



# svs news

AUTUMN 2003



looking forward..

## Looking forward



John Mindala

The V. Rev. Paul Lazor, dean of students, holds the Gospel at the Divine Liturgy celebrated on Orthodox Education Day, 2003. (See page 9)





## ON THE COVER

Seminarians from SVS and St Tikhon's Seminary, directed by David Drillock, join voices for the United Nations prayer service held at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Manhattan on October 6, 2003. For a complete story please go to [www.oca.org/pages/events](http://www.oca.org/pages/events).

## SVSnews

Autumn 2003 • volume 1, number 2

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Excerpts from *God with Us* (p. 14) used by  
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St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological  
Seminary is a graduate school of theology,  
whose primary purpose is the preparation  
of leaders, both clergy and lay, for service  
to the Orthodox Church and the world  
at large.

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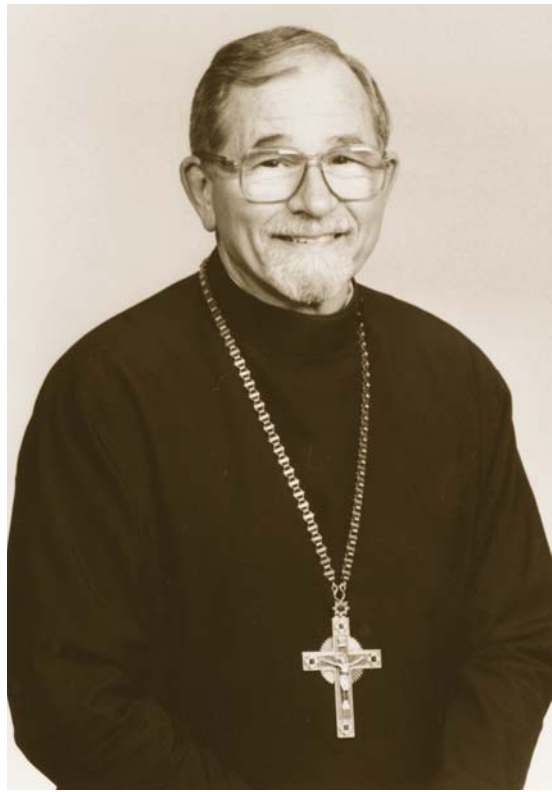
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# Remembering Our Leaders 1957–1983

AS SVS CELEBRATES ITS 65TH ANNIVERSARY, FR HOPKO REMINISCES ABOUT THE SEMINARY'S MIDDLE YEARS, INSPIRED BY THE SCRIPTURAL COMMAND TO "REMEMBER YOUR LEADERS, THOSE WHO SPOKE TO YOU THE WORD OF GOD; CONSIDER THE OUTCOME OF THEIR LIFE, AND IMITATE THEIR FAITH" (Hebrews 13:7).

by Dean Emeritus Fr Thomas Hopko



Fr Thomas Hopko (second from left) is pictured here with the 1962 octet. SVS Dean of Students Fr Paul Lazor (fifth from left) and Chief Financial Officer David Drillcock (fourth from left) were also members of this class.

## COMING TO THE SEMINARY

I heard about St Vladimir's in 1956 from a friend, Frank Kulik, now a psychiatrist in Jackson, Mississippi, and a staunch seminary supporter. Frank was a freshman at Drew University in New Jersey while I was enrolled at a small college in upstate New York. He phoned to tell me of a seminar he attended at Drew on the theme of Russian Orthodoxy. He was particularly impressed by one of the speakers, a young priest named Fr Alexander Schmemmann, a teacher at St Vladimir's Seminary in New York City. He suggested that we travel to find out more about St Vladimir's during our Easter vacation in 1957.

Driving to New York City in my father's black and white Chevy (which unfortunately, by the conclusion of our trip, needed a new clutch), we approached the seminary's neighborhood,



Met. Leonty (center), a man of striking spiritual nobility and humility, laid the foundation of the seminary's library.

“We approached the seminary's neighborhood looking for golden cupolas. Instead we found a six-story tenement on the corner of Broadway and 121st Street.”

Morningside Heights, looking for golden cupolas. Instead we found a six-story tenement on the corner of Broadway and 121st Street. The seminary was housed in several apartments while its classes were held in rooms (usually the boiler room) at Union Theological Seminary. After locating the office and chapel on the second floor, we found Fr Schmemmann's apartment on the fourth and rang his bell. A gray-haired woman with black wire frame glasses informed us that Father would be back later. I said to Frank, “I thought you said that Fr Schmemmann was young. His wife sure looks old!” However, this wasn't his wife, but a woman named “Vava” who helped the Schmemmann household—its young working “matushka,” three children, and several seminarians.

Later that day we met with Fr Schmemmann, Fr Daniel Hubiak, and Nicholas Ozerov (all of whom, I noted, smoked Camels.) They assured us that we would be most welcome at St Vladimir's but needed to enroll in a bachelor's program at an area college. This requirement suited me since my father insisted that I obtain a college degree. He wanted people to know that if I became a priest it was “by choice,” and not because I was “too dumb to study or too lazy to work.” Such was a widely held view in those days when, as my schoolmate, the late Fr John Psinka, would say, “few were called and all were chosen.”

When I arrived at the seminary the fall of that same year, the door was opened to me by another entering seminarian named Frank Lazor, later to be known as Metropolitan Theodosius of the Orthodox Church in America. After spending my first night, I was awakened by Kostya Kallaur (now a university professor and faithful seminary supporter) who told me that we had work to do: Union Seminary was discarding old beds, tables, and lamps which would be useful in our apartments. I'll never forget my first day in seminary, pushing a heavily loaded dolly many times across Broadway while cars screeched by, blowing their horns.

The seminary had no refectory so we ate as we could, mostly cooking for ourselves in our apartment kitchens. I (happily) lost thirty pounds my first semester. You can



imagine my joy in going home for winter break with my new “ascetical seminarian look.”

## THE SEMINARY

There were about twenty-five seminarians in 1957. Around half of us were “pre-theological” (sometimes referred to as “pre-logical”). Approximately ten were Antiochians sent by Metropolitan Anthony Bashir. Two part-time students were women, a Copt from Egypt and a convert called “Lady Pepys” from England. Frank Kulik and I shared apartment sixty-three, along with a Japanese, a Serb, a Romanian, a post-WWII Russian refugee and a couple of “Americans” like ourselves. I learned to imitate each of their signatures in order to sign everyone’s name on the “sign-in sheet” that we slipped under Professor Serge Verhovskoy’s door at ten o’clock each night—proof that we were home by curfew. Professor Verhovskoy (then written and pronounced “Ver-hov-sky,” with the accent on the second syllable) was the provost and also the de facto dean of students. The seminary rector was Metropolitan Leonty, primate of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in North America, since 1970, the “OCA.” He had assigned himself to this position after Fr Georges Florovsky left St Vladimir’s to go to Harvard and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Seminary in 1955.

## METROPOLITAN LEONTY

Metropolitan Leonty, while still a young archpriest in the 1910s, had been dean of an Orthodox seminary in Minneapolis, Minnesota. However, from 1923 to 1938, the Russian government confiscated many properties belonging to what was then considered the “American mission,” and no Orthodox theological schools in North America existed during this interval. It was after this period, in 1938, that both a graduate school in New York City and a

pastoral school at St Tikhon’s Monastery in Pennsylvania opened. Nineteen thirty-eight happened to be the 950th anniversary of the baptism of Kievan Rus by Prince Vladimir. Appropriately, the school was dedicated to St Vladimir both to honor the anniversary and emphasize the school’s missionary character.



The Rev John Meyendorff, former dean and professor of patristics, played an enormous role in the life of the school.

I remember well Metropolitan Leonty’s visits to the seminary, and our visits to his cathedral on Second Street where we seminarians would go to serve, read, and sing. He was a majestic man of striking spiritual nobility and humility. He loved to joke, asking us, with a smile and twinkling eyes, if we knew Hebrew and Greek, taunting us with feigned severity that it was impossible for us to understand the scriptures without such knowledge.

Metropolitan Leonty laid the foundation for the seminary library by securing at his own expense the thousands of books and journals collected by Fr Anthony Repella. I cataloged many of them during the summer of 1960, and afterwards, as my seminary job. This gave me an air of knowledge of Russian theological literature that was quite deceiving, since all I did was skim each volume to determine, quite unprofession-

ally, how it should be identified and shelved. Metropolitan Leonty died in 1965 after having officially appointed Fr Alexander Schmemmann, whom he deeply admired, as seminary dean in 1962. I was blessed to see him on his deathbed. I think he should be canonized a saint.

## SCHMEMANN AND VERHOVSKOY

Under Fr Alexander’s leadership, St Vladimir’s came to be so joined with his person and work that it was known, affectionately and not so affectionately, as the “schmemannary.” The connection, almost identification in some circles, of St Vladimir’s with Fr Alexander was understandable but also seriously misleading in that many others

Professor Serge Verhovskoy (left), also known as “Prof.” was the seminary’s bulwark and was largely responsible for finding the Crestwood property. Professor Nicholas Arseniev (right) knew about fifteen languages, ancient and modern, and could quote the Greek New Testament from memory.



played enormous roles in the life of the school. First among them was Professor Sergei Sergeevich Verhovskoy, whom everyone at the school called “Prof.” “Prof.” was the seminary’s bulwark and anchor. He lived at the school from his arrival from France in 1951 until his death in 1986. He loved meeting with the seminarians, favoring especially the women students and seminarians’ wives, of whom he was the most devoted advocate. In addition to teaching he was provost and financial officer, largely involved in finding the

thoughts and convictions about everything, multiple times, before finally turning things over to me. He threatened me with his “eternal malediction” if I ever taught any of my own ideas as Church doctrine. He promised me the same if I ever allowed the seminary to cut one minute of the six semesters of required dogmatics. I think I’m still out of harms way in regard to the former threat.

#### ARSENIEV, KESICH, AND MEYENDORFF

Prof. Nicholas Arseniev taught from the mid-1950s until shortly before his death in 1977. He was almost totally blind until near the end of his life when he had corrective surgery. We couldn’t bear to watch him cross the New York streets in traffic not only because of his terrible eyesight, but also because he usually walked in a state of mystical ecstasy. He knew about fifteen languages, ancient and modern, and once asked me in all seriousness if I knew Sanskrit! I replied that I hardly knew English. He quoted the Greek New Testament from memory (often holding the book upside down because of his poor eyesight), Dante in Italian, John of the Cross in Spanish, Goethe in German and Pascal in French. When I was an undergraduate at Fordham and not yet in the seminary’s graduate program, I was allowed to take Dr Arseniev’s elective courses on mysticism, Russian religious literature, and comparative religions. I heard many of his lectures before ever having exposure to those of Fr Schmemmann, Prof. Verhovskoy, or Fr Meyendorff. His lectures were always charged with the power of the boundless love of God given to us lavishly, freely, in Christ.

The young Dr Veselin Kesich taught New Testament with Dr Arseniev, as well as Greek, early Christianity, and Serbian

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“These five men were as different from one another as could be found on Earth. God truly had a sense of humor and divine purpose in bringing them together.”

Crestwood property that the seminary occupied in the fall of 1962. He loved the Crestwood campus. Woe to the one who trimmed a tree without “Prof’s” approval!

Prof. Verhovskoy taught dogmatic and moral theology (which he pronounced “feeology”), and lots of other things as well. He clearly considered himself the strongest (if not the sole) defender of Orthodoxy on campus. As his handpicked successor I met with him for several hours every week, even after I began teaching in the graduate division with him in the early 1970s. “Prof” taught me his

# A Process, Not a Product

by Protodeacon Peter Danilchick



Fifteen years ago, in December 1988, St Vladimir's Seminary launched its first strategic planning effort, "SVS2000," by hosting a workshop for SVS trustees, faculty, and staff. "Strategic planning" was a new concept for the seminary then and a bit controversial. In fact, one bishop attendee said at the beginning of the workshop: "Strategic planning is for corporate business, not for the Church." Indeed, a few others shared his concerns. Even former Dean Fr John Meyendorff was apprehensive as to what this new method might mean. However, after a few days of lectures, group exercises and discussions, most of these hesitations evaporated. In fact, when Metropolitan Theodosius asked Fr John his opinion of the proposed plan later, he replied: "Well, we do not expect anything revolutionary to come out of it...but if it is revolutionary, so be it!"

The attendees first learned that planning must be placed in the context of Christ and His Church. Planning is simply asking questions: "What are we doing? How are we doing? What should we be doing?" And while those of us who attended this workshop in 1988 had to ask ourselves such questions, it was also essential that we open ourselves to the questions posed by the Lord. Just as he asks Bartimaeus, the blind man, "What do you want me to do for you?" (Mark 10:51) so he asks us. We learned to consider this question prayerfully. Secondly, we learned that to answer the question, "how are we doing," we must be absolutely open, honest, and humble. Such openness requires us to invite the input of everyone who is invested in the seminary. It is not solely "those in charge" who write the plan, but also those whom the seminary serves and the entire Church body.

After attending the 1988 workshop, one lay trustee said: "Even if we don't do anything else, this short experience has shown us all—bishops, laity, faculty, and staff—that we love the seminary, feel strongly about its role, and want to help it better serve the Church." Many others echoed this sentiment in the subsequent seminars, surveys, and interviews that took place throughout the following year. These activities generated input that SVS leaders considered with care and then fleshed out into specific goals and objectives for the next several years of seminary operations, beginning in 1990.

SVS leaders carried out the strategic planning process over

the next decade. It was a "process" because it required the seminary to persistently reflect upon its performance. How has St Vladimir's fared in realizing these goals? When one compares the plan on paper to the tangible results, one can see clear-cut progress. But the needs of the Church continually evolve. Thus, in late 2001, the Board of Trustees decided to initiate another major planning effort, "SVS2010."

## RENEWED EFFORT—SVS2010

During much of 2002, the seminary actively sought the input of its supporters and friends. SVS conducted interviews with church leaders, held focus groups at church gatherings, and mailed surveys to everyone in its database as well as the current student body. What was the outcome?

**"We do not expect anything revolutionary to come out of it...but if it is revolutionary, so be it!"**

The respondents evaluated SVS in seventeen categories. Ratings improved overall from the 1989 survey in thirteen of these while remaining static in the other four. They pronounced the most improvement in the following areas: the library, married student housing, church support, campus outreach, and financial resources. Among the points of weakness that the surveys brought to bear were internet/distance education, practical parish training, and support of alumni.

Even though this "report card" was generally favorable, SVS leaders perceived that the demands of the Church are ever expanding—challenging the seminary to meet them with greater rigor. "For to whom much is given, much shall be required" (Luke 12:48). If the seminary fails to press forward, then it fails the legacy of its founders, notable teachers, alumni, supporters, and benefactors.

Extensive comments were received answering the question "What is to be done?" The following are just a small sample of these answers:

- Develop a distance education program, focusing on continuing education for alumni.

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# Fr Gregory Safchuk

One of the goals of SVS is to prepare its students to serve the Church. Therefore, the seminary is always pleased to welcome back one of its graduates who has gone on to do just that. This fall on Orthodox Education Day, the V. Rev. Fr Gregory Safchuk, member of the 1982 graduating class, was at SVS to concelebrate the Divine Liturgy, at which he gave a homily highlighting the theme for the day: “Orthodox Tradition: Yesterday and Today.”

Before giving an excerpt of this sermon, SVSNews would like to acknowledge Fr Gregory’s activities in brief. After completing his Master of Divinity degree in 1982, he accepted a three-year teaching fellowship at St Herman’s Seminary in Kodiak, Alaska. During this period, he was ordained to the priesthood on May 19, 1984, at the SVS Three Hierarchs Chapel by His Beatitude Metropolitan Theodosius. After a three-year assignment as Associate Pastor of Ss Peter & Paul Church in Detroit, Michigan, he was received into the Diocese of the West, where he was priest of St Innocent Church in Tarzana, California, for twelve years and dean of the Pacific Southwest Deanery for ten years. In 2000 he was made rector of St Mark’s Church in Bethesda, Maryland, where he currently holds a full schedule of liturgical services, offers pastoral care to all ages, conducts catechetical classes, and is

“I was embraced by yet another community of friends who carried me, like the paralytic, closer to Christ.”

responsible for all aspects of parochial administration. Among other of his noteworthy capacities in the Church, he was one of the founding members of the Board of Directors for Project Mexico and is now serving the second of two six-year terms of membership on the Metropolitan Council of the OCA. SVS encourages Fr Gregory, and all its graduates, “remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 1:3).



Fr Gregory Safchuk serving communion at the Education Day liturgy (above) and delivering the homily.



The following is an excerpt of the homily on Luke 5:17-26 that Fr Safchuk gave on Orthodox Education Day:

Today we heard a story from the Gospel of St Luke, which describes the healing of a paralyzed man. A nameless group of people bring him to Jesus, carrying him on his bed. It is a benevolent effort on the part of his friends. We can surmise that they make this effort for two reasons: first, they care for this man, and second, they believe that Jesus can heal him. It is their belief and love that motivate them to act on his behalf. This is the basic dynamic of salvation; the fulfillment of the greatest commandment: to love one’s neighbor as one’s self.

In this gospel story, faith is revealed as an indispensable condition for salvation, not only personal faith, but collective faith; for the paralytic is healed as a direct result of his friends’ faith. Moreover, his physical healing is a by-product of the forgiveness of his sins: spiritual sickness—sin—is what truly paralyzes a man. We are all paralytics in some sense, and, therefore, all need both healing and help from others. From conception, we are dependent on the care of others. As an infant, my sponsors at baptism made a commitment to help me enter into the Church. I was raised in the faith, taught by many others, both family and friends, from home to church school to seminary—this seminary.

When I arrived here twenty-eight years ago, this fact was made clear to me by Fr Hopko, who said that no man can be saved alone. I was met here and embraced by yet another community of friends who carried me, like the paralytic, closer to Christ. Lessons were offered in the classrooms, the chapel, and in student life. Many who were my teachers then are now gone, replaced by others who carry on the cycle of education and inspiration. I will always be grateful to those who taught me: Fr Alexander Schmemmann, Fr John Meyendorff, Prof. Serge Verhovskoy and Fr Cyril Stavrevsky, most recently of blessed memory. Each in his own way taught the same thing: the faith of the teachers who came before us, from Christ to the apostles—the Word of God. This indeed is the theme for today: “Orthodox Tradition: Yesterday and Today.”



# CAMPUS CHRONICLE

## DEAN OF SAINT SERGIUS INSTITUTE IN PARIS HIGHLIGHTS 2003 COMMENCEMENT

Protopresbyter Boris Bobrinskoy, dean of St Sergius Institute in Paris and one of the world's foremost Orthodox theologians, was featured speaker at the May 17, 2003, commencement exercises. Before Fr Boris delivered his message, Metropolitan Herman conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa* and presented him with the doctoral cross. In his talk, Fr Boris encouraged the graduates and reminded them of their vocation as bearers of the gospel of Christ.



tor of Divinity, *honoris causa* and presented him with the doctoral cross. In his talk, Fr

## SVS WELCOMES RECORD-SIZE INCOMING CLASS

In September, forty-five new students joined the SVS student body—the largest incoming class to date. This brings the total number of students at the seminary to ninety-five. Of this total, forty-one represent the OCA, twelve represent the GOA, and ten represent the AOCA. Other students represent the Serbian Orthodox Church, Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, the Moscow Patriarchate, the Romanian Orthodox Church, the



Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the Armenian Church, the Malankara Orthodox Church, and several non-Orthodox churches. Thirty-eight students are married. On-campus married student apartments are filled to capacity while nine additional apartments are being subsidized by the seminary to house the dramatic increase in numbers of married students.



## SVS FACULTY REPRESENT SEMINARY AT ALUMNI

### GATHERINGS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY

As part of the seminary's outreach to its graduates, faculty members who travel across the country often meet with alumni to report on seminary activities and to listen to their concerns. Two such meetings took place in the month of October, with Fr Alexander Rentel representing the seminary at the Diocesan Assembly of the Diocese of the Midwest (OCA) in Columbus, Ohio, on October 6-8, and Prof. Paul Meyendorff facilitating a gathering of alumni at Holy Trinity Cathedral in San Francisco, California, on October 12.

Fr Rentel had the opportunity to greet His Grace, Bishop Job, as well as many alumni who are members of the Diocese of the Midwest. He made himself available to both alumni and prospective students, fielding inquiries about the changes at SVS (new personnel, new facilities, etc.). Prof. Meyendorff met with a group of eight SVS alumni from the Bay area, updating them on recent developments at the seminary and discussing some of the proposals of the new strategic plan, including

the construction of additional married student housing and efforts to expand the pastoral formation program. Fr Victor Sokolov, rector of the cathedral, served as host, while Randa Aoun, a recent SVS graduate, provided abundant refreshments as the gathering of friends continued into the early evening. SVS hopes to make such successful reunions a regular occurrence for alumni across the country.

## LECTURE SERIES HONORS JAROSLAV PELIKAN'S 80TH BIRTHDAY

This December 17, Jaroslav Pelikan will turn eighty. His birthday celebration, however, began in May and will span the course of eight months, punctuated by several scholarly occasions across the country. Various seminaries have collaborated to host a lecture series entitled "Orthodoxy and Western Culture" to honor this theological luminary. The participating institutions, such as Yale University, the University of Chicago Divinity School, and Southern Methodist University, each have a personal connection to Jaroslav Pelikan. SVS is honored to be among them.

As part of the series, on September 14, a sizeable crowd gathered in the Metropolitan Philip Auditorium to hear an engaging talk entitled "Orthodoxy and Western Christianity: The Original European Culture War?" given by Fr John McGuckin. Fr McGuckin is an Orthodox priest, author, and professor who teaches at both Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University. His salient reflection was on the modern situation of Orthodoxy, which no longer only thrives in the "East" but is also present in east London, eastern Pennsylvania, and the east side of Manhattan. Understanding our modern relevancy in such contexts requires a right understanding of our Tradition, the gospel teaching that we have



inherited. Ultimately, he exhorted his listeners to present the full definition of Orthodoxy—the Church whose content is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## SEMINARY INAUGURATES



### ST BASIL THE GREAT AWARD

The St Basil the Great Award for

Academic Achievement was established in 2003 by an anonymous benefactor who wished to recognize students who have excelled in their studies at the seminary. It will be awarded annually to one senior, middler, and junior in the Master of Divinity program who has ranked highest in academic achievement that year. On September 14, Dean Erickson presented this award for the 2002-2003 academic year. The recipients were: **Sloan Rolando** from the senior class, **Vitaly Permiakov** from the middler class, and **Johanna Lind** from the junior class. May God grant that they, like St Basil, will excel not only in academics but also in wisdom and virtue!

## ORTHODOX EDUCATION DAY 2003

On October 4, SVS held its 34th annual Education Day: “Orthodox Tradition: Yesterday and Today,” which began with a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy beneath the Main Tent. The visiting choir of St Mark’s Church of Bethesda, Maryland, sang the responses. Large crowds gathered from great distances to worship



together and enjoy delicious food and sweets, educational discussions and lectures, and the opportunity to browse the many books published by SVS Press. Children kept busy beneath the Activities Tent, where plentiful art supplies allowed them full range of imagination for take-home treasures. High school students and young adults also gathered with Fr Michael Anderson for discussions about their Orthodox faith.

The afternoon offered festival participants a wide range of sessions to attend. Keynote speaker Frederica Matthewes-Green spoke about what it means to be a part of the Orthodox Tradition. Some took advantage of an instructional tour of the Three Hierarchs Chapel’s iconological program, given by Prof. Richard Schneider from York University in Toronto. OCMC’s Maria Gallos gave a presentation on “Tradition and Mission” and Kirill Sokolov, director of systems at SVS, gave a how-to workshop on starting a parish website. Some SVS faculty held a panel called “Theological Perspectives on Tradition”; Dr Al Rossi spoke on “The Challenge of Sexual Abuse”; and Elena Silk spoke on “Oral History.” Peter Jon Gillquist gave an enjoyable concert. The day ended with Great Vespers in Three Hierarchs Chapel.



# Transitions

After many years of dedicated service to the seminary, **Kenneth Johnson**, director of advancement has decided to take a position in the advancement office of a private school in NYC. Ken was at the seminary as a student, as secretary to the dean, as member and finally director of the advancement office. The faculty, staff, students, and hundreds of benefactors with whom he had personal contact will sorely miss him. We wish him the very best.

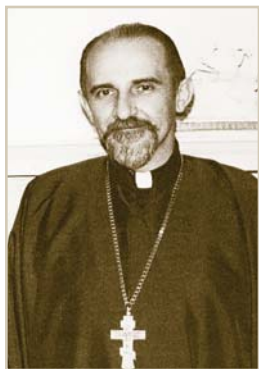
**Jerry Solak**, an SVS alumnus and the seminary’s bookstore manager for more than ten years, has decided to leave his position. During these many years, he has been a dedicated, competent, and loyal employee, and contributed much to the building up of press/bookstore operations. He will truly be missed, and we wish him the very best.

**Jeanette Hernandez** has been appointed to the newly created position of bookstore operations manager. She will be responsible for order processing, inventory, supervision of employees, hours of operation, and events. The development of the bookstore and acquisitions has been passed to the editorial department of SVS Press.

**Julia Mason Wickes**, SVS alumni and former managing editor of *Praxis* magazine, joined the staff in September as communications officer. Her responsibilities include editing the SVSNews, writing press releases, collaborating with the web team, and strengthening the seminary’s relations with the media.

**Fr Stephen J. Hryciniak** has joined SVS Press as director of marketing. He brings with him a wealth of experience in strategic planning, financial analysis, editorial acquisitions, marketing, and organizational development and looks forward to using these skills on behalf of the press.

# MEMORY ETERNAL



The seminary would like to remember the **V. Rev. Cyril Stavrevsky**, who died unexpectedly on Saturday evening, September 27, as he waited to begin vespers in the sanctuary of his church, St John the Baptist, in Rochester, New York. For those of us who remember him, Fr Cyril was a charming man with a great sense of humor. As dean of students at SVS from 1969-1977,

Fr Cyril was responsible for overseeing the day-to-day life of each seminarian, ensuring their well-being as well as supervising their responsibilities. He had a wonderful way of engaging each student and the unique ability to reprove without offending. He will truly be missed. We extend our deepest sympathies to his wife, Margarite, and his children Fr James ('79) and Ann Carol. May his memory be eternal.

**Hooda Germack**, longtime friend and benefactor of SVS, passed away on June 14 (pictured to the right with His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius). She will be greatly missed.

**Rev. Adrian Pollard** (M.Div. '90) fell asleep in the Lord on July 13. We offer our sympathies to his wife, Xenia, and their son, Daniel.

**Archpriest Michael Prokurat** (M.Div. '73; M.Th. '74) fell asleep in the Lord on July 23 after a ten-month struggle with cancer. We extend our sympathies to his wife, Margaret, and their three daughters and six grandchildren.

**Rev. Charles Austin Dinkler**, who attended the seminary between 1983 and 1985, fell asleep in the Lord on September 11 after a long illness. May his memory be eternal.

**Archpriest Nicholas Behr**, father to SVS faculty member Fr John Behr, died on September 16 following major surgery; he was 61 years old. We offer our sympathy to Fr John, his sister, Macrina (Behr) Hopko ('90), and their entire family.



## CLASS NOTES

Recent graduate Catherine Wason ('03) was selected as the first recipient of a scholarship for short-term mission work with OCMC from the newly established Louis and Helen Nicosis Endowment Fund. The scholarship enabled Catherine to travel to Romania in August and work at the Protection of the Theotokos Family Center.

Fr Alexander Rentel ('95) and his wife Nancy ('95) are parents of a new daughter, Maria Tatiana, who was born August 4.



Fr Lawrence Gaudreau ('00) and his wife Katherine are

new parents to a son, Michael Kingsland, born on August 19.

Matti Wallgren ('03) was ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Leo of Karelia and all Finland on September 1.

Sloan Rolando ('03) and his wife, Gina, are parents to a new infant girl, Lucia Colleen, born September 2.

Fr William Mills (M.Div. '97; M.Th. '00) and his wife, Taisia, announce the birth of their first daughter, Hannah, on September 4.

Peter DeFonce ('97), who was married on February 16, 2002, to Nadezhda Aleksandrovna, was ordained to the diaconate on September 21 at St Mary Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts, by his Eminence, Metropolitan Philip (AOCA).

Deacon Valentine Vassechko ('92), head of the Department of Comparative Theology at Moscow's St Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Institute, was ordained to the priesthood on September 21 by His Grace, Bishop Tikhon, Bishop of Archangelsk and Kholmogory.

Deacon Jesse Greendyk ('02) and his wife, Tara, are parents of a new daughter, Abigail Helen, born September 23.

Rev. Presbyter Joel McEachen ('68) was honored as one of four Orthodox priests to receive the Prophet Elias Award for rendering outstanding service to Orthodox youth both in Church and in Boy and Girl Scout programs.

*Do you have news to share? Alumni News will be featured here in SVSNews as well as E-News and Web-News. Please contact Fr Steven Belonick at [belonick@svots.edu](mailto:belonick@svots.edu).*



# Remembering Our Leaders

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

subjects. He was the first St Vladimir's alumnus to get a doctorate in America and then join the seminary faculty. Over the years he "became an SVS institution." Sadly, because of scheduling, I took only one New Testament course from Dr Kesich. His presence at the school during my student years, and since, has been one of God's great graces in my life.

Fr John Meyendorff came to the seminary from France in 1959 and played an enormous role in the life of the school. He was dean from 1984 until 1992 when he retired and unexpectedly died. Fr John suffered much over us—his rough and uncultivated students—and yet how he loved us, cared for us, and inspired us not only by his extraordinary learning, but by his childlike love for liturgical worship and wholehearted

devotion to the service of the Church. Fr John helped me personally in countless ways. He was my confessor, mentor, friend and (sometimes, sadly for me) my severest critic. I babysat his children and, with other seminarians (and my future wife), often had coffee at his apartment with Matushka Maika after liturgies. (I never had the courage to tell him, while working under him in the library, that the first syllable of the word "duplicate" does not rhyme with "cup.")

These five men were as different from one another as could be found on the face of the Earth. God truly had a sense of humor and divine purpose in bringing them together. They didn't always like each other and sometimes sharply criticized one another in both theological and practical matters. None was without his personal limitations, weaknesses, and sins, but they worked together marvelously, with dignity. They were able to do so, by God's grace, because whatever their clashes in temperament, formation,

and manner they were in complete solidarity about the essentials of Orthodox Christianity and the mission of St Vladimir's Seminary.

My purpose in sharing these memories is to convey a sense of the seminary during these years and honor its leaders. I write to proclaim the extraordinary love, commitment, and sacrifices of these exceptional people who, in the humblest of human conditions, gave their lives to a motley gang of political refugees, war veterans, and workers' kids in order to equip them for service in Christ's Church. No words will ever suffice to hymn the wonders of their countless gifts to us, their spiritual children. 🙏

For an unabridged version of this article, please go to our website, [www.svots.edu/Faculty/Thomas-Hopko](http://www.svots.edu/Faculty/Thomas-Hopko)

# Planning at SVS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

- Improve student life by providing forums for communication with administration, counseling support, additional married student housing, and financial aid.
- Enhance public relations to advance awareness of seminary services.

Ten strategic initiative teams were asked to develop detailed objectives based upon such input as listed above. Each team consisted of one or two "experts" and two or three "questioners." The "experts" were generally faculty and staff; the "questioners" were trustees, alumni, students, and others

who had vital interest in a particular initiative. All participants should be lauded for their excellent cooperation and energetic input.

The Seminary Board of Trustees will review the list of proposed objectives in their semiannual meeting in November 2003. Those in attendance will also propose stewardship mechanisms to ensure a regular evaluation of progress. As said, the strategic plan is not a "report" to be filed upon a shelf, but a process of rigorous self-evaluation and perpetual rededication to the service of the Church. We thank you for your support and prayers. 🙏

# Down the Road

**DECEMBER 26-28, 2003**

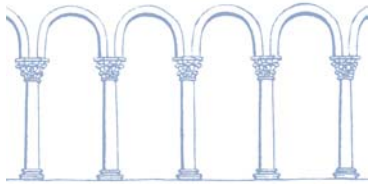
Christmas Retreat for college and high school students, featuring presentations by Mother Raphaela, Prof. Peter Bouteneff, and Dr Albert Rossi on the theme "Lord, Teach Us to Pray"

**JANUARY 30, 2004**

Annual Fr Alexander Schmemmann Memorial Lecture with speaker Dr Alexander Lingas

**MARCH 27, 2004**

Annual Lenten Retreat



# PILLARS

SVS THANKS THE KASMERS

Important enhancements are being made to the educational facilities at SVS, and we wish to express deep gratitude to an exceptional couple who is helping to make this possible. Anthony and Anna Kasmer have been good friends of the seminary family for over twenty years. As parishioners of St Vladimir Orthodox Church in Trenton, New Jersey, the Kasmers have had priests that graduated from SVS in both early and recent years—Fr Paul Shafran ('45), Pastor Emeritus, and Fr Martin Kraus ('01), the current rector. Ann and Tony faithfully attend seminary events, consistently contribute to the annual fund, and offer extraordinary hospitality to visitors from Crestwood. Just recently, Fr Thomas Hopko and Dn Jesse Greendyk enjoyed a royal tour of Tony's plastics compounding plant.

In the last two years, the Kasmers took bold action to support theological education at the seminary. Sensitive to modern realities and the need for the Church to respond, Ann and Tony established "The Anthony and Anna Kasmer Technology Endowment Fund" in the fall of 2002. Technology today touches every area of our life, especially education. In order to prepare seminarians adequately for ministry in today's Church, theological and pastoral training must be augmented by technological excellence. The Kasmers demonstrated vision and leadership in making this gift toward computers and technological enhancements at the seminary.


The Kasmer Fund will help sustain work initiated by the Lilly Technology Grant. SVS can report several upgrades in the area of technology. All student residences are now wired for high-

speed connections to the seminary network and Internet. Seminarians have the capability to view course documents online, engage in online discussions with professors and fellow students, and instantly search the library's holdings as well as databases of theological journals. Additionally, the Bashir Auditorium has been equipped with an LCD projector and screen for computer-assisted presentations. Much more is planned for the future, God willing, as the seminary's funds for technology grow.

SVS also thanks the Kasmers for another of their contributions which went toward a multi-faceted project in the Education Building. The former library area, vacant since the library moved to the Rangos Family Foundation Building, has been transformed into the new center for SVS Press operations and the bookstore. A new packing and shipping room was created in the back to function as the seminary mailroom. All classrooms were renovated, and more work is scheduled for the building, including a zoned air-conditioning system and exterior computer-access security doors.

In many ways—a record-size entering class, new programs and faculty, and these facility enhancements supported by the Kasmers—SVS is being blessed with tremendous growth. Our challenge is to be wise stewards of these gifts and to continue improving technology and all aspects of the education we give to our seminarians. SVS is truly grateful to Anthony and Anna



Kasmer, and to the countless generous people like them, without whom the continued growth to which we are called would be impossible. 

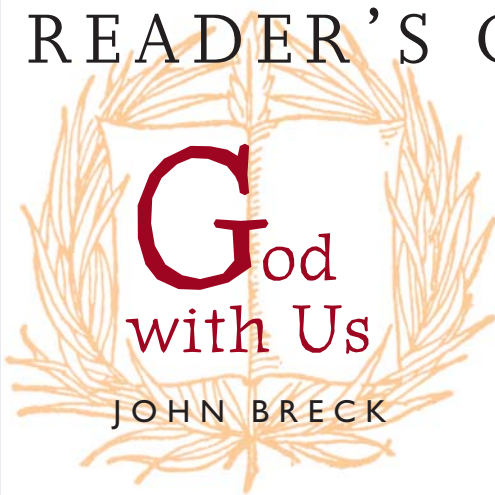
## Scholarship Opportunities

Most of those called to study Orthodox theology and to train for ministry in the Church need financial help. Last year St Vladimir's provided \$310,000 in scholarship assistance, thanks to God and to our many pillars of support who gave generously. The student body is growing, and with this blessing comes greater financial challenge—and a greater opportunity for you to participate in the preparation of Church laborers. Please consider making a special gift this year toward seminarian scholarships at SVS.

When using the enclosed envelope for a scholarship contribution, please specify the gift intention. For information on this year's scholarship program, or the opportunity to establish an endowed fund, contact Dn Jesse Greendyk (914.961.8313 x343). And thank you!



# READER'S CORNER



Anyone who has seen a loved one wither away under the effects of Parkinson's disease or disappear into their own darkness because of Alzheimer's can only hope and pray that these tragic and devastating illnesses soon will be curable. Genetic engineering and particularly the cloning of human stem cells promises just such cures, and many more besides. Who can reasonably oppose the research needed to discover those cures?

This is perhaps the chief moral issue, and dilemma, of our day. As we all now know, Great Britain recently legalized human cloning. It is the first country to do so, but it surely will not be the last. Scientists and philosophers in a number of Western countries are insisting that the "new medicine," which will grow out of the successful sequencing of the human genome, will offer heretofore undreamt of possibilities for healing disease, preventing epidemics, correcting genetic defects, and prolonging human life. To realize this medical utopia, though, will ultimately require experimentation on literally millions of human embryos.

Those who oppose the research on moral grounds are dismissed as retrograde: mindless reactionaries who—like pro-life people in general—are out of step with the needs and

demands of modern society and especially of "today's woman." To their way of thinking, however, the exalted roles of child-conceiving, child-bearing, and motherhood are seriously threatened by pressures that will lead to the fabrication of embryos-on-demand. They are acutely aware that little Adam Nash was conceived from a genetically selected embryo and brought into the world so that the stem cells from his umbilical cord could be used to relieve or even cure the Fanconi anemia that afflicted his older sister. The ineluctable slope, it seems, is getting slipperier and slipperier.

Just how, as members of the Body of Christ, are we to evaluate these developments? The problem with the Nash baby is the same as with the cloning of embryos, although to a lesser degree. We hardly can raise objections to using blood from an umbilical cord, especially since Adam was not at all harmed by the procedure. The problem, however, concerns the selective process that takes the determination of gametes out of the realm of "natural selection" and places it into the realm of conscious manipulation. There is a question we need to ask ourselves, one that will seem naive or irrelevant to many people, including many Christians: What is God's role in the process of human procreation?

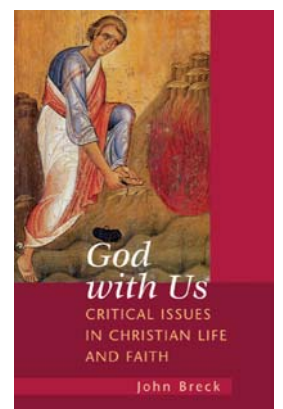
Orthodox Christians, in any case, are convinced that God is directly and intimately involved in literally every aspect of human existence and experience. The hairs of the head are all counted, the lilies of the field are arrayed, the birds of the air are nourished, and all by the hand of God. These poetic images are taken very seriously. They mean that everything that occurs in our life and experience is known by God and, in some fashion, comes under God's sovereignty.

This truth is well expressed by a prayer many Orthodox Christians say each morning: "Teach me to treat all that comes to me throughout the day with peace of soul and with firm conviction that Thy will governs all... In unforeseen events, let me not forget that all are sent by Thee."

If, indeed, we take these words seriously, then this means that God is also directly and intimately involved in the process of human procreation. And this means that we must leave the choice—the "natural selection"—of which sperm and ovum unite in the process of fertilization to the unconscious movements of the human body—movements that are ultimately directed by God.

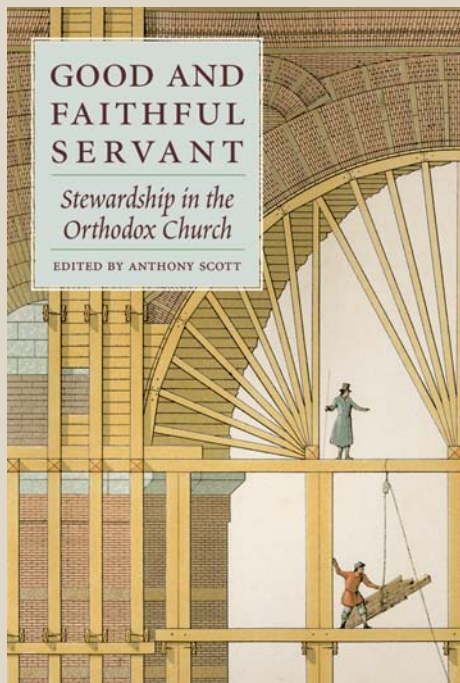
There is no greater mystery in this life than the creation of new life that bears the divine image. And by definition, any and every "mystery" or "sacrament" derives from God and is to be offered up to God as a sacrifice of praise.

The legal cloning of human embryos in the United States, at least for the time being, is restricted to the production of stem cells for purposes of medical research.... Hundreds of thousands already have been created and destroyed for the sake of scientific research. Whatever the motives of the medical teams, whatever the promises of the "new medicine," we mustn't forget that one most basic, if inconvenient, truth: Those embryos, too, are babies. ☩



Taken from  
chapter 10  
of Breck's  
*God with Us*  
available from  
SVS Press

# OFF THE PRESS



## Good and Faithful Servant

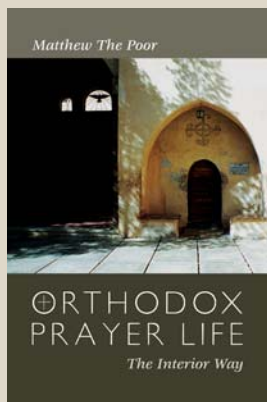
STEWARDSHIP IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

edited by Anthony Scott

“This book invites us to exercise responsible stewardship, to share our resources in a generous but also disciplined and accountable way. To engage in true Christian stewardship, we need a vision: We need to make God’s *oikonomia*, God’s plan of salvation for humankind, the model for our own human *oikonomia*, for our stewardship of God’s many gifts to us. This volume anticipates that ideal.”

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