rises Anew From the Rubble of Atheism

And thus, Russians, in contemporary events we read the ancient book of Divinely-ruled kingdoms! Sacred times pass in front of us in the deeds of our Tsars! What comfort for faith! What hope for the fatherland!

—Metropolitan Saint Filaret (Drozdov) of Moscow to Emperor Nicholas I of Russia, September 10, 1839

Having rebelled against God, condemned the sacred memory of our ancestors, and without the least scruples of conscience destroyed the labors of the best sons and daughters of our people, we have covered Russian history with the stain of terrible iniquity. This stain weighs on our conscience, and casts a pall on the spiritual life of our society.

—Patriarch Aleksy II of Moscow

On June 13, 1812,¹ Napoleon's *Grande Armée*—consisting of some six hundred thousand troops of "Gauls and with them twelve nations," as Russian lore would have it, invaded Russia, engaging Russian troops at Kovno. The Franco-Russian War of 1812 had begun. On July 6, Emperor Alexander I of Russia issued a solemn manifesto, calling the nation to arms:

"We now call all on Our faithful subjects . . . to join Us in a common and unanimous uprising to assist against all designs and endeavors of the enemy. May he find at every step faithful sons of Russia, who vanquish him with every means and force, attending to none of his wiles and deceptions . . . Noble estate of the Gentry! In every age you were the deliverer of the Fatherland. Most Holy Synod and clergy! With your fervent prayers you have always called down grace upon the head of Rus-

¹ Since prior to 1918, the civil calendar in Russia coincided with the Julian calendar in use by the Orthodox Church, all dates prior to that year are Old Style.



sia. Russian people! Valiant descendants of valiant Slavs! On numerous occasions you have crushed the teeth of the lions and tigers who have assailed you; unite together, with the cross in your heart and weapons in your hands, and no human power will prevail against you!"

Despite intense resistance from the vastly outnumbered 120,000 Russian forces divided into two armies, by the end of August, the French and their allies were virtually at the gates of the ancient and sa-

cred Russian capital of Moscow. On August 26, a fierce battle with few parallels in military history—the cannonballs could not fly, wrote the Russian poet Lermontov, through the mounds of bloody bodies—was fought near the village of Borodino, some seventy-five miles to the west of the Russian capital. Though they had suffered 42,000 casualties out of 112,000 combatants, including one of the commanders, Prince Bagration (in comparison, the

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Christ the Saviour Temple

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French and their allies lost 58,000 out of 130,000 combatants), and despite nominal retreats at left flank and center, Russian troops held the field. But it was a Pyrrhic victory, and the supreme commander of the Russian forces, Prince Mikhail Kutuzov, after a military council in the village of Fili, made the painful decision to disengage and abandon Moscow. With the loss of Moscow, he reasoned, Russia would not be lost and the army saved to fight another day. On September 1, Napoleon entered Moscow.

His victory, however, was both painful and hollow. The Russian emperor refused to even consider peace so long as a single French soldier remained on Russian soil; the entire country was caught up in a burst of patriotism and ardent support of its Monarch; and the ancient capital, constructed mostly of wood, was set aflame and burned down in a conflagration seen for many miles around. On October 6, scarcely four months after he had invaded Russia, Napoleon abandoned Moscow. Forced to retreat along the very same scorched route they had used to advance, pursued and harassed by regular troops, cossack cavalry units and peasant guerrillas, their supply lines overextended or cut off and an early winter nipping at their toes, the French and their allies perished in droves. The retreat turned into a rout. When, in November, the *Grande Armée* finally crossed the Russian border at the Berezina River, of the 600,000 troops who had invaded Russia, only some thirty to fifty thousand managed to escape. By the end of the year, the only French soldiers who were to remain in Russia were either lying dead on the fields of battle or prisoners of war.

Victorious against a formidable foe who had menaced all of Europe, Emperor Alexander I humbly ascribed his victory to God and the Russian people, and by Imperial decree on Christmas Day, December 25, 1812, ordained the construction of a memorial temple to Christ the Saviour:

"The salvation of Russia from the enemies, which were as numerous in force as they were sinister and menacing in their intentions and deeds, as also their complete destruction accomplished in six

months in such a way that even in swiftest flight only their smallest part could depart Our borders, is but the goodness of God, visibly poured out on Russia, truly a memorable occurrence, which the ages will not obliterate from written records. In preservation of eternal memory of that unprecedented devotion, faithfulness and love towards Faith and Fatherland, by means of which the people of Russia transcended itself in these difficult times, and in token of Our gratitude to the Providence of God, which has saved Russia from the threat of destruction, We have resolved in Our ancient capital city of Moscow to construct a church in the name of Saviour Christ, about which a detailed decree will be announced in due time. May the Almighty bless Our undertaking! May it be accomplished! May this Temple stand for many ages, and may the incense of gratitude of later generations rise in it before the Altar of God, together with love and emulation of the deeds of their forebears."

The original site for the proposed memorial temple, to be constructed in accordance with an architectural proposal by Witberg, was to be on the Vorobiev hills overlooking Moscow, in the approximate vicinity of where Moscow State University stands today. On October 12, 1817, the solemn laying of the cornerstone² was officiated, and a granite stone containing holy relics and other memorabilia placed at the site. For various reasons, however, construction came to a standstill, and Witberg's concept was never realized. Construction of the temple was not to resume for two decades.

After Alexander's death in 1825, his younger brother, Nicholas, ascended the Russian throne.

Remembering Alexander's wish, Nicholas I instructed that architectural designs should once again be submitted for the building of a memorial temple which would not present insurmountable difficulties in bringing the project to completion. From the multitude of submitted designs, one submitted by a member of the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts, architect K. A. Ton, received Imperial approval on April 10, 1832.

² In accordance with Orthodox tradition, a cornerstone, on which a cross and an appropriate inscription had previously been carved (and usually, though not necessarily, holy relics inserted), is placed as the first stone in the foundation of a church. See "The Office used at the Founding of a Church" in Isabel Florence Hapgood, trans. and compiler, *Service Book of the Holy Orthodox Catholic Apostolic Church*, revised (Englewood, 1983), p. 479 ff.

Emperor Nicholas I himself selected the new site of the planned edifice on the left bank of the Moskva River, near the Kremlin, on the site of the Alekseevsky convent. It was hardly possible to select a more appropriate site: because the elevation of the left bank of the river was lower than the right bank, on which the Kremlin itself was located, the new edifice would be seen in all its splendor and magnificence, yet would not architecturally overpower the Kremlin. Because much preliminary work was to be accomplished before actual construction could begin, a temporary preliminary Committee was constituted and funded in the amount of 214 thousand rubles of silver. Among the tasks assigned to this Committee was the appraisal and acquisition of the properties and structures on the proposed site, as well as the relocation of the Alekseevsky convent to a suitable area. By 1838, the work of the temporary Committee was successfully completed at a cost of 307,503 rubles. In 1837, the Alekseevsky convent was relocated to the village of Krasnoye, near Sokolniki, and in the following year the convent buildings and other structures were demolished. The temporary Committee was dissolved, and in its place a permanent blue-ribbon oversight Building Commission was formed, consisting of: Prince D. V. Golitsyn, the Military Governor-General of Moscow, chairman; Prince S. M. Golitsyn, vice-chairman; Senator P. N. Ozerov, Ober-Hofmeister Prince A. M. Urusov, Adjutant-General Count S. G. Strogonov, D. M. Lvov, Count A. I. Gudovich, and A. M. Miliutin. In 1838, the mayor of Moscow was attached to the Commission. K. A. Ton, the author of the project, was appointed chief architect. Construction commenced in 1839 and was completed in 1881, under the chairmanship of Prince V. A. Dolgorukov, who in the seventeen years that he held the post of Governor-General of Moscow, completed the interior of the by-then magnificent Cathedral.

On July 20, 1838, in accordance with the will of the Emperor, the original granite cornerstone which had been placed in the first foundation in 1817 was opened, and both the stone and its contents brought in solemn procession to Kremlin's Dormition Cathedral for temporary storage. Excavation of the foundation of the

future Cathedral was undertaken by merchants Shaposhnikov and Zverev.

During the excavation process, two cemeteries were discovered, at depths of 6 and 12 feet. The upper cemetery contained burials from the plague of 1771, while the lower contained artifacts from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries and several coins of the ninth century. In all, approximately 3.7 million cu. ft. of soil were removed to depths ranging from approximately 35 to 44 feet. The work moved forward expeditiously, and by September 10, 1839, everything had been prepared for the solemn laying of the cornerstone.

A day earlier, on September 9, the original 1817 cornerstone was brought to the location from the Dormition Cathedral. Metropolitan Filaret (Drozdov) of Moscow served an Intercession with blessing of water, and the very same objects which had been placed in it in 1817 were once again placed inside.

On the morning of September 10, 1839, after Divine Liturgy in the Dormition Cathedral, a long ceremonial procession wound its way from the Kremlin to the excavated location of the new temple. The entire length of the road was lined with troops. The procession was headed by veterans of the War of 1812, followed by the members of the Building Commission, members of the civil service, senators, generals who fought in the War of 1812, one hundred deacons, two hundred priests and archpriests, nine archimandrites, three bishops, and, behind the Miracle-working icons of the Theotokos of Iveron and Vladimir, Metropolitan Filaret of Moscow. Following the Metropolitan were Emperor Nicholas I accompanied by the Heir, Tsesarevich Alexander (the future Emperor Alexander II), ranking aristocracy, including the future Emperor Wilhelm I of Prussia, members of the State Council, ministers, members of the court and the general staff.

After the blessing of water at the site of the future cathedral, Metropolitan Filaret read the prayer indicated for the founding of a church, and addressed the following words to the Emperor:

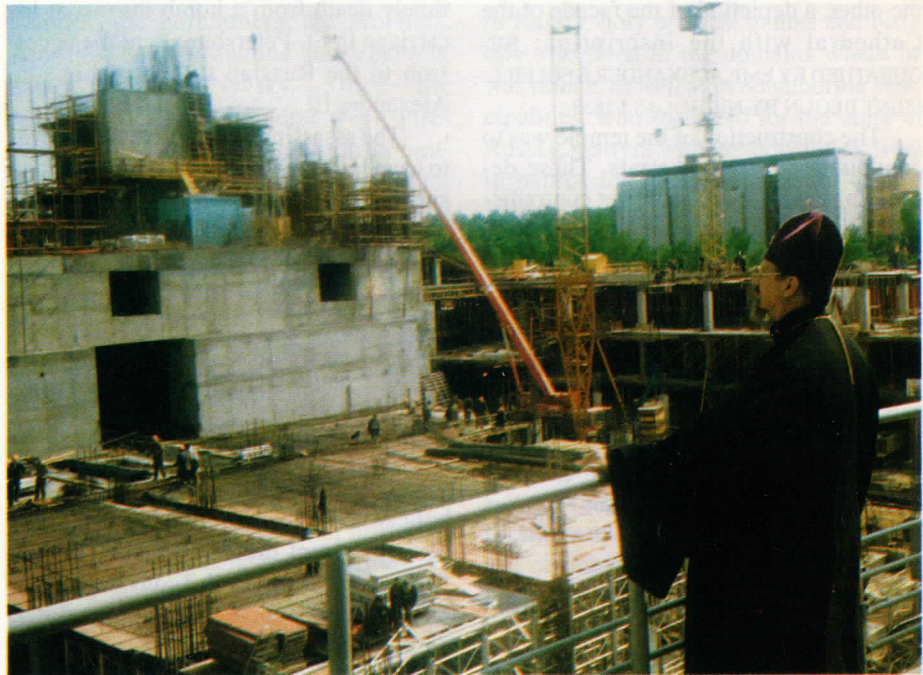
Most pious Sovereign!

“For certain important tasks there exists a special destiny of the Providence of

God, in accordance with which to one chosen person is given an elevated thought, and to another its majestic fulfillment. In anticipation, to the eye of the flesh it seems as if the work is not being accomplished: but in the eyes of Providence it is indeed prospering. Instead of one chosen person, it has two; and through one task many virtues shine forth: in the one who begins there is not only the good intention, but also humility, and patience and submission to God’s plans, wherein he must yield to another the fulfillment; in the one who brings the task to fulfillment not only is

dom, contemplates, for sacred remembrances and prayers of thanksgiving, a Temple to Christ the Saviour, in the capital that was the holocaust for the salvation of the Fatherland, and reborn from the ashes. His thought was proclaimed; the church blessed the undertaking of the Blessed One. You, one of his brothers, stood at that time at his side: and now we see that even then the Almighty has appointed you to fulfill the sacred vow of Your Majestic Brother by Your Majestic Arm.

“And thus, Russians, in contemporary



Archbishop Herman views the construction of the new Christ the Saviour Cathedral in Moscow.

there the good deed, but also munificence, magnanimity, and fraternal love, as we bring to fulfillment the task of another as if it were one’s own.

“Thus David, grateful to God for the establishment of his kingdom, contemplates building Him a temple in Jerusalem, and is confirmed in this thought in council with Nathan. The idea is magnificent; a Prophet has proposed it; a Prophet has confirmed it: but even two Prophets could not discern the destinies of Providence, until it was revealed to them. God appoints Solomon to fulfill David’s idea. ‘He shall build a house unto My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever’ (2 Sam. 7:13).

“Thus Alexander the Blessed, grateful to God for the salvation of his king-

events we read the ancient book of Divinely-ruled kingdoms! Sacred times pass in front of us in the deeds of our Tsars! What comfort for faith! What hope for the fatherland!

“Most pious Sovereign! May Your heart be confirmed in the Lord; may your power arise in Your God; may the Saviour of the world, Who has saved Russia, assist you to build this House unto His name, and may He establish the throne of your kingdom forever.”

After the conclusion of the Metropolitan’s address, the Emperor placed into the stone containing the objects of the 1817 foundation a cruciform gold-plated tablet with an engraved commemorative inscription and two
Continued on the next page.

Christ the Saviour Temple

Continued from page 17.

marble tablets inscribed with his name and the name of the empress.

To honor the solemn occasion, the Emperor decreed that special commemorative medals were to be minted in replication of the medals minted in 1812. Accordingly, 34 gold, 100 silver and 100 bronze medals, approximately 3.5 in. in diameter, were minted, with a depiction, on one side, of the All-seeing Eye in glory, with the inscription: NOT UNTO US, NOT UNTO US BUT UNTO THY NAME. YEAR 1812.— and, on the other, a depiction of the facade of the Cathedral with the inscription: BEQUEATHED BY EMP. ALEXANDER I. FULFILLMENT BEGUN BY NICHOLAS I 1838.

The construction of the temple was to continue for forty-odd years. These decades proved to be pivotal, yet contradictory, engendering epochal changes in the fabric of Russian society, and thrusting it with increasing force into the twentieth century. Within a decade of the placing of the cornerstone of the new cathedral, the European revolutions of 1848 were to result in a progressively more stifling political and social atmosphere in Russia, which, in turn, precipitated the Crimean debacle of 1854-55, the death of Nicholas I in March of 1855, and the fall of Sevastopol the following September. The accession to the Russian throne of Alexander II in 1855 ushered in a period of liberalization, of "great reforms" achieved through peaceful legal process, the greatest of which was the emancipation of some fifty-two million serfs in 1861,³ for which Alexander II was given popular acclamation as "The Liberator." The emancipation was followed, in turn, by modernization and democratization of local government (*zemstvo*), landmark reforms of the judiciary, finances, and the military.⁴ In foreign affairs, this was the time of the sale of Alaska to the United States (1867) and Russian withdrawal from the Western Hemisphere, the Russo-Turkish War (1877-78) and Ottoman withdrawal from Europe, with a concomitant

³ The full import and significance of this peaceful, albeit imperfect reform, suggests Prof. N. V. Riasanovsky of Berkeley, is to be gleaned from a comparison of this event to the almost simultaneous emancipation of eight million slaves in the United States accomplished by Lincoln at the cost of a bitterly divisive and bloody civil war.

⁴ Compulsive military service was extended to all classes of Russian society, instead of just the peasantry, draftees to be chosen by lottery; the length of compulsory military service was drastically shortened from twenty-five years (!) to six.

redrawing of the map of the Balkans. Rapid industrialization and urbanization, the decline of the gentry class, and the democratization of social life, however, were to bring about increasing social friction and strident demands for participatory government. Paradoxically, for the radical and revolutionary elements of Russian society who most clamored for reform, Alexander II was to become a *bete noire*, an object of fierce personal hatred and a target of many assassination attempts. The last attempt, on March 1, 1881, was finally to bring about his untimely death from a bomb thrown at his carriage in St. Petersburg, and the accession to the Russian throne of his son, Alexander III.

The assassination of Alexander II was to have lamentable consequences for Russian history. Despite an outburst of deep national feelings and a relatively brief flowering of national culture in the reign of his son, Alexander III, it was, ultimately, to be a tragic and most untimely setback for the process of peaceful and legal reform,⁵ the beginning of the end of the Orthodox Russian empire.

The year of the death of "the Liberator"—tragically, and, in retrospect, symbolically—was also to be the year when construction of the Temple of Christ the Saviour was completed. Today we cannot, of course, fully appreciate the splendor of the Cathedral as it must have appeared in its full glory to contemporaries, in its dual significance both to Church and to State, just as the experience of Orthodoxy as the dominant faith of a powerful empire lies almost totally outside the sphere of comprehension of contemporary Orthodox people. We can no longer conceive of the great Hagia Sophia in modern Istanbul as anything other than a quaint museum curiosity of the medieval world, just as the intricate fabric of religious and social life that produced the theological and liturgical amalgam of Orthodoxy is now consigned to vague and virtually irrelevant historic obscurity on some dusty library shelf. And yet for one who is free from

⁵ Alexander II died after having just signed a manifesto permitting the framing of a rudimentary constitution. His son and heir, Alexander III, deeply agitated by the assassination of his father, refused to publish this manifesto, causing this timely and necessary reform to be delayed until the very last decade of the existence of the Russian empire, just prior to World War I, when it was already too late. Ironically, a hundred-odd years later, Russia is still experiencing the birth pains of constitutional and participatory government, to which contemporary history bears vivid testimony . . .

the intellectual and spiritual constraints imposed by modern secular and atheistic humanism, even cursory descriptions of Christ the Saviour Cathedral and its consecration are capable of truly astonishing and uplifting the imagination.

The edifice was, indeed, magnificent. In accordance with the wishes of the Emperor, the outer appearance of the Temple was reminiscent of ancient Russian churches. Its floor plan represented a Greek cross, with outward projections in the four inner corners. At each of the four ends of the cross stood a facade divided by four columns into three portals, the central portal wider than the remaining two. Around the perimeter of the Cathedral, a total of 36 columns supported a cornice on which there were 20 semicircular pointed arches: three on each face and two in each inner corner. The entire structure was crowned with five golden domes, the central dome much larger than four smaller ones at the corners. The round wall of the drum of the central dome rested on an octagonal base, while the four smaller domes rested on octagonal bell towers placed at the four inside corners. The bell towers contained a total of thirteen bells, the largest of which, cast by Ksenofont Verevkin in the bell foundry of merchant N. D. Finliandsky, measured 11.7 ft. in diameter and weighed 33 tons, its tongue alone weighing 2,188 lbs. In contrast, the smallest bell weighed only 24 lbs.

Because the Temple of Christ the Saviour was conceived both as a religious memorial of thanksgiving, bearing testimony of Divine intercession for the Russian people in the War of 1812, and at the same time, a historical monument depicting the glorious deeds of ancestors, all four outside walls of the temple were decorated with sacred pictorial and bas-relief representations of historical events, emblematic of, or directly depicting the events of the War of 1812, as well as historical personages—the holy protectors and intercessors for Russia, zealous preachers of the Orthodox faith, and princes who had lain down their lives for the freedom and unity of Russian lands.

The dimensions of the Cathedral were in keeping with its architectural splendor. The height of the structure, taken from the base to the top of the cross on the central dome, measured some 325 ft., or approxi-

mately 108 yards (a height greater than the length of a football field; in fact, the great Kremlin bell tower "Ivan the Great" would have fit inside the apple of the central dome of the Cathedral!), while the exterior diameter of the large central dome was 98 ft. The entire structure, including the porticos, occupied approximately 73,500 sq. ft., that is, approximately 1.68 acres, while the inside of the temple proper occupied 42,834 sq. ft., or approximately one acre. The distance from the entry portal to the *solea* measured 136 ft., while the distance from the southern to the northern portals measured 234 ft. The total inside volume of the Cathedral was 3.587 million cu.ft.

Inside the dome of the central cupola, measuring some 91 ft. across, was a depiction of the Holy Trinity in the image of Lord God Sabaoth, ancient of days, sitting on the heavens as on a throne, with the Son of God as a child in His lap, with a scroll on which was written LOGOS in Greek letters, and with the Holy Spirit as a dove on His breast, surrounded by hosts of angels, who are illuminated by the flames of primordial light as they look towards the Holy Source of their boundless being. The hair of the Creator, in accordance with biblical tradition, is white and wind-blown, His arms uplifted in the simultaneous act of creation and blessing of the earth and the winged cherubim. His garments are formed of created white light which disappears into space. On the western side of the sky is written, in Hebrew, one of the names of the Almighty, "Elohim," which means "Powers." Under this sign of the being and all-presence of God, appear, in mystical light, angels already created and still being created, winged cherubim and seraphim eternally glorifying the Holy Creator of everything visible and invisible. This image is surrounded by rays of glory, which extend in all directions into a significant portion of a blue sky seeded with gold and silver stars. This sacred panorama, the first to be painted, was located at a distance of some 231 feet above the worshippers. The largest figure in this composition was approximately 49 feet high, the smallest about 21 feet.

The theme of creation, as depicted in the central dome, is followed by the general theme of human life on earth in prepa-

ration for the coming of the Messiah, as well as His Coming for the salvation of mankind. As our eye would move downward, we would see, on the inner circumference of the drum, depictions of the Saviour sitting in white garments, with an open book upon which is written, "I am the Light of the World," surrounded by thirty 20 ft. images of the righteous ones of both the Old and New Testaments, who were either prophets, or witnesses and subsequently proclaimers, of His coming. Here are portrayed the Theotokos, the Forerunner, archangels Michael and Gabriel, the Forefathers, the Prophets, Apostles, Ss. Constantine and Vladimir, and St. Alexander Nevsky. Since the main altar of the Cathedral was consecrated to the Nativity of Christ, on the eastern wall behind and above the main altar were depicted the Nativity of Christ, and below that, directly above the High Place, the Last Supper and the final events of the Lord's earthly life: to the left, the Gethsemane prayer ("Let this Cup pass"), the Humiliation ("Behold the Man"), and the Carrying of the Cross; to the right, the Crucifixion, Deposition from the Cross, and Entombment. Separating the main sanctuary from the nave was a four-tiered, white marble iconostasis, with ornamentation and marble incrustations, in the form of an octagonal chapel surmounted by a dome at the third tier level, and, above the fourth tier, a teepee-like, gold-plated bronze roof, crowned by a cupola with a cross. The main altar was actually located inside the chapel, so that the iconostasis also functioned as an altar baldachin, in the tradition of ancient Christian temples. The front facade of the iconostasis had an archway opening approximately 18 ft. high by 9 ft. wide for the royal doors, while the northern and southern deacon's doors, measuring approximately 9 ft. high by 6 ft. wide, were located in special double white marble partitions extending the iconostasis to the walls of the Cathedral.

In the southern wing of the Cathedral, to the right of the main altar, was located a *paraeclesia* consecrated to the heavenly patron of Emperor Nicholas I, St. Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia, whose life was lived in lands south of Russia. The prevailing iconographic theme of this wing portrays saints and events from the history of the Universal Church prior to

the Christianization of Russia, from the epochs of the third to the tenth centuries, the Ecumenical councils, and the life of St. Nicholas.

The *paraeclesia* of the northern wing, to the left of the main altar, was consecrated to the heavenly patron of Emperor Alexander I, St. Alexander Nevsky, who lived in the lands of northern Russia. The iconography of this wing was dedicated to the saints and events from the history of Russia and the life of St. Alexander; his predecessors and contemporaries who were active in the spread of Christianity in Russia; holy princes, monks and bishops who lived in the domains where he was prince, as well as in neighboring principalities, who struggled for the unity of Russia; martyrs who lay down their lives in battles for the freedom and unity of Russia; as well as depictions of the more important wonderworking icons of the Theotokos honored in Russia.

The iconography of the western wing of the Cathedral was dedicated to portrayals of Russian saints, monks, bishops and holy fools, saintly intercessors for Russia and founders of monasteries and centers of spiritual enlightenment. The ground floor corridor of the Cathedral was conceived as a memorial to those who served with distinction and gave their lives on the fields of battle in the War of 1812. In the niches of its walls were 177 marble plaques, inscribed, in chronological order, with Imperial manifestos, descriptions of battles listing dates, military units and weapons, commanding officers, a list of officers killed and wounded, the total number of casualties in each battle, the names of officers receiving military honors and awards, and, finally, recipients of the nation's highest military honor, the Order of St. George.

Thus, if one were to enter the Cathedral from its western side, opposite the iconostasis, and walk around to the north, or left side, one could read on the marble plaques, in consecutive order, the Imperial manifestos relating to the beginning of the War, as well as mobilization directives and descriptions of battles fought on Russian soil, whereupon one would come into the corridor behind the main altar. On the wall directly behind the high place, one could see a painting of the Cathedral it-

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Christ the Saviour Temple

Continued from page 19.

self, together with the architect's rendering of the design proposed by K.A. Ton, as well as the original proposal by Witberg. As one continued into the southern and western corridors, one could read plaques commemorating battles fought on foreign soil, concluding, finally, with manifestos relating to the entry of the Russian troops into Paris, the deposition of Napoleon, and the proclamation of peace. On December 13, 1880, Emperor Alexander II granted to the temple the status of a cathedral and confirmed plans for staffing and the budget. As proposed by the Building Commission and the Holy Synod, the Cathedral was to be equated in status with St. Isaac's Cathedral in St. Petersburg, and was to have a clerical staff of 29, including an archpriest, chancellor, three priests, a protodeacon, two deacons, two subdeacons, four psaltis, two altar servers, twelve bell ringers, one prosphora baker, plus a choir; in addition, a technical and service staff of 36, consisting one inspector, one architect, one supervisor, one sergeant and thirty-two guards and service personnel from the lower military ranks. The salaries of the two staffs and the choir, plus expenditures for uniforms and warm winter clothing for the guards, lighting, incense, wine, flour for prosphora, and fees for individuals assigned by the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts for technical and artistic expertise, were budgeted at 68,408 rubles per annum.

By the date of its completion, the Cathedral was also well-endowed with 117 pieces of various sacramental objects and appointments to the sum of 50,809 rubles; as well as coordinated vestments in various colors for three bishops, six priests, five deacons, eight psaltis, five *ispollatchiks* (singers, often young boys, for special responses sung during hierarchical services); also vestments for the altars, tables of oblation, tetrapods, cathedras, aers for sacred vessels and tray coverings, to the sum total of about 45 thousand rubles.

It was originally proposed that the Cathedral would be consecrated on August 26, 1880, but that date, for various reasons, did not prove feasible, and construction itself did not finally conclude until 1881. After the death of Alexander II, it

was also not possible to consecrate the Cathedral in 1882. Finally, the day of the feast of the Ascension, May 26, 1883, in the second year of the reign of Alexander III, was appointed as the day of the consecration of Christ the Saviour Cathedral, to be celebrated in conjunction with the Coronation festivities of the Emperor. Apart from the properly religious ceremonial of the consecration, as conceived and developed by the Ober-Procurator of the Holy Synod, K. P. Pobedonostsev, the Building Commission also developed a program for a grandiose civic event.

At 4 p.m. on May 25, 1883, Vespers

ciated by Bishop Misail of Mozhaik, assisted by the archimandrite of the Vysokopetrovsky monastery and local clergy, to the singing of choristers of the Chudov monastery. At the same time, from several different locations in Moscow, processions with specially venerated icons moved to Kremlin's Dormition cathedral: the archimandrite of the Perervinsky monastery with his monastic brotherhood brought the miraculous icon of Iveron from the Iverskaya chapel; the archimandrite of the Davydovskaya hermitage with his monastic brotherhood brought the Davydovskaya icon of the

On December 13, 1880, Emperor Alexander II granted to the temple the status of a cathedral and confirmed plans for staffing and the budget. As proposed by the Building Commission and the Holy Synod, the Cathedral was to be equated in status with St. Isaac's Cathedral in St. Petersburg, and was to have a clerical staff of 29, including an archpriest, chancellor, three priests, a protodeacon, two deacons, two subdeacons, four psaltis, two altar servers, twelve bell ringers, one prosphora baker, plus a choir; in addition, a technical and service staff of 36, consisting one inspector, one architect, one supervisor, one sergeant and thirty-two guards and service personnel from the lower military ranks.

were served in the newly-constructed Cathedral, after which one of the Moscow vicars, Bishop Aleksy, assisted by two archimandrites and local clergy, officiated the blessing of water. In front of the royal doors a table was placed with various elements and objects necessary for consecration, including sacred eucharistic vessels and vestments for the altar. At the same time, inside the main sanctuary, another table was placed, with Holy Chrism, wine, rose water and fragrances, an aspergillum, and four stones for driving in the nails of the altar board.

At 8 o'clock in the morning on May 26, the intermittent ringing of bells from the bell towers of the newly constructed temple proclaimed to the city that the long-awaited day of consecration had finally arrived. Inside Christ the Saviour Cathedral, the rite of blessing of water was offi-

Saviour; the archimandrite of the Znamensky monastery with the brethren of the Chudov monastery brought the icon of St. Alexis, metropolitan of Moscow; the archpriest and clergy of the Kazan cathedral brought the Kazan icon of the Theotokos. Earlier, the clergy of the Novodevichy convent had brought to the Dormition cathedral the miraculous Smolensk icon of the Theotokos, which had, by command of Field Marshal Kutuzov, been with the Russian troops at the battle of Borodino in 1812.

At 9 a.m., Bishop Misail and the clergy of the Nikitsky district of Moscow departed in procession to the Dormition cathedral for the Holy Relics which were to be placed in the altar table of the new cathedral. The procession was led by six uniformed banner bearers of Christ the Saviour Cathedral, followed by the *psaltis*

with lit candles, deacons with silver censers, and priests, two by two, carrying festival icons of the Nativity of Christ, St. Nicholas, and St. Alexander Nevsky, directly preceded by synodal choristers in dress caftans. Two archpriests carried the Book of the Gospels and the altar cross, preceded by two deacons with censers and two deacons with candles, and, alongside the Gospel and the Cross, another pair of deacons with fans. Bringing up the rear of the procession were the archimandrites of the Dmitrovsky, Borisoglebsky, and Vysokopetrovsky monasteries, and, finally, Bishop Misail.

When the procession approached the Dormition Cathedral, the clergy entered inside, while the banner bearers, joined by the banners of all Kremlin cathedrals and monasteries, stretched out in single file from its western portal. In due time, the doors of the Dormition Cathedral again swung open, and the clergy, beginning with the *psaltis*, came out in pairs for the return procession.

From the Dormition Cathedral, the return procession moved through the

Borovitsky gates of the Kremlin back to Christ the Saviour Cathedral. The solemn procession presented a truly glorious sight. Heading the procession were the banners of Christ the Saviour Cathedral and the banners of all Kremlin cathedrals and monasteries; behind the banners came the clergy and synodal choristers, followed by three acolytes with processional lamps. These were followed by clergy carrying the processional altar icon of the Theotokos with two crystal processional altar crucifixes on each side.

Clergy of the Zamoskvoretsky and Prechistensky districts carried icons of St. Alexander Nevsky, St. Nicholas, Nativity of Christ and St. Sergius; the Robe of Christ; the Nail of the Crucifixion; icons of the Holy Bishops of Moscow, Ss. Peter, Alexis, Jonah and Phillip; miraculous icons of the Theotokos of Kazan, Iveron, Smolensk, Vladimir; the Davydovskaya icon of the Saviour; the Book of the Gospels, and the altar cross. Following behind the icons came the archimandrites of all Moscow monasteries, together with archimandrites of other monasteries of the

Moscow diocese. Last of all came archbishops who were to take part in the solemnities of the consecration: Leonty of Kholm and Warsaw; Savva of Tver; the Exarch of Georgia, Paul; and the Abbot of the Simonov monastery, Bishop John. The hierarchs, alternating, carried on their heads the Holy Relics. During the procession, the clergy and the choirs sang the intercession of thanksgiving prescribed for Russian churches on Christmas Day, in commemoration of the deliverance of Russia from "the Gauls and with them twelve nations." At the same time, in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, the reading of the Liturgical Hours came to a close, and Metropolitan Ioanniky of Moscow, together assembled clergy, prepared to greet Their Imperial Majesties inside the western portal. *To be continued.*

—Archpriest Alexander Golubov
Lecturer at St. Tikhon's Seminary

The author would like to express his profound debt to S.A. Kargay and the Committee of Russian Orthodox Youth for reprinting materials on the history of the Temple of Christ the Saviour in Khram Khrista Spaisitelia (New York, 1986), extensive citations from which have been utilized in this article.

The Challenge of Christmas

Continued from page 12.

Ochrid, "Christ did not come to this world only in order to teach life or to correct our life, but he came to *be* Himself *our* life. A pure and true human life, but simultaneously a life in personal relation and communion with God, that is to say a theanthropic life."

What humanity offers to the condescension of the self-emptying Word is everything that man has become after the fall; that is to say, human nature in all its nakedness, destitute and impoverished and subject to corruption, the passions, sin and

death. However, all these things, when we decide to banish them from our life, become the most acceptable gift to the Incarnate Lord. Everything which constitutes the tragic consequence of human sin, is exactly what Christ is looking to heal. The event of the divine Incarnation is the greatest challenge and invitation for us all. In the measure we can freely offer our corrupted being to the self-emptying Word, we can renew and repeat the Incarnation as our own personal event. When we offer to Christ our pain, sin, tragedy,

and "our whole life," we become magi and shepherds personally participating in this miracle. The Saints and the Fathers of the Church served through their writings, and even more through their lives, this essential manifestation of the theanthropic life of the Word.

—Prof. Anestis Keselopoulos
Prof. Keselopoulos, of the School of Theology at the University of Thessalonica, was a visiting professor at St. Tikhon's Seminary in the fall of 1994.

Diocese Religious Education Activities for 1996

Attention all youth!

Mark your calendar for the next DRE winter retreat

February 2,3, & 4, 1996
St. Tikhon's, South Canaan, PA

"OUR MUSIC . . . OUR FAITH"
A Christian look at today's music
Guest Speaker: Michael Anderson
*Be on the lookout for future information
Come for music, fellowship & Prayer*

Diocesan Education Workshop

Saturday, April 27, 1996

Christ the Saviour Orthodox Church
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

"Nuts & Bolts" program to be presented
by

Michael Anderson, Director
OCA Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries

2nd Annual Women's Retreat

Saturday, August 10, 1996

St. Tikhon's Seminary

Speaker to be announced.

Church Life Reviving in Albania

Images and Incidents

Life in the mission field can be quite exciting. What is more thrilling than to participate in God's work of healing, enlightening and saving the entire world? Christ calls every believer to "go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation." In the process, however, he not only uses these servants as instruments in his hands, but nourishes and inspires them from their experiences. Following are a few of the many stories with which I have been blessed.

A Seminarian Finds Repentance and Peace

One of my most interesting experiences came from a conversation I had with Mihal, one of our oldest seminarians. He intrigued me from the first day with an attentiveness and enthusiasm that only a few other students had. So I asked him to share with me his life story. Why would a forty-six-year old man with two young children aged twelve and nine be willing to commit three years to study at a seminary, especially in the midst of extremely difficult economic times? This is what he told me.

Back in 1969, he was a young man of twenty-one who had just finished his service in the army. He was a pious man who felt greatly offended by the government's progressively anti-religious propaganda. When the Albanian government closed all its churches and mosques in 1967 and declared itself the first totally atheistic state in the world, Mihal felt he needed to protest. Although he knew the consequences could be fatal, he was a man of integrity



Fr. Kristo Sharko, one of the newly ordained Albanian priests, baptizing children in a village.

and wanted to be honest both with himself and with God. So he decided to write a letter to the ruler of the country, Enver Hoxha, protesting the terrible things the government was doing. He pleaded with him to recant his atheistic path of leadership, and repent before Almighty God. He even warned him that such arrogance and blasphemy would lead to his eternal condemnation.

Needless to say, shortly after mailing this letter, the police arrested and placed him in prison. He described for me the beatings and tortures that followed, the

worst of which were forced doses of large amounts of insulin (the effects from which he still suffers today) and electro-shock treatments. During this time he continually prayed for God to have mercy on him and save him. After six months of being in a village prison, he was transferred to the Tirana prison where he met a political prisoner who had been incarcerated for twelve years. This man told Mihal that before Mihal's arrival at the prison, he had had a dream about him. In his dream he had seen Mihal leaving prison. In order to do this, however, he needed to change his language and outward behavior. Otherwise, he would die in jail. This political prisoner also told Mihal that he had to stop speaking about God. "Use diplomacy," he urged, "Don't deny God in your heart, but publicly deny him to others. Tell people that you were temporarily insane when you wrote that letter."

Mihal decided to follow this advice. Although later he confessed that his public denial of Christ was his greatest sin, at the time he was simply looking for a way to escape the sufferings of prison. Because Mihal had many family members within the communist party, they had arranged for his case to be reopened after one year. During this review, he publicly proclaimed his temporary insanity, rejecting his past statements about God and against Hoxha.

Although released, he found little inner peace. The more he thought about his betrayal of God, the more inner turmoil

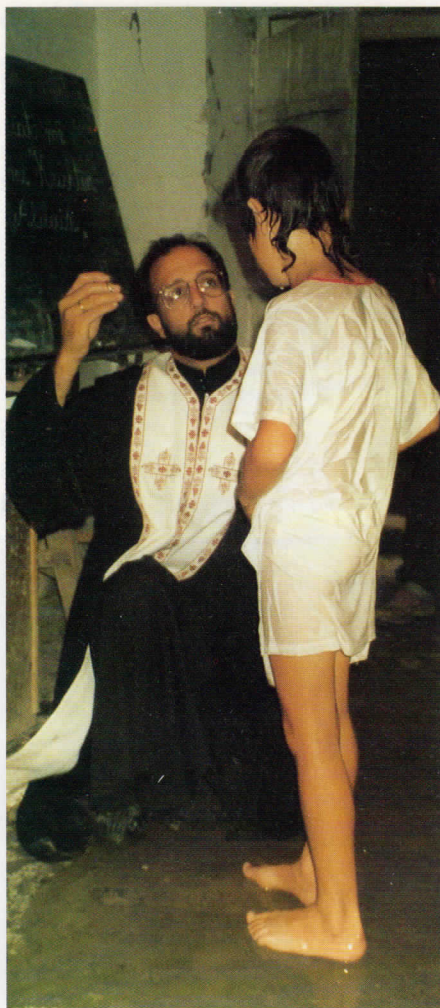
he had. The only place he could find any sense of serenity was in learning. So he went back to school. After working during the day, he would go to school at night. Slowly, he graduated from high school, and miraculously was accepted into a university. Here, he gives all credit to God. It was very rare for an ex-convict to enter the university. The door for Mihal, however, was opened. He ended up graduating with a degree in agriculture. He later became an "agriculture doctor" in his local area, even reaching the level of director of a state farm. But despite all this, he never found the deep inner peace he had when he was a young man.

Since the time of his release from prison, he regretted his denial of Christ. He longed for an opportunity to learn more about God and dreamed of the day he could publicly recommit his life to Him once again. This opportunity arrived with the coming of freedom in 1991. When he heard about the opening of an Orthodox seminary, he longed to go there but feared that his age (46) would keep him from being accepted. He emphasized to the seminary his desire to learn more about the God whom he had denied a quarter century before, and to commit his life in serving Him. From the zeal and enthusiasm he shows in class, his dream is finally coming true. I would like to conclude this story by sharing a poem he wrote while in prison:

A Prison Poem

I am in a prison
in a dark prison.
I can't find rest
nor peace.
My body burns much—
it burns like a fire.
My feelings are consumed
with pain in each bone.
But the faith that I have
for my holy Lord
Gives me courage to smile
and to die with happiness.
O beautiful sun,
where are you shining?
Please enlighten my little house
and bring happiness from heaven.

It is really such a blessing for me to speak with such people, to share our faith, and to encourage and learn from one another. This is what makes the Christian life so exciting.



Fr. Luke christening a child in a village.

Learning to Forgive

Another incident that was an inspiration for me occurred with a different student. This deacon was a man who spent eight years in prison. One day in class, I was talking about the topic of forgiveness, emphasizing our need to forgive even our enemies. Many of the students complained about the difficulty of this. This deacon agreed, but in private he showed me a little list of names he prays for during every Divine Liturgy. Within this list were the six names of people who falsely testified against him, and whose testimonies led to his eight-year incarceration. Such concrete examples of forgiveness and love summarize completely the message of the Gospel.

Celebrating Our Lord's Resurrection Once Again

For twenty-four years (from 1967 to 1991), the celebration of Easter was strictly forbidden in this absolutely athe-

istic country. If someone was even caught with a red egg (a religious tradition of all Orthodox Christians), or even worse, singing *Krishti u Ngjall* (Christ is Risen), he could be sentenced to prison. However, things have changed. And some of the most uplifting stories have occurred over the past three Easter celebrations.

One seminarian named Spiro described for me what happened in his village last Easter. Since his village has no priest, there was no official service. Still, hundreds of people came to the site of their destroyed village church building with lit candles and with red eggs. Spiro wasn't sure what to do with all the people who had gathered. So he decided to first read the Gospel story of the Resurrection, sing *Krishti u Ngjall* countless times, and then give a little sermon on what the significance of the Resurrection is in our lives. Their celebration was so simple, and yet so beautiful. I thought I was listening to an account of the early Church!

Another student, John, told me about how he celebrated Holy Week and Easter at Ardenica, the most beautiful and famous old monastery of Albania. Although the monastery grounds are still controlled by the State and used as a restaurant/hotel/tourist spot, John rejoiced because the Church had permission to use the fifteenth century church building for liturgical services. And he told me what inspiring services they had! Countless people came throughout the week to worship and praise God! And they were so meaningful for John personally. Although he grew up near the monastery, he was always frightened by it. Over the past twenty-five years in school, on television, and in books, he had always heard horror stories about the Church, priests, monasteries, and anything that had to do with religion. He said that in school he watched movies where priests were ordered by their bishops to kill young children, where monasteries were filled with poisonous snakes and the monks would use these serpents to torture people, where immoral priests always tried to sleep with different women of the village, and many other stories. After hearing all these things, it was poetic justice, he thought, that this year he was actually worshipping in this monastery praising God. Even more providential was that he

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Images from Albania

Continued from page 23.

was now at the seminary, preparing to commit his whole life to proclaiming Jesus Christ to all of Albania.

Persevering in Faith Even Under Persecution

During one visit to the city of Korca, which is known as the center of Orthodoxy in Albania, I had the blessing to visit the house of three elderly “sisters”—Marika, Demetra, and Elizabeth (two are blood sisters, and one a spiritual sister). They are considered by many Orthodox believers to be the living “saints” of Albania. They range in age from seventy-seven to eighty-eight, and have countless stories of what life was like under the persecution of Enver Hoxha. For two nights, I was enthralled by their stories of resistance and endurance in the name of our loving God. They told me how their house was a little “underground church.” Numerous times over the atheistic years they would secretly invite a priest, Father Kosma, to their home and celebrate the Divine Liturgy in an upper room during the middle of the night. “Just like the early Christians in the catacombs,” they told me. Of course, they knew that if they were caught, they could all be sent to prison. However, this did not hinder their devotion to God. Many times when the priest wasn’t available, two of them would offer various prayer services in their upper room, while the third stood watch at the front door to give warning if anyone was coming. One time a priest taught them about the importance of praying continuously and holding vigils in honor of God. In response to this teaching, the women made up a twenty-four hour schedule of prayer, in which each sister would take a two-hour shift and go to the upper room to pray to the Lord. During one Lenten period, they kept this twenty-four hour vigil for forty days straight.

Of course, such intense inner life led to a dangerous outreach among their compatriots. Demetra, who was the “evangelist” of the group, spent much of her time writing the Lord’s Prayer, parts of Scripture, the Creed of Faith, or other prayers on small pieces of paper, and then going around to different homes secretly delivering her spiritual gifts to other believers

and friends. Although at various times the sisters were questioned by the authorities, thank God none of them were imprisoned or physically persecuted.

“With the opening of the country and the restoration of religious freedom, we can now die in peace.”

“With the opening of the country and the restoration of religious freedom, we can now die in peace,” they professed. “I

always told people that God would hear our prayers and that our churches would be reopened one day,” Marika kept telling me. “But so many people wouldn’t believe me. Now, however, we see the fruit of the prayers of so many people. Of course, none of us ever imagined that one day we would actually be sitting in our home with an Orthodox Christian from America sharing stories about our love for Jesus Christ!” Before I left they asked me to remember only one prayer request, “Please pray that we may live to see the reopening of the monastery of St. John the Baptist (in a village near Korca), and may end our lives there as tonsured nuns.”



Celebrating an “outdoor” Liturgy in a destroyed old church.



Four of the “living saints” of Albania.

A Fool For Christ?

One day a friend introduced me to his mother, a pious and humble woman who abounded with the love of Christ. When I asked my friend to tell me about his mother, he said that as a child he remembered how his mother constantly talked about her love for Jesus Christ. She would even go around the neighborhood telling people about their need to turn to God. She even wanted to go to Hoxha's personal residence, and tell him that he needed to repent his evil against God. My friend told me how his whole family was scared and often told his mother to stop, but to no avail. A number of times she was sent to the police for questioning, but they and various doctors concluded that she was "crazy." Thus, her family was spared. As I heard this story, I thought about some of the saints of the Church who were called "fools for Christ." Often, these saints were considered crazy during their lifetime, but afterwards were seen as sane people whose love and devotion for Christ was misunderstood by the world. Maybe this woman is like them!

University Students Coming to Know Christ

For me personally, one of the most moving experiences was the baptism of seven university students whom I catechized. Six of the seven girls were from Muslim families. What a powerful and moving sight to participate in the baptism of these girls—to witness their excitement and enthusiasm at committing their lives to Jesus Christ and being renewed by His grace and mercy! Afterwards, when we were discussing the whole experience, one of the girls said with a radiant smile, "It's so wonderful to know that all the sins I have committed in the past [and she really struggled with guilt feelings for these sins] are forgotten and forgiven. Now I have an opportunity to begin a new life with the power and grace of Jesus Christ within me!"

This experience is what missions are all about, bringing new and exciting life to all people—bringing hope to the hopeless, love to the unloved, peace to the troubled, forgiveness to the sinners, healing to the broken, joy to the downcast, and salvation unto eternal life for all creation!

—Priest Luke A. Veronis



Fr. Luke baptizing a catechism class in the Cathedral of the Annunciation in Tirana.

Official

Parish Council Confirmations

All Saints Church—Olyphant
Christ the Saviour Church—Harrisburg
Holy Annunciation Church—Berwick
Holy Resurrection Cathedral—Wilkes-Barre
St. Michael Church—Jermyn
St. Nicholas Church—Bethlehem
St. Stephen Cathedral—Philadelphia

Reassignment

Priest David Shewczyk from Rector of Holy Resurrection Church, Alden Station to Rector of Holy Trinity Church, Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

Assigned

Priest Theodore Orzolek assigned Rector of Holy Trinity Church, McAdoo, Pa.

Appointment

Archpriest Joseph Martin appointed Spiritual Advisor for the Anthracite District, F.R.O.C.

Confirmed

Archpriest Theodore Heckman confirmed Secretary/Treasurer for the Philadelphia Deanery.

Father Daniel Ressetar: An Example of Multi-Dimensional Orthodox Christian Ministry

During his ordination to the priesthood on July 28, 1958 at St. Mary's Orthodox Church in Coaldale, Pa., Father Daniel Ressetar was told by his own father, Father Dimitri Ressetar, to always pray in the liturgy of preparation for their uncle, the Priest Maxim Sandovich, who was martyred in Carpatho-Russia by the Austro-Hungarian authorities in September 1914. Little did Father Dan realize at the time that thirty-six years later, Father Maxim would be canonized as a martyr by the Orthodox Church in Poland and that he would participate in the liturgical services at Gorlice. Orthodox Christian ministry, it would seem, runs in the family. This short article describes the ongoing life in the Church of Father Dan Ressetar—a truly multi-dimensional ministry, written not to engender earthly glory and recognition, but rather as a source of inspiration and an example for all, especially those now serving the Church or contemplating entering its seminaries.

Father Dan, Matushka Theodora, and their family, came to Harrisburg, Pa., in 1965 with the blessing of His Grace, Bishop Kiprian, to serve a small mission of some forty families meeting in a house chapel. The next year a temporary church was built in the suburb of Colonial Park, which would serve the parishioners of Christ the Saviour Church for the following twenty-one years. In 1988, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius and His Grace, Bishop Herman, consecrated the new temple of northern Russian design. The congregation has steadily grown through the years and consists of 220 adults, about 85 children, and many friends and supporters.

Father Dan and Matushka Theodora met because their fathers—Archpriests Dimitri Ressetar and Vladimir Prislowsky—were friends and seminary classmates, graduating in the class of 1921



Father Dan and Matushka Theodora

from St. Platon's Seminary in Tenafly, N.J. Father Dimitri directed several church choirs including that of St. John the Baptist Church in Edwardsville, Pa. It was there that Daniel Dimitri Ressetar was born in 1927, the oldest of Father Dimitri and Matushka Margaret (Tomcho)'s four children. Theodora was born in Cleveland in 1935, the younger of Father Vladimir and Matushka Anne (Evans)' two children, where Father Vladimir was serving St. Michael's Orthodox Church.

After graduating from high school in

Jersey City, N.J., Father Dan followed in his dad's footsteps and attended seminary at St. Tikhon's in South Canaan, Pa., where he directed the choir and from which he graduated in 1948. He went on to earn an A.B. in Philosophy from Lafayette College in Easton, Pa., in 1951. His first job came about because of the friendship between the two fathers. From September 1951 through July 1958, he served as choirmaster, cantor, and assistant to Father Vladimir at St. Michael's in Cleveland.

Theodora graduated in 1956 from Western Reserve Univ. in Cleveland with a B.S. in Elementary Education and became a first-grade teacher. Living at home and singing in the church choir directed by Father Dan, the two found they shared a love of liturgical and classical music, playing the piano as well as singing. The couple was married on April 20, 1958 at St. Michael's; both fathers officiated.

Father Dan was ordained to the diaconate by Bishop John of Chicago on June 21, 1958 at St. Michael's, and to the priesthood on July 28, 1958 by Bishop Dimitri of Wilkes-Barre at St. Mary's in Coaldale. His first parish was Holy Trin-



With parishioners at March for Life, Washington, D.C.

ity Church in McAdoo, Pa., where he served for four years. There, the first of the couple's three sons were born: Nicholas in 1959, and Gregory in 1961.

Many new experiences awaited the family in San Antonio, Tex., where they would live after Father Dan joined the U.S. Air Force in September 1962 as chaplain with the rank of captain. In addition to his military duties, he also served a small Orthodox mission at Lackland Air Force Base. Their third son, Alexander, was born in December 1963. Father Dan directed a 45-voice male choir, and was honorably discharged from active duty in July 1965. (Father's military service would continue, however. He served as a chaplain in the Reserves from 1966 through 1983, retiring with the rank of Lt. Col. Since 1966, he has been the Civil Air Patrol Chaplain at Capital City Airport near Harrisburg. And for many years he has been the Orthodox Chaplain at the VA Medical Center in Lebanon, Pa.)

Upon release from active duty, Father Dan was assigned to the mission parish in Harrisburg, arriving in the summer of 1966. He first stayed in a rooming house until the parish acquired its present property and rectory. For a short time, the family lived in a motel belonging to a parishioner, Anna Reedy. In October, they moved into the six-room Cape Cod-style home at 5501 Locust Lane which remains the parish rectory. Construction of the church (now the parish hall) began in November and was completed in March 1966 when the first service was celebrated.

In addition to ministering to an increasing number of parishioners, Father Dan somehow has found time to extend his ministry to many others outside the local community. He taught at St. Tikhon's Seminary, served as dean of the Frackville Deanery (and was recently appointed dean again by His Eminence, Archbishop Herman), helped organize several mission parishes in the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, acted as National Spiritual Advisor of the Federated Russian Orthodox Clubs (FROC, founded by Father Vladimir), and is the current spiritual advisor to its Central Pennsylvania District. In 1994, Father Dan was chairman of the 68th National FROC Convention at the Harrisburg Hilton, the best attended and most profitable in recent years, where the



During consecration of new church.

FROC formally petitioned the Orthodox Church in America to become an official church organization (the petition was later granted by the Holy Synod of Bishops). Since 1967 he has directed the 65-voice Pan-Orthodox Choir comprised of members of the Orthodox Council of Churches of South Central Pennsylvania of which he is the president (the local Orthodox clergy maintain close ties and have a monthly Bible study session). The choir at the annual pilgrimage to St. Tikhon's Monastery has also been under Father Dan's direction several times. And for ten years, in part to help his sons attend college, he was chaplain at the Dauphin County Prison; he remains active in the

prison ministry.

As Father Dan often remarks, he would have been unable to be so active without the support and encouragement of Matushka Theodora. Not only has she directed the church choir and led the church school program, she also organizes the baking projects of the St. Mary's Altar Guild, maintains the church property (mowing grass and raking leaves), creates materials for the OCA's Department of Religious Education, writes and arranges music for the children's choir (which she directs) and, after having raised three boys, keeps busy babysitting their two grandchildren, Dimitri and Sophia, born to Greg and his wife, Candi (Gordon).

By the grace of God, in the mid-1980s the parish outgrew its small church, and ground was broken in 1986 for a much larger edifice. Designed by Father Alexis Vinogradov, an architect-priest, the new church was ready by 1987 and consecrated the next year. The icons on the iconostasis were written by Father Theodore Jurewicz, who is now working on murals throughout the interior. A bell tower was added in 1989 through the generosity of parishioners Katharine and Stephen Macut. And the former church was converted into a parish hall, where the church school meets, bakery projects are held, and social functions take place.

Staying close to home because of their many parish responsibilities, Father and Matushka did not travel very far over the years. However in 1984, as a parish gift



Directing Pan-Orthodox Choir.

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Father Daniel Resselar

Continued from page 27.

for their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, they made an Alpine tour of Switzerland, Germany, and Austria. A pilgrimage of parishioners and friends was led to Russia and the Ukraine in 1988 for the millennium of Christianity in Rus'. The next year they traveled to Poland and Czechoslovakia, meeting with relatives including Father Maxim Sandovich, the son and namesake of the future saint. Father Dan went by military plane to Alaska in 1990 to participate in the annual pilgrimage to Spruce Island, the home of St. Herman. In 1994, he took a group to Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic, where Father Dan participated in the canonization of his uncle, Priest-Martyr Maxim, along with Archbishop Herman. A pilgrimage to the Holy Land is planned for February of 1996.

Father Dan's ministry has been a shining example for many, not only in the Church but to those in secular life. Blessed with a wonderful sense of humor and seemingly endless energy, he rises before dawn each day to read his prayerbooks and write in his diary, which he has kept for over forty years. His seven-day work week is usually broken by a nap and then he continues working well into the night, rarely retiring before midnight. Apart from celebrating a full liturgical schedule, Father Dan also distributes food and clothing to the needy every week and provides counseling to those in distress. With the arrival of Orthodox immigrants from the former Soviet Union and Eritrea in Africa, he has been kept busy finding them jobs, helping them learn English, getting driver's licenses, enrolling their children in school, and dealing with bureaucratic red tape of every kind. He is well-known in the local community for promoting the sanctity of life, both in the pro-life movement, where he participates in the yearly March for Life in Washington, and the anti-death penalty movement, where his photo showing him addressing a Capitol protest rally before Pennsylvania's first execution in over thirty years, appeared across the state. He is also active in ecumenical relations, and counts as a good friend Cardinal Keeler of Baltimore, president of the National Conference of Roman Catholic Bishops.

Father Dan credits a strong working relationship with key parish council members, members of the St. Mary's Guild, and other church organizations with much of the parish's success. Particularly helpful



Father Dan and his father, Father Dimitri on his day of ordination, July 27, 1958 at Coaldale, Pa.

has been the assistance of Father Michael and Matushka Olga Kovach, who were assigned to Christ the Saviour after their

retirement.

Though lacking in leisure time, Father Dan enjoys symphony and choral music, and has directed local liturgical and classical music workshops. He and Matushka regularly visit his mother, Matushka Margaret, at Ss. Cosmas and Damian Home and then go into New York City for the rest of the day, sightseeing and attending concerts. Theodora's mother, Matushka Anne, lives in her own home next to the parish property and helps out in every way, from folding church bulletins to serving as treasurer in the Altar Guild to singing on feast days. Finally, Father Dan tries to closely follow sports, including Penn State football and baseball, which saw his Cleveland Indians finally get to another World Series this year (and which he attended in 1954, the last time they were in it).

Father Dan's Orthodox Christian ministry has been and continues to be multi-dimensional and firmly grounded in every aspect of the Church's life—liturgical, community, chaplaincy, missionary, ecumenical, the prisons, musical, and the sanctity of life. He has fulfilled the Lord's command to do all things for the glory of the Trinitarian God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Let his pastoral life be a source of renewed commitment, inspiration, and example for those ministering in the Vineyard of Christ. *Axios!*



Father Dan, Chaplain, with Fr. Peter Zolnerowich at Lackland AFB San Antonio, Texas, May 27, 1963.

St. John of Kronstadt and His Wife, Matushka Elizabeth



As we continue our series on Saints, we come now to a Saint of nearly our own era. St. John of Kronstadt died in our own century, in 1908, and he was so beloved in his homeland that he was called a “Father for all of Russia.” His feastday is December 20.

He is also of special interest to us because he is one of the very few married

priests ever to be formally recognized as a saint in our Church. While he and his wife had an unusual marriage—he requested that they not have marital relations in order to dedicate themselves more completely to the work of God—nevertheless, they had over fifty years of devoted conjugal partnership. And for nearly twenty of those years they raised one of

Elizabeth’s nieces, who came to them at about the age of two. So they are a saintly example for all parents, and perhaps especially for all adoptive parents.

St. John was born in the province of Archangel, Russia, on October 18, 1829, into a very poor clerical family.¹ Most of his ancestors for at least 350 years had

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St. John of Kronstadt

Continued from page 29.

been priests or chanters, or in some other capacity had served the Church. So John was blessed with a very pious heritage. His father took him frequently to services at Church, and at home often spoke to him about Christ and the Saints. John would recall years later, "As long as I can remember, from very early childhood, since I was four or six years old, my parents instilled in me the habit of prayer and by their example made me a boy who was attuned to religion."²

When speaking in later years to one of his spiritual children, the Abbess Thaisia, St. John asked her, "Do you know what laid the foundations of my turning to God and what, already in my childhood, warmed my heart with love for Him? It was the Holy Gospels. My father had a New Testament in Slavonic-Russian and I loved to read this marvelous book when I came home for my school-holidays; the style and simplicity of narration made it accessible to my childish reasoning; I read the Gospels, enjoyed them and found them an irreplaceable consolation. This New Testament was also with me at school. I may say, that this New Testament was my childhood companion, my tutor, guide and comforter . . ."³

He had great difficulty learning to read, and in his first years at school he struggled mightily to understand and retain his lessons. But at about the age of ten, after he had prayed ardently and long for God's help, both of these disabilities were completely cured by God's grace.

While St. John was at the Academy, studying for the priesthood, he dreamed at first of becoming a missionary among the pagans—especially in Alaska. But when he realized that his own people were also in great need of instruction, he began to yearn to be a priest serving and teach-

ing them. In a dream one night, he saw himself going into a cathedral. Later, when he visited the cathedral at Kronstadt, a major port city and naval base in north-western Russia, across the bay from St. Petersburg, he immediately recognized it as the one in his dream. He married Elizabeth, the daughter of the cathedral's protopriest (who was retiring), and became the priest there in 1855.

His very first sermon indicates the source of his remarkable success as a priest, and what he said then about love is appropriate for all Christians in all times: "I feel my weakness and my unworthiness for the fulfillment of the most sublime service on earth, but I know what can make me more worthy of the rank of a priest . . . it is love for Christ and for all people. Love is a great force; it makes the weak strong and the small great. Such is the property of pure love, the love of the Gospels. May God, Who is wholly love, give me a spark of this love and kindle it into a flame through His Holy Spirit."⁴

St. John knew from the beginning that loving all people—not just those in his large parish, but all those, including the poor and the criminals, of his city—would mean for him extraordinary labors. He clearly felt the need for an unusual marriage arrangement. Thus, he told his wife at the very beginning of their marriage that he wanted to live with her as brother and sister so that they could better devote themselves to serving God and other people. Although at first it seems that Elizabeth was unhappy with this idea, she came not only to accept it, but to be an invaluable help and support to him in his extensive ministry.

Surely it was difficult for Matushka Elizabeth to have to "share" her beloved husband with so many people—to have him gone, serving others much of the time—but perhaps this difficult sacrifice was one of her greatest contributions. For she did succeed in accepting this extraordinary lifestyle with joy, regarding St. John as a "common treasure"⁵ to be cherished and protected. Their niece, whom they raised in their own home, gives clear testimony of this, and also to their great love for each other, as we see in her reminiscences given below.

⁴ Ibid., p. 11.

⁵ Ruth G. Shemyakina, "A Life With St. John of Kronstadt," *Tree of Life*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Summer, 1992), p. 10.

To give a small indication of St. John's "practical" ministry, we can list the main elements of a "Home for Constructive Labor" which he organized for the poor of the city. It included a free elementary school (St. John especially loved children, saying that the image of God was clearer in them),⁶ a workshop where carpentry was taught, a drawing class, a women's workshop for sewing, a workshop for shoemaking, a library for children, a zoological collection, a military gymnasium, and a bookshop for children and adults. He also organized here a Sunday School for teens and adults, lectures on many topics, a free public reading room for children, a paying library, a home for orphans, a summer cottage for the children, a doss house for drunkards, free medical care, and free dinners for the poor.

Fr. John typically began his day at 3:00 a.m., and often did not retire to sleep until midnight. In addition to organizing help for the poor by raising funds, and planning how they should be distributed, he personally spent many hours daily among the people—visiting, consoling, bringing food, getting medicine for the sick, and so on.

From the many donations he received, he also had a church, school, orphanage, sawmill, a cooperative store, and a convent built in the poor village where he was born. Among his many other works, mention should also be made of the beautiful Convent of St. John of Rila which he founded in St. Petersburg. In the basement of the church there, he had a chapel built dedicated to the Prophet Elijah and St. Theodora—the patron saints of his parents. This is where Fr. John asked to be buried.

Above all, St. John was a great man of prayer, who loved the services of the Church. He served the Divine Liturgy every day and encouraged the people to receive Holy Communion frequently (there were typically five thousand communicants at Liturgy—thus each service took many hours). St. Silouan the Athonite, a contemporary of St. John and another native Russian, says of him:

"We remember how when his carriage was brought round after the Liturgy, and he stepped into it to take his seat, people surged about him, seeking his blessing;

⁶ Bishop Alexander Semenov-Tian-Chansky, p. 14.

¹ Much of this Life is taken from *Marriage as a Path to Holiness: Lives of Married Saints*, by David and Mary Ford, being published by St. Tikhon's Seminary Press. The extensive quotations from Ruth G. Shemyakina, "A Life With St. John of Kronstadt," *Tree of Life*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Summer, 1992), are used with permission.

² Bishop Alexander Semenov-Tian-Chansky, *Father John of Kronstadt: A Life* (Crestwood, N. Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1979), p. 7.

³ Ibid. Abbess Thaisia was a very well-known holy woman of her time. At the insistence of St. John, she wrote her own autobiography, which includes interesting reminiscences of him. Her book is available in English as *Abbess Thaisia of Leushino: the Autobiography of a Spiritual Daughter of St. John of Kronstadt* (Platina, Calif.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood Press, 1989).

and in all the hurly-burly his soul remained rapt in God. His attention was not distracted in the midst of the crowd and he did not lose his peace of soul. How did he manage this? That is our question.

"He achieved this and was not distracted because he loved the people and never ceased praying to the Lord for them."⁷

As mentioned, St. John loved children and was deeply concerned for their education. He insisted on teaching the New Testament and other classes at the High School himself, as well as providing schooling for the poor. He also paid for his niece's education out of his own small salary, and as she says, he "followed my progress with unwaning interest, weekly looking over my notebook with my grades and signing it."⁸

He saw the value of secular education, but realized that the most important aspect of education was the "education of the heart"—an education that could only be provided fully by the Church. As he said, "One can be a scientist, but alas, a very bad man . . . We have to educate people not only to be learned and useful members of society, but also—this is more important and necessary—to be kindly, God-fearing Christians . . . Pray God, that from the sum of all acquired knowledge a harmonious whole may develop in the children's souls—that sound Christian system of knowledge, rules and practice, which represents the true Christian education . . . But if our pupils steal hours from the divine service in order to prepare lessons which deal, strictly speaking, with secular subjects; and if, while in church, they worry about their homework so that the divine service cannot nourish their minds and hearts; and if they are bored in church, then the pedagogic work will suffer. Because the best education is undeniably provided by the Church, with its marvelous, heavenly services, which penetrate right into one's inner being."⁹

In addition to all his charitable works, and his glorious celebration of the Liturgy, Fr. John was especially well-known for his spiritual discernment as a confessor, and for his healing prayers. Many miracles

have been worked through Fr. John's prayers both during his lifetime and after his repose.

In the last three years of his life, Fr. John suffered great pain from illness. His Matushka Elizabeth was very ill also, and distressed that she was unable to take care of him. Three days before his death, when he was told of her distress, he said: "Tell my wife that she is always with me, and I am always with her."¹⁰ These words were a great consolation to her then, and after his death.

Foreknowing the day of his death, St. John passed peacefully into the next world on December 20, 1908, at the age of 79. All of Russia mourned the loss of this most beloved pastor; twenty thousand people followed his coffin in procession. The Emperor himself, Tsar Nicholas II, commanded that a memorial service be celebrated on the day of his death.

Mat. Elizabeth mourned deeply over the departure of her beloved husband. She too carefully prepared herself for eternal life—repenting for all her sins, and communing daily during the last year of her life. She communed for the last time on May 21, 1909, and departed this life peacefully on the following morning, as the canon for the departure of the soul was being read.

According to her niece, Mat. Elizabeth "never allowed herself to interfere in Batiushka's affairs; she never tried to put herself forward or stand on a par with him; remaining always in the shadows, she shone with the reflection of his glory, his wondrous Christian deeds."¹¹ Although such a role is often not only avoided, but even despised in our times, we should realize that part of the great fruit which St. John bore was only made possible through the self-sacrificing love of his wife—and that fruit was surely worth a great deal of sacrifice. In light of the fruit such sacrifice helped produce, certainly we can echo her niece's "boundless" gratitude for Mat. Elizabeth's important role in the ministry of her husband—even if this role has gone largely unnoticed.

Though this couple had an unusual married life, their clear focus on salvation—on this life as a preparation for the heavenly Kingdom—and their love and

devotion to each other and to all those around them, can be an inspiration to us all.

An Adopted Niece, Ruth Shemyakina

Father John and Mat. Elizabeth gave special attention to the needs of her various family members—in fact, when they were first married, her father, her three brothers, and her two younger sisters lived in their home and were cared for by Mat. Elizabeth. They helped all of her siblings get established, and Fr. John even arranged dowries for his sisters-in-law through wealthy parishioners.

In 1870, the youngest sister, as she was staying in their home on a visit, gave birth to a daughter. Two years later, this woman's husband died, leaving her with no financial means to raise the child. Upon hearing of her plight, St. John suggested to his wife of seventeen years that they take their young niece and raise her as their own daughter (they were both forty-three years old at this time).

Years later, this girl—Ruth G. Shemyakina—wrote reminiscences of her childhood and youth living in the home of one of Russia's most popular saints, and of his faithful Matushka. "And so it happened, by God's will," she wrote, "I came into the care of these infinitely dear to me uncle and aunt, who tirelessly looked after my welfare as the most loving parents would care for a favorite child."¹²

This woman's remembrances give a vivid and touching glimpse into the family life of St. John and Mat. Elizabeth. They especially bring to light Elizabeth's pious and loving character, which is often overlooked in the biographies of her husband. Hence, we quote now from her niece at length.

Extracts from Ruth's Memoirs

Just as Fr. John never had a life of his own, giving himself to the service of his neighbor, so also E.K.¹³ never lived for herself; the circle of her activity was circumscribed by service to her relatives and close ones: she rejoiced at their joys and grieved over their sorrows. I remember her at the age of forty-five. She had kind, noble features, and was very active, forever bus-

Continued on the next page.

⁷ Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov), *Saint Silouan the Athonite* (Essex, England: Stavropegic Monastery of St. John the Baptist, 1991), p. 314.

⁸ Ruth G. Shemyakina, p. 8.

⁹ Bishop Alexander Semenov-Tian-Chansky, p. 25.

¹⁰ Shemyakina, p. 10.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹³ Mat. Elizabeth's full name was Elizabeth Konstantinovna Sergiev.

St. John of Kronstadt

Continued from page 31.

ting about. She liked to fuss over people, [to] warm and feed them. I can see her now, in the kitchen, a white apron tied around her waist, making a sweet pie. She enjoyed cooking, going to market, looking after everyone and making sure that everything was clean and the food tasty. How many times did Uncle, tasting his favorite apple pie, remark, "You are my master pie baker!"

Elizabeth Konstantinovna was warm-hearted, always even-tempered, affectionate. She liked having people visit her; then she would provide an abundant spread, and Uncle, seeing her hospitality and sincerity, would say about the bustling mistress of the house: "She's a real matushka."

With all her housekeeping tasks, Aunt did not overlook me. She spent all her free time with me, slept in the same room with me, taught me to read in Russian and in French; later, when I entered school, she prepared my breakfast, daily accompanied me to school, picked me up and quizzed me on my lessons. I remember that before Aunt began teaching me, Uncle served a *molieben*¹⁴ in St. Andrew's cathedral, to Ss. Cosmas and Damian and Prophet Naum. Uncle himself took me to the entrance examinations . . . and followed my progress with unwaning interest . . . Given such favorable conditions, it is hardly to be wondered that I became a top student. This brought great joy to my guardians, and Uncle hurried to inform many acquaintances of the good news: "Our niece and ward, Ruth, graduated with a gold medal."

From my earliest memory, I recall that Aunt always treated her great husband with reverent love and respect. When he came home tired from making calls on parishioners or serving, she hurried to take off his boots and help him undress, insisting that he lie down to rest. Then, dead silence reigned in the apartment; Aunt jealously guarded the brief rest periods of her hard-working pastor.

Uncle had a rather weak constitution and frequently fell ill. At those times Aunt turned into a tireless nurse: she spent whole nights at the patient's bedside. In 1879 Fr. John became dangerously ill with pneumonia. He lay for hours with closed

eyes, in a state of semi-consciousness. When he came around, he would often say, "My head aches unbearably, as though someone is hitting it with a hammer." Once, Aunt was sitting near Uncle's bed weeping. Opening his eyes, Batiushka¹⁵ looked at her and said, "Don't cry, Liza. God willing, I shall recover, but if not, God and kind people will not abandon you." Several days passed and one morning Aunt rushed into my room, trembling with excitement: "Uncle is better; the crisis is over!" We looked at one another, hugged each other tightly and both burst out crying; they were tears of happiness . . .

When Batiushka undertook his frequent—and later, daily—trips to Petersburg, Aunt always waited up for him, even if this was very late, despite the fact that her health wasn't the best; she constantly suffered from headaches and for several years was troubled by insomnia. In time her physical weakness forced her to cut back on her ministrations; for her, poor dear, this was a severe deprivation!

The following incident comes to mind: Some years ago in winter, Uncle went outside after a bath wearing light shoes. Aunt became very upset and, no longer able to walk fast herself, sent me to tell Batiushka that he risked catching cold, going out dressed so lightly after a bath. Coming in from the outside hallway, Uncle went straight to Aunt in the sitting room and said, patting her shoulder, "Thank you, my dear, for your concern, but don't worry, my feet are warm."

Uncle deeply appreciated this attentiveness on her part, and reciprocated in the same manner. When he was too ill to go to Petersburg, and later even around Kronstadt, he never sat down to eat without going into the sitting room or into Aunt's room, depending where she was, and calling her to the table. "When I eat alone," he said, "I have no appetite." Not an evening went by that Uncle didn't go to Aunt and say good night and bless her before going to bed: "I wish you good night," "Sleep peacefully," "God be with you," "God protect you"—he used to say to her before retiring to his study to sleep.

Not long before Uncle died, Matushka came down with influenza, and at this time his care for her was especially evident. It

was so moving to see how the dear sufferer, barely able to walk, would go in to bless her several times a day and in the evening before going to sleep, stroke her head and say, "Poor dear, poor dear, we are sufferers together . . ." He would stand for a long time beside her chair, shaking his head and looking compassionately at his sick wife; sometimes he would turn his gaze towards the icon corner and for a long time silently pray for her.

Usually, when someone asked Uncle about his health or Aunt's, he would answer, "We are both poorly," or "We are both preparing for death." Once, when he was told that Aunt was failing, he came to her and said, "Do not be despondent; the Lord is merciful; He will give you patience to endure this suffering and get well."

In November, dining together with Aunt and two guests, Uncle told them that his health was altogether bad. Aunt, wishing to encourage him, said, "You always feel better in the spring; when spring comes, you'll recover." "In spring, you say?" Uncle replied, "You'll live to see the spring, but I—will not." And he was right: he died in December, and she, in May.

When, from the sixth of December, Batiushka no longer had powers to serve Divine Liturgy but communed daily at home, he would come into the room of his sick matushka, with the chalice and commune her, saying, "My Lord and my God!" "With fear of God and faith draw near," "Receive the Body and Blood of Christ," "Peace to you, my eldress, I congratulate you."

On the morning of the 17th he communed her for the last time. From the 18th he did not leave his study. After Uncle's repose, Aunt's health began to deteriorate even more rapidly. She became very weak; her legs and hands barely functioned, her heart gradually began to fail. She sorely missed her ever-memorable husband and couldn't hear the mention of his name without tears; she could not accept the thought that Uncle was no longer among the living and would tell people, "I keep thinking that Ivan Ilyitch has not died but has simply gone off on a trip somewhere, as he used to go to Moscow, and that he will return."

Not long before she died Matushka saw a sketch of Batiushka at the home of an acquaintance and burst into uncontrol-

¹⁴ A special prayer service for a particular occasion.

¹⁵ "Batiushka" is a term of affectionate address for a priest in Russian; freely translated, it means "little father."

lable tears: "Ivan Ilyitch, Ivan Ilyitch," and when they tried to console her with the thought that he was now blessedly happy, she replied, "It's wonderful for him, but it's so hard for me; after all, we were together for fifty-three years."

Sensing her imminent death, Matushka, sitting in her chair, frequently lifted her gaze to the icons and said, "I must get ready, I must ask God to forgive all my sins." She often remembered and was consoled by the words of her ever-memorable Batiushka, our mutual intercessor before the Lord God, which he spoke on December 17, when he was told that his sick matushka was sorely grieved that she could not come into his study and take care of him: "Tell my wife that she is always with me, and I am always with her." These words greatly encouraged Aunt in her prolonged sufferings, consoling her with the hope that even after his death Batiushka would not leave her and would soon take her to be with him, that he would greet her in the heavenly mansion and through his intercession would lead her to the Throne of the Most High. At night, Aunt would usually put on Uncle's undercassock or she would cover herself with it.

Every time I went to the St. John of Rila convent she would say to me, "Make a prostration for me before Uncle's tomb," and she would weep unconsolably. If her hands or legs began to ache badly, she would immediately ask to have the afflicted places anointed with oil from the vigil lamp burning over Batiushka's tomb.

Deeply religious, Matushka placed all her hope in God's mercy and devoted herself wholeheartedly towards the salvation of her soul. "Ivan Ilyitch, bless me, pray for me," she would repeat several times a day, sorrowful that she had outlived her great husband-pastor. After his repose, she would pray sincerely with tears, but in her great humility, Aunt feared that her prayers would not soon be answered, and always asked others to pray for her. When I would go home for the night, after saying good-bye she would invariably say, "Pray for me." If I went to Vigil or Liturgy, I always heard this same request, coming from the depths of her heart: "Pray for me," and I prayed for her, as best I knew how.

One day, before I arrived, Aunt took a bad turn and consoled herself with no other

thought than the fact that "Today is Saturday; Ruth will go to the Vigil service and pray for me." Such was her faith in the power of prayer that even through my weak prayer she trusted to receive an alleviation of her sufferings.

In concluding this brief sketch, dedicated to the memory of this unforgettable matushka, I cannot neglect mentioning two of her most remarkable characteristics: a profound humility and meekness; in these two virtues all the greatness of her soul was expressed. She was never angry at anyone, she never held a grudge against anyone. If someone offended her or was unpleasant, she bore this uncomplainingly, and forgave the person from the bottom of her heart. In answer to the question, "Have you any ill will towards anyone?" Matushka invariably answered, "No, not towards anyone." Being herself forgiving, she taught others to act likewise; she would say, "Don't be angry; God Himself will show who is right, who is at fault, while we should forgive."

... Batiushka himself knew her soul, highly esteemed her purity, meekness and humility, and said about her: "My wife is an angel." Did many know that behind the great saint, Fr. John, stood a protectress, ready to lay down her life for him? If people did not know it then, may they know it now and may they sincerely pray for this pure edress, this meek edress, the servant of God, Elizabeth!

May a boundless gratitude to you—wonderful, self-sacrificing mother-educator—and memory eternal—dear virgin-wife, lamp of the Russian land—live in our hearts, and in those of our children and grandchildren!¹⁶

An Exhortation from the Saint

As we ask for the prayers of this magnificent saint, especially on his day, December 20 (just five days before Christmas), let us remember his own words about the crucial importance of being in fellowship with the Saints:

"We ought to have the most lively spiritual union with the dwellers in heaven, the apostles, prophets, martyrs, saintly bishops, confessors, with all the saints, as they are all members of the one body, the Church of Christ, to which we sinners also belong, and the living Head of which is

¹⁶ Shemyakina, pp. 8-10.

the Lord Jesus Christ himself. This is why we call upon them in prayer, converse with them, thank and praise them. It is urgently necessary for every Christian to be in union with them if he desires to make Christian progress; for the saints are our friends, our guides to salvation, who pray and intercede for us."¹⁷

Stikhera at Vespers, Tone 6

Having set aside all the things of this world, with one voice let us praise the wondrous beacon of the land of Russia and of the whole world, the good shepherd, the priest John, who hath given us a splendid model of life in Christ, who while on earth was aflame with the spirit of prayer, and who received from the Lord a two-fold gift of healing. Through his prayers may Christ strengthen us in piety and show us to be steadfast children of the Church, for the salvation of our souls.

Making room for all in thy pastoral heart and constrained by the wounds inflicted upon the poor by poverty, thou didst call all people by thy words and by thy writings, to build a house of industry, that the poor might find refuge therein. O teacher of good deeds worked through faith! O nurturer of the souls and bodies of the poor! O John, joy of them that before were in despair! Thy care for such here on earth was a likeness of thine intercession now in Heaven.

—David and Mary Ford,
St. Tikhon's Seminary

¹⁷ W. Jardine Grisbrooke, ed., *The Spiritual Counsels of Father John of Kronstadt* (Crestwood, N. Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1981), p. 64.



On Unceasing Prayer, Silence, the Jesus Prayer, and Guarding of the Mind

Bridging the Gap Between Sunday Liturgy and Sanctity



The following extracts from Orthodox spiritual writings both old and new offer essential guidance on the spiritual life. The discussion of the Jesus Prayer and other spiritual disciplines is limited here to those practices that are accessible to all the faithful, without the necessity for special guidance; any questions one may have, however, should be referred to one's spiritual father. It should be noted that while some of these texts will be easily understood, others may require more reflection and meditation. All, in fact, will bear repeated prayerful reading, which will help to make their meaning and uniform message clear.



His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature. . . . —2 Pet. 1:3-4

The weapons of our warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.

—2 Cor. 10:4-5

But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way. . . .

—1 Cor. 12:31

Until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ . . . —Eph. 4:13

¹ *Early Fathers from the Philokalia*, p. 409. This and other passages from the same volume, together with passages from *Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart*, *The Art of Prayer* compiled by Igumen Chariton, and the *Ladder of Divine Ascent* by St. John Climacus (1959 ed.) are reprinted by permission of Faber & Faber, London.

On Prayer and Purity of Heart by St. Gregory Palamas

Since God¹ is goodness itself, mercy itself and a limitless deep of benevolence, he who enters into union with Him, partakes in every way of His mercy. And union with Him is achieved by acquiring godlike virtues, as far as this is possible, and by communion with Him through prayer and supplication. However, communion through godlike virtues renders the diligent doer capable of receiving the Divine union, but does not effect it; it is intense prayer by its holy action that accomplishes the soaring of man to God and union with him; for in its essence prayer is the union of intelligent beings with their Creator, when its action transcends passions and passionate thoughts through piercing of the heart and contrition. . .

The Inner Closet of the Heart by St. Dimitry of Rostov

There are many among you who have no knowledge of the inner work required of the man who would hold God in remembrance. Nor do such people even understand what remembrance of God means, or know anything about spiritual prayer, for they imagine that the only right way of praying is to use such prayers as are to be found in Church books. As for secret communion with God in the heart, they know nothing of this, nor of the profit that comes from it, nor do they ever taste its spiritual sweetness. Those who only hear about spiritual meditation and prayer and have no direct knowledge of it are like men blind from birth, who hear about the sunshine without ever knowing what it really is. Through this ignorance they lose many spiritual blessings, and are slow in arriving at the virtues which make for the fulfillment of God's good pleasure. Therefore some idea of inner training and spiri-

² This is the first text in the *Art of Prayer* compiled by Igumen Chariton.

tual prayer is given here for the instruction of beginners. . . .²

A Saying of Abba Agathon

Abba Agathon was asked, "Which is better, bodily asceticism or the guarding of the heart?"³ The old man replied, "Man is like a tree. Bodily asceticism is the foliage, the guarding of the heart is the fruit. Since, according to that which is written, 'Every tree that does not bring forth good fruit shall be cut down and cast into the fire'⁴ it is clear that all our care should be for the fruit, that is to say, the guarding of the mind; but it needs the covering and the adornment of the foliage, which is bodily asceticism."⁵

From St. Isaac of Syria

Try to enter your inner treasure-house and you will see the treasure-house of heaven. For both the one and the other are the same, and one and the same entrance reveals them both. The ladder leading to the kingdom is concealed within you, that is, in your soul. Wash yourself from sin and you will see the rungs of the ladder by which you can ascend thither.⁶

On Unceasing Prayer by St. Ignatius Brianchaninov

Unceasing prayer⁷ was enjoined by God Himself. The Savior of the world said: Ask and you will be given; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.⁸ Will not God give judgment for His chosen, who cry to Him day

³ Following St. Theophan the Recluse. More literally, "guarding of the things within."

⁴ Matt 3:10.

⁵ From the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, Alphabetical Collection.

⁶ Quoted by St. Nicephorus, in *Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart*, p. 30

⁷ In this paragraph, taken from *The Arena* (Madras, 1970, p. 82), St. Ignatius cites three New Testament texts in support of the practice of unceasing prayer: a verse from the Sermon on the Mount; the parable of the persistent woman; and a word of St. Paul.

⁸ Matt. 7:7. The Greek text of this verse suggests a certain continuance or persistence that is generally lost in translation: i.e. *Keep asking . . . keep seeking . . . keep knocking . . .*

and night, while He waits for them patiently? I tell you, He will give them prompt judgment.⁹ The Apostle repeats the Lord's teaching and says: Pray without ceasing.¹⁰

*From A Profitable Discourse on
Sobriety and the Guarding of the
Heart by St. Nicephorus*

Question (to Nicephorus). We have learned from the foregoing evidence of the doing practiced by the fathers who were pleasing to God, and that there exists a certain doing which speedily frees the soul from passions and by love unites it to God . . . But we beg you to teach us what is attention of the mind and how to become worthy to acquire it. For this work is quite unknown to us.

Answer (by Nicephorus). In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ Who said: "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). Having called Him to help and assist me, I shall try as far as is in my power to show you what attention is and how, God willing, one can succeed in acquiring it.

Some of the saints have called attention the safekeeping of the mind, others—the guarding of the heart, yet others—sobriety, yet others—mental silence, and others again by other names. But all these names mean the same thing. Just as of bread one can say, a round, a slice, a piece, so also understand about this. As to what attention is and what are its characteristic features, you shall learn forthwith.

Attention is a sign of sincere repentance. Attention is the appeal of the soul to itself, hatred of the world and ascent towards God. Attention is renunciation of sin and acquisition of virtue. Attention is an undoubting certainty of the remission of sins. Attention is the beginning of contemplation, or rather its necessary condition: for, through attention, God comes close and reveals Himself to the mind. Attention is serenity of the mind, or rather its standing firmly planted and not wandering, through the gift of God's mercy. Attention means cutting off thoughts, it is the abode of remembrance of God and the treasure-house of the power to endure all that may come. Therefore attention is the origin of faith, hope and love; since he who has no faith cannot bear all the afflictions

coming from without, and he who does not suffer them willingly cannot say: "He is my refuge and my fortress" (Ps. 91:2); and he who has not the Almighty as his refuge cannot be truly sincere in his love for Him. . . .

. . . You know that in every man inner talking is in the breast. For, when our lips are silent, it is in the breast that we talk and discourse with ourselves, pray and sing psalms, and do other things. Thus, having banished every thought from this inner talking (for you can do this if you want to), give it the following short prayer:



"Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me!"—and force it, instead of all other thoughts, to have only this one constant cry within. If you continue to do this constantly, with your whole attention, then in time this will open for you the way to the heart which I have described. There can be no doubt about this, for we have proved it ourselves by experience.

If you do this with strong desire and attention, full of sweetness, a whole host of virtues will come to you: love, joy, peace and others, through which, later, every petition of yours will be answered in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, is glory, and power, honor and worship,

now and always, and for ever and ever. Amen.¹¹

*The Practice of the Invocation
of the Name*

by Archimandrite Lev Gillet

The invocation¹² of the Name may be practiced anywhere and at any time. We can pronounce the Name of Jesus in the streets, in the place of our work, in our room, in church, etc. We can repeat the Name while we walk. Besides that "free" use of the Name, not determined or limited by any rule, it is good to set apart certain times and certain places for a "regular" invocation of the Name. One who is advanced in that way of prayer may dispense with such arrangements. But they are an almost necessary condition for beginners.

If we daily assign a certain time to the invocation of the Name (besides the "free" invocation which should be as frequent as possible), the invocation ought to be practiced—circumstances allowing—in a lonely and quiet place: "Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and, when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret."¹³ The bodily posture does not matter much. One may walk, or sit down, or lie, or kneel. The best posture is the one which affords most physical quiet and inner concentration. One may be helped by a physical attitude expressing humbleness and worship.

Before beginning to pronounce the Name of Jesus, establish peace and recollection within yourself and ask for the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Ghost. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."¹⁴ The Name of Jesus cannot really enter a heart that is not being filled by the cleansing breath and the flame of the Spirit. The Spirit himself will breathe and light in us the Name of the Son.

Then simply begin. In order to walk one must take a first step; in order to swim one must throw oneself into the water. It is the same with the invocation of the Name. Begin to pronounce it with adoration and love. Cling to it. Repeat it. Do

Continued on the next page.

¹¹ *Writings from the Philokalia*, p. 31ff.

¹² Chap. 2 of *On the Invocation of the Name of Jesus*. Fr. Lev often wrote under the name "A Monk of the Eastern Church." Used by permission of Templegate Publishers, P.O. Box 5152, Springfield IL 62705.

¹³ Matt. 6:6.

⁹ Lk 18:7.

¹⁰ 1 Thess. 5:17.

On Unceasing Prayer

Continued from page 35.

not think that you are invoking the Name: think only of Jesus himself. Say his Name slowly, softly and quietly.

A common mistake of beginners is to wish to associate the invocation of the Holy Name with inner intensity or emotion. They try to say it with great force. But the Name of Jesus is not to be shouted, or fashioned with violence, even inwardly. When Elijah was commanded to stand before the Lord, there was a great and strong wind, but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. After the fire came a still small voice. "And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood . . ." ¹⁴ Strenuous exertion and the search for intensity will be of no avail. As you repeat the Holy Name, gather quietly, little by little, your thoughts and feelings and will around it; gather around it your whole being. Let the Name penetrate your soul as a drop of oil spreads out and impregnates a cloth. Let nothing of yourself escape. Surrender your whole self and enclose it within the Name.

Even in the act of invocation of the Name, its literal repetition ought not to be continuous. The Name pronounced may be extended and prolonged in seconds or minutes of silent rest and attention. The repetition of the Name may be likened to the beating of wings by which a bird rises into the air. It must never be labored and forced, or hurried, or in the nature of a flapping. It must be gentle, easy, and—let us give to this word its deepest meaning—graceful. When the bird has reached the desired height it glides in its flight, and only beats its wing from time to time in order to stay in the air. So the soul, having attained to the thought of Jesus and filled herself with the memory of him may discontinue the repetition of the Name and rest in our Lord. The repetition will only be resumed when other thoughts threaten to crowd out the thought of Jesus. Then the invocation will start again in order to gain fresh impetus.

Continue this invocation for as long as

you wish or as you can. The prayer is naturally interrupted by tiredness. Then do not insist. But resume it at any time and wherever you may be, when you feel again so inclined. In time you will find that the Name of Jesus will spontaneously come to your lips and almost continuously be present to your mind, though in a quiescent and latent manner. Even your sleep will be impregnated with the Name and memory of Jesus. "I sleep, but my heart waketh."¹⁶

When we are engaged in the invocation of the Name, it is natural that we should hope and endeavor to reach some "positive" or "tangible" result, i.e., to feel that we have established a real contact with the person of Our Lord: "If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole."¹⁷ This blissful experience is the desired climax of the invocation of the Name: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."¹⁸ But we must avoid an over-eager longing for such experiences: religious emotion may easily become a disguise for some dangerous kind of greed and sensuousness. Let us not think that, if we have spent a certain time in the invocation of the Name without "feeling" anything, our time has been wasted and our effort unfruitful. On the contrary this apparently barren prayer may be more pleasing to God than our moments of rapture, because it is pure from any selfish quest for spiritual delight. It is the prayer of the plain and naked will. We should therefore persevere in assigning every day some regular and fixed time to the invocation of the Name, even if it seems to us that this prayer leaves us cold and dry: and such an earnest exertion of the will, such a sober "waiting" on the Name cannot fail to bring us some blessing and strength.

Moreover, the invocation of the Name seldom leaves us in a state of dryness. Those who have some experience of it agree that it is very often accompanied by an inner feeling of joy, warmth and light. One has an impression of moving and walking in the light. There is in this prayer no heaviness, no languishing, no struggling. "Thy name is as ointment poured forth . . . Draw me; we will run after thee."¹⁹

The Safe Way for Beginners by St. Ignatius Brianchaninov

We consider it our duty to elucidate here,²⁰ as far as our poor understanding and poor experience will allow, the teaching of the Holy Fathers on the artistic cultivation of the prayer of Jesus. We shall explain clearly how the prayer is to be practiced, and what form of the prayer is suitable for all beginners without exception, whether monks or laymen, and what form of it is proper for proficients who have been raised to proficiency by God's will and God's grace.

Undoubtedly among all the ways the first place must be given to the way proposed by St John of the Ladder, since it is particularly easy, absolutely safe, necessary and even indispensable if prayer is to be effectual; and it is suitable for all Christians living piously and seeking salvation, both monks and laypeople. . . . We repeat: the greatest advantage of this method consists in the fact that, besides being thoroughly satisfactory, it is absolutely safe. In his chapter on prayer St John of the Ladder says: "Try to restore, or more exactly, to enclose your thought in the words of the prayer. If on account of its infancy, it wearies and wanders lead it in again. The mind is naturally unstable. But He Who orders all things can control it. If you acquire this practice and constantly restrain it, *He Who sets bounds to the sea* of your mind will say to it during your prayer: *Hitherto thou shalt come, and shalt go no further* (Job 38.11). It is impossible to bind a spirit. But where the Creator of that spirit is present, there everything obeys Him."²¹ "The beginning of prayer consists in banishing the thoughts that come to us, at their very appearance; the middle is when the mind stays solely in the words pronounced vocally or mentally."²² In the chapter on Obedience, St. John says: "Constantly struggle with your thought and whenever it is carried hither and thither, collect it together. God does not require from novices prayer completely free from distractions. Do not despond when your thought is distracted, but remain calm, and unceasingly restore your mind to itself."²³

Here is taught a method of praying attentively, of praying both vocally and with

¹⁴ 1 Cor. 12:3.

¹⁵ 1 Kings 19:13.

¹⁶ Song of Songs, 5:2.

¹⁷ Matt. 9:21.

¹⁸ Gen. 32:26.

¹⁹ Song of Songs 1:3-4.

²⁰ From *On the Prayer of Jesus*, pp. 49-63. Reprinted by permission of Element Books.

the mind alone. In attentive prayer the heart cannot help taking part, as St Mark has said: "The mind which prays without distraction constrains the heart." Thus, he who prays by the method proposed by St John of the Ladder will pray with the lips and with the mind and with the heart. And when he becomes proficient in prayer, he will acquire mental prayer and the prayer of the heart, and he will attract divine grace to himself, as is evident from the words we have quoted of the great director of monks. What more can be desired? Nothing. What delusion can there be in this way of praying? Only thought-wandering and distraction. But this is a fault that is completely obvious, inevitable in beginners, but capable of immediate treatment through the restoration of the thought to the words. Moreover, by the mercy and help of God, with constant effort, distraction is eventually eliminated.

... It is one thing to pray with attention with the participation of the heart; it is another thing to descend with the mind into the temple of the heart and from there to offer mystical prayer filled with divine grace and power. The second is a result of the first. ... To strive for the second before acquiring the first is not only useless but can cause the greatest harm ...

"He who desires to see the Lord within himself endeavors to purify his heart by the unceasing remembrance of God. The spiritual land of a man pure in soul is within him. The sun which shines in it is the light of the Holy Trinity. The air which its inhabitant breathes is the All-holy Spirit. The life, joy and gladness of that country is Christ, the Light of the Light—the Father. That is the Jerusalem or Kingdom of God hidden *within us*, according to the word of the Lord.²⁴ Try to enter the cell within you, and you will see the heavenly cell. They are one and the same. By one entry you enter both. ..."²⁵

... A beginner can learn the prayer of Jesus with special ease during the long ... services. When present at them, what is the use of fruitlessly and harmfully allowing one's thoughts to wander everywhere? But this is impossible to avoid unless the mind is fixed on something. Busy yourself with the prayer of Jesus. It will prevent the mind from wandering. You will

become far more recollected, more deeply concentrated. You will attend much better to the church reading and singing. And at the same time in an imperceptible manner you will gradually train yourself in mental prayer.

St. Seraphim orders one who desires to live a recollected life not to attend to irrelevant rumors which fill the head with vain and idle thoughts and memories, and not to pay attention to the affairs of others, not to judge them, and not even to think or speak about them. He orders such a person to avoid conversations, to behave like a pilgrim or stranger, to bow in silence to fathers and brothers whom one happens to meet and to guard oneself from looking attentively at them,²⁶ because such looking cannot fail to produce in the soul some kind of impression which will cause distraction by drawing away the attention and diverting it from prayer. Generally speaking, one living a recollected life should not stare²⁷ at anything, and should not listen to anything with special diligence, but should see as if without seeing and hear as if in passing, so that the memory and power of attention may be always free, immune to the impressions of the world, apt and ready to receive the divine impressions.

It is evident that the methods proposed by the monk Dorotheus and the elder Seraphim are identical with the method proposed by St. John of the Ladder ... We offer his method with complete confidence to beloved fathers and brothers, not only those living in monasteries, but also those living in the midst of the world who have an honest desire to pray sincerely, successfully and in a way pleasing to God—for general use. ... Experience will soon show that in using this method, especially at first, the words should be pronounced with extreme unhurriedness so that the mind may have time to enter the words as into forms ... " ... Whether talking, sitting, walking, making something, eating or occupied in some other way, one should at all times and in every place call upon the name of God, according to the command of Scripture: *Pray without ceasing* (1 Thess. 5:17). ... We must pray with the heart; we must also pray with the mouth,

when we are alone. But if we are in the market, or in the company of others, we should not pray with the lips, but only with the mind. We must keep watch over our sight and always look down to guard ourselves from distraction and the enemy's snares. Prayer has reached perfection when it is offered to God without the mind's wandering into distraction, when all a person's thoughts and feelings are gathered into one prayer ..."²⁸

... Experience will teach everyone ... that the saying aloud of a few prayers of Jesus and all prayers in general is a great help in preventing the mind from being robbed by distraction. In the event of a violent attack of the enemy, when a weakening of the will and darkening of the mind is felt, vocal prayer is indispensable. Attentive vocal prayer is at the same time both mental and cordial [i.e., of the heart] ..."

For the very reason that the priceless wealth of the prayer of the heart that is a gift of grace may be received in its time we forbid and warn our readers against striving for it prematurely, from proudly considering yourself worthy and fit to receive it, and thereby depriving yourself of it. ... First acquire attentive prayer. To one purified and prepared by attentive prayer, trained and qualified by the commandments of the Gospel and grounded on them, God—the all-merciful God—will give in His time the prayer of Grace ... To him who prays constantly with contrition of spirit, with the fear of God and with attention, God Himself gives gradual progress in prayer. From humble and attentive prayer, spiritual action and spiritual warmth make their appearance and quicken the heart. The quickened heart draws the mind to itself and becomes a temple of grace-given prayer and a treasury of the spiritual gifts which are procured by such prayer as a matter of course.

*Ladder of Divine Ascent
by St. John, Abbot of Raithu
From Step 11,
On talkativeness and silence*

In the preceding chapter we spoke briefly of how extremely dangerous it is to judge others and of how this vice steals

Continued on the next page.

²⁸ Kallistos, Patriarch of Constantinople, Answer 177 (quoted by St. Ignatius here).

²¹ Ladder: 28.17.

²² Ibid., 28.19.

²³ Ibid., 4.93.

²⁴ St Isaac the Syrian, Ch. 8.

²⁵ Ibid., Ch. 2.

²⁶ Instruction 6.

²⁷ "Stare." Lit. "look fixedly."

On Unceasing Prayer

Continued from page 37.

into even the most apparently spiritual people; and how it is better to subject oneself to condemnation and punishment by the tongue. Now we must show the cause of this vice, and give a proper account of the door by which it enters, or rather, goes out.

Talkativeness is the throne of vainglory on which it loves to show itself and make a display. Talkativeness is a sign of ignorance, a door to slander, a guide to jesting, a servant of falsehood, the ruin of compunction, a creator of despondency, a precursor of sleep, the dissipation of recollection, the abolition of watchfulness, the cooling of ardor, the darkening of prayer.

Deliberate silence is the mother of prayer, a recall from captivity, preservation of fire, a supervisor of thoughts, a watch against enemies, a prison of mourning, a friend of tears, effective remembrance of death, a depicter of punishment . . . increase of knowledge, a creator of contemplation, unseen progress, secret ascent.

He who has become aware of his sins has controlled his tongue, but a talkative person has not yet come to know himself as he should.²⁹

From Step 28, On Prayer

Until we have acquired genuine prayer we are like people teaching children to begin to walk. . . . We who are passionate must constantly pray to the Lord . . . Do not say, after spending a long time at prayer, that nothing has been gained; for you have already gained something. And what higher good is there than to cling to the Lord and persevere in unceasing union with Him? . . . He who is busy with something and continues it when the hour of prayer comes, is deceived by the demons . . . What is obtained by frequent and prolonged prayer is lasting. . . . Do not let the time of prayer be an hour for considering necessary things or even spiritual tasks, otherwise you will lose the better part. . . . The benefit of prayer can be inferred from the assaults of the demons during the divine office . . . Have all courage and you will have God for your teacher in prayer. . . .³⁰

³⁰ Additional portions of this step are quoted by St. Ignatius (see above)

For Further Reading

The Art of Prayer: an Orthodox Anthology compiled by Igumen Chariton. An excellent resource.

On faith; and To those who say that those living in the world cannot attain perfection in virtues. To start with, a most profitable tale, and Three methods of attention and prayer by St. Simeon the New Theologian (in *Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart*, pp. 143-161). The *Most Profitable Tale* relates the experience of a young man (generally considered to be St. Simeon himself) living in the city of Constantinople who through prayer was granted great spiritual gifts. *Three methods* shows how the operation of the Jesus Prayer is superior to certain other methods of prayer.

On the Prayer of Jesus, by St. Ignatius (Brianchaninov). Also, several chapters in his *Arena on the Prayer*.

A Night in the Desert of the Holy Mountain: a Discussion with a Hermit on the Jesus Prayer by Archimandrite Hierotheus Vlachos.

Ladder of Divine Ascent by St. John Climacus, step 28 on prayer & step 11 on silence; also other steps.

Spiritual Counsels of St. Seraphim, and *Conversation with Motovilov*, in *The Joy of the Holy* (St. Tikhon's Seminary Press).

²⁹ On silence see also Epistle of James ch. 3.

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Founder’s Day Homily

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Glory be to Jesus Christ!

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

In the primary Gospel lesson for today we heard the beautiful story of the raising from death to life, by our Lord, of the only son of a widow woman from the city of Nain in Galilee. Just the day before, the Lord had healed the sick servant of a Roman Centurion who, although not a Jew, had faith in Jesus—such faith, as the Lord said, as was not to be found in Israel. Now, followed by a great crowd, He and His disciples as they approached the gate of the city of Nain met a funeral procession coming out—the widow and her dead son, already mentioned. “When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, ‘Do not weep’” (Luke 7:13). Likewise to all who sorrow, who are full of cares, who have lost all hope, who are alone in this world, He says, “Do not weep.” “Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried (it) stood still. And, He said, ‘Young man, I say to thee, arise’” (Luke 7:14). Although we all live in a land of shadow and death, a land filled with our sins, the darkness of which overwhelms us, the Lord says to us, “Arise.” Although we may often feel without hope, lost in our sins, like a bright light the Lord shines through radiantly, lovingly illuminating a pathway in the darkness.

“And he who was dead sat up and began to speak” (Luke 7:15). Yes, when the Lord speaks to us, to our hearts, when He offers us a way out of darkness, when we take hold of His gift of eternal life, we who are dead will sit up, and we cannot be still, we must give witness, not only with our words, but with our very lives to the power of God working in us. “And He (Jesus) presented him to his mother” (Luke 7:15). Just as the young man was given into the care of his mother, so the Lord presents



Monk Anthony.

us to His own mother, the most Holy Theotokos, to help us, to pray for us, and to be, in fact, our mother as well, to whom we can turn in any kind of sorrow or affliction.

“Then fear came upon them all, and they glorified God, saying, ‘A great prophet has risen up among us,’ and, ‘God has visited His people’” (Luke 7:16). Centuries before, when the children of Israel had been wandering in the wilderness before entering the land of Canaan, Moses had told the people that in the time to come, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear” (Deut. 18:15). Now, this great prophet had arisen; God, become flesh, was performing a great miracle in Nain. “God visited His people,” today’s Gospel proclaims, and as Moses had foretold, all the people of Israel in our Lord’s time, and we the New Israel, must hear His voice.

Today we also commemorate the Holy Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Coun-

cil. This council once and for all proclaimed the truth of the Lord’s Incarnation, proclaimed the truth that God, indeed, had visited His people, and proclaimed this great truth by defending the Holy Icons. Yes, in the Old Testament the people had been commanded not to make images and to worship them as God, but when our Lord came, when God put on our human flesh, he was seen and it became possible to represent Him in images—icons—and not only that, but also images of His Mother, and the Saints, His friends, all of whom were the witnesses to the truth of the Incarnation and to the power of “God visiting His people” that made the Saints and the Theotokos worthy of veneration. When we venerate, not worship, an icon, whether it be of the Lord, His Mother, or the Saints, we too, speaking like the young man raised in today’s lesson—but with our actions and not just our lips—witness to the power of God who has visited us.

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Founder's Day Homily

Continued from page 39.

In the second Gospel lesson heard today from St. John, the Lord is praying for His disciples, and through them, all of the Bishops, successors to the Disciples, who will follow in His footsteps. Indeed, the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council whom we commemorate today were worthy successors. The Lord prayed, "I have manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou hast given Me out of the world . . . I have given to them the words which Thou hast given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from Thee; and they have believed that Thou sentest Me . . . And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in them . . . I have given them Thy word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world . . . Sanctify them by Thy truth. Thy word is truth" (John 17:6-17).

Yes, the Holy Fathers, indeed all bishops, are specially chosen and sanctified by God. And when they proclaimed the truth, the power of God was manifested in them (as in all bishops, when proclaiming the truth of God). The fact of the Lord's Incarnation was proclaimed, and the icons they defended were an important witness of this as we have said. But the Lord said that the world, the powers of darkness, would hate those chosen by Him, and indeed, through the centuries, many holy bishops and fathers, have been persecuted for proclaiming the truth. Many of the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council were imprisoned, tortured, and maimed, yet they held fast, and many are venerated as Saints. Our own St. Tikhon Patriarch of Moscow suffered at the hands of the godless ones, and is glorified as a Confessor for the truth. And any bishop now who proclaims the truth of God is persecuted by the dark powers of this world.

Today's reading from the Epistle to the Hebrews, also speaks about those who rule us, the bishops and our fathers. "Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the Word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct" (Heb. 13:7).

We have also witnessed the ordination to the Holy Priesthood of one of the mem-

bers of our monastic community, Fr. Tikhon. And I think that today's Epistle lesson from Hebrews speaks a little about him, indeed all monks. As St. Paul tells us, "We have no continuing city but we seek the one to come" (Heb. 13:14). Father Tikhon has given up the comforts of earthly life, "the continuing city" St. Paul refers to; he has rather set his hopes on the heavenly kingdom, "the one to come." He has labored in humility and in obedience. St. Paul says further, "Therefore by Him (that is Jesus Christ) let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name" (Heb. 13:15). Every day, Fr. Tikhon offers praise in the monastery church, in the daily services. Certainly he, as does any monk, endures sorrows and

tribulations every day of his life, yet he will be found every day "giving thanks to His name." The Lord is life, the Lord is a sure help, and His grace abounds. Today, Fr. Tikhon has been given a new grace, the Holy Priesthood, but truly a cross as well, for of those to whom much is given, much will be required. Yes, his sorrows will be multiplied, but his joys, in Christ, will abound as well. And again, as we pray for Fr. Tikhon, we will remember that the Lord who has chosen Him, in the words of today's Gospel lesson prays as well: "I pray for . . . those who Thou has given Me, for they are Thine." Amen.

—Monk Anthony

Given at St. Tikhon's Monastery Church, October 8, 1995.



Ordination of Monk Tikhon to the Holy Priesthood.



Archbishop Herman and the Monastic Brotherhood.



Holy Trinity Orthodox Church Honors Archpriest John Mason on His Retirement

On Sunday, October 22, 1995, a gathering of hierarchs, clergy, family, parish family and friends joined in prayer and friendship to honor Father John Mason, pastor of Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church, Wilkes-Barre, Pa., on the occasion of his retirement from the pastorate.

Father John was born November 3, 1928, in Scranton, Pa. He is the son of John and Anna Rachko Mason, of Scranton and Taylor, Pa., respectively. He is the second-born of three children, having a sister Kathryn and a brother James. He was baptized at Saints Peter and Paul in Scranton, and there at a very young age began to serve as an altar boy. At the age of nine years he began to read the Epistle several times each month in Slavonic. John attended Francis Willard Elementary

School, and graduated in the class of 1946 from West Scranton High School. He then attended four years at St. Tikhon's Seminary in South Canaan, Pa., receiving his diploma in May of 1950.

John married Doris Millian, daughter of Dimitri and Anna Didick Millian of Old Forge, Pa., on May 20, 1951. The marriage was performed at St. Michael's Church, Old Forge, by Fr. John Kopestonsky.

John was ordained a deacon on Pentecost, June 17, 1951, at the Cathedral of the Protection of the Holy Virgin in New York by Bishop Nikon, and attached to St. Tikhon's Monastery Church in South Canaan. On October 7, 1951, he was ordained to the Holy Priesthood at the same Cathedral by Bishop John of Chicago.

Father John's first assignment in his pastoral life began on October 14, 1951, at Saint Michael's in Robins, Ohio, where he served two additional parishes in Bell Valley and Lore City. Thereafter, Father John served Ss. Peter and Paul in Altoona, Pa.; Ss. Peter and Paul in Meriden, Conn.; St. Nicholas in Akron, Ohio; and Holy Trinity in Yonkers, New York.

On Nov. 1, 1988, Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church had the good fortune of Father John's arrival as pastor. He served his first Divine Liturgy on Sunday, Nov. 6. Father John has devoted his life as a priest continuing to serve as a pastor, while serving the Church in additional capacities. His involvement and service over the years includes serving on the Diocesan

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Archpriest John Mason

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Council of the Midwest, New York and Eastern Pa.; Dean of the Ohio Deanery for twelve years; and Charter Member of the Pension Board serving at present for nineteen years.

Father John is also a devoted husband, father and grandfather. The passing years have blessed Fr. John and Mat. Doris with a growing family: daughter Deborah who lives in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio; son Gregory, his wife Suzy and children Katrina, Nicholas, Jason, and Rebecca, in Lexington, Ky.; son Serge, his wife Sue and daughter Natalie, in Garner, N.C.; daughter Tamara and her husband Mark Kocsis, in Albuquerque, N.M.; and daughter Susan, in Ladson, S.C.

On Sunday, October 22, Father John celebrated Liturgy with His Eminence, Archbishop Herman; His Grace, Bishop Evgeny of Moscow; and priests and deacons from the Wilkes-Barre Deanery and visiting from Moscow. Responses were sung by the Saint Tikhon's Theological Seminary Choir, and Holy Trinity Church was filled with parishioners, family and friends of Fr. John and Matushka Doris.

A testimonial dinner in honor of Fr. John and his many years of dedicated service was held afterward, attended by hierarchs, clergy, family and friends. It was a celebration of thanks for the dedication and commitment of Fr. John and Mat. Doris; a day of appreciation for Fr. John's years of spiritual guidance, consolation, compassion, and gentle instruction; and a time of well-wishing for Fr. John and Matushka as they enter a new phase in their lives.

In his retirement from pastoral duties, Fr. John and Mat. Doris will reside in Hagerstown, Md. Father John will continue his priestly life in service to God and Church, serving his term as a member of the pension board, and attached to a parish in that area. Father John plans on spending time relaxing, walking, and most importantly, being with family and friends.

Father John enters his retirement with best wishes from his parishioners and friends at Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church. We thank him for his years of dedication and service, and pray that God will bless him and his family with many happy, healthy years.



Personal Renewal A Perspective from the Fathers

Editor's Note: This article, and the two that follow, were presented at the 25th annual lecture series held this fall at St. Tikhon's Seminary, with the theme "Renewal."

Even a cursory reading of almost any Patristic text would suffice for us to come swiftly to the realization that "personal renewal" in the Fathers can only mean one thing: Repentance.

That we are all in need of repentance is beyond dispute, as this is clearly indicated by the very first words preached by both St. John the Baptist and Christ Himself: "Repent: for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2 and 4:7).

So the question that I should like to pose in response to our given topic of discussion is: What is repentance and how does it bring about our "personal renewal"?

"Repentance," says St. John of the Ladder (c. 570—c. 649), "is the renewal of baptism."¹ We know from Holy Scripture and our life in the Church that baptism means dying to the old man and being raised together with Christ in newness of life. As St. Paul says:

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life . . . Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him" (Rom. 6:3-4, 6).

So if, as St. John of the Ladder teaches us, repentance is the renewal of baptism, then it too must signify the renewal of the very same death and resurrection in Christ that we receive at baptism. But what exactly is this kind of death, and what is this kind of resurrection? The short answer to this question, as the holy Apostle Paul himself goes on to say in Romans verse 7 of the same chapter, must be, that death

which sets us free from sin, "For he that is dead is freed from sin."

So, in practical terms, how do we die to sin? Christ Himself tells us plainly that "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23; and cf. also Matt. 16:24 and Mark 8:34). But what do these words really mean? Is this just an exalted metaphor that is intended to encourage us to be good and honest citizens? Most certainly not. For if Jesus Christ is truly "the way" (John 14:6), then surely, if we would be His disciples, we must also follow Him, follow His way; and, as Archimandrite Sophrony (of blessed memory) says, His way is that of the Cross: "where I am, there shall also my servant be" (John 12:26)—and "Where is Christ?" asks Fr. Sophrony. "On the Cross," he answers.²

In His Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:1—7:29), our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ gives us a vivid description of the divine way of life, that is to say, He teaches us how to live as He does. This is especially evident when we bring to mind such verses as:

"Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy . . . But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:43-45).

If we look closely at these and other such pronouncements, what we shall find is nothing less than Christ's self-revela-



Dr. Christopher Veniamin

tion. In other words, Christ is telling us how He lives, and how, therefore, we too should strive to live, if we would be perfect; if, that is, we would be *as He is*.

The beloved disciple John the Theologian and Evangelist, whose memory we celebrated today (September 26), makes this clear when he says, "We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:2-3).

Thus, if we wish to be eternally with Christ, we must become like Him; and this process of becoming Christlike, this purification, invariably involves repentance—a fundamental change in our whole way of life, in our "mode of being."

Our reactions, then, in any and every circumstance should be Christlike. Each time we find ourselves in difficult circumstances; each time that we are tempted to think or act according to the way of the world, and every time that we resist this impulse for the love of Christ, and ask for His help and mercy, we are indeed taking up our cross, we are indeed striving to change our way of life in accordance with Christ's commandments and example, we are indeed beginning to repent.

Let us listen briefly to how St. Silouan the Athonite (1866 - 1938), a saint of our own age, speaks of repentance: "Glory be to the Lord that He gave us repentance. Through repentance we shall all, every one

¹Step 5 On Painstaking and True Repentance which Constitutes the Life of the Holy Convicts; and about the Prison," in St. John Climacus, *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, tr. by Archimandrite Lazarus Moore with an introduction by Muriel Heppell (Willits, Calif.: Eastern Orthodox Books, 1959), p. 98.

²From Hieromonk Zacharias' homily "On Repentance," delivered in the "Atelier," Stavropegic Monastery of St. John the Baptist, Essex, England, January 29, 1983.

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Personal Renewal

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of us, be saved. Only those who refuse to repent will not find salvation, and therein I see their despair, and shed abundant tears of pity for them. They have not known through the Holy Spirit how great is God's mercy. But if every soul knew the Lord, knew how deeply He loves us, no one would despair, or murmur against his lot.

"Every soul that has lost peace should repent and the Lord will forgive her her sins, and there will be joy and peace in the soul. We have no need of other witnesses, for the Spirit Himself testifies that our sins are forgiven. Here is a token of forgiveness: if you now detest sin, it means the Lord has forgiven you your sins.

"And what more could we expect? That some voice from heaven sing us a heavenly song? But in heaven everything has life through the Holy Spirit, and the Lord has given us on earth the same Holy Spirit; in desert, mountain and cave, in every place, Christ's warriors who fight the good fight live by the Holy Spirit. If we preserve the Holy Spirit we shall be free of all darkness, and life eternal will be in our souls.

"If all men would repent and keep God's commandments, there would be paradise on earth, for 'the Kingdom of Heaven is within us.' The Kingdom of Heaven is the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is the same in heaven and on earth."³

But even though we know these things intellectually, even though we hear them at every Church service, yet we resist the challenge of Christ's first call to repentance, because we fear that we shall in some way lose our freedom; when, in fact, "true freedom" comes to him, says St. John of the Ladder, who "voluntarily delivers himself into servitude"—servitude, that is, to God.⁴

Based on the tradition of the Fathers, we can say that there are two basic ways by which one may arrive at the realization that a fundamental change of life must take place.

Firstly, there is what we might be allowed to call the "way of light," and secondly, there is what we may be allowed to

term the "way of darkness." By the "way of light," then, we refer to such exceptionally rare occasions as when Christ Himself appears to His creature in His uncreated divine glory, and recognizing thereby how far we stand from what we have been called to become, we cannot but react by beseeching Him to save us, and help us to change.

By the "way of darkness" we refer to the more common way by which the chasm that divides us from Christ is revealed to us. God, in His mercy, allows us to see ourselves as we really are; He allows us to come to the realization, as St. Silouan the Athonite says, that without Him we cannot do or even think any good thing.⁵ And the soul, seeing this, begins to cry out for help, asking Christ to enlighten, to illumine our darkened soul.

Now it should be emphasized here that both of these "ways" are a gift from God, and as such are the result of His saving uncreated grace operating in our lives. In other words, we are speaking here neither of an emotional nor of a psychological state or condition; for there is no similarity between the uncreated grace of God and any other created thing.⁶

Repentance, then, is not an emotion. But how can we be sure that we are repenting, and that we are not simply indulging in emotion and sentimentality? Indeed, how can we be sure that we are living and acting in accordance with the will of God?⁷

Let us turn now to examine more closely the culture of repentance as expressed in the daily life of the Orthodox Church, and let us look in particular at the monastic life, at the life as it were of our "specialists" in the ascetic life.⁸ For as St. John of the Ladder puts it, "Angels are a light for monks, and the monastic life is a light for all men. Therefore let monks strive to become a good example in everything."⁹

We laymen, then, must also be prudent enough to learn from the light of the mo-

⁵Saint Silouan the Athonite, *passim*.

⁶Fr. Zacharias, *loc. cit.*

⁷St. Silouan points to a useful criterion: "If you think evil of people, it means you have an evil spirit in you whispering evil thoughts about others. And if a man dies without repenting, without having forgiven his brother, his soul will go to the place where lives the evil spirit which possessed his soul. This is the law we have: if you forgive others, it is a sign that the Lord has forgiven you; but if you refuse to forgive, then your own sin remains with you." *Saint Silouan the Athonite*, p. 351.

⁸Cf. Sophrony, "Principles of Orthodox Asceticism," p. 259.

⁹"Step 26 On Discernment of Thoughts, Passions and Virtues," *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, pp. 206-207.

nastic life and polity, recognizing that it is the generator and measure of our own lives in the world. And let us not forget that asceticism—*ascesis* in Greek or in Russian *podvig*—understood as "spiritual labor," refers to monks and layman alike, since this is nothing more or less than living according to the commandments of Christ.

And by the way, we should never cease to be thankful for the fact that in this very part of the world—in North America—we have in St. Tikhon's Monastery a place where the authentic spirit and culture of repentance has been firmly implanted by holy men.

When speaking of repentance, the way of the cross, or following the commandments of Christ—for, as we have seen these terms are synonymous with one another¹⁰—the Fathers place a special emphasis on the importance of obedience, by which they refer not so much to an outward discipline as to the laying aside—or sacrifice—of one's own will in order to learn the will of God.

This, as we all know, is by no means an easy task, especially in our self-confident modern times. Archimandrite Sophrony explains why: "The educated man of the present day, with his developed critical approach, is incomparably less fitted for the ascetic exercise of obedience than the man of a simple turn of mind who is not seduced by intellectual curiosity. The cultured man, enamored of his own critical intelligence, which he is accustomed to consider his principal dignity and the one solid foundation of his 'personal' life, has to renounce this wealth of his before becoming a novice, or it will be difficult for him to enter the Kingdom."¹¹

The age-old tradition of the Church teaches us that none of us is capable of discerning the will of God by ourselves, however, and therefore we all require the advice and guidance of an experienced fellow-Christian, of one who is at least a little further along the path of salvation than we are—a spiritual father. Indeed, asks St. Theodore the Studite (759—826), "What is more to be desired than a true father—a father-in-God?"¹² Such a man, says Symeon the New Theologian (949—

¹⁰Based on a homily "On the Passions of the Lord" given by Hieromonk Zacharias, in the Chapel of St. Silouan, Stavropegic Monastery of St. John the Baptist, Great Lent, 1984.

¹¹Sophrony, "Principles of Orthodox Asceticism," p. 273.

³*Idem*, *Saint Silouan the Athonite* (1991), pp. 347-348.

⁴PG lxxxviii, 680C; found in Sophrony, "Principles of Orthodox Asceticism," tr. from the Russian by Rosemary Edmonds and reprinted from *The Orthodox Ethos: Studies in Orthodoxy*, vol. 1, edited by A. J. Philippou (Oxford: Holywell Press, 1964), p. 273.

1022), is found by persistently beseeching God to guide us to one capable of shepherding us well. And once found, he should be obeyed, just as though he were God Himself, even when his advice seems harmful to us and appears to go against our better judgment.¹³

"I know of monks," says St. Antony the Great, "who fell after much toil and lapsed into madness, because they trusted in their own work and neglected the commandment that says: 'Ask your father, and he will tell you'" (Deut. 32:7).¹⁴ And St. Symeon also warns us of this danger when he insists that it is "better to be called a disciple of a disciple and not to live according to the fashion of one's own style of life, gathering up the unprofitable fruits of one's own will."¹⁵

It is certainly true that Abba Dorotheus of Gaza (sixth century) teaches that if one truly wishes to learn the will of God, God will reveal His will to such a person even when there is no guide to be found, even, for instance, from the lips of a child. But the same holy father, quoting Proverbs, also states that "those who have no guidance fall like leaves but there is safety in much counsel" (Prov. 11:14). "We need assistance," he urges, "we need guidance in addition to God's grace";¹⁶ and he adds, "I know of no fall that happens to a monk that does not come from trusting his own judgment. Some say, 'A man falls because of this, or because of that,' but I say, and I repeat, I do not know of any fall happening to anyone [please note here the words, "to anyone"] except from this cause." "Do you know someone who has fallen?" asks Dorotheus, "Be sure that he directed himself."¹⁷

So, then, we ought to be humble and realistic enough to seek advice and guid-

ance from a spiritual father. It should be noted, however, that the personal relationship between spiritual father and child is an extremely subtle one, requiring much caution and attention. In the *Admonition of the Father to his Son*, a text from Kievan Russia (?eleventh century), we read the following words of advice:



"I show you, my son, true refuges—monasteries, the houses of the saints: have recourse to them and they will comfort you; shed your sorrows before them and you will be gladdened: for they are sons of sorrowlessness and know how to comfort you, sorrowing one . . . In the city where you are living or in other neighboring towns seek a God-fearing man—and serve him with all your strength. Having found such a man, you need grieve no more; you have found the key to the Kingdom of Heaven; adhere to him with soul and body; observe his life, his walking sitting, looking, eating, and examine all his habits; first of all, my son, keep his words, do not let one of them fall to the ground; they are more precious than pearls—the words of the saints."¹⁸

By sacrificing his own will, by not yielding to vainglory (*kenodoxia*), sluggishness (*okneria*) or apathy (*rathymia*), and by eagerly doing those things which he is advised, the disciple may be saved.¹⁹

Now let us conclude these brief and humble observations with a quotation taken again from Silouan the Athonite:

"Do not murmur, O children of God, because you find life difficult. Only wrestle with sin and entreat help from the Lord, and He will hearken, for He is full of compassion and loves us.

"O, all ye peoples, I weep as I pen these lines. My soul's desire is that you should know the Lord and contemplate His mercy and glory. I am an old man of seventy-two years and must shortly die, and I write to you of the Lord's mercy that He gave me to know by the Holy Spirit; and the Holy Spirit taught me to love the people. Would that I could set you on a high mountain, that from the height thereof you might behold the gentle and compassionate countenance of the Lord, that your hearts would rejoice. Verily I tell you: I find no good in me, only many sins, but the grace of the Holy Spirit has effaced the multitude of my sins, and I know that to the man who wrestles against sin the Lord grants, not only forgiveness but likewise the grace of the Holy Spirit, Who brings joy to the soul and a profound, sweet peace."²⁰

At the ancient close of the Liturgy, the Priest says "Let us depart in peace." Now as Archimandrite Kyrill (Abbot of the Monastery of St. John the Baptist in Essex, England), explains,²¹ it is clear from the New Testament that the word "peace" can only refer to the person of Christ, Who is Himself the only true peace. And so when we bear this in mind we begin to understand that the Priest is in fact exhorting the faithful to "depart in Christ." That is to say, that it is our responsibility as Christians, once we have received Christ at the Divine Liturgy, through the Holy Eucharist, not to forget the things of God at the Church doors as we leave, but to take Christ with us out into the world, thereby witnessing by our very way of life that we are His disciples. And how do we ensure that we take Christ with us? By continually calling upon His holy Name: "Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon me (a sinner)."

—Dr. Christopher Veniamin, Prof. of Patristics, St. Tikhon's Seminary

¹²Found in Bishop Kallistos T. Ware's article, "The Spiritual Father in St. John Climacus and St. Symeon the New Theologian," *Studia Patristica* xviii, 2 (1989), 299. Also reprinted as the Foreword in the study made by Irénée Hausherr, entitled *Spiritual Direction in the Early Christian East*, Cistercian Studies Series: no. 116, tr. Anthony P. Gythiel (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1990), p. vii.

¹³From my own "The Transfiguration of Christ in Greek Patristic Literature: From Irenaeus of Lyons to Gregory Palamas" (Oxford D. Phil. thesis, 1991), p. 241 (hereafter cited as Veniamin, "Transfiguration").

¹⁴*Apophthegmata*, Alphabetical collection, Antony 37 and 38 (PG 65: 88B); Ware, "The Spiritual Father in St. John Climacus and St. Symeon the New Theologian," op. cit., 300, n. 11.

¹⁵Veniamin, "Transfiguration," loc. cit.

¹⁶"On the need for Consultation: That a man ought not to rely on his own judgment," *Dorotheos of Gaza: Discourses and Sayings*, Cistercian Studies Series, no. 33, tr. Eric P. Wheeler (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1977), p. 122.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 126.

¹⁸Ware, "The Spiritual Father in St. John Climacus and St. Symeon the New Theologian," op. cit., 301.

¹⁹Veniamin, "Transfiguration," loc. cit.

²⁰*Saint Silouan the Athonite*, p. 345.

²¹Archimandrite Kyrill, "Homily on Bringing up Our Children in the Church," Chapel of St. Silouan the Athonite, December 13, 1992.

Parish Renewal: Death, Grieving, and Resurrection

There are several enduring memories, moments that have defined my life as a priest. One was walking into my first church on my first Pascha. There was another, and one that has crystallized my fundamental orientation to the Church and my life as a priest. Lying in bed after two weeks in my first parish, and reading the list of parishioners and explanatory comments left as a legacy by the previous pastor, I literally jumped up with a stark realization, "If I lose three or four key people or ten or twenty of anybody, this parish is closed." I felt it was my responsibility to do everything possible to prevent that, and I've been responding to this challenge for twenty years.

In a parish of thirty or thirty-five families and approximately eighty to ninety people, I could count on about thirty people—to work, to contribute, to attend, ultimately, to be the core of support to keep the parish going. Three years later, in a parish of 75 to 80 families and 120 to 130 people, I could count, again, on about 30 to 35 people. The big surprise came thirteen years later with 150 to 175 families and 300 to 350 people, it was the same core of about 30 to 40 people. The names and faces changed, but the dedicated, committed, and loyal core seemed to be about the same size, enough to survive and occasionally thrive. But, as the years wore on, repeated observations and patterns began to emerge.

One thing, new parishioners and converts were a blessing. Sometimes they came as the result of a lot of hard work and pastoral care, usually they were a gift from God. Numerically, converts and newborn baptisms kept pace with the numbers of those lovingly laid to rest. However, Bishop John Martin used to observe that births and converts had to outnumber deaths three to one to ensure survival. This is the demographic rule, and it makes

sense. One birth to negate one death, two more to allow for replacement in the next generation. Another thing, the old-world piety and fierce sense of loyalty and responsibility to the Church were aspects of the persons and parishes that were slowly and irreplaceably being lost. I mistakenly thought that the biggest problem with numerical erosion was a function of location. All the young people naturally moved out of the coal fields of southwestern Pennsylvania and northern West Virginia, and Morgantown, particularly, was not a stronghold of Slavic ethnicity or Orthodox presence. But, I discovered in north New Jersey in the New York metropolitan area, that the same rules prevailed. The majority of young people moved, and key parishioners, even in middle age with secure jobs in big companies were subject to transfer, seriously hurting the parish with their loss. The way our culture organizes the talents and abilities of people very simply causes a great deal of mobility. The net result, however, is at best a modest growth, more likely a slow deterioration, and at worst, a rapid decline in our parish rolls. Naturally, there are exceptions. Parishes in the suburbs, rather than the inner city, of large and expanding metropolitan areas with broadly diversified economies, often exhibit healthy growth. There are many truly exceptional priests, gifted in winning converts, and their parishes grow.

But on the whole, and it is on the whole that such things must be considered, more than enough of us share another experience I had about ten years ago. Because of weather and a variety of circumstances, on a particular Sunday, I had more parishioners hospitalized in intensive care units than I had in Sunday School. For me, that was one of these now famous "wake-up calls." It's also a situation with a fundamental dichotomy. You can't focus and



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spend time and energy on outreach when you have that much crisis, loss, and grief to handle at the same time. The need to live and grow, in a very immediate way, can be overwhelmed by the responsibilities to the sick, dying, and grief-stricken, which becomes the focus of time and energy.

This experience, however, led me to some insight, a different perspective, and ultimately, a constructive way of dealing with the situation. The insight was this: death, of course, is a part of life. But, if our "parish life" is a real thing, then death must be part of it as well. Far from the ultimate closing of a parish, there are cycles and seasons, all related to the way our people live and move, come into the world and return to the Lord. The connection made was between personal death and communal death. The perspective was that we can look at ourselves objectively and realize that as we observe decline in our parishes and can see no reasonable positive outcome for the future, we are in a situation of death and dying, of loss, and of grieving.

Whenever we deal with this experience, death and loss, personally and pastorally, we often use the book by Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, *On Death and*

Dying. Virtually everyone is familiar with the conclusions of this book. It is my contention that most often, we do not recognize that we are in a grieving situation about the conditions in our parishes, and consequently, we do not cope with this situation in effective, constructive, or satisfying ways. Further, the ways that we deal with our unrecognized grief lead to even more frustration, guilt, and continuing dissatisfaction.

Once again, the grieving situation is simply this: death and dying in our deeply loved churches. I must emphasize, there can be different cycles and levels involved. From the wholesale catastrophic decline leading to a parish closing, to slow erosion, to perhaps the moving away of our promising young students or a few heavily involved and dynamic families, we experience loss, and grieve for our parishes. In response to this experience, both individually, and I propose, collectively, we exhibit emotions, attitudes, and behavior patterns in the "stages" identified by Dr. Kubler-Ross: Denial, and Isolation, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, and Acceptance.

I know this is a highly confrontational, and therefore controversial contention. The natural response is *Denial*. Yet, very simply, the numbers are there—on the parish rolls, the seminary classes, publication mailing lists, the crowds at pilgrimages and other gatherings. Rationally, we cannot deny these facts, even as they are often too painful to realize consciously and emotionally. Thus, the denial shields us from the painful consideration of this experience and allows us to pursue personal and parish life on a daily basis. Again, most often we do not deny the fact of decline or deterioration outright. But, we avoid dealing with it emotionally by offering a variety of evasions. For example, often in the church, we tend to idealize and even "spiritualize" our problems. Resoundingly and most definitely, I assert that this is not wrong. We must pursue ideals, we must seek the spiritual in all things in life. But, in this particular context, are we really seeking ideals? Are we really being spiritual? Or, are we merely avoiding and denying painful realities.

We avoid dealing with it emotionally by offering evasions like the "quantity vs. quality" argument. Put simply, we may not

have as many or as much, but we are better educated and more spiritually advanced. (Personally, I think it is very interesting to contrast the education and spirituality of today's parishioner—or priest—with the piety and faith of the old-timers. I'm not saying one is better than the other, only that we can learn a lot by considering the differences). Very often, we also take refuge in the "look how far we've come, and how good we have it now compared to the old days" stories. Yet, the Gospel challenges us to return a hundredfold. Looking how far we've come often takes the form of focusing on our beautiful church buildings, and they most certainly are. But, we haven't been able to keep up with the shifts in population over the last two generations as our people no longer cluster around industries like coal, steel, and manufacturing that have waned themselves and continually dissolve into communities where because of lack of numeric concentration we find it difficult to build and maintain churches in our accustomed style. This often leaves churches that are fossilized remnants of formerly burgeoning parish communities. Often these "fossil" churches are heated by the fossil fuels that are paid for by "fossil" funds, savings and trusts that are depleted with each season.

Please permit a brief digression. There was an article entitled *The Shakers' Brief Eternity* in the September 1989 issue of *National Geographic*. The Shakers were a Protestant sect founded by a woman named Ann Lee in England and they were coming to America around 1774. Two of their basic tenets were strict celibacy and community life, something like a co-ed monastic community. They flourished in the early 1800s, growing by converts "signing the covenant" rather than by natural propagation. They did not die out in one generation, but grew to about 4,400 members by 1845 with about twenty-five communities. Their spirituality, charity, industry, and above all, antique furniture are famous. In fact, it was the antique furniture and the assets accumulated in land and properties that kept the members of the sect well taken care of in 1989. At that time, with trust funds in the millions (one Shaker chair sold for a record \$80,000, a candlestand for \$140,000), there were two Shakers left in one community, nine in

only one other; of the eleven Shakers, seven ranged in age from sixty to ninety-two. The two communities did not speak to each other. They were in fundamental disagreement on whether or not to allow new members. One wanted to close the book, die quietly, and allow the ideals, values, and spirit of the group to live on in a different way. The other wanted to take on new members as appropriate. They could not agree, and broke communication. A sad story, but there is certainly a resonance with some of the ways that we behave in terms of cooperation and communication, and certainly under much less duress. Denial and isolation is definitely a behavior pattern we experience in our parishes on a whole range of issues, but especially in terms of dealing with decline and need for renewal.

The next stage is *Anger*. Give it a moment's thought and down through the years you could make the case that anger is one of our characteristic traits. One word—meeting. Two words—Annual Meeting. As kids we used to sit in the balcony of the Russian Club Hall just dying to see the show and replaying choice lines for months afterwards. Gossip, parish and diocesan politics, endemic lay anticlericalism, clerical antipathy to episcopal authority, power struggles between priest and parish councils. We've always had plenty of anger to go around. But, in the context of decline it often takes the form of "blaming." As if one priest, one conflict, one incident could be the cause of all our problems, and being magically designated as such, the problems would vanish. Except, they don't, and the anger remains, festers, and causes further alienation and deterioration. Maybe instead of placing blame on bishops, priests, lay people, each other, we should realize that we—all of us—deeply love our Church, that our anger is simply a measure of the intense devotion and desire for good that we have, and that what we really need is not to place blame, but to respect and understand each other and just get along.

The next stage is *Bargaining*. If you've been around long enough, you can see a bargaining pattern. It can very easily be traced to the thematic development of diocesan and National Church Councils. We are always looking for, or have just dis-

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covered the new theme or personality, the obvious cure for what's wrong. New buildings and institutions, new approaches to stewardship and funding, mission work, outreach, educational programs and materials, pleas for prayer, demands for discipline, longings for liturgical rigor, clarion calls to scripture reading, sacramental piety, and personal spirituality weave in and out of vogue as the ways to right everything. Identifying these noble and worthy endeavors as bargaining mechanisms in no way demeans their intrinsic truth and worthiness. Nor does it



demean the sincere efforts of all of us who continually undertake them to the best of our ability. These things become bargaining mechanisms only when we develop the attitude that if we would do this or that, more and more, with better and better spirit, our problems would be over. As such, we falsely predicate the resolution of grief-causing deterioration upon ourselves and our actions. Like the terminal cancer patient, we bear only a limited power to control, forestall, or postpone, which in the face of death is no power at all. All we accomplish by undertaking these efforts in the "bargaining attitude" or spirit is to set ourselves up for further frustration and disappointment. In an Orthodox Church sense, such things as building, missionary work, outreach, education, prayer, discipline, worship, Scripture, Sacraments, and spirituality—all this and much more—are ways of life undertaken

all and in part for the glory of God, not to "solve" our perceived problems and frustrations.

The irresistible force of the love we have for our parishes meeting the innumerable immovable objects frustrating growth provides the elements for the classic response of *Depression*. The energy consumed in *Denial*, *Bargaining*, and *Anger* is now focused inward and dissolves in a deep personal sense of loss and sadness. It may, as with the stage of *Anger*, be helpful to consider that depression can be seen objectively as a response to intense love being frustrated by unfulfilling circumstances over long periods of time.

Viewed from this perspective, we can realize that the effects of *Depression* can also be a measure of both the degree of love and the degree of frustration. This realization may be more helpful in working through the *Depression* stage of grieving than drinking even more deeply from the cups of guilt in ascribing our moods to laziness or lack of faith. As a side-note, the whole issue of burnout may also be reexamined on a personal basis for these elements of the grieving process. As Emerson said, "We build our character in the débris of our despair."

The final stage of grieving for declining churches is *Acceptance*. It is not a happy thing. But it is also not sad, bitter, or hopeless resignation. *Acceptance* in this sense, as a response to our grieving situation, is coming to terms with reality. The only difference with the *Acceptance* stage on the personal or familial level in Dr.

Kubler-Ross's *On Death and Dying* is the duration of this stage. As pastors, we face a career of diminishing expectations. Developing a healthy sense of acceptance may be what we need to assure ourselves that, indeed, despite the mocking evidence of deterioration, we are in fact fighting the good fight and courageously running the course. Do the right things, with the right spirit, let the Lord bless and be the Judge.

Death is part of life. Without death, there is no Resurrection. Closing of a parish may be the ultimate, but it certainly is not the only measure of loss and grief for the churches we love so dearly. Renewal in this sense is not a "bargaining" mechanism or one more cure-of-all-ills. It is the symbol of the Resurrection; how, by the grace of God, we as parish communities respond to a variety of challenges.

As a conclusion, I offer Kierkegaard's response to despair, which was our Lord's response to the illness of Lazarus: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby" (John 11:4). A friend once observed, "You only have to preserve things that are dead." Some things are always dying in our churches. Some things should. Superstition, power and personality politics, parochialism, anti-clericalism, authoritarianism, and a host of other negative traits could pass tomorrow and never be missed. Our Holy Orthodox Church will survive on this continent. But, beyond mere survival, there will be a continual process of dying, death, and resurrection wherein the facets of our churches that are true expressions of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit will blossom and burgeon with new vitality in robust, productive parish communities that will grow both in spirit and in numbers. This vision is offered more with an attitude of acceptance of present realities rather than vain or self-deluding hope. In a different sense of hope, I offer these thoughts to you, comparing the grieving process as defined by Dr. Kubler-Ross with what we may be feeling and acting out in response to the grief we have as we witness decline, loss, and death in our beloved parish communities.

—Priest Michael A. Kleban

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Church Renewal

“Behold, I Stand at the Door and Knock . . .”

To know what the Church really is and perhaps what it has become through constant struggling, we should not begin with the way it appears in a particular parish, or in some particular diocese, or in some particular country, or at some particular time or place in history; instead, we ought to study the way it is described to us by the Lord Himself in the Scriptures.

The first truth we must always remember is that the Church is not the building. We tend to think of the Church as the place in which we worship. That building, *naos* in Greek, should not be equated with the Church; it is the building that houses the Church. The Church is composed of men, women, and angels, “living stones,” in the words of St. Peter in his first Epistle (I Pet. 2:5). It is appropriate for Peter to say this, because Simon was called Peter which means “rock” by Jesus, Who called on him to become a “living rock placed on the ‘cornerstone’ which is Christ Himself” (I Pet. 2:6-7).

The Church is the “assembly” of all disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. The word comes from *ekklesia*, which in ancient Athens denoted the citizens’ assembly. It is the People of God—all together—faithful, clergy and their bishop—where “Christ is in our midst.” Since the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit creates the Church . . . He transforms an assembly of believers into a place where Christ is present. The words of Jesus: “Amen, amen, I say to you, where two or three are gathered in My Name, there I am in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20).

St. Irenaeus tells us, “Where the Church is, there also is the Spirit of God, and where the Spirit of God is, there also is the Church and all its grace.” St. Cyprian of Carthage writes, “The Church is One, even though the number of churches is constantly growing as she becomes more fertile. There are many churches but only

One Church.”

St. Athanasius, the great champion of Orthodoxy, writes, “The Body of Christ to which Christians are united through Baptism is the source of our salvation.” Against those glowing words a chronic charge is often hurled against the Church. Someone will say, “When I go to Liturgy, I see people blessing themselves over and over again, praying on and on, and then when they walk out of that building, they say horrible things about their neighbors.” Or, when parents come home, they let their children hear criticisms against the priest. How can the world believe that Christ is living, and living in the Church, if the assembly is full of hypocrisy? Indeed, the Fathers tell us, the Church is disfigured by our sins, by our pettiness, by our crimes, by our spitting, by those who belong to it, your sins and my sins. And yet Christ remains in the Church and the Spirit hovers over it.

If we had been in Jerusalem on Holy Friday when Pontius Pilate presented to the crowd Christ, the Son of God, covered with blood and spit, we would have looked and found Him repulsive. Indeed, this is how the Prophet Isaiah described the Suffering Messiah: “. . . Many were astonished at Him—His appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance . . . He was despised and rejected by men . . . and as one from whom men hide their faces” (Isa. 52:14; 53:3) As His face was marked by all the ugliness of the world; in spite of how the spitting of men disfigured Him—He remained the same Christ, the only Holy One of God.

So the Church remains “Emmanuel”—“God with us”—the God Who consents to be present among sinners, and publicans



Fr. Michael Dahulich

and harlots. It is not for those who are well, but for those who are sick, who need healing that Jesus would say He came, when He was criticized for sitting down at the table of sinners like you and me. We are the Church in spite of our sins. Christ makes it so. What we need to do is to renew our relationship, our fellowship with Him, and not with those sins. In that effort the Scripture calls upon the Church to become two dominant images that I set before you tonight: the Bride of Christ, and the Body of Christ.

The Church as the Bride of Christ

Let’s look at the Church as the Bride of Christ. In the Old Testament, God is depicted as the Bridegroom of His People. This theme was especially developed by the prophet Hosea. He described the characteristics that united God and Israel, a foreshadowing of what will unite Christ to the Church. St. Paul emphasizes this continuity that exists between “Israel according to the flesh” (I Cor. 10: 1-8) and the “Israel Of God” (Gal. 6:16).

This is what Yahweh said to His People: “And I will betroth you to Myself forever; I will betroth You to Me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy. I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness and you shall know the Lord” (Hos. 2:19-20)

Even though Israel, the Bride, betrayed her Lord, He does not cease to love her

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Church Renewal

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with divine tenderness, to correct her, to draw her back to Himself, and to sanctify her with His love. (Hos. 11: 3-4; 8-9).

In the Gospels, Jesus speaks of the Bridegroom, of Himself as the Bridegroom. In the parable of the Wedding Feast (Matt. 22:1-54), the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a wedding feast that a King arranged for His son. All was ready, but those invited were not worthy. So others, from the highways and byways, were invited. The feast is not limited to a chosen people; both good and bad are called. All are invited to union with God Who desires, in the words of St. Paul to Timothy, that "all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2: 4).

We are all familiar with the analogy: the King is God, the Son is our Lord, the chosen—the guests—are the Jewish people, and from the highways and the byways the Gentiles were called. In this parable the Bride is represented here by all the guests. They are asked to wear special wedding clothes. One guest came in and did not—and was cast into the outer darkness.

What is this wedding garment? From the Expositation of the Bridegroom Matins: "Your bridal chamber, O my Saviour, I see adorned, and I have no wedding garment that I may enter. O Giver of Light, enlighten the vesture of my soul and save me."

We must obtain a "robe of light" for the marriage of the Bridegroom to the Bride. This robe of light is a gift from God—the gift of the Holy Spirit—Who is given freely to those who put their faith and trust in Christ. Through this gift we become members of the Church and are able to enter into the intimacy of the wedding chamber. We need to renew the purity of that garment.

Salvation is the conjugal union of believers, even those who had been "wicked," with Christ God, their beloved King. The union is celebrated at a feast, a banquet, a heavenly supper. We partake at the table of the Kingdom when we participate in the "Mystical Supper," when we commune the very Body and Blood of our Lord during the Divine Liturgy. That Liturgy celebrates the union of love between Christ and His people.

On this parable, St. John Chrysostom comments: "Why is this called a marriage? One may say: that you might learn God's tender care. His yearning towards us, the cheerfulness of the state of things, that there is nothing sorrowful there, nor sad, but all things are full of spiritual joy . . . Remember, you are bidden to a marriage, and to God's marriage no less. Consider how the soul that is bidden ought to enter into those chambers, clad and decked with fringes of gold . . ." And, "Remember it is not possible at the same time to deck both the soul and the body. It is not possible at the same time both to serve mammon, and to obey Christ as we ought . . ." The parable of the Bridegroom calls upon us to be faithful to Him, to be steadfast in the Truth that He has left us in His Church.



In the twenty-fifth chapter of the Matthew's Gospel, the Lord tells another parable, the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25 1-13). In this parable, the Bridegroom of the Church is late in coming. Ten virgins go to meet Him, but five are foolish and they fall asleep without having procured for themselves enough oil. St. Seraphim of Sarov tells us, "These virgins did accomplish many good works, but in their spiritual ignorance, they supposed that the essence of the Christian way of life consisted merely in doing good works. By doing a good deed, they thought they were doing the work of God; yet they gave no thought to whether their good deed acquired for them the grace of God's Spirit." In short, they failed to acquire the Holy Spirit!

Christ, the Bridegroom, will indeed return at the end of time. But we do not know the day or the hour; therefore we should be prepared to meet the Beloved at all times. The lamps of our hearts should always shine with the luminous presence

of the Holy Spirit. Let us seek this holy presence and cherish it more than any material thing. In the words of St. Paul to the Colossians, "What good is it to gain the whole world if we lose Christ who is our life?" (Col. 3:4).

If we are not prepared by the faithfulness of our souls to Christ, the door will be closed to us, as it was to the foolish virgins, despite their plea, "Lord, Lord . . ." "But now what do we learn from this parable?" Chrysostom asks, "That no man can protect us, if we are betrayed by our works . . ."

Hosea described God as the Bridegroom of His people, Israel. In His parables on the Church, Jesus reveals that He is the long-awaited Bridegroom, and in St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, the

Church is identified for the first time as the Bride of Christ.

Here Paul speaks of the Mystery of the Church. The Church is one flesh with Christ. No new idea, the Song of Songs prophesied it. We are not linked to Christ as individuals, but must together "attain to the unity of the faith" and in this unity do we realize "the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). In other words, St. Paul teaches that we are called to a double unity—unity with each other and unity with Christ. One cannot be a Christian alone. God cannot "know" us in the sense that a man "knows" a woman, outside the community of the Church. Together we constitute the Church—the Bride of Christ—together we become one flesh with Christ.

The two great commandments of the Old Testament, from Deuteronomy and Leviticus, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your soul, and all your strength and you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Deut. 6:5; Lev.

19:18; cf. Matt. 22:37,39) are expressed in their ultimate fullness in the marriage of Christ to His Church. This is the will of the Lord, St. Paul writes, "that He might present the Church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27). This is the work of renewal. He knows that she has not yet attained this state. The creation of the Church through the Word and the Spirit will be completed only at the end of time (Rev. 21: 1-4, 9-11, 22-23).

In spite of all the sins and all the failures of her members, the Church becomes truly herself, is transformed into the heavenly Jerusalem of Revelation, through the love of her Creator. He ceaselessly makes her grow by instructing her in His Word and by pouring out the purifying and life-giving grace of the Holy Spirit upon her.

Chrysostom comments again: "Yes, a marriage it is, not of passion, nor of the flesh, but wholly spiritual, the soul being united to God by a union unspeakable, and which He alone knows. Therefore, he (St. Paul) says 'He who is joined unto the Lord is one' (I Cor. 6: 17) . . . here he has called Christ and the Church a bride and bridegroom . . ." From the Book of Hosea, to the words of our Lord, and in the example of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians, we are called to the Holy Marriage, and this means we must be faithful to the Spouse to whom we are betrothed. All that He shares with us intimately—truth, sacraments, the grace of the Holy Spirit—these we must guard, cherish, and preserve until that day Revelation speaks of.

The Church as the Body of Christ

St. Paul also tells us that the Church is the Body of Christ. This analogy appears in I Corinthians, in Ephesians and in Colossians (I Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). He means that the Church is the mystical embodiment of believers in the cosmic Body of the Risen Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

You remember well that an attempt was made to destroy Jesus's body by nailing Him to the Cross, and forty years later the Temple of Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman armies. The only temple, the only place where the true worshipers of the Father assemble, is the Body of the Risen Lord (John 4:23). In the same epistle, St.

Paul delineates the various gifts of each member and the roles we play in "building up the Body of Christ." In chapter 12 he writes, "Now you are the Body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the Church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various tongues . . . Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?" (I Cor. 12:27-30). He goes on to compare the Church to a physical body, with various members, with various organs. Not everyone is one organ or the other. Imagine, St. Paul says, that each part of the body could speak. Could the eye say to the hand or the head to the feet, "I don't need you"? All the parts of the body are interdependent, each one needs the others. If one of the parts is ill, the whole body suffers together. And if a part works well, the body as a whole profits from it. In the same ways we are all united to each other and to Christ within the Church. If any member does or thinks evil, even unwittingly, the whole body, the entire Church suffers from it. If anyone has a good thought or prays sincerely in the privacy of his room, or publicly at the Liturgy, the whole Church, and all its members are healed by it.

"So likewise it happens in the Church," so writes St. John Chrysostom. "I mean, if there be any celebrated persons, the community reaps the good report of it. For the enemies are not apt to divide the praises, but to connect them together. And if any be brilliant in speech, they do not praise him alone, but likewise the whole Church. For they do not say only, 'Such a one is a wonderful man,' but what? 'The Christians have a wonderful teacher': and so they make the possession common."

One can understand how the Church is the Body of Christ best by eating the Bread which is itself the Body of Christ. When we commune of the sanctified bread and wine, then, by communing of the Body and Blood of Christ, Jesus's followers become themselves the Body of Christ, the Church. St. Irenaeus uses the following image to illustrate this truth. Just as water absorbs many grains of flour to make a single loaf of bread, so the Holy Spirit gathers the faithful to create a single body, the Body of Christ. The Mystical Supper, the Divine Liturgy, is the laboratory of the

Church. It is here that the God of our Fathers molds the assembly of His children, the Eucharistic assembly, using His two hands—the Word and the Spirit—to create a single loaf of bread, the Body of Christ—to create the Church.

And so what have we learned about the Church from the Scriptures? About the renewal of the Church? We know that we must be faithful to the Bridegroom, Christ our Lord; that is, we must be steadfast in all that He has handed down to us, and in all that He has shared with us. Second, we must use our God-given talents, whatever they be, as singers, workers, cooks, deacons, priests, bishops, expressly for the "building up of the Body of Christ." And lastly, in all that we do, we must always seek to fulfill the ultimate possession given to us, the acquisition of the Most Holy Spirit.

St. Paul basically tells us the same thing in Ephesians, chapter 2: "You are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in Whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in Whom you are also built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Holy Spirit" (Eph. 2:19-22).

One of the basic concepts in this quote from Ephesians is the term "the household of God." It is a basic concept of the Church: in Jesus's own words, "Where two or three are gathered in My Name . . ." In the early days, in the first formative years of the Church, the Church—the people of God—met in the homes of individuals. The Greek word *oikia* (household) is the Church in the home. From this comes *par-oikia* (a parish)—the Church in community. From this also comes *di-oikia* (diocese)—the local Church. And finally, we get *oik-oumene*—ecumene—the whole Church. Now remember, the Church is One, St. Cyprian already said that. Not parts of a whole—but whole in its locale. What I would like to do is make a checklist of renewal of the Church, not on a personal level, but on the level of the home, parish, diocese and national and international levels of "Church," keeping in mind our goals of renewal from the

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Church Renewal

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teachings of the Scripture: steadfastness to the faith, giving of one's service and acquiring the Holy Spirit.

The Home—The Church in Miniature

All of you are familiar with the picture of Jesus knocking at a door without a handle. In the Book of Revelation we read the words of the Lord in His vision to St. John, "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with Me" (Rev. 3:20). We often use this figuratively of the Lord speaking to the door of our soul, but let's use this metaphor literally: let's make it the door of our home. If Christ were knocking at the door of our home, would we let Him in—and what would He find?

Think about your house: the knock comes. The Lord stands there, just as He did at the house of Zacchaeus, and at the entry Hall—we must make the decisive choice to "let Him in." Do you make Him feel welcome—are you joyous at His coming? Or are you somewhat uncomfortable in His presence?

We take Him to our living room—the main room of the house—where the most time is spent. Will He find an icon corner there? Will He enjoy the TV or videos that we bring from the store, the music that our children listen to? Will He enjoy the same magazines that are in the rack?

We take Him to the dining room—the site of our appetites. Will He find the moderation in food and drink in our daily lives that His Word describes? Will He find us fasting according to the prescriptions of His Church?

Let's take Him to the bedroom—we spend about thirty years of life sleeping. But other things take place in the bedroom. Jesus wants to be the Head of our lives, and when He comes there He will look at whether we are faithful to our spouses . . . even though hair turns gray, and lines of wrinkles wear on the face, and there are potbellies and weak ankles! Are we faithful to our spouse? And if we are single, do we practice chastity? Are we pure in the practice of the Word of God that teaches that sex outside of marriage is always WRONG?

Let's take Him to the library. Will He

find us reading the Scriptures, the Fathers, books on our Faith, or things incompatible with it? When we send our children to college, we throw them into an arena, a battle of ideologies: creation vs. evolution, truth vs. opinion, Spirit vs. materialism, the commandments of the Lord vs. pleasures of the flesh, the "folly" of the Cross vs. the wisdom of the world. Will we have armed them with the Truth from the library of our home?

All of you will shudder to think that there is a junk room—will we share that with Him? Our darkest secrets, our trash, our garbage. This is the hardest room of all perhaps to open up to the Lord. We need His Light to shine in on the darkness. Lent is the time to spring clean that junk room with the help of the Lord, in Confession.

What about the office: are we doing business in a Christian way? Are we being honest in our every endeavor? There are few people who embezzle money, but many people "permanently borrow" the paper clips. We must let the Lord be our CEO—not just from 10 to 12 on Sunday, but in every deal that we undertake. Do we practice stewardship? Do we practice tithing? What does He tell us in Malachi: "Bring tithes into the treasury . . . Put me to the test, says the Lord of Hosts, and see if I do not open the windows of Heaven and pour a blessing on you" (Mal. 3:10-11).

Finally there is the basement—the lowest moments of our life: our fears and doubts. A marriage on the rocks, the apostasy of a child, the death of a loved one—Jesus is here to tell us that God is with us even in the basement of our lives: "If I descend down to Hades, He is there." In our bleakest, darkest moments He says, "I will never, not ever, no never forsake you." If you feel uncomfortable in taking the Lord on this tour of your home, in letting Him share days at a time of our lifestyle, then we need to renew and purify our homes as miniature churches.

Our homes should be miniature churches where we pray each day in the morning, at meals and before bedtime. We need to pray together as a family, read the Bible together as a family, observe the fasts as a family, set aside time to meditate, to remember our sins and repent, to make peace with one another, to plan our goals, to chart our future, with Christ as

the head of our household.

What does the Bible say: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is One Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise" (Deut. 6:3-7).

"And you shall teach them diligently to your children"—not in public school, not in Sunday School, not even in Church. "You shall teach them diligently to your children . . . in your house," says the Word of God. Only in this way can we renew the sense of family, the sense of the Church in miniature, the sense of the Church in our household.

The Church on the Parish Level

Let's apply the same metaphor here—Christ knocking on the door of our parish churches. He comes into the vestibule, will we let Him in? Will we welcome Him? Even though He is Jewish by birth, and not a Slav? Do we greet visitors and strangers in His Name?

The nave. Are we in Church for every Sunday Liturgy? Will He find us praying, confessing our sins with tears of repentance? Singing the Liturgy, listening to the words of the Epistle, the Gospel, and the sermon? Or, will He find us watching the clock, more concerned with the world? Will he find that we attend Vespers on Saturdays and holy day vigils? Will He find our whole family, especially our children, in the nave with us?

We see the beautiful Sanctuary where He mystically is present. Do we approach the Mystery of Holy Communion often? Do we come as worthily as possible having been cleansed by Holy Confession? Are we always spiritually prepared? Do we know the particular traditions of each feast and fast? Do we love the House of the Lord, and does it show?

Either downstairs or in the hall—Do we gather together after services for the coffee-social hour? Do we really share in the fellowship? Do we make visitors and guests feel welcome? Or, is it an opportunity for us to be critical of others? Do we succumb sometimes to gossip or slander?

Let's take Him to the Sunday School. Do we bring our children to the established program each week? Do we have enough good teachers? The best in textbooks and supplemental materials? Are the youth of the parish really a priority? Do we see them as the future of the Church? Do we also have adult programs of education? Bible study? Catechumen classes?

Let's take the Lord to the parish kitchen. Besides making pirohi, do we make friends and not enemies? Do we make new volunteer workers feel welcome? Are their ideas considered? Are their efforts appreciated? Have we rooted out that ugly gossip and criticism of others in those corners of the kitchen?



What about the parish council office? That income that they are counting, and has it been given proportionately for the building up of the Body of Christ? Are our officers good stewards of the parish's income? Perhaps they count money or do business during divine services? Do they authorize the expenditure of funds for the extension of the Kingdom of God here on this earth? That's a lofty call.

What about their meetings once a month? Does Christ feel at home in the spirit of those gatherings? Does His law of love pervade the session? Does the council earmark funds for various spiritual ministries? And let's not forget, do we raise money in a way compatible with Christ and His Gospel?

Let's not forget the annual meeting. Are we supporting the Diocese, the national Church, the Seminary, the Monastery and

the missions in a fair-share and generous way? Are we setting goals that reflect our high calling as Orthodox Christians? Are there attitudes towards our pastor, our Bishop, the Diocese, the Metropolitan, the national Church that betray our Baptism? Are we deserving of the praise given the Church at Philippi for supporting the Mother Church and the needs of the saints?

St. Paul told the Corinthian Church, "Let everything be done in good order." We need to make sure, as we renew the Church, that this is the case in our parish. Would Christ tell us, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been trustworthy in small matters; now you shall be placed in charge of the larger ones . . .

Enter into the joy of your Master!" (Matt. 25:21).

The Diocese as the Local Church

On the "local" level the Diocese is the Church. In the beginning of the second century, plagued with the death of the final apostle, St. John the Evangelist and Theologian, the Church was rocked with the question "How do you define the true Church? Where is the true Church, now that there are no apostles left?" St. Ignatius of Antioch tells them and us: "Where the Bishop is, let the people gather, for there is the catholic Church," the fullness of the Church.

So, the diocese, the Local Church, must have all of the necessary elements of the Church that Christ established—the lawful authority of the Bishop to teach, to dispense the Mysteries of the Faith (the Sac-

raments) and to administer the flock entrusted to him and to the pastors he so delegates. And so, we ask, is our Diocese promoting the building up of the Body of Christ, the growth of the Church? With educational programs like this one, with spiritual retreats, with educational publications? Is the Diocese reaching out to everyone in the fold—to the young (with its youth camps, and youth organization), but also to the elderly and the generation in their prime as well? Are we fully ministering to our own flock? Are we reaching out to the unchurched in Mission and Evangelism programs? Are we educating catechumens? Are we founding new parishes? Are we reaching out to the lost sheep of our own communities, those of our parishes who have fallen by the wayside for whatever reason? And are we reaching out to those who have never heard of the Orthodox Church or perhaps even the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ? Are vocations the priority of the Diocese? What are we doing to encourage young men and older men to become deacons and priests? Are we giving those altar boys a pat on the head? Are we helping to educate these future clergy? The bottom line: is the Seminary a line-item on our budgets? Also, we might ask, are we giving clergy salaries and necessary benefits to keep them in a manner befitting their service?

Do we gather as a Diocesan Family to affirm the truths of our Faith? To celebrate the Eucharist that makes us one? To join in the works of charity that reflect our love for God and fellow man? In essence, are we really being what we are supposed to be? Are we giving witness in a fallen world? Are we truly the Church, against which Jesus said the gates of hell will not prevail?

St. Ignatius wrote, nineteen centuries ago, "Indeed when you submit to the Bishop as you would to Jesus Christ, it is clear to me that you are living not in the manner of men but as Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that through faith in Him we might escape dying. It is necessary, therefore—and such is your practice, that you do nothing without the Bishop, and that you be subject also to the presbyters (the priests) as to the Apostles of Jesus Christ . . ." (*Trallians 2: 2-3*).

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Church Renewal

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For some of us renewal will be a necessity . . . for others it will mean a continuation of work well begun, a blessing of even greater gifts of God.

The Church on the Highest Levels

On the national level, there seems to be a preoccupation with a raging debate over whether or not, and if so, how do we become an or the "American" Church. I humbly submit that this is the wrong approach. What does it mean to be American? What can America give to our Church? Its art? Its music? Its philosophy? Its understanding of man? Its ethics? The very one thing for which the faithful flocked to these shores—freedom—has come to mean "a license" to do anything and everything. We need not concern ourselves with being an American Church. We need to concern ourselves with being the Orthodox Church in this country.

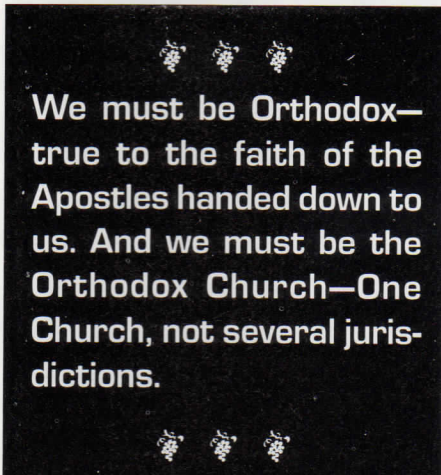
First we must be the Church, not an ethnic or cultural or social organization, but the Body of Christ. We must be Orthodox—true to the faith of the Apostles handed down to us. And we must be the Orthodox Church—One Church, not several jurisdictions. What happened in Ligonier must somehow live on! Our concern need not be how to make Orthodoxy "American"—our concern should be how to make America Orthodox!

And what about our relations with other churches, the ecumenical movement? I humbly also submit to you that there can be no dialogue with a so-called church that takes a divorced lesbian and makes her a Bishop. There can be no dialogue—no compromise—only a witness. We must witness to the truth of what the Church is supposed to be—that is our role in the National Council of Churches. And we must renew that every time we feel tempted to sit down and dicker. We must be a witness to those who sit in the darkness of ignorance of the truth or in the darkness of sin. Indeed we must be a witness to the faith handed down to us once for all.

Finally, on the international level: in 1961, President John F. Kennedy spoke of a man walking on the moon as a goal of NASA. That same year Patriarch Athenagoras spoke of a great Pan-Ortho-

dox Council or Synod of the entire Orthodox Church. Well, men have gone up and come back from the moon several times in the past thirty-five years; there has been no Council.

We cannot rightfully critique the Roman Church for its heretical ecclesiology, when we demonstrate to them none of our own. The "council" is the highest authority in our Church; and we need to have one—to gather Bishops from throughout the world together—to pray and concelebrate the Liturgy—to rightly define the word of God's Truth, and to resolve moral and canonical questions that need to be addressed. They are not resolved well by hiding behind pens and letters, but face to face, in open forum, where Ss. Athanasius and Nicholas triumphed. The Church needs to be herself.



**We must be Orthodox—
true to the faith of the
Apostles handed down to
us. And we must be the
Orthodox Church—One
Church, not several juris-
dictions.**

We all need to heed the words of Galatians to "Bear one another's burdens," and the analogy of I Corinthians: "If one member of the body is suffering pain, the whole Body suffers." If any one of our national churches is suffering, whether it is the Phanar at the hands of the Turks, Russia for seventy years under communist persecution, or Jerusalem the Holy City at the hands of unbelievers—if any part of the Church suffers—the rest of the Church should feel that suffering and come to its aid. For too long we have allowed ourselves to be pocketed along ethnic lines. If one member suffers, the whole body suffers.

What about the World Council of Churches and those various dialogues on the international levels? We must see ourselves as what we are—the True Church of Jesus Christ—the Faith given once for

all to the Apostles, transmitted by them and preserved by the Fathers. We say this zealously on the Sunday of Orthodoxy in the Synodikon of the seventh Ecumenical Council. But do we really believe it, do we really live it? Do we stand our ground against everyone else and say "ours is the Faith of the undivided Church of the first thousand years! We have not added a single thing to the deposit of Faith. We have not amputated anything from the Tradition given us. There can be no compromise—only witness." In an arena where someone dares to say that the Holy Spirit is one of many spirits—in such an arena there can be no compromise, only witness.

We must be faithful to the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ our Lord, and steadfast in the truth He has given us, in our homes, in our parishes, in our dioceses, in the greater Church. We must be willing to give of our time, talent and treasure in the service of His Church, for the extension of His Kingdom. Whatever we can do, we must do it for the Lord. And we must be about the greatest gift of all—acquiring the Most Holy Spirit.

In this year in which His Eminence, Archbishop Herman has called for renewal, I should like to propose that we make the patron saint of renewal, the saint who spoke these words: "In so far as this is what has been commanded you by the Holy Apostles—stand aright, hold firmly to the traditions which you have received, both written and by word of mouth, that you not be deprived of your firmness or become led away by the delusions of the lawless . . ."

Through the prayers of St. Mark of Ephesus, whose voice resounds across five hundred years, may we be true to the calling of the Church, and renew that calling in our lives—the calling of the Church which is Christ's very own Bride and Body, in which his most Holy Spirit dwells, so that as members of the Church we may be perfectly united with Christ and be recipients of the gift of his most Holy Spirit.

To God be the glory! Thank you.

—Archpriest Michael Dahulich
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St. John Chrysostom's Commentary on Psalm 120



*I have lifted up my eyes to the hills,
from whence my help will come.*

*My help comes from the Lord, who
made heaven and earth.*

*Give not your foot to moving, and let
not him who keeps you slumber.*

*Behold, he will neither slumber nor
sleep, he who keeps Israel.*

*The Lord will keep you; the Lord is
your shelter at your right hand*

*By day the sun will not burn you, nor
the moon by night.*

*The Lord will keep you from all evil;
the Lord will keep your soul.*

*The Lord will keep your coming in
and your going out, from henceforth, and
forevermore.*

Psalm 120 is the second psalm of the 18th kathisma, which is appointed to be read at Vespers on many days of the year, including days when the Presanctified Liturgy is served. Ps. 120 is also read at Midnight Office on all days except Sunday.

See here a soul perplexed and at a loss, as being amid evils, and looking to God, wishing to find consolation. Look again, at the triumph over temptations, and at the profit [from this], giving it wings and rousing it and making it seek to gain the help from above, and to cut off all earthly things. For if the Jews, who were dense and were attached to the earth from the sufferings of captivity¹ became, in this way, zealous and began looking to heaven, much more ought we—if we would be righteous—to do this amid difficulties, and flee to God for refuge—we of whom is required greater strictness than of them.

For at that time they were threatened by enemies in their midst, and there was for them no city, no wall, no tower, no implements of war, no human ally, no superiority of goods, nor any other such

¹ This psalm, like the others of this Kathisma (all of which are called the "Hymns of Ascents") was sung by the Hebrews while they were held captive in Babylon, and while they went on pilgrimages to Jerusalem.

² I.e., to approach it their misfortune with good grace and with a Christian demeanor, bearing up under it as might a philosopher or lover of wisdom or one striving to acquire virtue.

thing: they were living as prisoners and slaves in the midst of masters and foes. And being crushed by the magnitude of their misfortunes, they began to flee for refuge to the unconquerable hand. Deprived of all that pertains to [normal] human life, from this desolate state they began to be philosophical.² And therefore, they would say **I have lifted up my eyes to the hills, from whence my help will come.** All things that come from men have been abandoned; all have vanished, all put out of the way. The one thing that remains is salvation, he says, which is from God.

My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth. Do you see that everywhere they are seeking after God—from the earth, from heaven, from the hills,³ from the desert, from everything they form a conception of him? Do you see their thought becoming more sublime, and do you see them extolling his providential care, which is everywhere stretched forth? For he⁴ did not simply add, **Who made heaven and earth**, but discussing this enigmatically, he is saying, If he made heaven and earth, he is able also to furnish help in an alien land, and everywhere—even to stretch out his hand in a barbarian country, and preserve those who have fallen out from their native land. But if by a single word he brought these elements into being, much more will he be able to deliver us from the ungodly foreigners.⁵

Do you see how those who are more insensible than stones, are thinking philosophically⁶ while they spend their time in exile? For no longer is the temple remembered, but heaven and earth. And notice how they proclaim God's creativity and wisdom, and his providence. For those who formerly said to a piece of wood, "You are my god," and to a stone, "You gave birth to me," now acknowledge the

³ Gk. *apo ton oron*. Here, as in the Psalm, the word is *oros*, usually rendered as "mountain." But the older meaning of "hill" includes our idea of mountain.

⁴ He: the Psalmist—trans.

⁵ Gk. *varvaron*.

⁶ See n. 2.

maker of the world. **My help is from the Lord**, not from men. Nor is it from horses, nor from things, nor from our allies and friends, nor from our clothes and wealth. **Our help is from the Lord:** impregnable is this assistance, invincible this aid. And not only invincible, but both ready and willing. One need not go a long distance, or flatter the doorkeeper, or spend one's money, or send a representative, but just remaining in the condition one is in, one can secure this help, if one but separates oneself from human activities in order that he may stand upon that hope, and have clear-sighted eyes and behold sublime things.

For it is for this reason also, that with respect to this life alone,⁷ God made his creature upright, and placed the eyes at the top of the body, teaching [us] also that we must look away from sensory things, and towards what is lofty. For only this living creature is thus formed, while the others all look downward and incline earthward. This one has been extended towards heaven, that he may look around at everything there, and may meditate on those things, and form a conception of them, and that the eyes of his soul may be clear-sighted. For this reason a certain sage has also said, "The eyes of the wise man are in his head"; that is, they are removed from all things below, and they imagine the celestial city and the things that stand on high ground. **Give not your foot to moving, and let not him who keeps you slumber.** See you what earnestness the Word demands from us? But since they have been reminded of help, and are summoning the divine aid from above, he counsels and commands them, all but saying this: "If you wish to enjoy this benefit, contribute what comes from yourself." And what is it he advises? Hear what he says: **Give not**

Continued on the next page.

⁷ *Alone*: may be a reference to the teaching that those in heaven will have spiritual bodies, rather than physical bodies (cf. 1 Cor. 15); they will see God and other spiritual beings clearly with spiritual eyes which therefore would not be physically localized. Furthermore, there would be no earth from which to avert the eyes, hence no need to place them in the top of the body.

St. John Chrysostom

Continued from page 55.

your foot to moving. That is, do not stagger and fall; do not be led into sin; and then you will have the hand of God reaching out, neither forsaking nor neglecting you.

So it starts with us; it is we who are the masters [of the situation]. Inasmuch as we are masters, whenever we wish to attain to something, it is also necessary on the one hand that we contribute from ourselves the things which are small and lowly (for God also desires this). But on other hand it is also needful, nevertheless, to go forward not in a state of idleness, nor sleeping and snoring, nor backsliding, but being busy and active, and zealous to preserve [ourselves]. For this reason also, he hires at about the eleventh hour. Indeed, what great work were they going to do around the eleventh hour? But it was so one might have a starting-point of one's activity, so that there would be a reason for crowns. It is for this reason that he said: **Give not your foot to moving, and let not him who keeps you slumber.** For if we supply what comes from us, that which comes from him will follow. And from this is shown something as great: that whenever we bring forward the things from ourselves, we also ask for divine aid from him in order that we may abide in steadfastness, that we may remain unshaken.

Now who gives his foot to moving? He who enters upon slippery deeds—and such people do not have a sturdy footing. Such is the love of possessions; such is the longing for worldly things. This is why they constantly totter and fall, dangling peril over themselves with respect to the last things. For these are never unshaken; they are never motionless, but are forever changing and being changed and stirred up more than ocean waves; they flow more swiftly than a river's currents, and are more paltry than any grain of sand, and they slip away. **He will neither slumber nor sleep, he who keeps Israel.** If ever you are so disposed,⁸ he says he will neither slumber nor sleep, that is, he will neither forsake nor abandon, nor leave naked and desolate. Wishing to say this with hints, but not plainly, he sets down, **He who keeps Israel.** He is saying, that is, if

this is his perpetual work, to establish you in that security that is from above and from your ancestors,⁹ he will not abandon his work, and he will not leave [you] to practice that which is habitual to you, unless you give your foot to moving. And not only will he not abandon you, but he will cause you to stand with great steadiness. And therefore he encouraged us, saying, **The Lord will keep you; the Lord is your shelter at your right hand.** Another [version] says: beside your right hand. He will be your defender, he says, your ally, your helper. You see here also, how he wishes you to be effective? From a metaphor of men standing in battle formation, he will stand at your right hand, so that you are invincible, so that you are effectual, so that you are mighty, so that you are a lord, a champion standing firm and carrying off the victory. For it is through this,¹⁰ most of all, that we accomplish all things. And he will not only be for you a defender or an ally, but also a shelter. I repeat: by the actions at our side, he¹¹ is portraying God's help. His perfect guarding, and his assistance, which is near-at-hand, he expresses through the right hand and the sheltering. **By day the sun will not burn you, nor the moon by night.**¹² This also happened when they returned from Egypt and were spending time in the desert.¹³ Here he speaks of a great freedom from fear. It was likely that those returning then would benefit from some such wonderworking by some [additional]

¹⁰ Having the Lord at one's right hand.

¹¹ St. David, the psalmist and prophet-king.

¹² This apparently refers to two hazards which are mentioned in the Bible: sunstroke (see 2 Kings 4:19), and moonstroke (see Mt. 4:24; the word in this verse translated in the KJV as "lunatick" is rendered less precisely in others by "epilepsy." The latter was indeed believed in ancient times to be triggered or occasioned by the phases of the moon, but so were various forms of madness as well—whence the name "lunacy"—and this belief has persisted even into modern times).

¹³ During Israel's sojourn in the desert, when they were completely dependent on God's mercy for their safety, he protected them from the twin hazards of the wilderness just mentioned, St. John seems to say. He may also understand this verse as a reference to the pillar of cloud which guided Israel in the wilderness by day, and the pillar of fire which guided them by night, and which to some extent may have shielded Israel from, and moderated, the effects of the heat of day and both the darkness and moonstroke of night—thereby supplementing and even supplanting, with a special, supra-natural governance for his people Israel, the natural governance of the "greater light" and the "lesser light" which God at the beginning had supplied to "govern" and "rule" the day and the night (Gen. 1:16-18, Ps. 136:8,9 LXX). The comforting presence of these manifestations of God's guidance and care might tend to reduce the incidence of various forms of lunacy and anxiety and to promote peace of mind. This verse could be also an oblique reference to the fact that Israel, through faith in God, was shielded from the ill effects of sun-worship and moon-worship which were common among other peoples.

¹⁴ Not only will God shelter Israel and be her ally (as he did during the sojourn in the desert) but he will also protect her from "things that belong to men"—ailments and weaknesses (see n. 12), or any small distress, which he proceeds to call "little things."

means besides. From his superabundance, therefore, wishing to demonstrate his forethought—that he not only delivers from fearful things—but also will not let us suffer things that belong to men, he brings in this.¹⁴ For plentiful are his means for providing help, and unutterable is his love for mankind, bestowing on us help from himself not in proportion to the measure of our need, but exceeding with all his gifts in response, our requests. **The Lord will keep you from all evil; the Lord will keep your soul.** For if he will not even give his assent that these little things should vex you, but extends his own forethought and solicitude so much—much more will he make you invincible against other things.¹⁵ Every assaulting distress yields and submits to the command of God, which is not so in the case of men. Now if he frequently delivered from this evil, was he not able to deliver from another evil? And if he was able, would he not want to do it? But the almighty, strong hand of God is able to destroy whatsoever it comes upon, and to deliver from all things and to restore freedom.

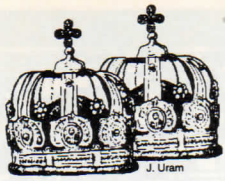
The Lord will keep your coming in and your going out. Another translation says, "your approach." Do you see his continual assistance,¹⁶ present everywhere, to one who is going in, and to one who is going out? Now what can be likened to this love, this love for humanity? Here, truly, he intimates all life—for in these things consists all of life, in entrances and exits. And, showing this more plainly, he adds: **from henceforth, and forevermore.** Not regarding one day, nor two, nor three, nor ten, nor twenty, nor a hundred, but continuously, from beginning to end. With men it is not so: there are many changes, continual lapses, multitudinous shiftings. Today someone is a friend, tomorrow, an enemy. Today, a helper; tomorrow he forsakes you. And not only does he often forsake you, but he even fights and schemes worse than any enemy. But the things of God are immovable, continuing, undying, steadfast, unbounded. Therefore, in order that we may attain to them, let us contribute what is from ourselves, so that we may enjoy great stability and may attain to the future good things in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory unto ages of ages. Amen.

¹⁵ I.e., from "all evil," not just from the "little things" but from greater evils, those not of human origin or due to human weakness, but originating with the diabolical powers.

¹⁶ Assistance: with the idea of military assistance in combat; alliance.

⁸ I.e., to slumber.

⁹ This may be a reference to the "vertical" and "horizontal" aspects of salvation: that it comes from God, yet is brought about through our membership in the continuing household of faith (the Church).



Saint Mary's in Coaldale Honors Father Paul and Matushka Irene on Silver Wedding Anniversary

On Sunday, September 8, St. Mary's new church year was ushered in with a triple religious and social observance. It was the climax of our successful 86th Anniversary Year: the celebration of the Tenth Annual Patron Saint Dinner and the most festive and memorable occasion of the silver wedding anniversary of Father Paul P. and Matushka Irene O. Borick.

We were honored to have His Eminence, the Most Reverend Archbishop Herman, celebrate the Divine Liturgy and offer the most impressive Service of Thanksgiving for the continued health and happiness of Father and Matushka. The Sunday School children participated in singing some of the responses. They received the Sacrament of Holy Communion and were honored with a special blessing from His Eminence for the start of their new Sunday School year.

The banquet hall was filled to capacity. His Eminence was greeted by Miss Jolene Marek and presented with a beautiful bouquet of red roses. Father Paul and



Fr. Paul and Matushka Irene Borick.



Matushka Irene were pleasantly surprised with a centerpiece, an anniversary cake, and gifts from the parishioners which were presented by council president, Mr. John O'Shura, the Church choir, Sunday School, the planning committee, and the Ladies Aide. His Eminence eulogized Father and Matushka for their diligence, devotion, and labor in Christ's vineyard.

It was in 1982 that Father and Matushka joined the family of St. Mary's in Coaldale. In their profession they are called upon to be consultants, confidants, teachers, and leaders. Under their guidance, our church has had many old articles replaced, sacred items refurbished, and new additions made. We are justly proud of our beautiful edifice and church home. At the present time, necessary repairs are in progress. In the very near future, the plans are for the repainting of our church

interior.

Our congratulations and best wishes are extended to you, Father Paul and Matushka Irene, as you celebrate your silver wedding anniversary. Twenty-five years ago you joined hands in love, faith, and trust. You have shared dreams, blessings, and tears. Your smile, a quiet nod, has endeared you to us. Your marriage vows were not only to each other, but to God and His Holy Church. May your next twenty-five hold the same joys, health, and happiness. With God's blessings many things are possible. May God grant you many years! *Mnohaya Lyeta, Blahaya Lyeta!* May we all continue to live together for many more years in the peace, harmony, and friendship existing among all of us. You have ingratiated your life and love in our hearts. God bless you forever!

—Stephanie Chmel



Christmas is too Commercial

Christmas is clearly more commercial than Christian. When you look at Christmas decorations, few of them depict Christ's birth, but instead they depict secular symbols of Christmas such as Santa



Jeremy Soroka

Claus. When you turn on the television around Christmas time, most of the "Christmas shows" have nothing to do with The Nativity at all. Instead of portraying the true meaning of Christmas, these shows just show cute little cartoons and other shows little kids like to watch so that the station could get good ratings. The meaning of Christmas is made very unclear to Christians these days because of the meaning of Christmas that all the commercials portray. These advertisements inadvertently turn people, especially young children, away from the birth of Christ and to the secular custom of getting gifts. When my three-year-old sister talks about Christmas, she doesn't tell me about how our Lord was born that day, but about the toys she is going to get for Christmas. Many adults also send their children the wrong message by opening up presents on Christmas Day instead of going to church. This is a terrible thing because it teaches kids that getting worldly gifts that you purchase with money are more important than getting the spiritual gift of a chance at eternal salvation by Christ coming into the world and becoming man, which is a gift that no money can buy. In this holiday season, we must all subordinate the commercial aspect of Christmas to its true meaning, the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

—Jeremy Soroka

Christmas, Christian or Commercial?

Christmas, in the Orthodox Christian Church, is the celebration of the Nativity of Christ. Christmas, in a commercial or secular sense, however, is centered around the giving and getting (and buying) of earthly things.

In the Orthodox Church, Christmas is centered around the birth of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ. The Christmas season in the Orthodox Church begins with the nativity fast to prepare us for the feast. Unlike the rest of the world, the celebration of Christmas for us starts after the feast rather than before the feast. The Nativity services are some of the most beautiful services in the liturgical year, especially Christmas Eve, with the singing of "God is With Us."

The first signs of Christmas can usually be seen in malls as early as October in the form of decorations. Soon the emphasis will be on Santa Claus and the giving and getting of earthly gifts.

If you were to ask anyone who is not in the Church what the true meaning of Christmas is, they would probably tell you it's the spirit of peace, love, and giving. That's all well and good, but they'll be leaving out the most important thing, the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Christmas should be for all of us not only a time of peace, love, and giving, but most importantly, a time of remembrance, not only of Christ's birth, but also of what his birth ultimately meant for us.

—Steven Sedor

A Christian Christmas

We have all seen the Christmas toys' commercials on television and the huge Christmas extravaganzas, like those at Rockefeller Center, but is this all that Christmas has become? I believe there are



Barbara Bench

those who only do see Christmas as a money-making opportunity, but for the most part, Christmas is still being retained as a Christian holiday.

We still sing Christmas carols such as *Silent Night*, *O Little Town of Bethlehem*, and *On This Bright Day*, not because they are of commercial value but because they remind us to remember Jesus' birth and the first Christmas.

Christmas is also a time for family. Family togetherness is a very important part of Christian life. We treasure our families and friends for their love and support, not for their gifts or checkbook.

The church is always filled on Christmas Eve and Christmas morning. People do realize the importance of Jesus in their lives. They come to pray and glorify Jesus during this very special day.

The world has not forgotten the true meaning of Christmas. It may have gotten a little overshadowed by commercials at times, but the Christian value of Christmas has not been forgotten.

—Barbara Bench

**“Maybe it is in America . . . that
the question of the future destiny of
Orthodoxy will be solved . . . ”**

A letter to Alive in Christ

Dear Editor,

With great interest I have read the magazine *Your Diocese Alive in Christ*. The only issue available to me was the paschal issue for April 1993, and although it wasn't a new one, I read thoroughly every article included in it. I can honestly say that I haven't seen such a good publication concerning the questions of Orthodox belief and Church life for a long time. It is an especially great joy for me to know about Orthodox Christianity in the U.S.A., about your holy ministry. Unfortunately, we have too little information here about your Church, and it's very sad because America is now the most influential country in many ways. Its influence is really worldwide, and because of this, the growth and piety of the Church in such a country becomes very important for all Orthodox people in any place. Maybe it is in America, and through the American Church, that the question of the future destiny of Orthodoxy will be solved. Right worship of God (the meaning of the Russian word "Pravoslavie") will be in all the other nations of the world. That's why I was very glad to hear that in the U.S.A. Orthodoxy is not a "Russian" or "Greek" Church, but is open to all people who are looking for God's Truth on earth.

I would be very happy if it is possible for me to receive your magazine. Also, it would be very nice if I could find friends among the faithful of the American Orthodox Church. If there is anyone interested in corresponding with brothers in Kiev, please send him my address. I will be very glad to have such communication.

About myself, I am twenty-three years old. I was born in the Ukrainian town of Zhitomir (less than a hundred miles from Kiev). After school I entered the Moscow Physical-Technical Institute. Living in Moscow, I encountered the Orthodox Church. It may be strange to hear this, since I lived in a country with a great Orthodox history, but while I was at school, there was no real freedom of confession, and I knew nothing about Christ and His Church. But while I studied in the Institute, life in the Soviet Union underwent serious changes, and then for the first time I heard the Orthodox faith preached. I am very grateful to the Lord that I have spent my first years in Church—such an important time for all neophytes—during the Orthodox revival in Russia.

This year, after completing my Institute course, I received a master's degree in physics and now am pursuing my studies in physics as a post-graduate student in the Institute of Physics, Kiev. But along with this I feel a deep calling for Church ministry, and now I'm taking a first year course at Kiev Seminary (in the external program), and have various duties in my parish. But despite my lack of time, I will be very happy to hear about your Church Alive in Christ.

God save you.
Sincerely yours,
Victor Horodenchuk

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Kiev 252028
Ukraine

*Christ is Born! Glorify Him!
The Editor & Staff of Your Diocese Alive in Christ Wish You
A Joyous Feast of Christ's Nativity And a Blessed and Prosperous New Year!*

Holy Resurrection, Alden Station, Honors Fr. David Shewczyk



President Michael Kardash presents Fr. David with a plaque from the parish for the eight years of service.

Father David Shewczyk will never be forgotten at Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church in Alden Station, Pa., where he served his last Divine Liturgy as priest of the parish on Nov. 12, 1995. Father David will always be remembered for his inspiring sermons, beautiful singing voice and counseling. Although the church is very small, he was always able to keep things going and people working together. He ran a Bible study, coordinated the seventy-fifth anniversary, had eight successful years in the chicken barbeque (setting records in sales each year!), along with many other fundraising projects. Father David was never one to say no. He was very active in the Newport Township, friends with all the neighbors, and had many fun events with the Sunday School children, such as going to baseball games, miniature golf, bowling, along with many other events. Father David is truly a good example of an Orthodox priest. He will now travel with his wife, Matushka Sharon and two sons, Timothy and Nicholas, to Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., where he was asked by His Eminence, Archbishop Herman to take on the new assignment to continue God's work. May God grant Fr. David and his family many more years!



Father David, Matushka Sharon, sons Timothy and Nicholas.



Many people lined up to give their farewells and congratulations to Fr. David and family.

Commentary of Saint Justin Popovich on the First Epistle of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian

Part III



I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. (I John 2:13-14)

By the remission of sins, the Lord has given to man the strength to struggle against his sins, to master them and to overcome them. By his victory over his sins and through them, man also gains the victory over their very creator, over the devil. In our human world, sin resembles an impersonal force, like evil. Many are those who thoughtlessly imagine that it is easy to overcome sin and evil. But no sooner does man begin to fight them, that he sees how terrifying is this force of sin, and that behind this force there is something which is much more powerful than sin. And no sooner do we seriously begin to seek the roots of sin, of each sin, that sin sends us back to its source, the devil. Behind every sin it is therefore wicked spirits who are lurking—*o poniros*, the wicked one. Every man who has, be it only once, seriously fought against his sin, has realized that it is not possible for him to overcome it without the help of the One Who is without sin. Much more yet if that man has led a struggle against many sins, for through them he has led a fight against their creator, against their defender and against their advocate—against the devil. For it is only through Christ that man becomes all-powerful in the struggle against sin and the devil. It is here that the

Apostle's announcement applies: *I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me* (Phil. 4:13). This is why the Holy Theologian announces this good news: **I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. You have overcome the devil, you have overcome the wicked one** and all his misdeeds. And by what have we overcome him?—by the power of the Gospel, by the power of the lived Gospel, by the Word of God. For every evangelic virtue that is lived fills men with the all-victorious energy of God. Do evangelic virtues live in man?—they are the all-powerful energies of God. No power of sin or of the wicked one—and not even their own creator—can confront this divine energy. It is through God that man is strong—strong and invincible though the God-man. And it is this which the Holy Theologian explains to us: **I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.**

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (2:15)

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. Why? Because *the whole world lieth under the wicked one* (I John 5:19), because it is mingled with and identified with the wicked one. Sin has cunningly laid out its snares over the entire world like an invisible network of tiny vessels that are diffi-

cult, almost impossible, to discern and distinguish. And by this network of capillaries, sin has instilled its poison in the very nature and being of the world. The world, through its love of sin, has so identified itself with evil, that “evil” and “world” have become synonymous. Thus, the love of the world is in reality the love of sin and of evil. This is why the Holy Theologian can write to us: **If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.** Now, can our love towards the Father equal the love of the Father? This love is to love all that is divine, all that is immortal and eternal, it is to love the Good of God, the Truth of God, His Righteousness, His Love, His Wisdom. Here is another world, made of divinity, of immortality, of truth, of righteousness, of supreme wisdom and of eternity.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. (2:16)

What does the Holy Theologian mean when he speaks of “the world”? He defines it thus: **For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. The World** of which the Holy Evangelist is thinking is the love of sin: lust, **the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life**: these are the principal sins, the principal instruments of sin. Because of his love of sin, the body has become the home of sin, the dwelling place of sin, the breeding-ground of sin. And the eyes?—these are the insatiable eyes which dragged mankind into sin. The eyes are what drag

Continued on the next page.

St. Justin Popovich

Continued from page 61.

man into sin more than anything else. The eyes are more ravenous and more voracious than wolves. If man does not contain them by wisdom, if he does not renew them by prayer, if he does not humble them by repentance and if he does not soften them by mercy, they will so avidly devour all sins that they will fill and devastate his entire soul. Cursed is the man who gives his eyes over to sin as *weapons of unrighteousness* (Romans 6:13). Blessed is the man who can give all his senses—and even his eyes—over to God, as weapons of righteousness (Romans 6:13). As for the third sin, the sin which synthesizes all the sins of the world, this is **the pride of life**. This is the first sin in all the worlds, it is the sin of Satan, the source of all sins. It was and shall remain so forever. We could say that “pride is the fullness of sin”: all sin, at its core, proceeds from pride, and is sustained by pride. **The pride of life** is woven of innumerable and diverse prides, great and small, fleeting or lasting. Let us first cite the most important ones: the pride of glory (of scholars, of statesmen, of all types of men in high places), the pride of beauty, the pride of wealth, the pride of good works, the pride of modesty (yea, because of modesty!), the pride of mercy, the pride of success . . . Is there a single virtue that pride cannot change into vice?—Alas, the pride of prayer transforms the one who prays into a Pharisee, the one who fasts into a person with suicidal tendencies; it is thus that each sin is in reality a sin of pride, for it is indeed by pride that Satan became Satan. Were there no pride, sin would not exist either in the angelic world, nor in this human world. All this **does not come from the Father**, it is the Only-begotten Son of God Who **comes from God**. But He is humility incarnate and personified in all His divine perfections. And in His Gospel, the first among all the other virtues is humility (cf. Matthew 5:3). Yea: humility is the only remedy against pride and against all the other sins.

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. (2:17)

The world of sinful sweetness will

pass because sin is that obscure force, that unique force which produces death in the human being, that is, which renders him dead and obsolete. In truth, by means of all his sins man accomplishes the will of the creator of all sins—the Devil. It is his will which drags man towards all his deaths, towards all that passes. Above all, sin destroys and overturns in man all the instruments of thought: man begins to go crazy, begins to proclaim obsolete things, ideas and passions, as his own divinity, as his principal concern, as the goal and meaning of his life. Here is to be found the principal cause of all human idolatry, both cultural and scientific, philosophical and artistic, political and religious. Before the Devil stands the God-man, He Who shows us how man can gain dominion over all transitory things and over all deaths, how he can become immortal and eternal. How? by doing the will of God: **but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever**. And where is the will of God expressed? In the God-man, Christ, and in His Holy Gospel. Fulfilling the Gospel, man fills himself with immortality and eternal life, so that he will no longer perish. Who is the true immortal man? Only the true Christian.

If the Holy Theologian speaks by antitheses, it is because his visions are the most profound and his revelations are the greatest. He clearly sees these antitheses. His Gospel is full of them: God and the Devil, Christ and the Anti-Christ, truth and falsehood, love and hate, light and darkness, righteousness and unrighteousness, good and evil, life and death, virtue and sin. He fathoms all this to the very depths, he also sees in all dimensions; he sees each thesis and each antithesis in their fulfillment and in their outcome, in their absolute and totally concrete worth. With him, everything is vision, revelation, experience, lived. If he has seen the greatest mysteries, it is because he is *the disciple whom Jesus loved*; he is thus also the first Theologian, the true Theologian. With him and after him will appear yet two more: Saint Gregory the Theologian and Saint Symeon the New Theologian.

Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is

the last time. (2:18)

All that Satan possesses which is evil in the world has risen up against the Good of Christ; all that Satan has that is falsehood has risen up against His Truth, all of Satan's hatred has risen up against the love of Christ, all that the devil is has risen up against the God of Christ—in a word: the Antichrist arises against Christ. The **Anti-Christ** puts himself in the place of Christ, he takes the place of Christ, he lifts himself up against Christ. Yea, the profound desire of the Antichrist, the essence of his being, is to replace Christ, to take His place. To accomplish this, the Devil makes use of all means, and above all, of wicked means: of hypocrisy and of false piety: he takes the appearance of piety, whereas he has rejected its reality. He puts on a peaceful appearance to hide, to mask, his pride. He puts on the appearance of a benefactor whereas at the bottom of his heart he seeks only to harm. He takes on the appearance of a friend of man, whereas in reality he is but the slayer of man. All this, he does only to deceive in their choice—in order to abuse—the greatest possible number of men, all men. The **Antichrist** will be like a sort of incarnation of the Devil, because Christ is the incarnation of God. The Antichrist will be the personification of evil, of hatred and of falsehood, of pride and unrighteousness, because Christ is the personification of good, of love and of truth, of peace and of righteousness. Such will be that principal Antichrist who is to manifest himself before the second Coming of the Lord Christ in order to substitute himself for God, to proclaim himself God (cf. II Thess. 2:4); but before manifesting himself, he will have had innumerable predecessors, innumerable antichrists. He is an antichrist who desires to take the place of Christ; he is an antichrist who desires to substitute his own truth for that of Christ, his own righteousness for that of Christ, his own love for that of Christ, his own good for that of Christ, his own gospel for that of Christ. Much more: he is an antichrist who is an adversary of Christ: whoever struggles against the Person of Christ, against His Truth, against His Love, against His Righteousness—in short whoever struggles against the Gospel of Christ struggles against the Church of Christ, for the Church is the Gospel incar-

nate. Yea, the Gospel incarnate, for she is the body of Christ. Saint John, he who has seen the Mysteries, announces to us these glad tidings: **“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.**

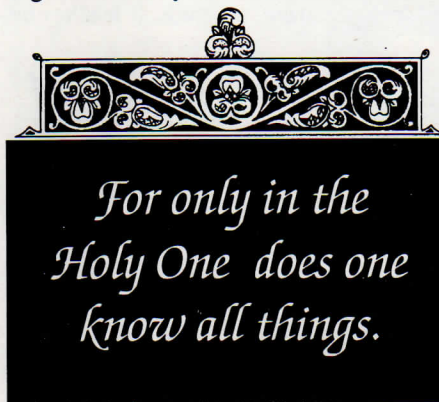
They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. (2:19)

Whence come the antichrists? **They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.** It is solely by free will that one becomes Christian and remains Christian, and free will is free insofar as one always has the strength and the right to determine oneself for good or evil, for truth or for falsehood, for love or for hate, for righteousness or for unrighteousness: for God or for the Devil, for Christ or for the Antichrist. Christians who turn aside from Christ reveals that they have been neither rooted, nor founded, nor strengthened in Christ by the holy virtues and by the holy Mysteries—and if they are not, it is because they willed it of their own free will. True Christians are founded upon Christ, united to His divinely-human body, the Church, in communion with God, *of the house of God* (Eph. 2:19), *fellow citizens of the saints* (Eph. 2:19), and they are *so with all the saints* (Eph. 3:18). They are reciprocally members of one another, and though numerous, they are members of a single Body—the Body of Christ. They are *a single body* (I Cor. 12:12): *Because there is only one bread, we being many are one body* (I Cor. 10:17). And if these have turned themselves away from Christ, it is because **they were not from us for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us.**

But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. (2:20)

Ye know all things: the things of both

God and Satan, Christ and the antichrist, good and evil, life and death, righteousness and unrighteousness. For you the principal questions have been resolved; in you, no doubt, no hesitation, and no indecision can be found. Ye know everything about the paths which lead toward God, as well as those which lead toward the Devil. And from whence know ye this? **From the Holy One**—for only in the Holy One does one know all things. **The unction from the Holy One** makes all of man’s being holy. First of all, it sanctifies how he knows: his spirit and reason, his soul and heart. If man fills himself with the holiness of the Holy One, he can likewise attain the righteous and true knowledge of the Holy One—that is, of God—



and, with His help, he can attain all the knowledge that he needs. He only needs to live a holy life from the Holy One and through the Holy One. Thus, man enables himself to attain the true knowledge of everything he needs in all the worlds in which he lives; this is why only the saints truly know simultaneously this world, man and God—Truth, Righteousness and Life—and the Devil as well, and all that comes from him: *We are not ignorant of the devices of Satan* (II Cor. 2:11) declares the Holy Apostle. And holiness guards the saints so that those that know evil and all its snares may not stumble. They know in every detail the secrets of good and of evil, the secrets of truth and of falsehood. They know with great assurance and clarity, that there is no communication between Light and darkness, nor between God and the Devil, nor between good and evil. This is why the Holy Witness of the mysteries announces to us the glad tidings: **I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.** (2:21)

Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. (2:22)

Christians are Christians on account of this: they know the Truth. But what is the Truth?—It is the God-man, Christ. And what is falsehood?—It is the Devil, for *he is a liar and the father of lies* (John 8:44). And what is his fundamental lie?—The denial of the God-man, Christ, maintaining that Jesus is not God, that He is not the Messiah—that is, the Christ—that He is not the Savior. This is indeed the work of the antichrist. The chief liar in the world is the Devil, and with him the antichrist. Let it be known that whoever in any way denies that Jesus is God, Messiah and Savior, that man is a liar: indeed this is the principal lie of the world; all other lies either follow from this one, or are developing into it. If all lies were to converge into a single lie, into one all-encompassing lie, it would be this: “Jesus of Nazareth is not God, He is not the Messiah, He is not the Savior”. The Holy Initiator into the Mysteries proclaims this to us in the name of God: **Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.** What is the Anti-Christ, and what is his Anti-Gospel?—The negation of the Divine Trinity: of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. (2:23)

There is no God outside of the Triune Godhead. Whoever does not recognize Jesus as God does not know God—he is God-less, an atheist; but whoever recognizes Christ as God knows God and knows all things—and whoever recognizes Him believes in the Divine Trinity, for Christ the Lord, as Son of God, leads each of His disciples to His Heavenly Father: if there is no Son, neither is there any Father, for the Father is Father in that He has a Son. Now Christ the Lord, by His entire life upon the earth, reveals clearly that everything within Him is divine, that He is—in

Continued on the next page.

St. Justin Popovich

Continued from page 63.

His every aspect—entirely from God the Father, and entirely for the Father. The Holy Evangelist announces to us the glad tidings: **Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.** Relationship with the Son flows from the relationship of man with God, for there is no God but Christ, neither in heaven, nor upon the earth, neither under the earth.

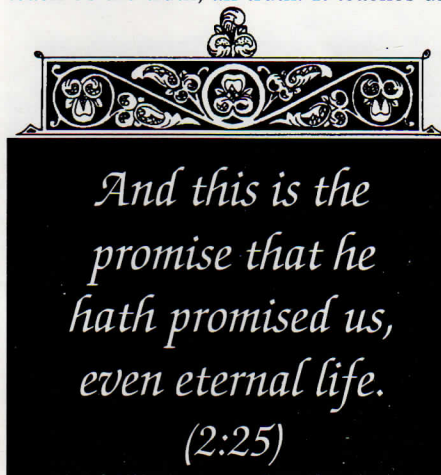
Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. (2:24)

From the very beginning, the Holy Gospel is the Gospel of the Holy Trinity and about the Holy Trinity. A man becomes a Christian if he accepts this Gospel, but he remains a Christian if he lives by it and if it is found in him. Through the Gospel, the Holy Trinity dwells, lives and abides in man, for only the Holy Trinity gives man the strength to live according to the Gospel. What is the life of Christians? It is a permanent personal relationship which unites them with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, with the help of the Holy Mysteries and the Holy Virtues. For all Christians, their continuous and saving endeavor is to enter into the Trinity and to become Trinitarian. By such an endeavor, they reach the principal goal of our existence in the world: life eternal. In this way the principal promise made by Christ the Lord and His Gospel is fulfilled, for everything which has been, and everything which has been done and everything which has been taught—has been, and has been done and has been taught in order that men might have the assurance of the gift of eternal life and that they might receive it. This is why the Holy Evangelist announces these glad tidings: **And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. (2:25)**

These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same

anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. (2:26-27)

Only through living by the Truth does man become capable of guarding himself and of defending himself from every illusion which rushes upon him. The Truth defends itself—man needs only to make it a part of his own nature by living by it and for it. Then will truth itself protect him and ever defend him from all non-truth and all falsehood. True indeed is the word of the Truth Himself: *The truth will make you free* (John 8:32): it will free you from every sin, from every evil and from every devil. If the Truth itself abide in us—it will teach us the truth, all truth. It teaches us



by means of the Holy Virtues, and abides in us with the help of the holy virtues and the Holy Mysteries. There is no room for doubt: it is the Holy One Who lives in us through the Holy Mysteries and through the Holy Virtues which transfigure our every thought, our every feeling and our every desire into holiness. By their holiness, the Holy One teaches us everything we need for our piety and for eternal life—both in this world and in the next. Holy things are recognized by their holiness, for through the Holy One we participate in holiness, which, going beyond even holiness, directly teaches us all truth. This is why the holy Initiate in the Holy Mysteries announces to us these glad tidings: **But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.**

And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. (2:28)

Outside of Christ there is neither life nor truth. The holy Theologian unceasingly proclaims to us this good, this principal truth of the Gospel of God: that the whole of Christian life—in this world as well as in the next—consists of man's abiding in Him and of His abiding in man. The entire truth of the New Testament is contained in this: that the God-man is in us and we in Him, and that so the Truth will be in us and we in it, Righteousness in us and we in it, Love in us and we in it, eternity in us and we in it, and all divine perfection in us and we in it. This is what makes us children of God and, as children, we have confidence before the Father: **And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.**

If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him. (2:29)

That which is righteous is found in the Righteous One, and righteousness comes from the Righteous One. The Righteous One alone has righteousness and He alone knows righteousness—but it is all of righteousness, it is the righteousness of God, all-Righteousness, which the divine Righteous One, He who is all righteousness, Christ the Lord, has and knows. He who abides in him abides in righteousness, but in the one in whom the Righteous One abides, He abides with all his righteousness. And man manifests this by his righteousness, for it is from the Righteous One that proceed both righteousness and every thing that is righteous, just as light proceeds from the sun and perfume from basil. He alone possesses the truth, he alone knows the truth who with the help of the Holy Virtues assimilates himself to the only Righteous One and is born spiritually of Him. Thus every righteous one likens himself to the One who is all righteousness: *he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.* (I John 3:7)

To be continued.

Daily Devotions

JANUARY

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|-----|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. | Col. 2:8-12 (Circumcision) | Luke 2:20-31,40-52 (Circumcision) |
| 2. | Heb. 9:8-10,15-23 | Mark 6:1-7 |
| 3. | Heb. 10:1-18 | Mark 6:7-13 |
| 4. | Heb. 10:35-11:7 | Mark 6:30-45 |
| 5. | 1 Cor. 9:19-27 | Luke 3:1-18 |
| 6. | Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7 | Matt. 3:13-17 |
| 7. | Acts 19:1-8 | John 1:29-34 |
| 8. | Heb. 11:17-23,27-31 | Mark 6:54-7:8 |
| 9. | Heb. 12:25-26; 13:22-25 | Mark 7:5-16 |
| 10. | James 1:1-18 | Mark 7:14-24 |
| 11. | James 1:19-27 | Mark 7:24-30 |
| 12. | James 2:1-13 | Mark 8:1-10 |
| 13. | Col. 1:3-6 | Matt. 24:34-44 |
| 14. | 1 Tim. 1:15-17 | Matt. 22:35-46 |
| 15. | James 2:14-26 | Mark 9:42-10:1 |
| 16. | James 3:1-10 | Mark 10:2-12 |
| 17. | James 3:11-4:6 | Mark 10:11-16 |
| 18. | James 4:7-5:9 | Mark 10:17-27 |
| 19. | 1 Pet. 1:1-2,10-12; 2:6-10 | Mark 10:23-32 |
| 20. | 1 Thess. 5:14-23 | Luke 16:10-15 |
| 21. | 1 Tim. 4:9-15 | Matt. 15:21-28 |
| 22. | 1 Pet. 2:21-3:9 | Mark 10:46-52 |
| 23. | 1 Pet. 3:10-22 | Mark 11:11-23 |
| 24. | 1 Pet. 4:1-11 | Mark 11:23-26 |
| 25. | 1 Pet. 4:12-5:5 | Mark 11:27-33 |
| 26. | 2 Pet. 1:1-10 | Mark 12:1-12 |
| 27. | 2 Tim. 3:1-9 | Luke 17:3-10 |
| 28. | 1 Tim. 4:9-15 | Luke 19:1-10 |
| 29. | 1 Pet. 2:21-3:9 | Mark 12:13-17 |
| 30. | 1 Pet. 3:10-22 | Mark 12:18-27 |
| 31. | 1 Pet. 4:1-11 | Mark 12:28-37 |

FEBRUARY

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|-----|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. | 1 Pet. 4:12-5:5 | Mark 12:38-44 |
| | 2 Pet. 1:1-10 (Friday) | Mark 13:1-8 (Friday) |
| 2. | Heb. 7:7-17 (Meeting) | Luke 2:22-40 (Meeting) |
| 3. | 2 Tim. 2:11-19 | Luke 18:2-8 |
| 4. | 2 Tim. 3:10-15 | Luke 18:10-14 |
| 5. | 2 Pet. 1:20-2:9 | Mark 13:9-13 |
| 6. | 2 Pet. 2:9-22 | Mark 13:14-23 |
| 7. | 2 Pet. 3:1-18 | Mark 13:24-31 |
| 8. | 1 John 1:8-2:6 | Mark 13:31-14:2 |
| 9. | 1 John 2:7-17 | Mark 14:3-9 |
| 10. | 2 Tim. 3:1-9 | Luke 20:46-21:4 |
| 11. | 1 Cor. 6:12-20 | Luke 15:11-32 |
| 12. | 1 John 2:18-3:10 | Mark 11:1-11 |
| 13. | 1 John 3:11-20 | Mark 14:10-42 |
| 14. | 1 John 3:21-4:6 | Mark 14:43-15:1 |
| 15. | 1 John 4:20-5:21 | Mark 15:1-15 |
| 16. | 2 John 1:1-13 | Mark 15:22-25,33-41 |
| 17. | 1 Cor. 10:23-28 | Luke 21:8-9,25-27,33-36 |
| 18. | 1 Cor. 8:8-9:2 | Matt. 25:31-46 |
| 19. | 3 John 1:1-15 | Luke 19:29-40; 22:7-39 |
| 20. | Jude 1:1-10 | Luke 22:39-42,45-23:1 |
| 21. | Joel 2:12-26 | Joel 3:12-21 |
| 22. | Jude 1:11-25 | Luke 23:2-34,44-56 |
| 23. | Zechariah 8:7-17 | Zechariah 8:19-23 |
| 24. | Rom. 14:19-26 | Matt. 6:1-13 |
| 25. | Rom. 13:11-14:4 | Matt. 6:14-21 |
| 26. | Genesis 1:1-13 | Proverbs 1:1-20 |
| 27. | Genesis 1:14-23 | Proverbs 1:20-33 |
| 28. | Genesis 1:24-2:3 | Proverbs 2:1-22 |
| 29. | Genesis 2:4-19 | Proverbs 3:1-18 |

MARCH

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|-----|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. | Genesis 2:20-3:20 | Proverbs 3:19-34 |
| 2. | Heb. 1:1-12 | Mark 2:23-3:5 |
| 3. | Heb. 11:24-6,32-12:2 | John 1:43-51 |
| 4. | Genesis 3:21-4:7 | Proverbs 3:34-4:22 |
| 5. | Genesis 4:8-15 | Proverbs 5:1-15 |
| 6. | Genesis 4:16-26 | Proverbs 5:15-6:4 |
| 7. | Genesis 5:1-24 | Proverbs 6:3-20 |
| 8. | Genesis 5:32-6:8 | Proverbs 6:20-7:1 |
| 9. | Heb. 3:12-16 | Mark 1:35-44 |
| 10. | Heb. 1:10-2:3 | Mark 2:1-12 |
| 11. | Genesis 6:9-22 | Proverbs 8:1-21 |
| 12. | Genesis 7:1-5 | Proverbs 8:32-9:11 |
| 13. | Genesis 7:6-9 | Proverbs 9:12-18 |
| 14. | Genesis 7:11-8:3 | Proverbs 10:1-22 |
| 15. | Genesis 8:4-22 | Proverbs 10:31-11:12 |
| 16. | Heb. 10:32-38 | Mark 2:14-17 |
| 17. | Heb. 4:14-5:6 | Mark 8:34-9:1 |
| 18. | Genesis 8:21-9:7 | Proverbs 11:19-12:6 |
| 19. | Genesis 9:8-17 | Proverbs 12:8-22 |
| 20. | Genesis 9:18-10:1 | Proverbs 12:23-13:9 |
| 21. | Genesis 10:36-11:9 | Proverbs 13:19-14:6 |
| 22. | Genesis 12:1-7 | Proverbs 14:15-26 |
| 23. | Heb. 6:9-12 | Mark 7:31-37 |
| 24. | Heb. 6:13-20 | Mark 9:17-31 |
| 25. | Heb. 2:11-18 (Annunciation) | Luke 1:24-38 (Annunciation) |
| 26. | Genesis 15:1-15 | Proverbs 15:7-19 |
| 27. | Genesis 17:1-9 | Proverbs 15:20-16:9 |
| 28. | Genesis 18:20-33 | Proverbs 16:17-17:17 |
| 29. | Genesis 22:1-18 | Proverbs 17:17-18:5 |
| 30. | Heb. 9:24-28 | Mark 8:27-31 |
| 31. | Heb. 9:11-14 | Mark 10:32-45 |

APRIL

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|-----|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. | Genesis 27:1-42 | Proverbs 19:16-25 |
| 2. | Genesis 31:3-16 | Proverbs 21:3-21 |
| 3. | Genesis 43:26-32; 45:1-16 | Proverbs 21:23-22:4 |
| 4. | Genesis 46:1-7 | Proverbs 23:15-24:5 |
| 5. | Genesis 49:33-50:26 | Proverbs 31:8-31 |
| 6. | Heb. 12:28-13:8 | John 11:1-45 |
| 7. | Phil. 4:4-9 | John 12:1-18 |
| 8. | Exodus 1:1-20 | Job 1:1-12 |
| 9. | Exodus 2:5-10 | Job 1:13-22 |
| 10. | Exodus 2:11-22 | Job 2:1-10 |
| 11. | Exodus 19:10-19 | Job 38:1-23; 42:1-5 |
| 12. | Exodus 33:11-23 | Job 42:12-16 |
| 13. | Rom. 6:3-11 | Matt. 28:1-20 |
| 14. | Acts 1:1-8 | John 1:1-17 |
| 15. | Acts 1:12-17,21-26 | John 1:18-28 |
| 16. | Acts 2:14-21 | Luke 24:12-35 |
| 17. | Acts 2:22-36 | John 1:35-51 |
| 18. | Acts 2:38-43 | John 3:1-15 |
| 19. | Acts 3:1-8 | John 2:12-22 |
| 20. | Acts 3:11-16 | John 3:22-33 |
| 21. | Acts 5:12-20 | John 20:19-31 |
| 22. | Acts 3:19-26 | John 2:1-11 |
| 23. | Acts 4:1-10 | John 3:16-21 |
| 24. | Acts 4:13-22 | John 5:17-24 |
| 25. | Acts 4:23-31 | John 5:24-30 |
| 26. | Acts 5:1-11 | John 5:30-6:2 |
| 27. | Acts 5:21-33 | John 6:14-27 |
| 28. | Acts 6:1-7 | Mark 15:43-16:8 |
| 29. | Acts 6:8-7:5,47-60 | John 4:46-54 |
| 30. | Acts 8:5-17 | John 6:27-33 |

Christ is Born!

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Alyssa Chrush
Rodney Cook & Family
Lisa Curry
Andrew, Karen, & Ben Cuttic
Mrs. Natalie Danczenko
Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Danko & Family
Michael & Mary Dorosh
Michael J. & Marina M. Dorosh
Damian A. Drasher
Donald & Carole Fair
Andrew Fartuch Family
Ted & Betty Fedora
R. Seraphim Freedman
Patty Felix
A Friend
John & Olga Frimenko
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Gaynor
Helen Gingrich & Family
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Guditis
Mr. & Mrs. Alan Guiducci
Helen Haas
Leza Hahalis
Alex, Anastasia, George Hahalis
Mary Ann Hanas
Helen Haney
Andrew Hasenecz
Charles Hasenecz

Elizabeth Hasenecz
Rose Marie Heckman
Doctors Julius & Anna Herz
Mary Holva
Leo & Mary Howell
Leo & Adam Howell
Mrs. Mary Hresko
Suzanna Hretz
Daniel Nicholas Hretz
Xenia Sophia Hretz
Mary Hudak
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Isbansky
Peter Jubinski
Sarah Jubinski
P. Daniel Jubinski
George & Rose Mary Jubinsky
Mrs. Mary Jurta
Mrs. Helen Karel
Mrs. Mary Kasander
Eric Kasander
Jeffrey J. Kasander, D.M.D.
Jim, Nadia Kelly & Family
Mrs. Anna Keretz
Bill & Sandi Keysock & Family
Vera Kiak
Albert & Esther Kiechel
Gary Kiechel
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Kohudic
Selar & Jo Ann Konsevitch
Mrs. Donald Koretski
John Koretski
Mary & Stephanie Koretski
Mr. & Mrs. Timothy Kovolenko & Family
Olga Kozachonok
Bob Kriebel
Katherine Kriebel
Terrie Kriebel
Rebecca Kriebel
Michael Kriebel
Michael H. Kuchka
Dr. Michael R. Kuchka
Alexei Kurenkov
Paula Lahutsky
Russell Lahutsky
Vladimir B. Laury
Nicholas & Judy Lezinsky
Kyra, Matthew, & Peter Lezinsky
Lichtenwalner Family
Mrs. Olga Logechnik
Mr. & Mrs. Jeffrey C. Lovell
Bill & Irene Macenka
Olga Macenka
Mary Madensky
Mr. & Mrs. Randall Marsh & Family
Mr. & Mrs. George Mazur & Family
Mary McKay
Eugenia Jane Meilinger
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Metz & Family
Mrs. Helen Mohr
Frank & Irene Momrock
Jack & Barbara Monarek & Family
Mrs. Theresa Nalepa
Nick's Brother
Bill, Susan, & Elizabeth Nielsen
Robert & Ellen Novatnack & Daughters
Mr. & Mrs. Alexander Ostapenko & Family
Mrs. Helen Perlow
Mary Petrovich
Eleanor M. Phillips
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph M. Pinkowicz & Family
Julia Pipok
Nicholas G. Pippis
Reader & Mrs. William Podlusky & Family
Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Prodes
Mrs. Anna Prohidney
Mrs. Pauline Radchuck
Dr. Gregory & Rosalie Radio
Scott & Keri Radio
Laura Riley
Valerie Ristvey
Mr. & Mrs. George Ristvey
Gordon & Valerie Roberts
Matthew, Alexander, & Nicholas Roberts

Glorify Him!

Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Roman
Alex & Gregory Roman
Nancy A. Sabol
John Saharuk
Mrs. Olga Sawaryski
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Sawarynski
Alexandra Schichalew
Helen Schweisgut
Mr. & Mrs. James Seifert & Family
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Senick, Jr.
Mary Silfies
John & Helen Skibo
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Slivka, Eric & Peter
John Smakula
Florence Smakula
Laura Smakula
Margaret Smakula
Mr. & Mrs. Gary Solan & Family
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Stafiniak
Joseph & Stephen Stafiniak
Miss Michele Stafiniak
Bessie Stamets, Steve & Cathy
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Stellato & Family
Boris & Vera Stoiancheff
Julia Strohl
Olga Sviatko
Anastasia Symanovich
Russell & Ola Tatusko
Wash & Helen Telepchak
Mrs. Irene Tomolovski
The Toroney's & Beatty's
William & Evelyn Urban
Martha Wagner
Louise Walker
Catherine Witko
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Yergey & Stacey
Rosemary Ziegenfuss

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

Catasauqua

Reader Chris & Mary Anne Rowe, Kati & Samuel
Mary Zbur
Louis & Betty Hilt
John & Pat Wasco
Anna Lalo
Scott & Dana Morgan & Alexis
Jack & Sandy Miller & Dan
Helen Suda
John & Anna Miller & Andrew
Mildred Bowski
Charles & Helen Gaston
Richard & Jean Garrison
George & Harriet Mazur
John Karpeuk
Robert & Cheryl Steck
Edward & Paulene Bachert
Joe & Mary Horoschak
Mary Yuhas
Verna Teman
Zachery Brusko (altar boy)
Sue Greitzer
Michael Harahus
Elizabeth Reeder
Dr. Serges & Fay Salivonchik
Olga Salivonchik
Eva Fox
Robert & Rebecca Romanchak
Dave & Danielle Bachert
Ed & Holly Bachert, Zachery & Nate
Andrew Brusko, Sr.
Lucy Wasco
Andrew Brusko, Jr.
Michael & Tonya Gaston, Michael & Lucas
Michael & Vincentine Brusko
Mary Zemchak
Mary Muha
Mary & Richard Baker & Kathy
Sue & Jeffrey Cressman
Andrew & Pat Brusko & Andrew
Vince & Nicki Fugazzotto
Ronald & Brenda Acker
Peter Kandianis, Laura, Kati, Ruth

ST. MARY'S ORTHODOX CHURCH

Coaldale

Fr. Paul & Matushka Borick
Nettie Bench
Mr. & Mrs. John Bench
Helen Berezniak
Harry Bialis
Theodore Bogash
Helen butts
Stephanie Chmel
David & Melanie Christman
Analisha & Vanessa Christman
Dr. & Mrs. Richard Chwastiak
Nicole & Richard Chwastiak
Randall Cunningham
Nicholas & Mildred Danchak
William & Helen Evetushick
Ray & Nadine Fegley
Charlie Garner
Olga Hebda
Catherine Hedes
Joe Herbert
Anna P. Horoschak
Jennie Jupin
Olga Kash
Helen & Wash King
Rose Lisella
Michael Lorchak
Ted & Pauline Lorchak
Mary Lutash
Kay & Paul Maliniak
Olga & Ben Macalush
Pauline Maholick
Marie Maholick
William & Helen McCullion
Helen Ostrosky
Marie Ostrosky
Jack & Millie O'Shura
Faith Orsulak
Lisa Vavra Ouly
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Patochek
John & Irene Puschak
Ted & Cathy Puschak
Bernard & Anna Pisko
Petrina Poko
Nancy Ruggeri
Ann Scarloss
Olga Sidoriak
Ann Slanta
Simon & Martha Stafiniak
Anna Tatushka
Gertrude & Michael Tatushko
Martha D. Teno
Sylvester & Helen Vavra
Rickie Waters
Olga Weiss
Harry Wyshosky
Anna Wargo
Ronald & Marie Yurchak
Mary K. Zemanik
Michael F. Zemanik
Michael Zordich

ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH

Coatesville

Sam Babich
George Babich
Vera Hatcher
Sunday School
Church Choir
Val & Jim Fox
John Zatyeczyc
Peter & Georgette Sarosi
Maria Toth
Karen Campbell
Ann & Nick Ruczhak

ST. ANDREW ORTHODOX CHURCH

Dallas

Very Rev. Michael Lepa
Florence M. Brin
Mrs. Robert T. Rhodes
Margaret Yankoski

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

Edwardsville

Rev. Fr. Emilian & Mat. Laryssa Hutnyan
Natalia & Zachary Hutnyan
Reader Gregory R. Sagan
Michael & Mary Rilko
Elizabeth Ervin
Mary Nickett
Ann Billek
Anna Pengrin
Olga Stapay
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Thorik
Frank Hulanick
Steve & Kathy Harmanos
Michael & Kyra Harmanos
Robert & Sandra Ference & Lauryn
Elaine & Edward Van Camp
Mr. & Mrs. William Deletconich
Mr. & Mrs. John Lukatchik
Jean Ruth Kutzer
Michael Kolinchock
Helen & George Piskorik
Ann Slavinski
Julia Capp
Sandra Williams
Marie & Peter Souchick
Ethel Berdy
Anna Dutko
Elizebeth Dutko
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Dutko
John & Audrey Supina
Fred & Suzanne Duduk
Terry & Natalie Hashey
Alexandra & Elena Duduk
In Memory of John & Androna Berdy
In Memory of Elizabeth Berdy
Mary Yova
Eugene Gingo & Family
Kathy Malcolm
Joseph Cunyar
Ben & Lucille Dragan
Peter & Florence Mazur
Betty & Joseph Wozniak
Joseph, Jr. & Eugene Wozniak
Mary Rock
Richard, Evelyn & John Swetts
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Merowsky
Mary Cunius
Michael Skopic
George Grabousky
Slymock Family
John Kotis
Michael, Sandy, & Hannah Lukatchik
Dora Deroski
Tillie Panco
Helen Moncovich
Wanda Wanko
Joanne Olejnick
Julia Seman
Anna Romanchick
Helen Sharock
Julia Sitar
Eva Kopko

HOLY ASCENSION ORTHODOX CHURCH

Frackville

V. Rev. & Matushka Ropitsky
Sophie Osenbach
Eva Mucha
Mary Torick
Anna Dudash
Mr. & Mrs. Donald Bricker
Drs. Robert & Mary Lou Bricker
Anna Bendinsky
Olga Chuma

Christ is Born!

Mr. & Mrs. Peter Swoboda
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Weremedic
Michael & Roseann Weremedic
Liz & Mike Weremedic
Jim, Lisa, & Jimmy Weremedic
Peter Weremedic, Jr.
Sophie & John Pellock
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Dikun
Olga Williams
Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Smarkanic
Mr. & Mrs. John Malinchock
Dr. Paul Thomas
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Thomas, Sr.
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Fletcher
Myron & Helen Polanchyk
Anna Jordan
Mary Krutz
Barbara Eximatats
Mary Zokuskie
Theresa Basara
Mary Hancher
Catherine Motz
James & Olga Hreshko
Sandra & Jack Morash & Sons
Zackary, Nicholas, Gregory, & Christopher Wilson
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Holowaty
Anna Sowchak
Nancy Sowchak
Ann & Alex Peleschak
David & Donna Peleschak
Steve Peleschak
Michael Ropitsky
Mary Diffenderfer
Carole Sagan
William & Mary Keysock
David, Gregory, & Daniel Keysock
Olga Purcell
Paul & Martha Malinchock
Pauline Searles
Joe & Anna Martin
Mel Martin
Paul Martin
Mae Parano
Anna Andrusichen
Michael Andrusichen
Michael Dyzel
Ann, Renee, & Val Eippert
Michael & Helen Onuskanich
John Cooper
Marge & Nicholas Tatusko
Vera Timko
Olga Chrsh
Sergius Chruch
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Kuchta
Margaret Kuchta

ST. HERMAN OF ALASKA ORTHODOX CHURCH

Gradyville

Fr. & Matushka John Perich
Taisia & Alixandra Perich
Reader Gregory & Sharon Hubiak
Katya & Alexander Hubiak
Serge & Svetlana Taptykoff
Nadine & John Prokop
George & Christel Krugovoy
LuAnn & Don Motel
Andrew & Mary Anne Toroney
Anna C. Woodring
Larissa Pahomov
Danielle & George Pahomov
John & Audress Krowzow
Olga Pishthey
George & Anastasia Plisko
Daria C. Collins
Anatole & Cynthia Bredikin
Nancy & Alan Pcsolyar
Nika, Joshua, & Daniel Pcsolyar
John Onushkanich
Matushka Mary Fedoronko
Jim & Sue-Amanda Chobany
Mr. & Mrs. George Taylor & Sons
The Hammerer Family

Nita Harris Siciliano & Sons, Peter & Mark
Stephen M. Sissons
Dorothy Sissons
Anastasia Jabkowski
Eleanor Bryan
Vera & Igor Kiselev
Marta & Kevin Grewell

CHRIST THE SAVIOUR ORTHODOX CHURCH

Harrisburg

Father Daniel & Theodora Ressetar
Father Michael & Olga Kovach
Haithan, Luna, & Riham Ayoub
Jim, Marilyn, Allan & Nicholas Antonio
John R. Barns
Dan, Patti, Michael & Andrew Bromley
Sylvester & Dorothy Barbu
John Caba, Jr.
Mary & George Cvijic
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Drebot
Mr. & Mrs. John J. Dotsey
Tusha Dernbach
Dave & Diane Dugan
Suzanne Demchak
Joseph, Pauline, & Brian Fetsko
Mr. & Mrs. Andy Fedetz
Rudolph & Donna Facynic
John A. Gamble
Razvan & Milila Gramatovici
Angela Georgias
Carl & Deb Hisiro & Family
Ron & Libby Hancher & Family
Mr. & Mrs. Ron Hancher, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. James Hardenstine & Family
Helen Kurylo
John & Lydia Kachur
George & Marilou Klipa
Alysha & Kristina Kachur
Evelyn & George Krempasky
Lauren, Rachel, & Elizabeth Kneiss
Gary & Carol Kneiss
Dolly & Adam Mallick
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Mallick
John & Diane Midlick
Katherine Macut
Cheryl & Dave Martin
Sonia & Eli Mioff
Sue B. Mandell
Timothy & Marianne McMahon
Dr. & Mrs. Joseph Norato & Sons
Mr. & Mrs. John Osuch, Jr. & Family
Evelyn J. Onufer & Mother Mary
Matushka Ann Prislipsky
Lorrie & David Pawlush & Family
Nicholas Pestrock
Paul & Betty Pellegrini
John, Matthew, Molly Ann Pylypciw
Joseph Russian
Nicholas Ressetar
Alexander Ressetar
Sophia & Dimitri Ressetar
Candi & Gregory Ressetar
Mr. & Mrs. Mn. L. Risser
John & Nadzia Schilling
John, Natalie, & Nicholas Schilling
Russ & Shirley Sass
Sysak Family
Sutovich Family
Bill & Irene Sumple
Gary, Joanne, Jacob, & Erica Strobert
Larry & Megan Smith
Effie Spaseff & Family
June Taleff
Helen Tatusko
Ron, Judy, Holly, & Noelle Webb
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Wood & Family
Leo & Marlene Washburn
Mrs. Alice Yankosky

Helen Yannone
Michael & Janice Zuro

ST. MICHAEL'S RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Jermyn

Fr. John & Matushka Kowalczyk, Sophia & Nicky
Fr. Gabriel & Matushka Petorak
Andrea & Jeff Baldan & Family
Debbie & Barry Bernosky & Family
Wendy & Serge Bochnovich & Family
Mary Bowan
Willard & Sue Brown & Family
Eddie & Eileen Brzuchalski
Dennis & Sonia Buberniak
Valerie Buberniak
Sandra & Kevin Carney
Jeff, Sandra Cavanaugh & Sons
Randy, Sharon Cleary & Children
Denise Cobb & Kyle
Bob & Eileen Dance
Delores Dreater
Kay Fedirko
Donald, Rosalie & Bill Fives
Barbara & Tony Franchak
Peter & Dolores Frenchko
Joseph Getzie
Nicholas Getzie
Peter Getzie
Sandy & Joe Gillott
Tom, Helen, & Stephanie Grancey
Bessie Guzey
John & Lucille Guzey
Andy & Dorothy Hanchak
Bill & Joan Hanchak
Julia Hanchak & Tom
Mr. & Mrs. Alex Hockin
Mr. & Mrs. John Hockin & John
John & Debbie Jaye & Jonathan
Olga Jaye
Dorothy Keklak
Rose Kelechawa
Julia Kitchura
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Klatch & Sons
Henry II & Jeremi Korpusik
Mary & Henry Korpusik
Mr. & Mrs. John Krenitsky
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Krenitsky
Irene Kupinski
Helen Lahey
Daria Lehman
JoAnn & Sam Mattise
Myra McInnis
Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Michalczyk
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Mikulak
Alice Mosley
Roxanne & Miles Neutts
Barbara & John Nayduch
Justine Orlando
Barbara Palubniak
Tillie Palubniak
Antoinette Petorak
Andy & Peg Petrilak
Martha Pollock
Willard Puzza
Anna Rusiniak
Mary Rusiniak
Mary Joan Rusiniak
Martha Scopelliti
John Sernak
Mary Sernak
Millie Sernak
Paul & Delores Sernak
Ron, Lorraine, & Ann Sernak
Delores Serniak
Steve & Dolly Serniak & Allison
Anastasia Sloat
Marilyn & Jerry Soroka & Children
In memory of Emily Stawisky
John Susko
Irene Swirdovich
Chap. & Mrs. Peter Telencio
Damian & Stephen Telencio
Bob & Millie Telep & Rebecca

Glorify Him!

John & Yvonne Wargo & Family
Mary Wyziak & Michael
Julia Zaccone
Peter Zaccone
Mary Zielinski
Betty Zrowka
Joe & Dorothy Zrowka

ST. VLADIMIR'S ORTHODOX CHURCH

Lopez

Hieromonk Michael Thier
Mrs. Nicholas Kachmarsky
Rosemary Kachmarsky
Robert E. Teese
Mr. & Mrs. John Caccia
Mr. & Mrs. Frank McCobin
Mr. & Mrs. Warren Stanteg
Edward Jack Enright
Mr. & Mrs. William John Enright & Sons
Helen Fullerton
Rosalie Burke
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Gulich
Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Matychak
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Kachmarsky
Craig Kachmarsky
Michael & Estelle McCobin
Norma Sharon McCobin
Robert & Nanette Carter
Dr. Natalie Lee Gardener & Monica
Mary McCobin Neddoff
Mary Kravetz
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Kravetz
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Vanderpool
Mary Puzo
Mary Ann Sysock
Stefie Neuffer
Leo Mattichak
Helen Dennis
Mary Saxe
David Vanderpool
Olga Rodka
Robert Rodka
Vera Gulich
Mr. & Mrs. James Christini
Mr. & Mrs. Paul St. Germain
John Borick
Emily Andrewlavage
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Elchak
Mr. & Mrs. John Kriel
Mr. & Mrs. Metro Hubiak
Tillie Opishinski
Mary Serecsko
Anna Hoch
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Fedrochak
Anonymous

HOLY ASCENSION ORTHODOX CHURCH

Lykens

Rev. Nicholas Wyslutsky
Matushka Elizabeth Wyslutsky
Joachim Wyslutsky
Ann Mahoney
John & Mary Mehalko
Elisabeth Y. Sultzbaugh
Andrew Y. Sultzbaugh
Gayle & John Sultzbaugh
Suzanne Smeltz
Nadia Sass
John & Judith Sweikert
Michael & Olga Hrinda
Joe & Patti Welsh
Nancy & John Coles
Johnnie & Chris Coles
George & Betty Tiazkun
Dracoool of Lykens
Dr. & Mrs. Paul Pianovich
Alex & Stephen Pianovich
Dr. & Mrs. Alexander Pianovich
Michael & Edith Leshko

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

McAdoo

Irene Yaworsky
Lonnie Pelli

Helen Osuch
Mary Stronko
Michael & Anna Kurtz, Sr.
Michael & Janette Kurtz, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Zabilette
Pearl Elko
Mr. & Mrs. Gregory Kurtz

ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Mt. Carmel

Fr. Michael Evans & Family
Jean Mathias
Mary Shields
Mary Moroz
Anna Gondal
Dorothy Beckus
Catherine Harndock
Eva Roushinko
Chris Buchkarik
Anna Panikarchuck
Mr. & Mrs. Bernie Malkoski
George Panikarchuck
Anna & Charles Raber
Anna & Dolores Wislock
John & Theresa Pohekailo
Charles Chidovich
Helen Timpko
Olga Thomas
C. Shaffchick
Margaret Olaf
Mr. George Bortnichak
Florence Bubernak
Peter Yastishak
Mrs. Mary Kandrot
Mr. Costy Melnick
Sandy & Joe Tosca
Vera & Stanley Zbicki
Walter & Sandy Sebasovich
Walter Sorochka
Julia Barnes
Julia Bushick
Russell Alexieko
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Yonkovig
Olga Berkoski
Marie Cuff
William Wislock
Mr. & Mrs. Ernie Hill
Valentina Wood
Helen Sorocka
Pearl Winnick
Mrs. Fred Markovich
Mary Zeluskey
Mr. Leon Markovich
Joe Coletti
Mr. & Mrs. Joe Yastishak
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas P. Alekseyko
Mrs. Deanna Ciocco
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Breslin
Paul Wislock
Adam Leschinsky

SS. PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

Minersville

Fr. Michael & Matushka Hatrak
Matthew & Natalie Hatrak
Stablum Family
Anna & James Antonio
Mr. & Mrs. Luke Oakill
Susie Frew
Andrea Frew
JoAnn Brinich
Mr. & Mrs. David Studlack
John Studlack

ST. JOHN'S ORTHODOX CHURCH

Nanticoke

Rev. & Matushka Stephen Karaffa
Mary Zupko
Joe & Mary Paprota

Paul & Olga Sulewski
Jay & Marge Sokol
Joe, Joey, & Jill Paprota
John & Ellie Pihonich
Mary Hunchar
Mary Misewich
Olga Carvey
John & Theresa Klos
Warho Family
Dorothy Fagula
Helen Zutkowski
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Zupko

ST. MICHAEL'S ORTHODOX CHURCH

Old Forge

Fr. David & Matushka Karen Mahaffey
Nikolas Mahaffey
Michael Mahaffey
Seth Mahaffey
Kyra Mahaffey
Mary Adamiak
Maria Augustine
Tillie Augustine
John & Sandra Barsigian
Tony, Suzi & Sierra Bellenzeni
Anthony Bellenzeni, Sr.
Jon & Anna Marie Black
Agnes Buranich
Helen Chesniak
Mr. & Mrs. William Condon
The Cushner Family
Mr. & Mrs. Walter Ermolovich
Atty. Nicholas Ermolovich
Neal & Ann Freeman
Mrs. Nicholas Halchak
Mr. Harrison Hubiak
Mr. & Mrs. Alex Jadick
David Jadick
Michael & Marge Jadick
Mr. & Mrs. Al Krenitsky
Juliana Kuzmack
Nick Lezinsky
Mr. & Mrs. Tina Ludwig
Joseph & Ann Marie Macijowski
Helen Percy
Ann Peregrim
Lovie Peregrim
Theresa & Helen Polanchik
Daniel & Sandra Pregmon
Michael & Eva Pregmon
Walter & Margaret Pregmon
William & Mary Pregmon
Mr. & Mrs. John Pritchyk
Pauline Spitko
Michael Spitko, Jr.
Paul, Martha & Paul Andrew Tumavitch
Ann Tyrpak
Sonia Tyrpak

ALL SAINTS ORTHODOX CHURCH

Olyphant

All Saints Sr. R Club
All Saints Jr. R Club
Priest Peter & Matushka Suzanne Dubinin
V. Rev. Michael & Matushka Olga Chanda
John & Florence Boyko
Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Bonczar & Family
Helen Bryer
Olga Boyko
Mr. & Mrs. David Brzuchalski & Family
Brian & Ruth Brown
Stepanna Butchko
Patrice, Peter, Michelle Dubinin
Joseph Dzwonczyk
Helen Dzwonczyk
Mr. & Mrs. Ray Dubois & Family
Elmer & Elizabeth Generotti
Irene Glowatz
Johanna, Joan & Janet Gima
Olga Grancey
Mary Jane Gilbert
Mary Hoyniak & Daughter
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Huddy & Daughters
Justine Horhut

Christ is Born!

Mr. & Mrs. Harry Hunyak
 Nicholas & Marie Holowatch
 Vera & Natalie Hoyniak
 Mr. & Mrs. Victor Koziar
 Ann Klemko
 Michael & Amelia Kuzmiak
 Mr. & Mrs. Theo Koziar
 Edward & Eleanor Krushinsky
 Lubov Kopestonsky
 Olga Longwell
 Joseph & Nancy Mazur
 Regina McAvoy
 Frances Meholic
 Dr. Gregory Meholic
 Claudia Mikulak
 Mr. & Mrs. William Mezick & Daughter
 Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Puza
 Vera & Olga Paulishak
 Mr. & Mrs. George Perechinsky
 Thomas & Barbara Puhalla
 Mr. & Mrs. Peter Rezanka, Sr.
 Barbara Rusen
 Mr. & Mrs. Peter Rezanka, Jr. & Family
 Mr. & Mrs. George Scochin & Family
 George & Joan Schlasta
 Mary Semon
 Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Stafursky
 Ken & Dan Stafursky
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Schlasta & Family
 Mary Stafursky
 Mr. & Mrs. Bryan Siebecker & Family
 Adele Shopay
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Semon & Family
 Michael Stuchlak & Linda
 John & Annette Schlasta
 Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Verespy & Family
 Julia Voloshen
 Mary Wasilchak

ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH Olyphant

Fr. Vladimir & Matushka Marianne Fetcho
 Protodeacon Stephen & Matushka Juliane Howanet
 Julie, Rick, James & Jonathan Cesari
 John & Josephine Chichilla
 Michelle Chichilla
 Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Dreater & Niki
 Mr. & Mrs. Paul Dreater
 Paul Dreater, Jr.
 Tanya Dreater
 Mrs. Barbara Evanina, Billy, Tanya & Stephen
 Joseph & Dorothy Fetchina
 Kyra Fetchina
 Olga Fetchina
 Maria Grabania
 Mike Grabania
 George Kopestonsky
 Edward Kurilla
 Olga Kuzmick
 Jack, Joan & Greg Lengel
 Marie Marshalek
 Anna Murawsky
 Mr. & Mrs. Tom Price
 Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Rebar
 Ann Thomashefsky
 James & Helen Thomashefsky
 Helen Witiak
 Mary Youshock

ST. STEPHEN'S ORTHODOX CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL Philadelphia

V. Rev. Daniel & Mary Geeza
 Matushka Mary Fedoronko
 John S. Borick
 Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Yencha
 Andrew & Maura Yencha
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert Burch
 Anna & Michael Hargrave
 Bill, Nina, Kathie, Michael & Matthew Gavula
 Arnold, Katherine, Anna & Alexandra Jensky
 Peter & Elizabeth Hetman
 Mr. & Mrs. John Lisovitch
 Don & Kim Berman

Annette Kopistansky
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Herrschaft
 Anne Burdziak
 Catherine Paulasack
 Helen George
 Tatiana Koniuch
 Mary D. Birkenbach
 Anna D. Simpson
 Joseph C. Simpson
 Mr. & Mrs. Walter Stephan Stephadwich
 Dr. Timothy Horsky
 Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Horsky
 Paul, Diane, Laura & John Fedoronko
 Nadia Kolesnik
 Helen Plunkett
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Kolesnik & Family
 Mr. & Mrs. John Kolesnik, Jr. & Family
 Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Kolesnik & Family
 Olga & John Gazak
 Mary Gressen
 Olga Russin
 Michael & Jennie Harb
 Mrs. Alice Victor
 Barbara, Katie & Patrick Fagan
 Dr. & Mrs. Michael Taptykoff, Michael & Natalie
 John Herbut
 Mr. & Mrs. Theodore Pschick
 Matushka Mary Horsky
 Mary Radick
 Charles & Halina Colter
 Mr. & Mrs. Willis Dietrich
 Michael & Sonia Mariani & Family
 Dave, Elham, Matthew & Alexis Geeza
 Gregory & Cindy Geeza
 Capt. Michael & Mary Frances & Anastasia Geeza
 Rose Neher
 Jack, Judy & Jennifer Clyde
 Ron & Kathy Bisaga
 Ronald Bisaga
 Vince & Diane Zanghi & Nicholas
 Mr. & Mrs. William Wasser
 Mr. & Mrs. Walter Mokriski
 Robert Tallick
 Bill Kraftician
 Joseph & Barbara O'Brick
 Tamara Danyluk
 Dr. George & Pauline Englesson
 Mr. & Mrs. Brian Ezrow
 John, Kate, Nicholas, Alexander & Andre Cox
 Larry, Connie, Jon & Chris Skvir
 Konstantin & Exaterina Yororbatovhevski
 Mrs. Alice Karpiak
 Jelena Grabania
 Janke Nass
 Christine Nass
 John, Denise, Sonia & Michael Rowe
 Peter Kalandiak
 Nicholas Cronin
 John Kozlowski
 Anastasia Peramus
 Reader Daniel, Taissa & David Drobish
 John & Helen Szulak
 Olga Oprouseck
 Orest J. Fedoronko
 Margret Englesson
 Barbara, Karen, Nick, Vanessa, Kris, & Robbie
 Mr. & Mrs. Stephan Pron, Sr.
 Larissa & Stephan Pron
 Pron-Zwick Family
 Mr. & Mrs. Paul Cholaris

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH Pottstown

V. Rev. Nicholas & Matushka Yuschak
 Mr. & Mrs. John Bortesy
 Nettie Hart
 Anna Meko
 Victor & Helen Pershinsky
 John Sekellick
 Erzeda Popoff

ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

St. Clair

Fr. Michael & Matushka Hatrak
 Matthew & Natalie Hatrak
 Sam & Joan Wisnosky
 Danny Perrin
 Wassil Draovitch
 Leah Chrush
 Stella Kadingo
 Jeanette Sagan
 Ted Sagan
 Reader Gregory Sagan
 Leo Draovitch
 Russell Draovitch
 Nancy Messina
 Mary Melhonick
 Betty Hoptak
 Steve Pelak
 Tatiana Heffner
 Jared Zane
 Ann & Alex Zuk
 Olga DeMarkis
 Anna Bagush
 George Papinchak
 Verna Papinchak
 Sue Kritak
 Mary Kritak

ST. HERMAN OF ALASKA ORTHODOX CHURCH

Shillington

The Parish Council
 The Sunday School Teachers & Students
 The Our Lady of Kazan Sisterhood
 The Parish Choir
 Rev. & Mrs. John A. Onofrey
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Anderson & Family
 Dr. & Mrs. Gregory Cortellessa & Family
 Louise Coleman
 Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Dougherty & Family
 John & Marie Drosdak
 Stephanie Drosdak & Mark
 Gloria Duty & Sons
 Mr. & Mrs. Jefferson Gore & Sons
 Bill & Rosalie Hardman
 Mr. & Mrs. Walter Hojnowski
 Terry M. Hojnowski
 The Kawood Family
 Eva Kopera
 Dr. & Mrs. Wadim Kurjanowicz
 Mrs. Jean Kusior
 Mike & Vera Losk
 Deborah Lucas & Michael
 Irene Lupco
 John, Dana & Raymond MacKoul
 Michael & Janice Mallick
 Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Matsick & Family
 Gertrude Melniczek
 Karl & Ruth Osterburg
 Michael & Teresa Savage
 Mr. & Mrs. John Seman & Family
 Sandra Semion
 Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Sichak & Family
 Gloria Spitko
 Cheryl & Catherine Terenchin
 The Wanenchak Family
 Mr. John Yonchuk
 Mr. & Mrs. Edward Yurick & Family
 Hank & Anne Zerbe

ST. BASIL'S CHURCH Simpson

Rev. Leo Poore
 Pearl Bock
 James & Mary Anne Braun
 Maria K. & Jefferson H. Braun
 Olga & John Buberniak
 Mary Chupeck
 Sam & Nadine Demianovich
 Helen Dorval
 Olga Gallick
 Helen Hrichuk

Glorify Him!

Stephen & Esther Kowalsky
Thomas & Elaine Kravetsky
Laurie, Lynn & Kimberly Kravetsky
Helen Kutch
Michael & Theresa Luczkovich
Julia Mazza
Anastasia Mikulak
Michael J. & Julia Mikulak
John & Mary Okorn
Walter & Marie Proch
Maria & John Proch
Walter & Mary Anne Proch
Christina M. & Elizabeth A. Proch
Daria & David Roat
Jo Ann Somple

ST. TIKHON'S MONASTERY CHURCH South Canaan

His Eminence, Archbishop HERMAN
Very Rev. Daniel & Matushka Delores Donlick
Protodeacon Keith Russin
Reader Gregory Hatrak
Reader Gregory Sulich
Matushka Mary Borichevsky
Matushka Dorothy Sulich
Galina Abolins
Mary Andreychik
Marge Barna
Olga Barna
Harry, Stella, Michael, Ekaterina & Maria Boosalis
Bill & Alice Boga
John David Dowling
Betty A. Figura
Drs. David & Mary Ford & Emmelia
Daisy Geeza
Mr. & Mrs. John Getzie
John Getzie, III
Joseph Getzie
Mr. & Mrs. William Huniak
Julia Jacewicz
Mrs. Katherine Lazorack
Jule Lepa
Mr. & Mrs. John Minarick
Mr. & Mrs. Ken Paluc
John & JoAnne Paluch
Martin Paluch
Stephanie Sklarsky
Julianna, Maria & Michael Tihanich
Paul Wozniak
Julie, Bill & Sue Zielinsky

SS. PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH Uniondale

Fr. John & Matushka Maxwell & Family
Lovey Klym
Marie Hutnyan
Donald & Ann Bock
Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Kilmer
Rose Kennedy
Martha Dorosh
Vladimir & Betty Demianovich
Peter & Catherine Jubinsky

HOLY RESURRECTION ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL Wilkes-Barre

Very Reverend Joseph Martin
Matushka Gloria Martin
Protodeacon Keith Russin
Father Deacon Sergei & Matushka Vicki Kapral
Reader David & Kathryn Kessler
David Nicholas & Tatiana Kessler
Mr. & Mrs. John Dulsky
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Sokola
Mrs. Helen Pryor & Family
Agnes Timchak
Andrew Buleza
Laverne Chapman
Mr. & Mrs. Wendell Thoman
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Humko
Mrs. Mary Onufer
Olga Layton
Vladimir Glowatsky
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Wysocki

Ann Wensel
Irene & Charles Urban
Charlene Faust
Michael & Nancy Pieck
Elizabeth Reese
John & Irene Zimich
Mrs. Mary Krill
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Romanuski
Mr. & Mrs. John Zoranski
Betty Polk
Laura, Greg & Michael Polk
Rose Sorochak
Mr. & Mrs. Sam Ostopick
Mrs. Nicholas Kondratick
Mark Kondratick
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Berlozan
Mrs. Mary Solovey
Stella Terpack
Mrs. Simon Russin
Mr. & Mrs. Harry Holak
Mr. & Mrs. D.H. Anderson
Elizabeth Takach
Vera Kraynanski
Anna & Ann Marie Hutz
Sandra, Julieann & Nicholas Kapelan
Kyra Zoranski

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

Wilkes-Barre

Father & Matushka Pawlush
Mary Skordinski
John Goobic
Sue Bawn
Mary Bankos
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Lisko, Sr.
Mary Salmay
Mary & Stephen Krill, Jr.
Marianne Krill
Marion & Eve Sowyrda
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Stchur
Pearl Tutko
Andrew Dennis
Fr. John & Matushka Mason
Deborah Mason
Gregory & Susy Mason
Katrina & Nicholas
Jason & Rebecca Lawrence
Serge, Sue & Natalie Mason
Tamara & Mark Kocsis
Susan Mason
Justine Paddock
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Sanders
Mr. & Mrs. Boris Mayher
Mr. & Mrs. Edward A. Gudaitis
John Pawlak
Mrs. Helen Zavada
Mrs. Mary Petro
Anna Bromuko
John & Gabriel Homick
Mr. & Mrs. Nicholass Canyuch
Miss Olga Canyuch
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Pawlak
Mr. & Mrs. Theodore Sovyrda
Mrs. Anna Kondratick
Liz & John Gurka
Mr. & Mrs. William Gurka
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Welgo
Mr. & Mrs. David Mills
Mr. & Mrs. Samuel Cross
Basil & Lydia Homick
Mr. & Mrs. William Yankovich
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Gozick
Mary Piznar
Stephen Lukachick
Barbara King
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Talpash
Anna Goobic
Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Goobic

Mr. & Mrs. Jonah Goobic
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Goobic, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Donald Goobic
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Goobic
W. Mason
Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Latzman
Fr. David & Matushka Sharon Shewczyk
Timothy & Nicholas Shewczyk

HOLY CROSS CHURCH Williamsport

Fr. Daniel & Myra Kovalak
Daria & Natalia Kovalak
Elsie Skvir Nierle
Dr. & Mrs. Michael Serwint
Lew & Barbara Shatto
John Kovich
John Sam, Jr.
Julie & Michael Stefanick
Yvonne & Nathan Bohlander
Helene Fowler

ST. MARK'S ORTHODOX CHURCH Wrightstown

V. Rev. Theodore Heckman
Larisa, Justin & Chryse Heckman
Rev. Dn. & Mrs. Gregory Moser
John Wanko
Helen Bulley
Walter & Elizabeth Labick
Mary Zaroff
Boris Borichevsky Family
Lucy Znak
Sonja Lengel & Kate Safonova
James & Monica Pitra
Mr. & Mrs. George Nakonetschny
Michael, Anthony & Steven Nakonetschny
Sandy, Peter & Stephanie Bohlander
Julia, Peter, Katie & Holly Ren
Vera Nakonetschny Gambone
Valerie Polakow & Nicholas Nakonetschny
Elena Nakonetschny
Richard Baranowski
Myron, Linette, Stephen & Anastasia Sedor
Delores L. Marmaluk & Family
Mila Grom
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Miele
Betsy Werner
Mr. & Mrs. Kevin T. Swan
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Posusney

ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL CHURCH Wilmington, DE

Rev. & Matushka Andrew Diehl
Sophia M. Puit
Harry & Emily Wujik
Robert & Jean Zapora
Vesselin B. Lilov
Michael Mizgala
Olga O'Neill
Bill & Marie Herman & Family
Leon Ciach & Lisa Collins
Kutch Family
Marie Karawulan
Paul, Vera & Matt Chalfant
Pete & Dolores Karawulan
Jim Carpenter
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Hojnicky & Family
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Hojnicky, Sr.
Mr. & Mrs. David Roberts & Family
Mr. & Mrs. William Dryden
Mr. & Mrs. William Scari
Irene Sulick
Mr. & Mrs. John Maloney & Family
Olga Rybachak
Jim & Anne Riley & Family
James S. & Olga S. Riley & Family
Len & Mary Guretsky
Anna Streltsoff
Peter & Elizabeth Melnik

All In The Diocesan Family

BETHLEHEM

St. Nicholas Church

Parish Activities: The three day "Russian Days" was a huge success. This event involves the entire parish and has become a community-wide event in the city of Bethlehem.

Eightieth Anniversary scheduled: In 1996 a year-long program of parish activities is planned that will involve all members, as we prepare to celebrate our 80th Anniversary.

Interior Icon Project: Dennis Bell of Cleveland, Ohio has been selected to paint the interior of the church and to write icons for the ceiling and walls.

Church School: On Sunday, October 15, the first St. Nicholas Education Day, four temporary classrooms were dedicated to the memory of St. Elizabeth, St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre, St. Mary of Egypt, and Ss. Herman and Innocent of Alaska. An open house was conducted, which allowed parents to attend classes and review the Church School curriculum.

COALDALE

St. Mary's Church

Church School Activities: In July, the children held their annual outing at Knobel's Amusement Park. His Eminence, Archbishop Herman, was present for the beginning of the Church School year, on Sunday, September 10. The students also sang the responses to parts of the Divine Liturgy.

Parish Activities: On October 22, the parish held its Octoberfest and the 24th Annual Christmas Bazaar was held in October.

90th Birthday: On November 2, Anna Harhues celebrated her 90th birthday Anniversary. On October 1, Claire and Otis Remington celebrated their Wedding Anniversary.

EDWARDSVILLE

St. John's Church

Marriage: On August 18, Helen Zelinski and Clarence Hamersle were united in the sacrament of Holy Matrimony.

Baptisms: Joseph James Kulick, son of



Jolene Marek presenting flowers to His Eminence.



Jack O'Shura, Council President, greeting His Eminence at church.



Children singing responses at Divine Liturgy.



Archbishop Herman blessing Sunday school children—first day of Church School

Don and Kathy Kulick, September 15.
Zachary Michael Hutnyan, son of Fr.
Emilian and Matushka Laryssa Hutnyan,
November 25.

GRADYVILLE

St. Herman of Alaska

Baptisms: Amanda Marie Chobany,
daughter of James and Susan Chobany,
June 25. Michael Anthony Tatasciore,
son of Anthony and Daria Tatasciore,
September 3.

Church School Activities: A trip to
Hershey Park began the Church School
year. A Haunted Hayride and a sleep-over
was held the Friday before Halloween. The
number of Church School children has
reached thirty, which has prompted the
need for an additional teacher.

Parish Activities: St. Herman's spon-
sors a booth at the Media Food Festival.
The parish sells ethnic foods. The choir
performed liturgical songs and the chil-
dren performed ethnic dances at the Inter-
national Festival held in Upper Darby. The
parish was also represented at the Sun
Center for a bake and craft sale.

HARRISBURG:

Christ the Saviour Church

Award Recipient: On October 29,
Natalie Schilling received the Chi Rho
Girl Scout Award, from His Eminence
Archbishop Herman.

F.R.O.C. Convention: On Sunday, Oc-
tober 29, the Central Pennsylvania District
held its 65th Annual District Convention
at Christ the Saviour. Archbishop Herman
was the main celebrant of the Hierarchi-
cal Divine Liturgy. He was assisted by
Very Rev. Daniel D. Ressetar, pastor and
district spiritual advisor; Associate Pastor,
Very Rev. Dr. Michael G. Kovach; the Rev.
Protodeacon Keith Russin; and the
subdeacons Alexei Kurenkov and Alexei
Klmitchev, students from Russia who are
studying at St. Tikhon's Seminary. The
adult and children a cappella choirs were
directed by Matushka Theodora Ressetar.
After the services, His Eminence, Arch-
bishop Herman, presented Dr. Michael
Wusylo, Pittsburgh, national president of
the F.R.O.C., with the Gramota from His
Holiness Alexy II, Patriarch of the Ortho-

Continued on the next page.



St. Herman of Alaska, Gradyville, Pa. - Church school children after performing ethnic dances at the Upper Darby International Festival.



F.R.O.C. Convention.



Blessing of the icons before the Divine Liturgy in Jermyn.



All In The Diocesan Family

Continued from page 73.

dox Church in Russia, in behalf of the Federation. Following the fellowship hour, 130 people attended the convention banquet held in the parish hall. During the business session, the following people were elected to office for 1996. Governor, John Petronko; Lt. Governor, Gary Lelo; Secretary, Paula Lahutsky; Treasurer, Nicholas Ressetar.

LYKENS

Holy Ascension Church

New pastor welcomed: During July, the Parish welcomed Fr. Nicholas Wyslutsky and his family.

Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Celebrations: Mr. & Mrs. John Coles and Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Welsh recently celebrated their twenty-fifth anniversaries. May God grant them many years!

Memory Eternal: Kataryna Lapicky, 99, the last of the charter members, fell asleep in the Lord on the Feastday of the Protection of the Theotokos. May her memory be eternal!

Parish Activities: The Annual Parish Bazaar was a huge success.

The parish worked together to make 1500 peroghi and several hundred halupki.

SHILLINGTON

St. Herman of Alaska

Baptisms/Chrismations: Cole Douglas Benson and Jaclyn Desiree Cortellessa on November 5.

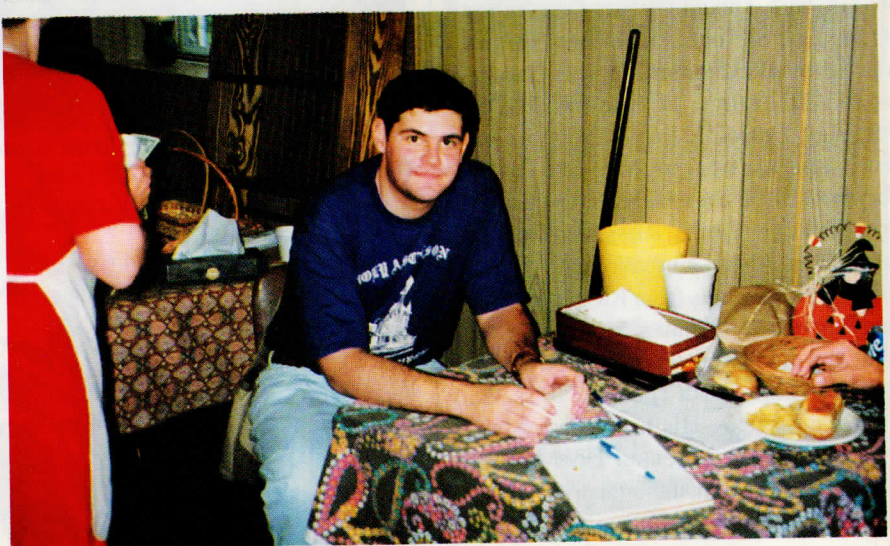
Marriage: On September 16, Paul Melniczek and Denise Shuman were united in the sacrament of Holy Matrimony.

Graduates: Thomas Gruneberg received his degree from Western Maryland Univ. and Mary Anne Seman graduated from Gov. Mifflin High School, Shillington.

Parish Activities: On July 23, the Parish Golf Tournament & Picnic were held. On July 24, Parish Night was held at the Reading Phillies Baseball Game. On, November 12, the Annual Pre-Advent Harvest Dinner was held in the Church Hall. On November 30, parishioners under the leadership of Louis Kawood repainted the interior of the church. This was part of his "Community Service" project for his upcoming Eagle Scout Award.



Joseph Zrowka receiving the Olyphant Lions Club award for his bread ministry.



Annual Bazaar at Holy Ascension, Lykens.

**WILLIAMSPORT
Holy Cross Church**

Lecture Series: On October 9, His Eminence Archbishop Herman, spoke on "The Challenge of A.D. 2000" and debuted the videotape produced regarding



Parishioners at St. Herman's, Shillington, repainting the church.

the historic meeting of Orthodox bishops in 1994 at Ligonier. On November 6, Archpriest and Mrs. Alexander Veronis from Lancaster spoke on "Evangelizing the World" in a dynamic fashion. They focused the need for all local support and international mission programs through prayer and commitment. They also showed slides of their own missionary endeavors in Kenya where they built an Orthodox Medical Center in 1988. Their son, Fr. Luke Veronis, currently serves as a missionary in Albania. On November 13, Holy Cross Pastor Fr. Daniel Kovalak presented a slide program entitled "Where Heaven Met Earth" detailing his recent pilgrimage to Israel, Sinai, and Egypt. Each of the presentations welcomed visitors to Holy Cross and was followed by a Fellowship Hour sponsored by the Holy Cross Auxiliary.

Community Witness: On October 25, Fr. Daniel Ressetar of Christ the Saviour Church, Harrisburg, spoke at the ecumenical luncheon of the United Churches of

Continued on the next page.



St. Herman's parishioners at the Reading Phillies game.



Fr. and Presbytera Alexander Veronis with Fr. Daniel Kovalak.



Archbishop Herman addressing the faithful at Holy Cross parish.

All In The Diocesan Family

Continued from page 75.

Lycoming Cty. His topic was "What is a Saint?" After sharing the Orthodox perspective on holiness and sanctity, he recounted the life of his great-uncle, Priest-martyr Maksym (Sandowich) and his experience at the canonization in Poland in 1994.

At the November 9 Annual Assembly of the United Churches of Lycoming Cty., Holy Cross Rector Fr. Dan Kovalak was elected president of the ecumenical group. The agency is considered one of the most active interfaith efforts in Pennsylvania with a budget in excess of \$111,000. On the Executive Board are 20 local religious leaders representing some 150 local churches.

Auxiliary: On October 12, the Auxiliary held its Annual Meeting. Elected to office were: Cathy Thereoulis, President; Chris Sinatra, Secretary; Elsie Skvir Nierle, Treasurer; Carol Serwint, Immediate Past President. In addition to its



Holy Cross Women's Auxiliary.

monthly financial pledge toward the parish operating budget, the Auxiliary offered cash donations to the Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards, International Orthodox

Christian Charities, and the local Shepherd of the Streets Ministry. The Auxiliary also staffs seven volunteer sub-committees in their service to the parish community.

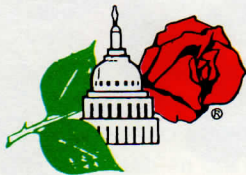
*The Most Rev. Archbishop Herman
and
Orthodox Christians for Life
Request the honour of your presence for
The Orthodox Witness on the Sanctity of Human Life
at the*

1996 March for Life

Monday, January 22, 1996, 11:30 A.M.

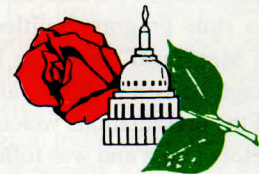
Dignitaries on the Podium at 11:45 A.M.

Program Activities Start at 12:00 noon



The Ellipse, Washington, DC

(across the street from the White House)



RSVP by January 14, 1996
Orthodox Christians for Life
P.O. Box 805, Melville, NY 11747
(516) 271-4408

ST. TIKHON'S BOOKSTORE
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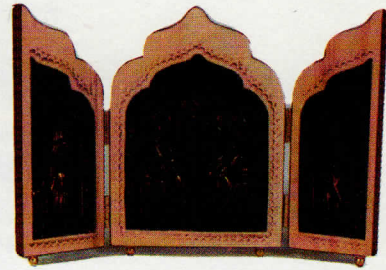
New Folding Book Icons Available From St. Tikhon's Bookstore!



IC383 \$100.00



IC385 \$30.00



IC384 \$120.00



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IC391 \$7.00



IC387 \$12.00



IC389 \$14.00



IC386 \$16.00

Second Annual St. Tikhon's Century Association Russian Winter Festival



Weekend of February 16 through 19, 1996
The Historic Radisson Lackawanna Station Hotel
700 Lackawanna Avenue Scranton, Pennsylvania

Special Rates: \$59.00 for single or double plus tax.
Call 800-347-6888 for reservations.

A block of rooms reserved until January 17th!

Special Events on Saturday February 17:

The Lackawanna Station will be turned into a Russian Collectible, Jewelry, Fine Art and Antique Bazaar featuring Treasures from Around the World!

A Russian Folk Ensemble, "Misha and Natasha"
will entertain shoppers and diners during the day!

The Hotel's excellent chef will be featuring a Russian Menu
Buffet for lunch at 1:00 to 2:30 PM and for dinner at 7:00 to 8:30 PM.

Reservations for the Buffet can be made by calling 717-343-2232.

Special Event on Sunday February 18:

MASLENITSA: A RUSSIAN PRE-LENTEN CELEBRATION

Time: 2:00 P.M. - Banquet: Featuring a Russian Style Menu!

Entertainment: Accordionist Cossack Sam Solkuluk, Russian Bass Misha Gulko,
Russian Baritone singer Gary Nova, Gypsy Balalaikas Orchestra
and "Misha and Natasha!"

A visit by Father Frost and a Traditional Snow Princess!

Crowning of our own Prince and Princess of the MASLENLITSA!

Co-Chairs: V. Rev. John Perich and Mrs. Florence M. Boyko.

Dress: Costumes, gowns, ethnic costumes or whatever!

Reservations should be sent to:

Florence M. Boyko, 211 Summit Point, Scranton PA 18508 **717-343-2232**

NO LATER THAN FEBRUARY 5, 1996!

Please make checks payable to:

St. Tikhon's Century Association

Ticket Price for Banquet: Adult \$35.00 Child \$15.00

Reservations can be made for tables of 10!



Promise: Fun to be had by all!