

The Orthodox Church



**Remembering all those things
which have come to pass for us...**

Official

No. 474 ■ JANUARY 2007

■ RECEPTIONS

KRETA, Deacon Joseph is canonically received into the ranks of clergy of the Orthodox Church in America by Metropolitan Herman from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA. He is under the omophorion of Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia and attached to the Diocese of Eastern PA/ January 16, 2007.

■ ORDINATIONS

FLOM, Richard was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia on behalf of Metropolitan Herman at St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery Church, South Canaan, PA. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman/ December 6, 2006.

GAVRILKIN, Konstantin was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Metropolitan Herman at Holy Resurrection Church, Wayne, NJ. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman and attached to the Diocese of Washington and New York/ January 28, 2007.

KATSILOS, Deacon Constantine was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Bishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada at St. John the Divine Church, Windsor, ON. He is under the omophorion of Bishop Seraphim and attached to the Archdiocese of Canada/ January 1, 2007.

■ ASSIGNMENTS

BEHR, The Rev. John, who was attached, is assigned to Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY/ January 11, 2007.

BELONICK, The V. Rev. Steven, who was attached, is assigned to Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY/ January 11, 2007.

BROWNE, The Rev. Raymond Martin, who was acting rector, is appointed rector of St. John the Baptist Church, Edwardsville, PA/ January 1, 2007.

FLOM, Deacon Richard is attached to St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery Church, South Canaan, PA/ December 6, 2006.

FRAVEL, The Rev. Barnabas is released from duties at Holy Ascension Church, Frackville, PA and from the Diocese of Eastern PA; transferred to the omophorion of Bishop Nikon of Boston and attached to the Diocese of New England; and appointed acting rector of St. Nicholas Church, Pittsfield, MA/ January 7, 2007.

GAVRILKIN, Deacon Konstantin is attached to Holy Resurrection Church, Wayne, NJ/ January 28, 2007.

HASENECZ, The Rev. Timothy, who was acting rector, is appointed rector of Holy Trinity Church, Catsauqua, PA/ January 14, 2007.

HOJNICKI, The Rev. Timothy, who was acting rector, is appointed rector of Holy Apostles Mission, Mechanicsburg, PA/ January 7, 2007.

KATSILOS, The Rev. Constantine is appointed acting rector of St. John the Divine Church, Windsor, ON/ January 1, 2007.

KOLES, The V. Rev. David, who was acting rector, is appointed rector of Holy Trinity Church, New Britain, CT/ February 1, 2007.

KRETA, Deacon Joseph awaits assignment/ January 16, 2007.

LAZOR, The V. Rev. Paul, who was attached, is assigned to Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's

Seminary, Crestwood, NY/ January 11, 2007.

MOSHER, The Rev. Joshua, who was acting rector, is appointed rector of SS. Peter and Paul Church, Meriden, CT/ February 1, 2007.

RENTEL, The Rev. Alexander, who was attached, is assigned to Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY/ January 11, 2007.

RHODES, The V. Rev. Dennis, who was acting rector, is appointed rector of Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church, Waterbury, CT/ February 1, 2007.

ROSHAK, The V. Rev. Michael, who was acting rector, is appointed rector of Three Saints Church, Ansonia, CT/ February 1, 2007.

SHERMAN, The V. Rev. Mark, who was acting rector, is appointed rector of St. Nicholas Church, Salem, MA/ February 1, 2007.

SMITH, Deacon Peter Kevin, who was attached, is assigned to Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY/ January 11, 2007.

SMITH, The Rev. Walter, who was awaiting assignment, is appointed acting rector of Holy Trinity Church, Kayville, SK, and Holy Trinity Church, Moose Jaw, SK/ November 27, 2006.

SOKOLOV, Protodeacon Kirill, who was attached, is assigned to Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY/ January 11, 2007.

VANSUCH, The Rev. Jason, who was acting rector, is appointed rector of St. Nicholas Church, Norwich, CT/ February 1, 2007.

■ RELEASED

CHUNOV, The V. Rev. Luben is released from duties at Holy Virgin Protection Cathedral, New York, NY and from the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman and granted a canonical release to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America/ January 10, 2007.

■ DEATHS

SURDUCAN, The V. Rev. John, who in retirement was attached to SS. Peter and Paul Church, Dearborn Heights, MI, died on January 22, 2007. *May his memory be eternal!*

SYMEONOFF, The V. Rev. Boris, who was pastor emeritus of St. Nicholas Church, San Anselmo, CA, died on January 4, 2007. *May his memory be eternal!*

■ PARISHES

ARCHDIOCESE OF CANADA/ New Status. St. Vladimir, Prince of Kiev Mission, Halifax, NS, is granted parish status and is now known as St. Vladimir, Prince of Kiev Church/ January 1, 2007. ■

No. 475 ■ FEBRUARY 2007

■ ORDINATIONS

FISHER, Deacon Vasily was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Bishop Nikolai of Sitka, Anchorage, and Alaska at Holy Resurrection Cathedral, Kodiak, AK. He is under the omophorion of Bishop Nikolai and attached to the Diocese of Alaska/ February 15, 2007.

MITCHELL, Patrick was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Metropolitan Herman at St. Nicholas Cathedral, Washington, DC. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman and attached to the Diocese of Washington and New York/ February 4, 2007.

WILLIAMS, Jeffrey Irenaeus was ordained to the Holy

Diaconate by Bishop Nikon of Boston, New England, and the Albanian Archdiocese on behalf of Metropolitan Herman at Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman/ February 2, 2007.

■ ASSIGNMENTS

FISHER, The Rev. Vasily is attached to Holy Resurrection Cathedral, Kodiak, AK/ February 15, 2007.

FRAVEL, The Rev. Barnabas, who was acting rector, is appointed rector of St. Nicholas Church, Pittsfield, MA/ February 1, 2007.

MITCHELL, Deacon Patrick is attached to St. Nicholas Cathedral, Washington, DC/ February 4, 2007.

[* NICOVOTIS], Priestmonk Ambrose of the Russian Orthodox Diocese of Western Europe of the Patriarchate of Constantinople is placed "on loan" to the Orthodox Church in America and the Archdiocese of Canada and attached to the Monastic Community and the Bishop's Chapel of St. Silouan the Athonite Johnstown, ON/ November 30, 2006.

WILLIAMS, Deacon Jeffrey Irenaeus is attached to Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY/ February 2, 2007.

YOUNG, The Rev. Nicholas is appointed priest-in-charge of St. Nicholas of Myra Mission Station, Toronto, ON. He remains attached to Christ the Saviour Sobor, Toronto, ON/ November 12, 2006.

■ ON LOAN

KUCHTA, The V. Rev. Waldemar is granted "on loan" status to serve the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada. He remains attached to Holy Resurrection Sobor, Saskatoon, SK, Canada/ February 7, 2007.

■ DEATHS

SKVARNAVICIUS, Archdeacon Roman, who was attached to Holy Trinity Cathedral, Boston, MA, died on February 10, 2007. *May his memory be eternal!*

■ PARISHES

ARCHDIOCESE OF CANADA/ New Mission Station. St. Nicholas of Myra Mission Station, 353 Sherbourne St., Toronto, ON M5A 2S3; 905/985-1564. The Rev. Nicholas Young, priest-in-charge.

* Indicates non-OCA clergy. ■

No. 476 ■ MARCH 2007

■ EPISCOPAL CHANGES

[SWAIKO], Metropolitan Herman is released from duties as locum tenens of the Diocese of the West by the Holy Synod of Bishops. All other archpastoral duties remain the same/ March 20, 2007.

[PETERSON], Bishop Benjamin, former Bishop of Berkeley, was elected Bishop of San Francisco and the Diocese of the West by the Holy Synod of Bishops/ March 20, 2007.

[STORHEIM], Bishop Seraphim of Ottawa and the Archdiocese of Canada was elevated to the rank of Archbishop by the Holy Synod of Bishops/ March 21, 2007.

■ ORDINATIONS

KONTOS, Philip was ordained to the Holy Diaconate on February 25, 2007 by Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas and the South on behalf of Metropolitan Herman at St.

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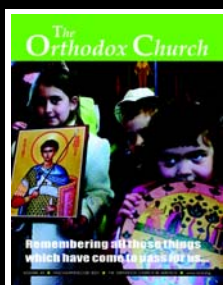
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Our Cover

"Remembering... the cross, the tomb, the resurrection on the third day, the ascension into heaven, the sitting at the right hand, and the second and glorious coming!"



Cover photo /
John Sopchak, S. River, NJ

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The Orthodox Christian journey

Our life in the Orthodox Church is best described as a journey. One of the most significant and interesting contemporary books about the Orthodox faith is titled *The Orthodox Way*. As Bishop Kallistos Ware, the book's author, points out, one of the most ancient names for Christianity is "the Way." This implies that to be Christian is to be on a journey. Bishop Kallistos writes: "Christianity is more than a theory about the universe, more than teachings written down on paper; it is a path along which we journey – in the deepest and richest sense, the way of life."

Our Christian journey has again brought us through Great Lent to Pascha, the Resurrection of Christ. We now continue our journey through Pascha to the Ascension of our Lord and to Pentecost, the descent of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes the Christian journey is understood as the private and individual story of my relationship with God. Yet in truth the journey of Christians is never solitary. As we follow Christ, we journey with one another, we walk as the People of God. The journey is practical and not theoretical. The journey involves each Orthodox Christian, each Orthodox parish and diocese, and the Orthodox Church as a whole.

What is the Orthodox Church "as a whole" in America? We know that there is diversity as well as unity in American Orthodoxy. There are a variety of Orthodox Churches or "jurisdictions" in the United States and Canada. At the same time there is a unity of faith, expressed in the sharing of the same sacraments.

There are some who are content with the experience of diversity in unity, and unity in diversity in the context of the present "jurisdictional" distinctions. There are others who yearn for a deeper expression of Orthodox unity, for a fuller affirmation of the essential oneness of the Orthodox Church in North America. There are those who believe that a fully united self-governing Orthodox Church in North America is demanded by the Orthodox understanding of the Church.

The conference of Orthodox bishops convened in Chicago by

the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas [SCOBA] in October 2006 offered an opportunity to see Orthodoxy in America as a whole.

The program of the conference was simple in concept. The assembled bishops heard reports from each of the agencies and commissions established and endorsed by the Standing Conference of Bishops. None of the information was a secret – probably each of the hierarchs had seen much of the information before. Yet the presentation of the reports in the context of one meeting offered an opportunity to see the "whole picture."

It became stunningly clear that much more was being accomplished on behalf of Orthodoxy as a whole in America than most people – even most hierarchs – realized. While we have jurisdictional distinctions and differences, while we have the reality of different and parallel and overlapping Orthodox ecclesial structures – we also have agencies and commissions working on behalf of Orthodoxy as a whole.

One way to characterize this common Orthodox mission and witness is to point out that the agencies and commissions of the Standing Conference of Bishops accomplish their work "as though" Orthodoxy in America is already fully united. And this common witness and mission is not only theory, it is not only written down on paper – it is also experienced daily, it is also manifested in real life and in real programs of charity and humanitarian aid, mission outreach and witness.

Thus the journey of Orthodoxy in North America is not at all at a dead end. We may well be moving too slowly for some, and too fast for others. Yet the movement forward is real. If we are faithful to the Gospel and to the will of Christ for the Church, we will be among the builders of Orthodox unity in North America, and our Church in America will be faithful and effective in its apostolic mission on this continent.

The conference of bishops last October in Chicago did not have Orthodox unity on its agenda. Its quiet testimony to Orthodoxy's common witness and mission was therefore all the more miraculous and powerful. ■

GRAY AREA

Q & As

What about tithing?

Why is 10% tithing being pushed by the OCA? While 10% is required in Old Testament times, so is stoning and other rules we no longer follow.

Many Christians, Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike, tithe. But it is well known that the New Testament maxim, revealed in the parable of the widow's mite, is rooted in the fact that everything we possess is the Lord's, and that we in turn should offer Him everything that we have, or at least the first and best portion of our treasures.

Even though tithing is rooted in the Old Testament, it should not be seen, like stoning, as something that should not be practiced. Would one recommend that Christians ignore the Ten Commandments because they are found in

the Old rather than New Testament? Jesus Christ came to fulfill the law, not to abolish it. That which was worth saving from the Old Covenant was incorporated into the New.

In looking at the reality of some parishes – especially those with 50 members or less – tithing would be a reason-able means to keep the parishes properly funded – and, in some cases, alive. The "I'll give a buck a week" attitude in a small parish only ensures insufficient funding to keep the doors open, much less support a priest.

What is critical is not so much the *percentage*, but rather the *spirit* in which one gives the first and the best of one's treasures (and time and talent) to God's work – in honesty and thanksgiving to God for His many blessings. Remember: the widow who only gave two coins was blessed because she gave everything she had to God. She overshot the tithe by 90%!

— **Father John Matusiak** ■

WISDOM

from the Fathers

Saint Cyril of Alexandria

When the second Adam appeared among us, the divine man from heaven, and, contending for the salvation of the world, purchased by His death the life of all men, and, destroying the power of corruption, rose again to life, we were transformed into His image. And we undergo, as it were, a different kind of death that does not dissolve us in eternal corruption, but causes upon us a slumber which is full of faith and hope, after the likeness of Him Who has made this new path for us, that is, Christ.



Saint John Chrysostom

What especially showed that He was not a mere man was His being able to set up a trophy of victory over death, and thus quickly to abolish its long-enduring tyranny and conclude that difficult war. This is why He said, "Then you shall know." Then! When? "When after my resurrection I shall draw the world to Me, then you shall know that I did these things as God, and was the true Son of God avenging the insult offered to my Father." ■

That's the Spirit

Father Vladimir Berzonsky

Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself." — *Genesis 3:9*

Christ is risen! But where are you?

Guilt, shame, fear, and flight. Every parent knows the sequence of misbehavior. Eyes lowered, head down, hiding from exposure. In most of the art displaying the expulsion of our ancestors from Eden, we see Adam and Eve being chased out by the angel with a flaming sword, running in terror, looking backward over their shoulders.

But from the Bible record we find that Adam realized he was not worthy to remain there any longer. He understood that it was no longer the place for him – rather, not the same relationship with the Lord God that he had before he betrayed the Lord's trust.

The next question God puts to Adam was, "Who told you that you were naked?" As a human blessed with God's image, he had a conscience. He realized that he had broken the bond between the Lord and himself. He was running from the God that he had in his soul. Where would he go to escape that Presence? How do you flee from His love? And so the God of love explores ways to return the prodigal to Himself. In the beautiful anaphora prayer from the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great we hear, "Thou didst visit him in various ways: Thou didst send prophets. Thou didst perform mighty works by Thy saints, who in every generation were well-pleasing to Thee. Thou didst speak to us by the mouth of Thy servants the prophets, foretelling to us the salvation which was to come. Thou didst give us the law as a help. Thou didst appoint angels as guardians."

That wasn't enough. Something more, an action involving the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity, had to happen. "And when the fullness of time had come, Thou didst speak to us through Thy Son Himself, by Whom Thou didst make the ages." Meditate on the archetypal icon of Saint Andrei Rublev, the "Hospitality of Abraham," the Holy Trinity contemplating humanity's salvation, and notice the cup, sometimes containing a lamb, on the table. That is the cup that the Son of God was contemplating in Gethsemane. "Not My will, but Thy will" – that is, the Father's will be done, the will that Our Lord accepted, the cup of our salvation, being both Lamb of God and Shepherd in search of Adam, the lost sheep. The phrase from the Good Friday prayer asking another profound question, why He had to be crucified, is answered: "I came to earth seeking Adam, and when I didn't find him, I went into Hades to search for him."

Now is the time to look into the icon of the Resurrection. We find Christ descending into the nethermost regions beyond life, and we discover the same One Who asked of Adam, "Where are you?" Again He asks this question, in the bowels of Hades. Of course He knew all along, from Eden through the history of the world, where Adam, Eve, and their children were gathered. He comes to find and rescue the children of the primeval disobedient couple. The God-man swoops into the place where Adam's offspring fear to go, sensing death as a foreboding place of total darkness dressed in the color of ethereal lightness. Our Lord's vestment billows with the wind of the Holy Spirit. His glorious feet, wounded by the spikes of the cross, break down Hades' gates – "trampling down death by death." He seizes Adam with the same hand that was nailed helplessly to the beam, now filled with divine strength. He whisks him, his spouse, and all their children away from that place which is no "place," but a "condition," so that in the beautiful

Father
Georges Florovsky

A community of prayer

This editorial, which appeared in The Orthodox Church in January 1973, still delivers a timely message.

The basic antinomy of Christian existence is conspicuously reflected in the realm of worship. Christianity stands by *personal* faith and commitment, and yet Christian existence is essentially *corporate*: to be Christian means to be *in the community*, in the Church. *Unus Christianus – nullus Christianus*.

On the other hand, personality should never be simply submerged in any, even Christian, collective. The Body of Christ consists of responsible persons. The first followers of Jesus, in the “days of His flesh,” were not isolated individuals engaged in their private quest for truth. They were Israelites – regular members of an established and instituted community, of the “Chosen People” of God. They were “waiting for the consolation of Israel.” Indeed, a “Church” already existed when Jesus began His ministry. It was Israel, the People of the Covenant. The preaching of Jesus was first addressed precisely to the members of this “Church,” to “the lost sheep of the House of Israel.” Jesus never addressed individuals as individuals. The existing Covenant was the constant background of His preaching. The Sermon on the Mount was addressed not to an occasional crowd of accidental listeners, but rather to an “inner circle” of those who were already following Jesus with anticipation that He was the “One Who should come.” It was the pattern of the Kingdom. “The Little Flock,” that community which Jesus had gathered around Himself, was, in fact, the faithful “Remnant” of Israel, a reconstituted People of God. It was reconstituted by the call of God, by the “Good News” of salvation.

But to this call each person had to re-

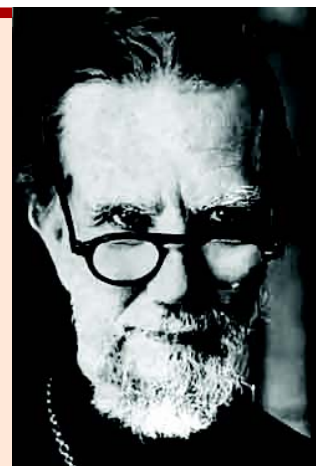
Father Georges Florovsky was a prominent 20th century priest, theologian, author, and educator. Born in Odessa in 1893, he studied philosophy at various universities in the Russian Empire at the age of 18. In 1919, he began to teach at the University of Odessa, but his family was forced to flee the Soviet Union the following year, eventually settling in Paris, France.

In 1925, he was appointed professor of patristics at Paris’ St. Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute. Patristics became for him the benchmark for Orthodox theology and exegesis, as well as a source for many of his contributions and critiques of the ecumenical movement. He spent the rest of his life teaching at theological institutions.

In 1932, he was ordained to the priesthood. During the 1930s, he wrote his most important works in the area of patristics as well as his greatest work, *Ways of Russian Theology*, in which he questioned the western influences of scholasticism, pietism, and idealism on Russian Orthodox theology and called for a reevaluation of Orthodox theology in the light of patristic writings.

In 1949, Father Georges moved to New York City, where he became dean of Saint Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary. His oversight of the development of the theological curriculum led to the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York granting the seminary an absolute charter in 1953. He retired as dean in 1955, after which he taught patristics and Russian religious thought at Harvard Divinity School until 1964 and Slavic languages and literature at Princeton University until his retirement in 1972.

Father Georges fell asleep in the Lord in 1979, having left a monumental corpus of writings on virtually every aspect of Orthodox Christian theology, life, and thought. ■



spond individually, by an act of personal faith. This personal commitment of faith, however, incorporated the believer into the community. And this remained forever the pattern of Christian existence: one should believe and confess, and then he is baptized into the Body. The “faith of the Church” must be personally appropriated. Moreover, only through this baptismal incorporation is the personal act of faith completed and fulfilled. Those baptized are born again. Accordingly, Christian worship is intrinsically a personal act and engagement, and yet it finds its fullness only within the community, in the context of common and corporate life. Personal devotion and community worship belong intimately together, and each of them is genuine and authentic, and truly Christian, only through the other.

There are, in the Gospel, two passages concerning prayer, and they seem to guide us in opposite directions. On the one hand, in the Sermon on the Mount, Christ was teaching the multitudes to pray “in secret.” It had to be a solitary prayer – “when thou hast shut thy door” – man alone with his

Heavenly Father. Yet, on the other hand, on another occasion, Christ was stressing the strength of a joint and corporate prayer: “If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask.”

Now, is there any contradiction or conflict between these two different praying attitudes? Or, rather, do they belong together and are possible only together? Paradoxically, they simply presuppose each other. Indeed, one has to learn to pray “in secret,” alone, bringing all his infirmities and adoration before *his* Father, in an intimate and personal intercourse. And only those who are trained in the practice of this “solitary” prayer can meet each other spiritually and join together in what they are going to ask corporately from their *common* Father in heaven. Common prayer presupposes and requires personal training. Yet personal prayer itself is possible only in the context of the community, since no person is Christian except as a member of the Body. Even in the solitude, “in the chamber,” a Christian prays as a member of the redeemed community, of the Church.

Classics to 18

Phyllis Zagano

Chasing Mary Magdalene

Just when the world thought Mary Magdalene was fully explained in Dan Brown's far-fetched book *The Da Vinci Code*, she's been dug up again, this time in Jerusalem's East Talpiot neighborhood by the Discovery Channel. They say 10 ossuaries – small limestone caskets – found in 1980 belonged to Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and their supposed kin, both named and not named.

There was a BBC documentary about all this in 1996, but here we go again. The folks who are pressing these tales might try to sell you a bridge in Brooklyn soon. That is how questionable their “research” is.

Millions of folks recently tuned in to the so-called documentary “The Lost Tomb of Jesus” and learned a little about archaeology and a lot about how the Discovery Channel makes money. A lot of money.

The “Tomb” show has little to do with reality. It claims to be

“historical and realistic” – the new antireligious code words – in investigating the tomb's “discovery.” The filmmakers were thrown out as soon as the authorities found their robotic cameras snooping about the burial site without permission.

The Israel Antiquities Authority cataloged the Jerusalem tomb of a middle-class first-century family 27 years ago, and scholars declared the ossuary names were coincidental. They said the tomb was not that of visiting Galileans in town for the high holy **Magdalene to 8**



Enduring images

Mary Magdalene has been a favorite subject of artists for 2000 years, as seen in a 14th century Italian fresco [left], a 19th century British rendering [left, bottom], and a contemporary icon [below].



Magdalene from 5

Chasing Mary Magdalene

days, whose relative, Jesus, was brutally tortured and killed.

In many respects, the show hinges on Mary Magdalene, one of Jesus' closest disciples, here put forth as Jesus' wife. She was indeed a major player. But bad history once combined three Gospel Marys: Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus; the unnamed penitent woman with the alabaster jar who anointed Jesus' feet; and Mary Magdalene, witness to the Resurrection. That may help explain why Mary Magdalene is already buried in at least three other places – two in the South of France and one in modern-day Turkey – and assuredly not in Jerusalem.

Mary Magdalene's supposed relics rest in two French churches. Those in the former Benedictine abbey church of Vezelay, in Burgundy, date to the ninth century. However, in 1279, Mary Magdalene's bones were found again at Saint Maximin de Provence on the Cote d'Azur. The Dominican church there holds a reliquary with her – or somebody's – skull. One French legend has Mary going to Marseilles after Jesus' death, supposedly traveling with Lazarus and some companions who eventually converted the whole of Provence. But that would make her more likely Mary of Bethany. Others say her relics came to France from Turkey centuries later.

The Byzantine tradition says Mary Magdalene went to the commercial city of Ephesus (in modern-day Turkey) along with Mary, the mother of Jesus, and John, the beloved apostle. John wrote most of his gospel there, and it is said Mary Magdalene helped. They died at Ephesus toward the end of the first century.

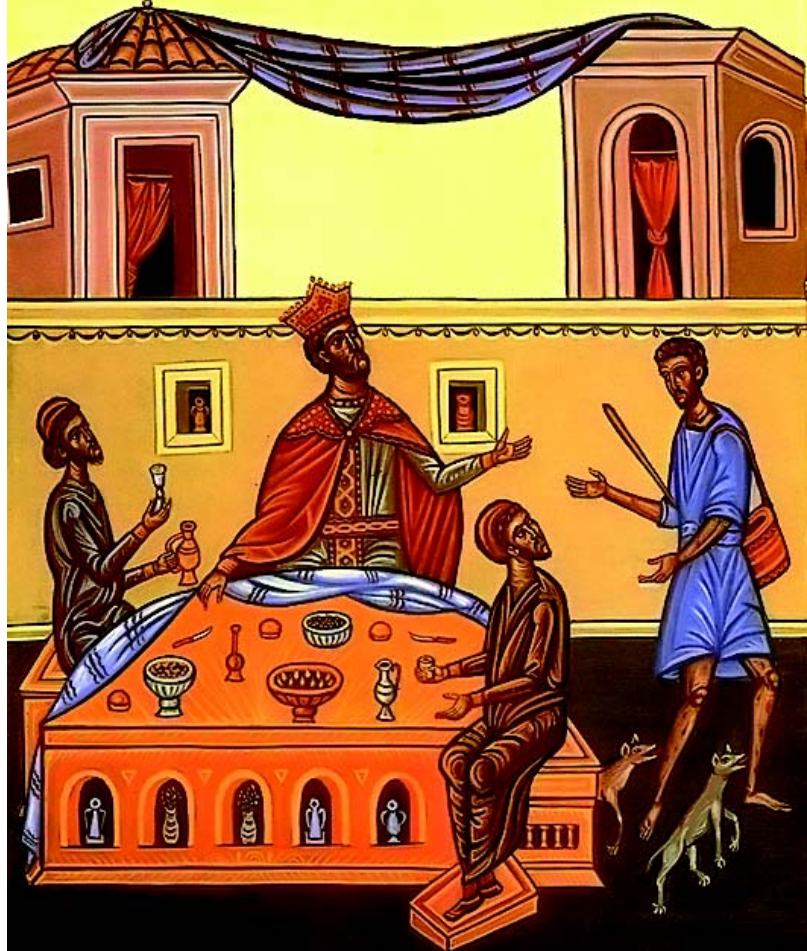
Did they really go there? In the sixth century, Emperor Justinian built a basilica over Saint John's tomb in Selcuk, near Ephesus. Not far away, the less-documented final abode of Jesus' mother, called the *House of Meryemana* – Turkish for "Mother Mary" – remains a place of pilgrimage. Mary Magdalene's relics were transferred from Ephesus to Constantinople in 899, but some argue they were brought to France in 745.

If you've lost track of whose bones are where by now, that is precisely the point. Legend blends with history because these people were neither powerful nor rich. Jesus' followers most probably got out of town as quickly as they could. But they were not Blackberry-wielding corporate types jetting around the Mediterranean from one beach to another. They were poor, simple outsiders, who left Jerusalem to write and tell of what they had seen and heard.

In other words, they had more important things to do than erecting elaborate tombs for themselves, in Jerusalem or elsewhere.

Did Mary Magdalene repair to the South of France after Jesus' death? Doubtful. Did she go to Turkey? Could be. Was she, in fact, the wife of Jesus? Hardly. The definitive answers are shrouded by the dark curtain of the ages. But no matter where Mary Magdalene and the others went after the Crucifixion, it is not likely they had a relatively fancy family tomb back in Jerusalem. ■

Phyllis Zagano is senior research associate-in-residence at Hofstra University and a contributor to Religion News Service, in which this article appeared.



"There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and ate sumptuously every day..." Jesus warns against indulgence in His parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31.

Father John Parker

Modern indulgences

Battling unrestrained gratification

What comes to mind when you hear the word "indulgence?" If one is a student of Church history or theology, he or she might think of the Roman Catholic doctrine, against which the Reformers fought, that defines an indulgence as "a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven." If one is more inclined to think simply on everyday life, he or she probably relates indulgence as the dictionary does, "to allow oneself (unrestrained) gratification," the kind of thing one notices in advertisements from no-guilt desserts to Disney cruises.

Funny thing is, when Roman Catholic doctrine meets post-modern living, one would require an indulgence for an indulgence!

There is a dangerous trend in contemporary American Christianity that, while rightly rejecting the former, is guilty of fervently accepting the latter. "Unrestrained gratification" takes different forms, depending on a variety of factors, not the least of which is the issue *du jour*.

Sometimes it is moral indulgence defended by poorly inter-

preted passages of Scripture, such as "judge not and you will not be judged" [Luke 6:37]. In these cases, it is not typical that the Scriptures are tossed aside and ignored; rather they are radically reinterpreted contrary to their received meanings. This type of indulgence is rather disconcerting, because in it, its promoters do not seem to recognize that the heart of Christianity is believing and acting as Christians have always believed and been taught to behave. This indulgence has many biblical names, including *porneia* (from which we derive our term "pornography") and the old, forgotten *fornication*, and includes every sexual behavior, both imaginable and unimaginable, outside of marriage.

Other times, the indulgence comes through food. This one is hardly noticed, but present by an utter absence of regular, disciplined fasting, except when a seminary or para-Church ministry needs money, for which a day of "prayer and fasting" is called. But Christians have, from the beginning, fasted with great structure, and not to bargain with God! (Fasting changes *us*, not Him.) We don't eat or drink on Sundays until after we receive Communion, hence the term break-fast. We reserve at least two days per week for intentional fasting, Wednesdays (in commemoration of the betrayal of Christ by Judas) and Fridays (in solemn memory of Jesus' Crucifixion and the very reason for the practice of "no meat on Fridays").

For 2,000 years, Christians also have set apart longer seasons for fasting and repentance, the chief of which is the 40 days before Pascha called Great Lent. When there is never a planned, voluntary abstinence from food and libation, everything is a feast. This indulgence is called gluttony.

A third type of indulgence is liturgical, and is also rooted in a misinterpreted passage from the Scriptures in which Saint Paul says that he has become "all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" [1 Corinthians 9:22]. And let's be fair, every Christian is liturgical; the question is to whom is your liturgy related? Here, the services of the Church are crafted, based on the expressed desires of the membership or potential membership.

One well-known author, George Barna, has made lots of money from books he publishes that report his polls asking questions to non-Christian people, such as, "If you were to go to a church, what would it look like?" Church leaders read these books and then literally "shape worship" to meet the demands discovered in market research. This indulgence fuels pride, in assuming that what I already like or do is sufficient for the corporate worship of God Almighty, while concurrently assuming that what we have received from our Christian forbears is insufficient and/or irrelevant.

G. K. Chesterton, a contemporary of C. S. Lewis, left some famous words about this delusion: "Tradition means giving a vote to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead.... Tradition refuses to submit to the small and arrogant oligarchy of those who merely happen to be walking about."

The Christian life, from the beginning, has been the opposite of indulgence. Christians are called to cast off selfish pleasures, personal interpretations, and individual wants, and to put on Christ.

Indulgences to 10

What the religion polls say

Polls and surveys, for whatever they're worth, may not always be reliable. But they do offer some level of insight into various aspects of contemporary life – including religion – in these days of indulgence.

David Briggs, a religion writer for *The Plain Dealer* of Cleveland, recently reported on the results of a number of studies reviewed by over 500 members of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and the Religious Research Association who met recently in Portland, OR. Some of their findings were interesting, to say the least.

✓ Studies comparing Orthodox Christian and Catholic clergy show that marriage can be a blessing and a significant source of support for clergy, but it also can be a source of stress in a profession that demands long hours. While researchers from San Francisco's Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute of the Graduate Theological Union and the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, found that 95 percent or more of both groups said celebrating the Liturgy and administering the sacraments were the greatest sources of satisfaction, radical differences emerged in their personal lives. Ninety percent of the Orthodox priests surveyed said it came from their wives, with 79 percent saying they saw their wife as a partner in parish ministry. While celibate Catholic priests also said they appreciated family support, that support declined over time as parents died. Seventy-two percent of Catholic priests age 45 or under said their family was a strong source of support, compared with 59 percent of priests ages 65 and older. Orthodox clergy, however, reported stresses related to family life. Thirty-seven percent said providing financially for their family was a great problem, while two-thirds said having more time to spend with their family would be helpful to their ministry.

✓ What would Jesus buy? Nearly half of the respondents to a 2005 Baylor Religion Survey said they purchased religious goods in the past month, with 34 percent spending \$25.00 or

Polls to 30

While polls tend to be subjective, they often confirm that which everyone suspected all along – such as the importance of ministry to young people in the growth of the Church.



Indulgences from 9

The Gospel promise is not prosperity, comfort, or pleasure, and it is far from conformity to “me.” Rather, the gift of the Gospel is eternal life and freedom from eternal death, which is what I always bring on myself when I do things, like Frank Sinatra sang, “my way.” I am a sinner! My way is a total mess! Jesus did not (and does not) call His followers to “do whatever you want, however you want, whenever you want.”

Rather, we are to cast off our sins and selfish pride and to take up our cross daily and follow Him. This personal, voluntary crucifixion necessarily involves changing our whole lives. As Christians, by God’s grace, we must change our behavior from immoral to holy.

We need to ask ourselves, “Is this action revealed by God to be inherently good? We must change also our eating from gluttonous to sanctified. Am I eating to live, or living to eat? How am I providing for the truly hungry? And we surely need to adjust our corporate worship from self-centered to God-focused. Is our worship rooted in the Eucharist, which is the central act of Christian worship from the beginning? Is our worship a concert to God or to ourselves? Whom do we face when we sing and pray?”

When we avoid or cease to take such inventory of our Christian lives, indulgence surely takes over. Instead, we would do well to put the words of Saint Paul into action: “You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love” [Galatians 5:13]. ■

Fr. John Parker *is priest-in-charge of Holy Ascension Church, Mount Pleasant, SC.*

Priestmonk Calinic

The Conquerer of death

Strange as it may sound, death is mankind’s great teacher

Before the spectacular miracle of the Resurrection of Lazarus, Jesus wept. Patristic writers, such as Saint Cyril of Alexandria, point out that He wept as a man – to show that He was truly human – but it could also be said that He wept as God.

God did not create death. Death is not what was meant to be. Man chose death for himself when he decided to seek life and ultimate meaning in created, earthly things, taking them as a his goal and source, instead of a means to his true Goal and Source of life. Because of this, death has become the ultimate fundamental of human existence. All we do, all of our hard work, all the talents we labor so hard to acquire, all achievements, ranks, and goals are made vanity by death. All is lost in death. Death is the limit, the

boundary, of human form.

It is for this reason that monasticism points to death as mankind’s great teacher. God’s decrees are irreversible, and death is the great didactic given to us to show us that this world is not the source of our life and meaning. God is the Source of our life and meaning. It could even be said that the way to judge the depth or seriousness of a philosophy is to examine its treatment of death. Does death have meaning, or destroy all meaning?

Christianity confronts death directly and does not “sugar-coat” it – in other words, we do not say that death is “natural.” Christianity calls death what it is: a tragedy, a scandal, and an outrage. How could it be otherwise? No matter how elderly or sick someone was, when they are gone, we are sorrowful, being separated from one we loved. Death separates irrevocably.

Such is the state of affairs that Jesus encountered in Bethany, making Him weep. But our God is an active God, not one exiled to heaven, but with an active interest in all the details of our lives. No problem is too great or too trivial for our God, and He is not one to leave things status quo. He did something about it. He became a man and Himself endured death – in all its horror, the worst type, the shameful, public death of a criminal, in front of His own mother – and He rose from the dead, for it was not possible for Him, being sinless, to be held by it. And by so doing, He transformed death from a necessity resulting from the irreversible decree of God to a loving free choice: He gives us all the offer to carry the cross and die with Him, and hence to participate in His Resurrection. He redeems all human life, achievement, and relationships. He redeems the body and the material world. He does not remove death; rather, He removes its sting, and He replaces it with everlasting life.

Jesus is our God, and as Lord, He raises Lazarus from the dead. Lazarus sat at a table with Jesus eating – an undeniable witness to Jesus’ power, mission, and universal offer. And at this moment, two people were confronted with this offer: a prostitute and a priest.

The sinful woman broke an alabaster box of costly ointment and wept at Jesus’ feet, which she dried with her hair. She broke the box – that is, she saved nothing for herself – and poured it out as her offering. It cost 300 *denari*, which was 300 days’ wages. This latter fact enraged Judas, who managed the apostles’ money. The hymns of Holy Week tell us even more about the contrast between these two witnesses of the miracle of Lazarus, being quite explicit as to where the woman came from just then, and the background of Judas. Make no mistake: Judas was an apostle and had the gift of healing. Yet he was more interested in worldly things. He could not turn away from temporary concerns, and had no horizon of vision. Death was not Judas’ teacher.

The sinful woman understood that which Judas failed to understand: Christianity is about healing – not just temporary healing, but healing from mankind’s greatest problems: egotism, sin, and death. The great paradigm of Orthodox Christianity is not that of righteous/sinful, but of healthy/sick. All of us need healing.

Herein is the message of the raising of Lazarus, of the Resurrection of Christ Himself. Instead of concerning ourselves with

Conquerer to 30

Father Steven Kostoff

Where and when

Clinging to hope in the shadow of the Virginia Tech massacre

One of the unspoken subtexts of our lives today is a certain uneasiness or anxiety as we await the next inevitable “man-made” tragedy to unfold. Domestically, we warily lead our lives within those peaceful intervals between shootings and mass killings. We are now certain that it is all a matter of *when* and *where*.

The availability of guns and the openness of our society makes such attacks virtually impossible to stop. We are probably never quite as “safe” as we like to believe. Many of these murderous rampages were revisited as news broke about the mass killings on the campus of Virginia Tech shortly after Pascha, as the media attempted to place this latest tragedy within a wider context of similar events. We almost feel guilty when we cannot quite remember the most recent shooting and the precise number of victims. Straining to find language fully expressive of this horrific event, the media called these latest shootings a “massacre” because of the “record” number of persons killed there in a short span of time. For all of our social adaptability and openness, our cultural pluralism and toleration, and our inclusiveness, there will always be those lonely, isolated, and twisted individuals who come to the insanely irrational conclusion that the only way to resolve their problems is to take other innocent lives before they end their own. Truly, there must “inner demons” at work here that are far beyond our comprehension.

For myself, it was difficult not to remain rather fixated before the TV as more and more of the facts behind this tragic event were discovered and disclosed. The questions awaiting the university authorities and local law enforcement agencies are troubling and perhaps even staggering in their implications. All of that belongs to the future. When one sees the victims slowly being personalized as flesh and blood human beings through photos and stories, one can only be overwhelmed by the seemingly senseless nature of these unique lives so abruptly and horrifically ended. From our limited human perspective, the finality of death is indeed dreadful. Yet, I was deeply impressed by how some of the parents and siblings of the victims were able to respond when asked to speak publicly. In their initial shock and bewilderment, one could only feebly try to empathize with them as they expressed their grief and utter sense of loss before the nation. As a parent of children of similar age, it is impossible to even think of the parents of the shooter. That must be an uncharted realm of pain and agony that is beyond the endurable. That is one more family that we need to include in our prayers.

It seems to be too early to speak about the consolation of God to those most affected by this tragedy. The raw feelings and the need to assimilate such loss must first be respected and processed.

Hope to 28

Metropolitan Herman calls for prayers after VT massacre

In a statement dated April 20, 2007, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, called upon the faithful of the Orthodox Church in America to pray for victims and their families of the massacre on the campus of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, VA, on Monday, April 16.

The text of the statement reads as follows.

“On Monday, April 16, in the midst of our ongoing celebration of the Resurrection of Our Lord, we were shocked to learn of the senseless murders of thirty-two students and faculty members on the campus of Virginia Tech.

“Once again, we were reminded that we live in a fallen world, one in which evil is very much alive and over which Our Lord wept on the eve of His own death. Yet, it is at times like this that we are challenged to cling even more intensely to our only Hope, our only Joy -- the risen Christ, by Whose Resurrection the promise of new life is freely offered to those who wish to partake thereof.

“It is difficult to imagine the shock experienced by the classmates of those who lost their lives. And the grief experienced by the students' parents is beyond our imagination. Death, regardless of the circumstances, is always a tragedy, something that remains foreign to God's creation. Finding comfort in the midst of such pain is not easy. Answering the ultimate question -- “why?” -- is even more difficult, given the impossibility of rationalizing that which is by nature irrational.

“Yet, our Savior so mercifully reaches out to us in the midst of this and every tragedy, lightening our burdens, removing our yokes, and weeping with us in our losses. At times like this, we are reminded to turn to Him, to seek for ourselves and for the families and friends of the victims that peace which passes all understanding.

“I invite all of you to join me in praying, above all, for those innocent students and faculty members whose lives ended so tragically and abruptly.

“May they be granted eternal rest where there is neither sickness, nor sorrow, nor sighing. Let us pray for the victims' families, for whom we express our deepest sympathy, as they struggle in the days and years ahead to cope with the painful loss of their sons and daughters, their brothers and sisters and spouses. Let us pray for their classmates -- and the entire Virginia Tech community -- and especially for those Virginia Tech students who are members of our Orthodox Church in America, whose grief we share in a special way. And let us pray for ourselves, that the Lord will help us, each in our own way, to transform the growing violence and sense of fear that has become so common in our society by living our own lives in faithfulness to the Gospel of our risen Lord.

“May He Who has power over both the living and the dead, our only Hope and Resurrection, transform our individual and collective grief into a faith capable of enduring this mindless tragedy. And may He enable us to see beyond the evil of this world, to place our hope in the promises of the life of the world to come, and to embrace all the more intensely the comfort that He and He alone offers.”

A copy of the statement was sent to Dr. Charles W. Steger, president of Virginia Tech. ■

Father Alexander Garklavs

Archbishop John of Chicago

April 11, 2007, marks the 25th anniversary of the falling asleep of Archbishop John [Garklavs], retired Archbishop of Chicago and Minneapolis, on Palm Sunday 1982. He is remembered as one of the great bishops who God blessed to serve the Orthodox Church in America.

Named John by his parents, he was born in a small village, Umurga, Latvia, on August 25, 1898. His father, Jacob, a farmer, died when John was very young, but his devout mother, Anna, lovingly raised him and his brother Peter. Most Latvians were Lutheran, but John learned from childhood and maintained through his entire life a deep devotion to the Orthodox Church.

After briefly serving in the Imperial Russian Army during World War I, John returned to his native city, Limbazi, where he labored as a tailor and served as choir director and psalm reader at the Orthodox parish. He attended and graduated from the Riga Theological Seminary and was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood in 1936.

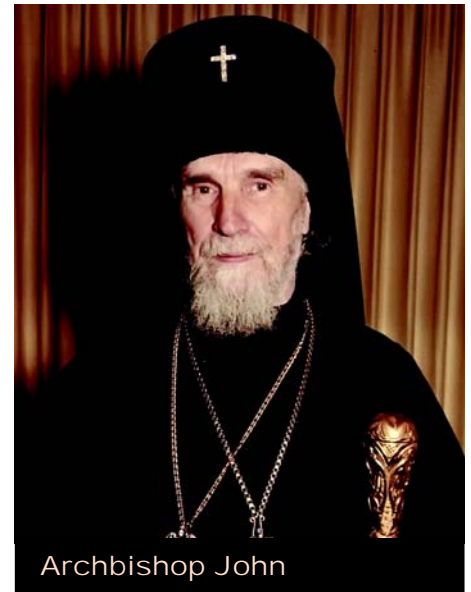
A young, energetic priest, Father John was assigned to oversee three poor parishes in Western Latvia. He would serve at these parishes on a rotating basis, all the while maintaining a day job to make ends meet.

With the coming of World War II, dramatic changes occurred in Latvia. The country, which was independent since 1918, was annexed to the Soviet Union in 1940. Shortly thereafter, it was attacked by Nazi Germany. These changes reverberated within the Latvian Orthodox Church. During the years of independence, the Latvian Church distanced itself from the Russian Orthodox Church and subsisted in an uneasy autonomy granted by the Patriarchate of Constantinople. This changed in 1940 with the arrival of the dynamic Metropolitan Sergius [Voskresensky] from Moscow. As he restored canonical order to the Orthodox Churches in the Baltic countries, he sought to find a suit-

able candidate to become Bishop of Riga. The celibate Father John was selected and, on February 28, 1943, he was consecrated to the episcopacy in Riga's Orthodox cathedral. These were difficult years. Metropolitan Sergius was murdered in early 1944. Thousands of displaced Russian refugees streamed through Riga. Casualties and catastrophes were especially acute in the Baltic countries situated between the warring giants, Russia and Germany.

In the fall of 1944, Bishop John, his mother, and a young attendant who would become his adopted son, Sergius Garklavs, together with a group of Orthodox clergy were forced to leave Riga. Bishop John was much opposed to this, but finally acquiesced. Their evacuation from Latvia and subsequent journey through Poland and Czechoslovakia and into American occupied Western Germany took almost two years and was filled with hazards, hunger, deprivation, and the constant dread of unexpected political developments. Accompanying Bishop John and his group was the miraculous Tikhvin icon of the Mother of God. The icon had been brought to Latvia by German soldiers during their retreat from Russia and entrusted it to the local Orthodox Church. As he prepared to leave Riga, Bishop John instructed that the Tikhvin Icon be hidden at the woman's monastery until the end of the war. Later, the German authorities became aware of this. Taking the icon with a small group of clergy, Bishop John left Riga for the port city of Libau. His evacuation had temporarily halted at the same city and when he learned of the icon's arrival, he sought to bring it safely to the Orthodox parish. As the chaotic retreat continued, the Germans were more interested in saving their lives, and the Tikhvin icon came into the custody of Bishop John. His instructions and wishes – to return the icon to a free Russia and the restored Tikhvin Monastery – were fulfilled in July, 2004.

After several years living in German refugee camps, Bishop John, the Tikhvin icon, and those with him arrived in the United States in 1949. He was received into the North American Metropolia, as the Orthodox Church in America was known at the time, by Metropolitan Theophilus. He lived at Holy Virgin Protection Cathedral, New York, NY, and was given the title Bishop of Detroit and Cleveland. In 1957, when he was named Archbishop of Chi-



Archbishop John

cago and Minneapolis.

Until his retirement in 1978, Bishop – and later Archbishop – John guided the life of the Diocese of the Midwest with evangelical foresight and pastoral wisdom. Under his capable direction, the diocesan administration expanded, and the diocese enjoyed a vibrant development. In addition to his knowledge of Russian, Latvian, and German, he learned enough English to communicate effectively. Unpretentious and simple in daily life, he was a man of prayer, devotion and self-control. He loved the church services and liturgical singing, but he also understood the need for pragmatic pastoral adjustments in parish life. Though he personally preferred the Old Calendar and Old Slavonic, he had no doubts about the missionary imperative for the Orthodox Church in the New World. He was an active proponent of missions and oversaw the establishment of several new communities.

Archbishop John's achievements have become more evident during the past 25 years. A genuine spiritual leader, a missionary, a compassionate cleric, and a gracious host, he was a true archpastor to his flock. He was a "people person," especially friendly to those who were discovering the Orthodox Church. Many converts fondly recall his nurturing warmth. He left a visionary legacy of diligent pastorship, embracing outreach and noble stewardship.

May God make the memory of his departed servant, Archbishop John, to be eternal! ■

Fr. Alexander Garklavs is the newly appointed chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America.

OCA News Notes Notices

Holy Synod of Bishops acts on commission report

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, chaired the spring session of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America at the Chancery, Syosset, NY, March 20-22, 2007.

A major portion of the meeting was devoted to the report of the special commission charged with conducting an investigation of allegations of financial impropriety. His Eminence, Archbishop Job, and His Grace, Bishop Benjamin, reviewed the commission's report, its many attachments, and its end-notes and outlined the process and progress of the commission's work. A summary of the investigative report, presented one week earlier to members of the Metropolitan Council by legal and accounting firms, also was presented. It was noted that the Metropolitan Council had approved further investigation.

Protopresbyter Robert Kondratick, former OCA chancellor, was asked into the session to field a substantial number of questions and to provide answers with regard to issues raised by the commission's report. Father Robert was questioned on 17 specific issues with regard to allegations brought forth.



The Holy Synod of Bishops meets in St. Sergius Chapel.

In discussing facts presented in the commission's report, His Eminence, Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas and the South, prepared a letter addressed to Metropolitan Herman, requesting that Metropolitan Herman "rescind the order of Father Kondratick's transfer to the Diocese of the South." After much discussion, the hierarchs agreed that the suspension of Father Robert was appropriate, and that 30 days should be provided for him to prepare his response before a spiritual court.

The members of the Holy Synod also considered a breach of confidentiality by Mr. Gregory Nescott, a member of the special commission, unanimously concluding that he should be removed from participation in the commission's ongoing efforts.

The members of the Holy Synod asked the special commission to continue its work until it is brought to a conclusion. They further affirmed that all financial records using the OCA's name and/or charitable status, discretionary or other, past, present, or future, are subject to independent audits.

Deacon John Zarras, transition officer, presented the names of the Very Rev. Alexander Garklavs, Mr. Kevin Kovalytsik, and the Rev. Andrew Jarmus as candidates for the offices of chancellor, treasurer, and director of ministries and communications respectively. One week earlier, members of the Metropolitan Council had unanimously recommended the three candidates to fill the vacant positions. The

three candidates were approved by the Holy Synod of Bishops.

The acting treasurer's report and reports associated with the pending 2006 audit were presented by the Very Rev. Paul Kucynda. A lengthy discussion followed, focusing on the history of compilation reports instead of full audits and problems associated with the development of the administrative committee. It was noted that, in this environment, the Martin Drive property had been purchased without the knowledge of the Metropolitan Council, which according to the *Statute* is the only body responsible for buying and selling property.

The members of the Holy Synod concurred with the reported decision of the Metropolitan Council to sell the Martin Drive property.

Father Paul also reported that negotiations with the Diocese of Alaska regarding a number of properties throughout the diocese had been initiated. He noted that the intention is to establish ownership of the lands in question by the Orthodox Church in America, and then to transfer ownership legally to the Diocese of Alaska. The members of the Holy Synod, concurring with the process as presented, affirmed that proper research of the documents and histories of the lands in question is crucial for the sake of the record.

Other matters considered by the members of the Holy Synod included the fol-

Synod to 14

IN DEPTH

- ✓ **READ** the complete account of the Holy Synod spring session at www.oca.org/News.asp?ID=1205&SID=19.
- ✓ **READ** the address of Metropolitan Herman to the Holy Synod of Bishops at www.oca.org/News.asp?ID=1193&SID=19.
- ✓ **READ** the Holy Synod's statement in response to the investigative commission's initial findings at www.oca.org/News.asp?ID=1196&SID=19.
- ✓ **READ** the response of Metropolitan Herman to Archbishop Dmitri with regard to the status of Protopresbyter Robert Kondratick at www.oca.org/news.asp?ID=1199&SID=19. ■

Synod from 13

Holy Synod meets

lowing.

- A report on the diaconal vocations program noted that 32 individuals are enrolled in the program, with an additional 20 individuals who have expressed an interest in pursuing the program in the near future. The Holy Synod emphasized the importance of background and psychological checks on all candidates.
- The hierarchs heard a report from the Very Rev. Eugene Vansuch concerning the ongoing efforts of the Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards and development. Father Eugene reported that income was slow, yet steady, and expressed his hope that FOS would meet its 2007 goal.
- Reports on annual giving and special appeals and the work of the OCA's ministries were offered by Mr. David Lucs.
- The general fiscal health of the OCA pension plan was reported by His Grace, Bishop Nikon of Boston, New England, and the Albanian Archdiocese.
- Initial considerations with regard to the convocation of the 15th All-American Council in 2008 were reviewed. While many individuals have expressed an interest in holding the council at Saint Tikhon's Monastery, the facilities are far too limited. While a site has yet to be selected, the members of the Holy Synod agreed that the council will be limited to delegates and shorter than previous councils. In an effort to provide the maximum amount of time for questions and discussions, it further was agreed that only written reports will be offered, with ample opportunities to field questions. No oral reports will be given.
- His Grace, Bishop Alejo of Mexico City, reported that, thanks to the OCA's \$10,000.00 donation to the Mexican

Exarchate, a six-room auxiliary facility is being constructed next to the Mexico City cathedral. He also reported that nearly the entire population of a 5,000 person village in the State of Veracruz has embraced Orthodoxy, with other villages in this remote Aztec region following suit.

- In response to a request from His Holiness, Patriarch Aleksey II of Moscow and All Rus and His Eminence, Metropolitan Laurus of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia regarding the situation of three deposed clergy, the members of the Holy Synod decided that action will be taken on a case-by-case basis upon receipt of a letter to the Holy Synod of Bishops by each cleric expressing repentance and petitioning for the lifting each deposition. It was further decided, regarding suspended clergy, that each may write to the bishop who had suspended him, or his successor. Should the bishops involved decide to reinstate suspended clergy, they should immediately send appropriate documentation to Metropolitan Herman.

A joint meeting of the Holy Synod and the Metropolitan Council will convene during the week of October 21, 2007.

In addition to Metropolitan Herman, Archbishop Dmitri, Archbishop Job, Bishop Nikon, and Bishop Alejo, other Holy Synod members in attendance were His Eminence, Archbishop Kyrill of Pittsburgh, Western Pennsylvania, and the Bulgarian Diocese; His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate; His Eminence, Archbishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada; His Grace, Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania; and His Grace, Bishop Irineu of Dearborn Heights, Auxiliary of the Romanian Episcopate. His Grace, Bishop Nikolai of Sitka, Anchorage, and Alaska was not present. ■

Former OCA chancellor suspended

Protopresbyter Robert S. Kondratich, former chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America, was temporarily suspended from all functions of the Holy Priesthood on Friday, April 20, 2007.

A Church Court has been appointed according to the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, Article XI (Church Courts and Canonical Procedures), to hear the charges made against him.

May the All Merciful Savior bless and comfort His Church in this most difficult time. ■

IN DEPTH

✓ **READ** the detailed summary of the March 13-14 Metropolitan Council meeting at www.oca.org/news.asp?ID=1191&SID=19.

✓ **READ** the statement issued by the Metropolitan Council proposing candidates for the offices of chancellor, treasurer, and director of ministries and communications at www.oca.org/news.asp?ID=1186&SID=19. ■

www.oca.org

SVS summer institute to be held June 24-27

The annual Saint Vladimir's Seminary summer institute, focusing on the theme "Why Liturgy Matters: Worship as Witness in a Changing World," will be held on the school's campus in Crestwood, NY, June 24-27, 2007.

Priestmonk Gregory [Woolfenden] will deliver the keynote address, drawing on his wealth of scholarly, liturgical, and pastoral experience to explore the question, "Could, or should, there be a common Orthodox liturgical practice in North America?"

Presentations on the Divine Liturgy also will be offered by several members of the seminary faculty.

"The Divine Liturgy offers a unique witness of the Christian faith," the Rev. Alexander Rentel, assistant professor of canon law and Byzantine studies and scheduled institute speaker, said. "Although today's world has little patience for ancient and elaborate rites, our worship remains absolutely necessary."

The daily schedule also will offer specific music practices and workshops for Church musicians, choir directors, and singers. Those wishing to expand their general knowledge of the Orthodox faith will attend lectures and discussion groups on the theme, while a special nine-hour program in rubrics will be geared to newly ordained clergy or those in diaconal "late-vocations" programs.

The schedule and list of speakers, together with downloadable registration forms and additional institute information, may be found on the seminary web site at www.svots.edu. ■

Metropolitan Council concludes two-day session

Members of the Metropolitan Council of the Orthodox Church in America concluded their two-day spring session at the Chancery on Wednesday, March 14, 2007.

A number of issues and decisions were forwarded to the Holy Synod of Bishops, which met during the week of March 20, for further implementation.

Of special note were several recommendations by the special investigatory commission, headed by His Eminence, Archbishop Job of Chicago and the Midwest, which is conducting an internal investigation of the Church's finances. Members of the Metropolitan Council accepted the special committee's recommendations, which were forwarded to the Holy Synod for further action.

In addition, the names of three recommended candidates for vacant Chancery positions – those of chancellor, treasurer, and ministries and communications director – were forwarded to the Holy Synod for final confirmation.

Seven seminarians to participate in summer internship program

Five students from Saint Tikhon's Seminary, South Canaan, PA, and two students from Saint Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY, are in the process of being matched up with parishes for the Orthodox Church in America's 2007 summer intern program.

Mentors and sponsoring parishes identified in early February were recently contacted to confirm their commitment to the program, according to the Rev. Stephen Voytovich, program coordinator. As soon as confirmations are received, the listing of seminarians and proposed parishes will be forwarded to His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, for his blessing.

The proposed dates for the program are June 3 through August 19. Funding for the internship program is firmly in place.

The program is recognized as an important contribution to the pastoral formation of OCA seminarians. ■



Metropolitan Herman opens Metropolitan Council meeting with Service of Prayer.

Synod issues statement on investigation

The members of the Holy Synod of Bishops issued an archpastoral statement to the clergy, monastics, and faithful of the Church at the conclusion of their spring session held at the Chancery March 20-22, 2007.

The text of the statement reads as follows.

"For more than a year, the Church has been preoccupied with allegations of improper financial activities by employees of the Chancery. By now, most are aware that the accusations are focused on three general areas, that:

"1. The processes in place for administrative and financial controls were routinely circumvented;

"2. Monies designated to specific charities were diverted and used for other purposes; and

"3. Church money was used for personal purposes.

"It must be confessed that during early 2006, there were many of us who believed that the allegations were exaggerated, motivated by the personal animosity of the accusers, or that there were simple explanations to these 'misunderstandings.' In March of 2006, it became apparent to us that we were wrong in these beliefs, and that there was substance to at least some of the claims. In addition, we realized that we were not equipped to investigate these matters without professional assistance. We solicited recommendations of law firms that had impeccable reputations and expertise to assist us in the investigation, and Proskauer Rose was selected to look into the allegations on our behalf. Their role was simple in concept, though difficult in execution; the firm was to review the allegations, to determine which ones were supported by credible evidence, and to advise us on possible courses of action. Assisting Proskauer in this assignment was our auditing firm Lambrides, Lamos, Moulthrop LLP.

"The investigation consisted of interviewing chancery employees and former employees, collecting and reviewing tens of thousands of documents from a variety of sources, such as the OCA archives, bank records, personal records of the interviewees, and Church financial records. In October of 2006, a representative group of the Holy Synod and the Metropolitan Council met with Sarah Gold (the partner at Proskauer

Statement to 30

Bishop Benjamin elected to vacant see; Bishop Seraphim elevated to archbishop

His Grace, Bishop Benjamin of Berkeley, was canonically elected to fill the vacant see of San Francisco and the West by the members of the Holy Synod of Bishops at their spring session March 20-22, 2007.

Bishop Benjamin was nominated to fill the vacant see by delegates to the diocese's assembly several months ago. He succeeds His Grace, Bishop Tikhon of San Francisco, Los Angeles, and the West who retired in the fall of 2006.

Ordained to the diaconate in November 1987 and to the priesthood ten years later, Bishop Benjamin was assigned as auxiliary to the Diocese of the West after

his consecration to the episcopacy on May 1, 2004.

At the same session of the Holy Synod, His Grace, Bishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada was elevated to the dignity of archbishop.

A native of Alberta, Archbishop Seraphim was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood in 1978 and served as a priest in Finland, Canada, and the US. He was consecrated to the episcopacy in 1987, after which he was named Bishop of Edmonton and auxiliary to the Metropolitan. In 1990, he was elected ruling bishop of the Archdiocese of Canada, succeeding His Eminence, Archbishop Sylvester. ■

Holy Synod confirms new chancellor, treasurer, ministries/communications director

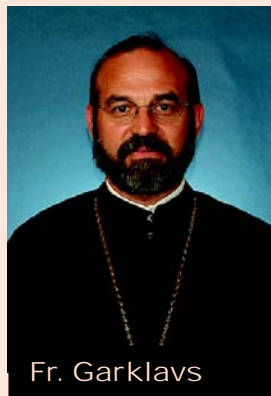
Accepting the recommendation of the Metropolitan Council, members of the Holy Synod of Bishops confirmed the selection of three candidates for the offices of chancellor, treasurer, and director of ministries and communications.

The search for a qualified candidate for the position of secretary was reopened, while the position of comptroller was eliminated.

The Very Rev. Alexander Garklavs was confirmed as chancellor. Rector of Holy Trinity Church, East Meadow, NY, for many years, he has a proven record of pastoral care and concern for other pastors, a record of personal integrity, a sense of trust and commitment to transparency, and the trust of clergy and faithful. He possesses a working knowledge of and familiarity with Church administration and a grasp of the seminaries' mandates and weaknesses, and is very capable in organizing and leading large gatherings.

Mr. Kevin Kovalycsik, a member of Holy Virgin Protection Cathedral, New York, NY, was selected as treasurer. He holds a bachelor's degree from Rutgers University, an MBA from Seton Hall University with emphasis in economics, and an MPA degree from Columbia University with emphasis in advanced management and finance. He has work experience with the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority, where he held successively responsible management/executive positions. He also has consulted worldwide and is a strong communicator.

The Rev. Andrew Jarmus, priest-in-charge of the Mission of the Theotokos "The Life-Giving Spring," Winnipeg, MB, Canada, was named director of ministries and communications. For eight years, he served as director of mission and education for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada [UOCC]. He also served as the UOCC's communications director for five years and as chairman of the UOCC's clergy development committee. He holds Master of Theology and Master of Divinity degrees. ■



Fr. Garklavs

Departments to co-host ministry skills conference July 25-28

"The Heart Assured: Works of Love in Deed and Truth" will be the theme of a skills conference to be cosponsored by the OCA's Department of Pastoral Life Ministries and the Department of Christian Witness and Service at Marymount University, Arlington, VA, July 25-28, 2007.

"The conference will focus on clergy and laity working together to develop ministries that address a variety of needs found in every parish community," said Mrs. Donna Karabin, who chairs the Department of Christian Witness and Service. "Numerous workshops will help equip participants in ministries to children, adults, seniors, the infirm, clergy and their families, and a number of other groups."

Registration fees are \$125.00 before July 1 and \$150.00 after that date. Meals are an additional \$90.00. Air conditioned campus housing is \$40.00 per night single, \$32.00 per night double. Single day registration is \$75.00, including meals.

Additional information will be sent to all parishes and will appear on the OCA web site at www.oca.org, or may be obtained by contacting Mrs. Arlene Kallaur, at 516/922-0550; arlene@oca.org; Mrs. Katherine Vitko at 703/892-1412; kjvitko@yahoo.com; or the Very Rev. Andrew Morbey at 612/788-1947/ amorbey@comcast.com. ■

Teaching Scripture theme of June 30 Christian Ed conference

The OCA Department of Christian Education will hold a one-day conference for educators, parents, and the general faithful on understanding and teaching Scripture in an authentically Orthodox manner.

Titled "In the Beginning," the conference will be held at Holy Trinity Church, Parma, OH. In addition to lectures on the theme, there will be a number of hands-on workshops and displays of educational materials. The OCA Department of Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministry also will hold a focused workshop.

For further info, contact the DCE at christianeducation@oca.org or call Mrs. Jewelann Stefanar at 216/741-0985. ■

The Paschal Message of Metropolitan Herman

Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen!

If Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty....

And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! [1 Corinthians 15:14,17]

Dearly beloved in Christ,

Recently, there have been a number of attempts to “disprove” the central tenet of our faith: that Christ is risen from the dead. Television documentaries claim that Our Lord’s grave – and that of his family – have been discovered. “Scholars” debate whether Christ really died on the cross, or whether He merely fell victim to a condition that mimics death, only to be “revived” while “resting” in the tomb. That which generated tremendous controversy 2000 years ago – even Our Lord’s murderers spread the belief that His disciples had stolen His body! – continues to breed controversy and attempts to prove or disprove the very foundation of our faith as Orthodox Christians.

Scientifically, the Resurrection cannot be proven. Ultimately, it is a Mystery – the greatest Mystery of all time. It is a Mystery that can only be understood through the eyes of faith, through an intense trust in the will of the Creator Who, as we sing in one Vesper hymn, can change the order of nature as He desires. It is a Mystery that simply cannot be understood by those who question or reject the very notion that God so loved the world that He sent His only-begotten Son to renew and restore all creation and its relationship to its Creator. For those who deny God, or who are indifferent to Him, or who refuse to embrace His very existence, the Resurrection is reduced to myth, even as it renders the death of Christ meaningless, just one more senseless death not unlike the countless others perpetrated by the civil authorities of the time.

While indeed we “preach Christ crucified,” as Saint Paul writes elsewhere, it is only through the glorious Resurrection that the Crucifixion holds any real meaning. The cross – that dreaded sign of death and corruption – is transformed into a sign of victory, the ultimate symbol of God’s presence and loving kindness and forgiveness. Hence, while we preach Christ crucified, we look beyond the cross to the empty tomb, in which we discover

the Christ Who emptied Himself precisely to ensure that our preaching and faith are not empty or futile, the Christ Who loves us so much that He literally gives His life lest we remain captives to sin, corruption, and ultimately, death itself.

Someone once wrote that, when the Good News of the Resur-

rection ceases to be controversial, it loses its very power to transform lives. Today, as in centuries past, Our Lord’s Resurrection remains the subject of controversy, doubt, and even blatant denial. But surely we must acknowledge that, despite 2000 years of controversy and scientific enquiry and archeological digs, the light of the risen Christ has not – and cannot – be extinguished. The Resurrection remains at the heart of our faith and lives as Christians. The eyes of faith can see beyond the Mystery into the deepest reality of all: the love of God that makes the Resurrection of Our Lord possible and holds for us the promise of our own resurrection and delight in life eternal.

This year, as we celebrate the Resurrection of Our Lord and Savior, let us arm ourselves against every temptation to doubt the central Mystery and reality of our faith. Let us be assured of the forgiveness and new life that shines forth from the empty tomb. And let us renew our commitment – and conviction – that only by and through the incompre-

hensible Mystery of the Resurrection can we discover our true destiny and calling as the People of God, living “in” this world, yet already delighting in the life of the world to come.

May the risen Savior renew, restore, and refresh us during this most joyous season, and every day of our lives, so that in all things, He and He alone may be glorified!



With love in the Risen Lord,

+ HERMAN

Archbishop of Washington and New York
Metropolitan of All America and Canada

InMemoriam

Editorial request: Please inform the TOC editorial office by phone [630/668-3071] or e-mail [info@oca.org] when a death occurs so announcements may be made on the OCA web site and in TOC in a timely manner.

Archdeacon Roman Skvarnavicius

BOSTON, MA – Archdeacon Roman Skvarnavicius fell asleep in the Lord on February 10, 2007, after a battle with cancer.

Born in Springfield, MA on December 31, 1950, Archdeacon Roman was a graduate of Saint Tikhon's Seminary, South Canaan, PA. He was ordained to the diaconate by His Grace, Bishop [now Archbishop] Job, on December 11, 1883, after which he was attached to Saints Peter and Paul Church, Springfield, MA. In 1986, he was assigned to Boston's Holy Trinity Cathedral. He also served as deacon-in-charge of Saint Sophia and Her Three Daughters Mission.

In 1990, he was elevated to the rank of archdeacon.

Funeral services and interment were celebrated at Saints Peter and Paul Church, Springfield, MA, by His Grace, Bishop Nikon of Boston, New England, and the Albanian Archdiocese and Archbishop Job on February 13.

May Archdeacon Roman's memory be eternal! ■

The Very Rev. John Surducun

DEARBORN HEIGHTS, MI – The Very Rev. Father John Surducun, pastor emeritus of Saints Peter and Paul Church here, fell asleep in the Lord on January 22, 2007, five days after he celebrated his 92nd birthday.

Born in Labasint, Timis, Romania in 1915, Father John graduated from the Theological Academy in Timisoara in 1942. The same year, he married Elena Gherga, was ordained to the priesthood, and assigned rector of the Descent of the Holy Spirit Church, Clopodia, Banat, Romania.

Due to the persecution of the Church and its clergy by Romania's communist regime, Father John and his family relocated to Italy in 1948. Three years later, they emigrated to the US.

He served parishes in Cleveland, Salem, Martins Ferry, and Newark, OH, and Weirton, WV until his appointment as pastor of Saints Peter and Paul Church, Dearborn, MI. He was responsible for the parish's relocation to Dearborn Heights and the construction of the current church and hall in 1975.

Father John also served as administrator of *Solia*, the official publication of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate; treasurer of the Episcopate; member of the Spiritual Consistory and Episcopate Council; president of the Clergy Pension Fund; and spiritual advisor to the American Romanian Orthodox Youth.

After his retirement in 1980, Father John administered parishes in Fort Wayne, IN; and Warren and Detroit, MI. He was elevated to the rank of archpriest in 1991.

Father John was preceded in death by his wife in 1997. He is survived by four sons and five grandchildren.

Funeral services were celebrated at Saints Peter and Paul Church on January 26 with interment in Woodmere Cemetery, Detroit.

May Father John's memory be eternal! ■

Nicholas L. Turkevich

LINCOLNVILLE, ME – Nicholas L. Turkevich, 89, last remaining child of the late Metropolitan Leonty, fell asleep in the Lord on Bright Thursday, April 12, 2007.

A 1940 graduate of Dartmouth College, Mr. Turkevich was an international advertising executive, first in Chicago and Houston, then long based in Amsterdam and Paris before retiring to West Fairlee, VT, and later to Lincolnville.

Mr. Turkevich is survived by his wife, Elisabeth, and three daughters Barbara, Elisabeth, and Julianna.

Funeral services were celebrated by the Very Rev. Daniel Skvir of Holy Transfiguration Chapel, Princeton, NJ, on April 17, 2007.

May Mr. Turkevich's memory be eternal! ■

Classics from 6

A community of prayer

And it is in the Church that he learns his devotional practice. Thus, the two manners of prayer are more than complementary; they are organically bound together, as two inseparable aspects of the same devotional act. Each without the other may be even dangerous and disruptive: "solitary" prayer may degenerate into individualistic pietism, ecstatic and selfish, and when those without any previous personal training attempt to join with others the result may happen to be, not a true community prayer, but rather a crowd prayer – not the true corporate prayer of a community of persons, but of an impersonal multitude – or else, a mere formality

and exhibition. Even "in the chamber," a Christian must not pray only for himself: he is never alone on his knees before the Father, and the Father is not only *his* Father, but the Father of *all* and *everyone*. We, as Christians, are taught to call on "*our* Father," our common Father, Who is also "the Father of Our Lord, Jesus Christ," Who died for all and has saved all men.

Personal prayer must be "catholic" – that is, comprehensive and universal. The praying heart must be large enough to embrace the needs and sorrows of the whole suffering and redeemed humanity. In this spirit can individuals truly meet each other as "brethren," and precisely as "brethren in Christ," and "agree" concerning things which are proper to be asked for. On all levels, private and corporate, Chris-

tian worship must be a *common* worship, a worship within the community. And on all levels, private and corporate, personal engagement or commitment are indispensable. Prayer "in common" is still personal engagement. Joint prayer is still prayer of persons. The very act of "joining" is a personal act. ■

Spirit from 5

Christ is risen!

phrase from Saint John Chrysostom's Paschal homily, "*the Lord, jealous of His honor, will accept the last even as the first.... Let everyone enter into the joy of your Lord.*" Indeed, honor and glory are His for finding us, Adam's offspring, and returning us to Him. ■

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So what does that mean...?

Interpreting the “less-than-obvious”, Part 2

Valerie Zahirsky

In the last issue of *The Orthodox Church*, we looked at some of the less-than-obvious Scripture passages that can leave Church school students and adults alike wondering, “so what does *that* mean?”

Here are a few more passages that we’d do well to explore in detail.

1 Exodus 4:21/ “And the Lord said to Moses, ‘When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles which I have put in your power; but I will harden his heart, so that

he will not let the people go.’”

This could be confusing, especially for younger children. Why would God harden Pharaoh’s heart so that he won’t let the Hebrews go? Didn’t God *want* Pharaoh to let them go?

What these words express is God’s complete knowledge of His creatures. The Lord knows all of us better than we know ourselves, and He knows that Pharaoh will harden his own heart. God knows him to be a proud, harsh, stubborn ruler not given to compassion for his slaves. It is Pharaoh’s own decision, and a result of his free will, to be obdurate. Just a few chapters later we read that Pharaoh “hardened his heart this

time also” [Exodus 8: 32.]

2 Luke 2:29/ “Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.”

This is the translation our students often hear. Because we don’t use “thou” and “thee” and the verb forms that go with them in everyday speech, students may not be aware that this is not a request for permission to depart. Rather, Simeon speaks these words to thank and praise God for fulfilling His promise that Simeon would see the Savior before he died. Now, Simeon says, God *is allowing* His servant depart in peace, having seen “Thy salvation.”

Christian Ed to 20

1: Preliminary comments on New Testament hermeneutics

Father Theodore Bobosh

“All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” [2 Timothy 3:16].

This verse from Saint Paul is oft quoted by those who demand that scripture be read literally. The verse, however, never speaks about a literal interpretation of scripture; it only says that all scripture – and for Saint Paul this would have meant the Old Testament, as he was writing even before the Gospels had been written – is inspired, or “breathed in” by the Holy Spirit.

In this series, I would like to take a look at what *hermeneutics* – Greek for *interpretation* – we can find in the authors of the New Testament as they interpreted the scripture, which to them would have been the Jewish *Tanakh*, or what we Christians refer to as the Old Testament – the only scripture which the New Testament Christians would have known. It is my contention that the real hermeneutic with which the New Testament writers read the Old Testament is Christocentrism, not literalism.

We can recognize that in the broad historical context, Jesus – and Saint Paul after Him – is in the rabbinic tradition of interpreting scripture. This is the tradition that produced the



Mishnah, that effort to mine the depths of scripture for all of its possible meanings. The assumption of this tradition is that scripture, as the Word of God, is going to be as deep and rich in meaning as God Himself is. What this tradition certainly did was search beyond the literal meaning of any one text into the spiritual, allegorical, typological, pragmatic, and theoretical meanings. This way of interpreting scripture was essen-

tial in the Rabbinic movement with its focus on the Torah and its 613 laws. History had not always been kind to the Jews, who found themselves for much of their history oppressed, in exile, with their temple destroyed and much of their prescribed worship impossible to perform. It was in fact often not possible for them to keep the literal meaning of the Torah. But they continued to be faithful to the notion that the Torah was God’s Word, and so it must mean something, even if its literal application was impossible or nonsensical. The vast Jewish writings that emerged in the Mishnah and Talmud were all part of this effort to mine the scriptures for their meaning and contemporary application, even when the literal sense no longer applied to life.

Jesus and Saint Paul are both clearly in this same tradition. It is not our purpose here to explore this connection or this Rabbinic tradition, but this does help us to see the hermeneutics of the New Testament writers within their historical and religious context. When Jesus says, “You have heard it said... but I say to you...” in Matthew 5, He is speaking as a rabbinic

Scripture to 20

Christian Ed from 19

We sing these words at Vespers because Christ is our Savior, too. Christ is the “light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to Thy people Israel.” This means *all* of us, as well as Simeon.

3 **Matthew 24:40-42/ “Then two men will be in the field; one is taken and one is left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one is taken and one is left. Watch, therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.”**

These words, spoken by Christ to His disciples, describe the swift and unexpected coming of the end of time. Like the parable of the wise and foolish virgins in the next chapter, it warns us always to be ready for the last days.

This passage is used by some Christians as a sure sign of the “Rapture” – a relatively new teaching [typified in the *Left Behind* books and videos] that contends that some good people will be taken up to heaven by God, while others will be left to suffer tribulation on earth. But this is not the teaching of the Church, nor has it ever been, and such a specific, literal interpretation is not appropriate here.

In this passage, Christ is describing the difference in destinies between those who love and long for the Christ, and those who are indifferent to Him. When the last day comes, people will be doing ordinary things. We cannot tell from the outside which people are lovers of Christ and have prepared for Him, and which are indifferent and unprepared. But each person will go to his or her destiny on that last day. The *Jerome Biblical Commentary* warns us not to over-interpret the words in this passage, noting that the precise meaning of “taken” and “left” is not clear, nor does it need to be. Those who are “taken” will be taken because they are ready; they have shown the vigilance that Christ Himself recommends.

We can take from this passage, as from the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, the call to vigilance that we hear at Bridegroom Matins during Holy Week: “Behold, the bridegroom comes at midnight, and blessed is the servant whom He shall find watching; and again, unworthy is the servant whom He shall find heedless.” ■

Valerie Zahirsky is co-chair of the OCA Department of Christian Education.

Scripture from 19

interpreter of the Torah and is commenting on the existing interpretation of the Torah as much as the Torah itself. [Thus, in Matthew 5:43, Jesus refers to something “you have heard,” which clearly is not anywhere in the Torah, but apparently existed in the common Rabbinic interpretations of the Torah to which the people were exposed].

Another example of Jesus as rabbinic teacher is found in Matthew 22:34-40: “But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they came together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, to test Him. ‘Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?’ And He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.’”

Here we can recognize Christ as a Jewish rabbi upholding the great shema of Israel as the foremost commandment of the Torah, to which all the rabbis would have agreed. But Jesus’ interpretation of the Torah becomes more clear – and perhaps more controversial – in what He declares as the second great commandment. It is not that the Torah did not teach love of neighbor, for it certainly does, and quite specifically. Jesus, however, as interpreter of the Law, will indicate in his own teachings that love of neighbor supersedes all the sacrificial laws of the Torah, and that love of neighbor is more important than following the letter of the other laws, something other rabbis would dispute with Him. ■

Fr. Theodore Bobosh is rector of St. Paul the Apostle Church, Dayton, OH.

Next issue/ *Christ's Hermeneutic: Seeing Christ in the Old Testament*

RESOURCES

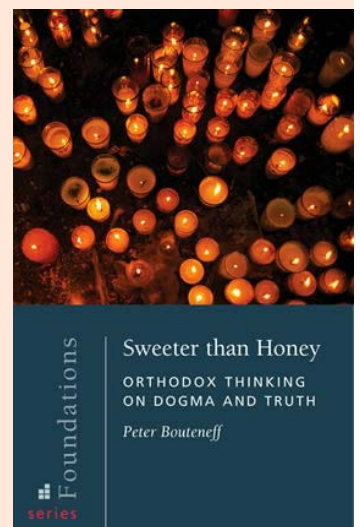
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A century of councils

Alexis Liberovsky

The culmination of Saint Tikhon's archpastoral service in North America was the convocation of the First All-American *Sobor* [council] a century ago, March 5-7, 1907. The humble yet significant gathering of clergy and laity met under the leadership of their visionary archpastor in the town of Mayfield, PA, to address the needs of the Church's continued missionary expansion throughout North America.

When Saint Tikhon, the Enlightener of North America and future Patriarch of Moscow, became ruling bishop of the North American Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church in 1898, diocesan administrative authority in the Russian Church was largely vested in the person of the ruling diocesan hierarchy. However, in his archpastoral ministry in America, Saint Tikhon increasingly sought the participation and input of all clergy and the laity in the governance of the diocese. This remarkable style of diocesan administration generated numerous regional gatherings over several years to discuss and develop Church life. Eventually, this led to the idea of a gathering unprecedented in North America: a council composed of clergy and laity to deliberate a most crucial topic, "How to Expand the Mission," which became the first *sobor's* theme.

Several weeks before the council, Saint Tikhon had received news of his transfer to another see in Russia. As such, he no longer had the authority to preside over the council. However, as he had not yet departed to his new assignment, and his successor, Archbishop Platon [Rozhdestvensky] had not yet arrived in America, Bishop Innocent [Pustynsky] of Alaska, who was the diocese's temporary administrator, invited Saint Tikhon to preside over the very council his vision had conceived.

Along with Saint Tikhon, the key participants in this council included three priests who are now canonized saints: Fathers Alexander Hotovitzky, John Kochur-



Clergy and lay delegates to the historic First All-American Sobor, held in Mayfield, PA in March 1907, pose for a group photograph. The sobor was the first of 27 similar gatherings held during the last century.

ov, and Alexis Toth, along with Father Leonid Turkevich, who decades later would become Metropolitan Leonty. The council recognized it was essential to create a permanent and orderly administrative structure in the diocese in order to fulfill the Church's mission. To enact this, council delegates resolved to proceed with the drafting of a statute. They also realized that the regular convocation of councils was essential to the development of the Church's mission. Ways to enhance the financial infrastructure of the diocese and its parishes also were discussed, and such systematization was deemed indispensable for missionary expansion. In addressing the issue of differences in liturgical practice across the North American Diocese – the diocese embraced faithful and communities of many different ethnic backgrounds – the council's consensus was to follow Saint Tikhon's wise view that these are to be accepted as, in part, a reflection of the various ethnicities of the clergy and faithful and that they do not contravene the essence of the Orthodox faith.

The primary significance of the First All-American *Sobor* was the precedent it set for the future councils of the American Church. In fact, 27 such councils were convened over the last century.

This year also marks significant anniversaries of six other All-American *sobors* and councils.

✓ The Third All-American *Sobor*, convened in Pittsburgh, PA November 7-9, 1922, elected Metropolitan Platon as primate, despite ongoing turmoil resulting largely from the 1917 Russian Revolution.

✓ The Sixth *Sobor* was held in New York, NY October 5-7, 1937 to approve the initiative undertaken by Metropolitan Theophilus to forge ecclesiastical synergy and peace with the Russian Orthodox

Church Outside of Russia [ROCOR], while insisting that the autonomy of the North American Metropolia remain in force. This *sobor* also mandated the establishment of Saint Vladimir's Seminary and Saint Tikhon's Pastoral School, thus ending a 15-year period during which no theological school existed in North America.

✓ At the 13th All-American *Sobor*, held in New York November 14-16, 1967, a formal decision to change the Church's official name to "Orthodox Church in America" was vetoed by the hierarchy, but a straw vote overwhelmingly in favor of the name change clearly showed the council's understanding of the Church's identity and future direction.

✓ A decade later, the Fifth All-American Council after autocephaly met in Montreal, QC, Canada October 25-28, 1977, at which elected Metropolitan Theodosius [Lazor], the Church's first American-born Primate, to succeed the retiring Metropolitan Ireney [Bekish]. This council also introduced the idea of stewardship into the Church's life.

✓ The 10th Council met in Miami, FL July 26-31, 1992. Delegates focused on the theme, "Discerning God's Will: Our Spiritual Life And Ministry," and continued to grapple with issues broached at the Ninth Council – accountability, communication, and Church unity. As a result of its decisions, an administrative summit was held the following year and its deliberations lead to revision of the Orthodox Church in America's Statute.

✓ Delegates to the 13th All-American Council, held in Orlando, FL July 21-26, 2002, elected Metropolitan Herman [Swaiko] to succeed the retiring Metropolitan Theodosius. The Council, having "The Parish Community: Our Life in

Evangelization

"They're baaaack!"

What to do when the visitors return, Part 1

Father Eric Tosi

In the last few issues of *The Orthodox Church*, ways to open our parishes to visitors have been discussed. We've looked at things that are helpful and things that should be avoided.

But what do we do when enquirers express a desire to learn more about Orthodox Christianity – taking the next step in embracing the faith?

Visitors who become serious enquirers are in a delicate position. They've built up the courage to come through the front door. They've attended some services. They've initiated relationships with people in the parish, and especially the priest. They've discovered something intriguing about what they have seen and heard. Now what?

What we *don't* want to do is overwhelm them – by piling a dozen books on them, by insisting that they attend every service and fast strictly, or by offering a detailed commentary on complicated doctrines for which they may have little if no foundation to understand, much less embrace. Simply stated, enquirers are not yet ready for such things. They simply have questions, want answers, and open themselves to learning more about Orthodox Christianity. And they need to be integrated into the community, step by step, in an effort to demonstrate that Orthodox Christianity is not just an intellectual affair, but a way of life.

Some parishes have had success with enquirers' classes that offer a forum to obtain simple answers to basic questions. Such classes are generally successful because they involve others – there's safety in numbers! – and they offer people a venue to identify with others.

Other parishes find that "one on one" meetings between the priest and the enquirer works better. The advantage to this is that it provides an opportunity for the priest and the enquirer to focus on questions that are often very specific and may

not be "general" enough for a group.

Either approach – or a combination of the two – is fine, provided that the enquirer is offered an opportunity to pursue his or her journey at his or her own pace. They real key, however, is personal contact: the inquirer needs to sense a connection between himself or herself and the parish community.

There are ten things that are essential to an effective enquirers' class and one-on-one meetings. In this issue, we'll take a look at the first five.

1 Offer a simple introduction to the faith. It's not necessary to survey the entire history and theology of the Church, the life of every saint, and the finer points of liturgical worship in one – or even a dozen – sessions. Instead, offer a basic initial introduction to the faith as outlined in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, and then build on these points in subsequent sessions. Some enquirers already may have read a number of books on the faith. They're bound to need clarification as they attempt to align what they've read with what they've experienced in the parish. Help them to see that the parish – and every parish – is a manifestation of what they have read.

2 Get to know your enquirers. Listen to them, to their stories, to their hopes and aspirations, and to their expectations. Such stories often are filled with incredible accounts of how they discovered the Church and what lead them to explore it further. Show a genuine interest in them as individuals, and adjust the way you explain things to them in terms they can understand.

3 Avoid "issues." There are those who explore Orthodoxy, not out of a quest for truth, but in reaction to something else – problems in their former faith tradition, difficulties at home, and so on – or because they are attracted to the externals. Sometimes they unintentionally want to bring their "issues" with them, or they are looking for someone to "condemn" whatever it is they are facing. Embracing Orthodoxy, however, must never involve "running away" from something; rather, it involves a "running to" Christ, to His truth, and to the new life He offers – period. For enquirers who fit this profile, it's crucial to redirect their search into a positive direction, giving them an opportunity to move forward instead of being mired in the past.

4 Be honest. Speak with conviction and sincerity. If you don't know the answer to a question, admit it, offer to research it, and deliver the answer during the next meeting. Clearly present what the Church *is*, not what it *isn't* or what it is against. When confronted with questions on controversial topics, frame the answers in terms the enquirer understands while simply and clearly stating the Church's position. Teach the faith, don't argue about it.

5 Get them involved. It's important for enquirers to feel that they have found a home. Don't overload them: "Now that you seem to be interested in Orthodoxy, we hope you'll join the choir and the social group and later consider teaching Church school – and, by the way, do you cook? We're always looking for help at the picnic." Rather, introduce them to others who have similar interests, backgrounds, occupations, and life-styles, thereby assuring them that they are not on a journey by themselves. Encourage others to share their faith "stories" as well. ■

Fr. Eric Tosi is chairman of the OCA Department of Evangelization.

Visit the Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards link at www.oca.org to learn how *you* and *your parish* can support – and *expand* – the work of the OCA's departments!





New life! Bishop Seraphim visits St. John the Divine parish in September 2006.

MISSION possible!

Parish experiences a “wholly resurrection!”

WINDSOR, ON, CANADA – When one hears of a “mission parish,” one generally envisions a small group of people with no church building who are attempting to plant a community, often in an area with little or no Orthodox Christian presence. But the experience of the faithful of Saint John the Divine parish here has been unique – to say the least!

Established in 1914, the parish’s membership dwindled over the years, especially after the death of its long-time pastor, the Very Rev. Lukian Steciuk, in 1976. “Supply” priests from Detroit and Toronto served the parish for years, albeit infrequently. Eventually, the parish’s handsome and historic church building, on most days, stood empty.

And then, a few years ago, a group of Father Lukian’s family members – currently four generations strong – led the challenge to bring life back to the parish and to make it a beacon of Orthodoxy in the Windsor area. Reader Michael Boyer initiated weekly Typika services and managed to organize volunteer repair and renovation of the church and hall. Educational programs for children and adults were introduced, as were a number of neighborhood outreach ministries.

In September 2006, His Grace, Bishop Seraphim [now Archbishop] of Ottawa and the Very Rev. Dennis Pihach, diocesan chancellor, visited the parish, marvelled at the renovation of the parish plant, and discussed plans for the parish’s full resurrection. During the visit, the first baptism and conversion of the parish’s “new era” were celebrated, and Reader Michael was ordained to the order of subdeacon.

On January 1, 2007, Bishop Seraphim once again visited the parish to ordain Deacon Constantine Katsilas, who had been leading Typika services for some time, to the holy priesthood. The appointment of Father Constantine as rector of the

parish brought to an end complications for Detroit area clergy crossing the border and long drives for Toronto area clergy.

“Many people have been asking just how we are organizing ourselves to help bring this church back to active life,” said Subdeacon Michael. “It is simple: we consider ourselves a ‘mission group’ of dedicated and energetic Orthodox Christians who feel that there is an excellent opportunity for growth in the teachings of our faith, and want to spread the love and compassion of God’s will through prayer and celebration.”

To accomplish their goals, the faithful drafted an action plan, and they are working hard to fulfill their goals.

“We are looking for people to join our core group to help develop our little church into something absolutely exciting and strong.”

The faithful also maximize use of the internet in their reorganization and growth efforts, and the parish web site – <http://stjohnwindsor.org> – offers announcements of plans and activities, prayer lists, requests for volunteer help, updates on ministries and the renovation of the church and hall, reports of successful celebrations and events, and other announcements.

“We’re continually exploring how to get the word out, specifically using technology to better reach the Orthodox ‘lost sheep’ and to evangelize the neighborhood,” said Subdeacon Michael. “Our e-newsletter campaign has been a tremendous success, and with the combination of several media avenues, we hope to continue to experience growth.”

Reaching out to the neighborhood is a high priority for the revitalized parish. Some community events, including means, seminars, and support groups, are in the planning stages, while the faithful have been working with The Drouillard Place, a neighborhood outreach agency, and have met with the local directory of Windsor’s Community Centre.

With a newly renovated facility, a newly appointed pastor, and a renewed missionary spirit, the faithful of Saint John the Divine parish anticipate not only being Windsor’s oldest Orthodox parish, but also its newest! ■

Windsor’s oldest – and newest – parish!



Adoptions

From Russia with love

After three years, Pasha has been adopted!

Arlene Kallaur

In June 2004, an announcement was posted on the web site of the Orthodox Church in America seeking adoptive parents for a friendly little Russian orphan, Pavel Kurov, affectionately known as "Pasha."

Abandoned at the age of two years and three months at the Ryazan Baby Home in central Russia, Pasha suffered from a rare neurological condition – *sacral agenesis* – that affected his lower spine and legs. As a result of his condition, his future in the Russian orphanage system was, at best, bleak. Had he been left in the system, he undoubtedly would have been locked away in a psycho-neurological clinic, in which his mobility would have most likely deteriorated.

After a persistent two and a half year search for just the right adoptive couple, mounds of complex and demanding paper

work, and a series of starts and stops, Pasha finally was adopted and arrived at his new home in the US at the end of January.

Now the son of David and Dawn Heatwole, members of Saint Catherine Mission, Hagerstown, MD, Pasha just celebrated his eighth birthday surrounded by his new family and friends.

"Although it was a very long wait, filled with blood, sweat and tears, looking back we are reminded that ultimately God is in control – and *His* timing is perfect. This became very visible to us once we came home with Pasha," remarked David, Pasha's new dad. "Pasha seems very happy, although he's still very shy. He is adapting well overall, and we are excited to see his progress. We are amazed at how creative he is. His first big project was to make a Batman outfit out of paper, even the cape."

"He has really taken to David!" Dawn adds. "He loves his Papa! It's so cool to watch them together! And he's picking up

Despite a rare neurological condition, Pasha is right at home with his new dad and mom, David and Dawn Heatwole, who are members of St. Catherine Mission, Hagerstown, MD.



Orthodox Christian Adoption Referral Service

With the blessing of SCOBA, the **Orthodox Christian Adoption Referral Service [OCARS]** was established in 1982 to offer **alternatives to abortion** for mothers faced with unplanned pregnancies and to **assist families** wishing to adopt. **Matushka Marie Meyendorff** was its founding president.

OCARS became an OCA program in 1992, with **Mrs. Arlene Kallaur** succeeding the retiring president as director. Since that time, OCARS has been active in the **placement of 60 children from Russia** – many of whom, like Pasha, would have faced bleak futures.

OCARS is not a licensed adoption agency. Rather, it partners with The Cradle, Evanston, IL, while guiding and offering encouragement to families as they go through the adoption process.

For more info contact Mrs. Kallaur at **arlene@oca.org; 516/922-0550, ext. 126.**

a little English and learning the alphabet. He's smart! I wish you all could meet him!."

Besides making Pasha feel comfortable in his new home and enrolling him in school, medical tests to determine the extent of his disability and appropriate treatment top the Heatwoles' agenda. Fortunately, Pasha's condition is at the milder end of the spectrum, although his primary need is long-term physiotherapy.

The Heatwoles extend their thanks to the many members of so many parishes who prayed for the successful completion of Pasha's adoption.

Those who would like to help Pasha and his new family and/or become part of a support group for him can e-mail the Heatwoles at **david.heatwole@verizon.net**.

Couples who might consider adopting other children who, because of their disabilities have little chance of being adopted in their homelands, are invited to contact the Orthodox Christian Adoption Referral Service at **arlene@oca.org**. ■

Mrs. Kallaur is director of the OCA's Office of Humanitarian Aid and the Adoption Referral Service.

Youth, young adult, & campus ministry

IN DEPTH

✓ **FOR MORE INFO** on **Spring Break** and the many other programs offered by **Orthodox Christian Fellowship**, visit <http://www.ocf.net/>

www.o.ca.org

Taking a real break

Twelve trips, eight locations, 104 college students, and one focus – *Jesus Christ!*

In late February and March 2007, 104 college students served the poor, orphaned, and needy, taking a “real break” from the “sun and fun” spring breaks college students often choose.

Orthodox Christian Fellowship’s [OCF] “Real Break” program sponsored 12 trips to eight locations, offering college students a chance to engage in life-changing experiences and orient their lives towards Christ.

“Putting faces and personalities to some of Toronto’s homeless has had a big impact on me,” said Joanne, a freshman at the University of Michigan who went on a Real Break to Saint John the Compassionate Mission, Toronto, ON. “Hearing stories, doing a tangible project that improved the mission, and then coming back together as a group and having incredible discussions is like putting the puzzle together of what a true Christian life should be like.”

Other teams served at Guatemala’s Hogar Rafael Ayau Orphanage; Project Mexico and Saint Innocent Orphanage in Tijuana, Mexico; San Francisco’s Raphael House; the Twelve Apostles Monastery in Greece; San Cristóbal Orphanage in El Salvador; and Jackie’s House in the Dominican Republic. Some students joined other volunteers as part of International Orthodox Christian Charities’ “Volunteers in the Gulf,” helping those in the New Orleans area still recovering from Hurricane Katrina.

The majority of participants admit they sign up for Real Break with the intent of serving and giving to others, but the time spent loving their brothers and sisters in Christ has a very different effect than expected. The students receive more than they give – a life transforming experience.

The amazing growth of the program – 620 students have participated since the program was started eight years ago – is a testimony to the fact that college students thirst for outreach opportunities to maintain and deepen their relationship with Christ. ■

New Orleans was a popular Real Break destination.



St. Andrew’s Camp seeks staff members

Saint Andrew’s Camp and Religious Center, Jewell, NY, is now accepting applications for a camp director, counselors, a cook, a registered nurse, and qualified lifeguards for the 2007 summer camping program.

According to the Very Rev. Ken James Stavrevsky, Saint Andrew’s Camp has spiritually nurtured well over 2,000 children of God, both campers and counselors, during its 29-year history.

Situated on the shore of Lake Oneida northeast of Syracuse, NY, the camp has been – and continually strives to be – an unparalleled resource of the Diocese of Washington and New York for youth ministry programs.

The summer camping program is designed and managed to provide children and teens with a six-week camping experience in an Orthodox Christian community. Most campers attend a two-week session. Daily activities include worship services, religious education, nutritious meals and snacks, swimming and water activities, games, sports, arts-and-crafts, and a host of opportunities for fun and fellowship.

Applications for these positions as well as information about the camp are available on the camp web site at www.standrewscamp.com.

Daria York, executive director, welcomes interested applicants to contact her at DariaY@aol.com or 315/383-2686 to discuss ministry opportunities. ■



NorthAmerica



During an historic first meeting of the West Coast's canonical Orthodox Bishops in Los Angeles during Bright Week, the need to increase pan-Orthodox activities was affirmed. Participating in the meeting were [from left] OCA Bishop Benjamin, Antiochian Bishop Joseph, Greek Metropolitan Gerasimos, and Serbian Bishop Maxim.

West Coast's canonical bishops meet for first time, call for more pan-Orthodox activities

At the invitation of His Grace, Bishop Joseph of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, the West Coast's canonical Orthodox bishops held their historic first gathering on Bright Tuesday, April 10, 2007, in Los Angeles, CA.

In addition to Bishop Joseph, His Eminence, Metropolitan Gerasimos of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America; His Grace, Bishop Maxim of the Serbian Orthodox Metropolitanate; and His Grace, Bishop Benjamin of the Orthodox Church in America, attended the gathering. Also in attendance were the deans of the four Los Angeles area cathedrals: The Rev. Michel Najim, Saint Nicholas Antiochian Cathedral; the Very Rev. John Bakas, Saint Sophia Greek Cathedral; the Very Rev. Michael Senyo, Holy Virgin Mary OCA Cathedral; and the Very Rev. Nikola Ceko, Saint Stephen

Serbian Cathedral.

The gathering opened with singing the Paschal troparion and the blessing of food. After lunch, Bishop Joseph welcomed everyone and thanked them for making time to attend this gathering. He reviewed the items on the agenda and offered an opening statement about the importance of expressing the Orthodox Christian faith with one voice. Metropolitan Gerasimos congratulated Bishop Benjamin on his recent election to the vacant See of San Francisco and the West of the OCA.

The hierarchs also discussed a variety of matters, including the need for pan-Orthodox gatherings. They appointed the four deans to draft recommendations for future pan-Orthodox gatherings.

The hierarchs agreed to schedule a second gathering in the summer of 2007, to be hosted by Metropolitan Gerasimos.

OCA clergy featured on internet-based broadcasts

Three priests of the Orthodox Church in America will offer insights into Christian life on upcoming Orthodox Christian Network [OCN] broadcasts, said the Rev. Christopher Metropoulos, OCN founder and executive director.

"These men are powerful teachers of the Orthodox faith, and we at OCN are honored that they have agreed to share their insights on 'The Ark,'" said Father Christopher. "This is the value of this new technology. We now have a powerful way to share the messages and ministry of these men with the whole country."

"The Ark," OCN's new 24-hour, internet-based radio outreach, may be accessed at www.receive.org. OCN's other offerings, including "Come Receive the Light," are available on the same site.

Among the OCA clergy slated to appear regularly on "The Ark" are the Rev. John Behr, newly appointed dean of Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, Crestwood, NY; the Rev. Stephen Freeman, pastor of Saint Anne Church, Oak Ridge, TN; and the Very Rev. Thomas Hopko, dean emeritus of Saint Vladimir's Seminary. Clergy of the Greek and Antiochian Archdioceses, including the Rev. Stanley Harakas, also will be featured on future programs.

OCN, a commissioned agency of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas, is dedicated to finding effective ways to use modern media to raise awareness of the Orthodox faith in the minds of the faithful and the general population. ■

OPPORTUNITIES

■ **Holy Resurrection Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre, PA**, recently opened a search for a **part-time choir director**. Salary and benefits will be based on experience. Qualified candidates are invited to submit resumes and cover letters to the **Very Rev. Joseph Martin, 591 North Main Street, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18705** or to frmartin@epix.net.

NorthAmerica

Education commission on-line forum makes its debut

In honor of its 50th anniversary, the Orthodox Christian Education Commission [OCEC] has established a new on-line forum designed to offer educators an opportunity to share curriculum ideas and lessons, ask questions, solve problems, and network with one another.

"The purpose of this forum is to provide an on-line community for Church school teachers, Orthodox day school teachers, college professors, and anyone interested in Orthodox Christian education," according to Ms. Eleana Silk, OCEC spokesperson. "The forum is hosted by yahoogroups."

Fifty years ago, the first annual conference on Orthodox Christian Education was held with participants from five jurisdictions: Carpatho-Russian, Greek, Russian, Syrian, and Ukrainian. During this conference, the purpose, goals, and function of a new commission were defined.

Shortly thereafter, OCEC began to develop a Church school curriculum for

grades kindergarten through 12. In 1960, OCEC became the first active commission of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas.

In addition to curriculum materials, OCEC published two widely circulated monthly magazines – *Young Life*, for elementary school children, and *On the Up-beat* for teenagers – both of which were discontinued in the 1980s.

"Over the years, many people have made major contributions to the development of Orthodox Christian Education," Ms. Silk said. "However, the contributions of three people that truly stand out are Mrs. Sophie Koulomzin, Dr. Constance Tarasar, and Dr. John Boojamra. It is in honor of their dedicated work that the OCEC takes this next step in the growth of Orthodox Christian education by establishing this on-line forum."

For more information, contact Ms. Silk at 914/961-8313 ext. 365 or esilk@aol.com. ■

IN DEPTH

The Orthodox Christian Education Commission [OCEC] is an agency of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America.

OCEC was established in 1957 by a group of Orthodox theologians and educators as a forum to exchange ideas and to search for solutions to common educational problems. It currently develops and publishes educational resources and offers support to parishes across North America.

OCEC is governed by a board of trustees made up of jurisdictional representatives. Its daily operations are conducted by an executive board composed of a chairman (OCEC's vice-president) and the heads of the commission's departments.

✓ **LOG ON** to OCEC's web site at www.orthodoxed.org for a wealth of curriculum and other resources.

✓ **JOIN OCEC'S on-line forum** by sending an e-mail request to OCEC-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. ■

Detroit colloquium attracts Episcopal, Protestant clergy

One hundred Anglican, Protestant, and Orthodox clergy and laity attended "Faith of Our Fathers: A Colloquium on Orthodox for Anglicans" sponsored by Saint Andrew House Center for Orthodox Christian Studies, Detroit, MI, January 29-30, 2007.

Designed to explain Orthodox Christianity to US Episcopalians and Canadian Anglicans, the colloquium attracted participants from as far away as Bar Harbor, ME; Denver, CO; Lakeland, FL; Toronto, ON, Canada.

Orthodox attendees included four bishops, laypersons, monastics, parish priests, and seminary professors.

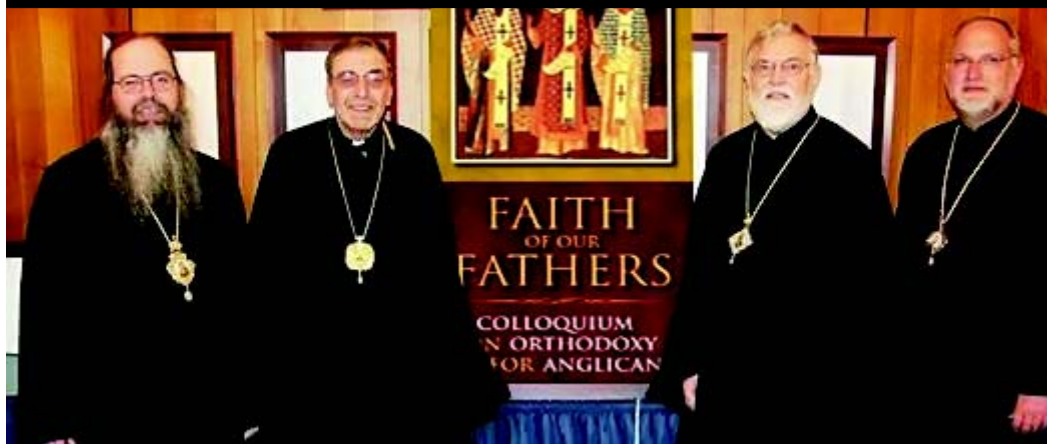
His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate and founder of Saint Andrew House, delivered the keynote address on the historical relationship between the Orthodox Church

and the Anglican Communion, including the involvement of the royal families of Britain and Romania during the past century. Other speakers, a number of whom

had served as Episcopalian or Protestant clergy before their conversions to Orthodoxy, spoke on a variety of topics including theology, liturgy, the Western Rite, culture and tradition, and practical considerations for prospective converts.

Colloquium lectures are available online at www.ancientfaithradio.com and www.orthodoxdetroit.com. ■

Bishops attending the colloquium included [from left] Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia and Eastern PA; Bishop Nikon of Boston, New England, and the Albanian Archdiocese; Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate; and Antiochian Bishop Mark of Toledo.



OISM holds first meeting at Holy Trinity Seminary

Over 60 students from five North American seminaries gathered at Holy Trinity Monastery and Seminary, Jordanville, NY, February 9-11, 2007 for the spring meeting of the Orthodox Inter-Seminary Movement [OISM].

"The event marked the first time in OISM's 40 year history that a meeting was held on the sacred grounds of Holy Trinity Monastery," said Deacon Stephen Vernak, a student at Saint Tikhon's Seminary, South Canaan, PA. "The participants spent three days in spiritual retreat, fellowship, and in conducting business meetings."

His Eminence, Metropolitan Laurus, First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, welcomed the seminarians to the historic meeting.

In addition to participants from Holy Trinity and Saint Tikhon's seminaries, students from Saint Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY; Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Brookline, MA; and Saint Andrew's College, Winnipeg, MB, Canada, also participated in the gathering. ■

Hope from 11

Where and when

The "bigger picture" may or may not be in sight for many involved at the present time. The "healing process" takes a great deal of time and effort. It was rather fascinating to hear the words of a young girl who is now paralyzed from the waist down after being struck in a school shooting in Arkansas. She spoke of "forgiving" the young man who shot her, and that is the source of her present acceptance and peace with her condition. Yet, perhaps many of these families are being sustained precisely by their faith in God, and if Christian, their faith in Christ. If so, may the grace of God in Christ be poured into their broken hearts with abundance!

The Apostle Paul did encourage Christians not to be "as others who have no hope" [1 Thessalonians 4:13]. What a challenge for those directly facing this tragedy! And yet, it is precisely during the Paschal season that our ultimate hope, based upon the reality of the Risen Lord, is most fully expressed. We pray for all of the



Metropolitan Laurus with OISM members.

victims and their families and hope, in turn, that the God Who is not constrained by the "impossible" will work in their hearts in the difficult days, months, and years ahead. ■

Fr. Steven is rector of Christ the Savior/ Holy Spirit Church, Cincinnati, OH

Official from 2

Mary of Egypt Church, Norcross, GA. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman/ February 25, 2007. **MANSOUR, Karl Anthony** was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Bishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada at The Sign of the Theotokos Church, Montreal, QC. He is under the omophorion of Bishop Seraphim and attached to the Archdiocese of Canada/ November 19, 2006.

SEAMORE, Deacon Gabriel was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia and Eastern PA on behalf of Metropolitan Herman at St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery Church, South Canaan, PA. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman/ March 17, 2007.

■ ASSIGNMENTS

ACTIVE, The Rev. Sergie is appointed dean of the Kenai Deanery. All other duties remain the same/ March 8, 2007.

ANDREJUK, The Rev. Daniel is released from duties as dean of the Kenai Deanery. He remains rector of St. Tikhon of Moscow Mission, Anchorage, AK/ March 8, 2007.

HECKMAN, The V. Rev. Stephan is released from duties at St. Peter the Aleut Church, Mountain Village, AK. All other duties remain the same/ March 8, 2007.

JARMUS, The Rev. Andrew is released from duties at Holy Trinity Sobor, Winnipeg, MB, and appointed priest-in-charge of the Mission of the Theotokos of the Life Giving Spring, Winnipeg, MB/ March 1, 2007.

KONDRATICK, Protopresbyter Robert S., who was rector of Holy Spirit Church, Venice, FL, is returned to Stavropegial status/ March 22, 2007.

KONTOS, Deacon Philip is attached to St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery Church, South Canaan, PA/ February 25, 2007.

MAHAFFEY, The V. Rev. David is released from duties at St. Michael Church, Old Forge, PA and assigned acting rector of Holy Trinity Church, Pottstown, PA/ January 14, 2007.

[MAJOROS], Priestmonk Luke, while remaining a member of the Communauté Monastique de St. Seraphim de Sarov, Rawdon, QC, and priest-in-charge of

St. Gregory of Nyssa Mission, Kingston, ON, is assigned to the Hermitage of St. Anthony the Great, Westport, ON/ September 1, 2006.

MANSOUR, Deacon Karl Anthony is attached to The Sign of the Theotokos Church, Montreal, QC/ November 19, 2006.

NICK, The V. Rev. Victor is released from duties at the Orthodox Community, St. Michael, AK, and assigned rector of St. Peter the Aleut Church, Mountain Village, AK/ March 8, 2007.

PHILLIPS, The Rev. Christopher is released from duties at Christ the Good Shepherd Mission, St. Louis, MO, and appointed rector of St. Michael the Archangel Church, St. Louis, MO/ March 2, 2007.

POWELL, The Rev. Barnabas, who was acting rector, is appointed rector of St. Michael Church, Pueblo, CO/ March 28, 2007.

POWOROZNIK, The Rev. Ronald Victor Paul, who was priest-in-charge, is appointed rector of St. Athanasius Mission, Sherwood Park, AB/ April 1, 2007.

SEAMORE, The Rev. Gabriel is attached to St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery Church, South Canaan, PA/ March 17, 2007.

■ DEPOSED

O'BRIEN, The Rev. R. Joseph, who was on a leave of absence, is deposed from all sacred functions of the Holy Priesthood and his name is removed from the ranks of clergy of the Orthodox Church in America, by the Holy Synod of Bishops/ March 22, 2007.

■ PARISHES

DIOCESE OF ALASKA/ Deanery change. St. Tikhon of Moscow Mission, Anchorage, AK, is transferred from the Kenai Deanery to the Anchorage Deanery/ March 8, 2007.

ARCHDIOCESE OF CANADA/ Location changes. Holy Apostle Barnabas Mission, Comox, BC, is now listed as Comox Valley, BC, while St. Herman on Alaska Church, Surrey [Langley], BC, is now listed as Langley, BC/ March 1, 2007.

ARCHDIOCESE OF CANADA/ New name and status. All Saints of North America Mission Station, Winnipeg, MB, is granted mission status and is known as the Theotokos of the Life Giving Spring Mission. The Rev. Andrew Jarmus, priest-in-charge; 59 Purdue Bay, Winnipeg, MB R3T 3C6/ February 1, 2007.

DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST/ Parishes merged. Christ the Good Shepherd Mission, St. Louis, MO, and St. Michael the Archangel Church, St. Louis, MO, are merged and known as St. Michael the Archangel Church. The Rev. Christopher Phillips, rector/ January 28, 2007. ■

WorldBriefs

INDONESIA

Muslim extremists target Orthodox Christians in Indonesia

Orthodox Christians have joined the list of those being attacked by Muslim extremists in Indonesia, according to a March 19, 2007 statement issued by the Ecumenical Patriarchate's Metropolitanate of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia.

According to the statement, the Rev. Methodios Sri Gunarjo, his family, and other Orthodox Christians were terrorized and threatened in mid-March. While there were no reports of physical harm, the statement states that verbal, psychological and other forms of abuse continue.

"At one point, a knife was put to the throat of Father Methodios, as his attackers demanded that he close the churches in the Boyolali area of Central Java," the statement reported. "It should be noted that there is a thriving ministry in this area."

The statement notes that a large group of Muslim protestors intent on purging the region's Christians had been gathering in the area of Father Methodios' church, threatening him and the faithful of his community.

"The attackers are not from Boyalali, as local Christians and Muslims have joined

in showing their support for Father Methodios, who is noted for the love and compassion he has shown all people in the area," the statement noted, adding that Father Methodios and his family had been forced to leave their home as their lives had been threatened.

As of the date on which the statement was issued, His Eminence, Metropolitan Nikitas of Hong Kong had been unable to contact Father Methodios directly, although he remained in constant communication with other Orthodox Christian clergy in Indonesia.

Attacks against Christians of all traditions have been increasingly frequent in a number of Southeast Asian nations with Muslim majorities in recent years. The statement reveals that Orthodox Christianity, which is not associated with colonization in past centuries, has not been immune to threats and attacks.

Since its establishment in the mid-1990s, the Metropolitanate has been increasingly active in an unprecedented Orthodox missionary outreach throughout the region. ■

Source: OCMC

IN DEPTH

A Muslim by birth, **Fr. Methodios Sri Gunarjo** converted to Protestantism in the early 1980s and attended the Indonesian Evangelical Theological Seminary. Several years later, he settled in Grasak, a small town in Central Java, Indonesia. Having become disillusioned with evangelical Protestantism, he and several others were baptized as Orthodox Christians in 1990. Two years later, he was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood and established an Orthodox Christian community in Grasak. Metropolitan Dionysios of New Zealand sent money to build a church there, but the site was abandoned in 1994 when a group of Muslims forbade the faithful to use it because they did not have the proper government permits.

Today, the Grasak community numbers over 50 faithful, although tensions with the local Muslim population remain unresolved.

✓ **READ MORE** about Fr. Methodios and his community at www.cs.ust.hk/faculty_dimitris/metro/Indonesia_Cyril.html. To read the fascinating history of Orthodox Christianity in Indonesia, log on to www.cs.ust.hk/faculty_dimitris/metro/Indonesia_Cyril.html.

www.o.c.a.org

IOCC celebrates 15th anniversary

International Orthodox Christian Charities [IOCC], the humanitarian aid organization for all North American Orthodox Christians, celebrated its 15th anniversary on March 10, 2007.

Since its establishment, IOCC has grown to include eleven field offices in Eastern Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa and has delivered over \$250 million in emergency aid and development programs in 33 countries.

Pictured to the left with His Beatitude, Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem, is a group of IOCC supporters and staff who toured Jerusalem and the West Bank last February to assess the progress of IOCC's Holy Land programs.

Most recently, IOCC launched an initiative to repair and rebuild nine Christian schools in the Bethlehem, Ramallah, and Jerusalem areas.



Statement from 15

Synod issues statement

conducting the investigation), to receive the presentation of her preliminary findings. The body of evidence that was presented was detailed and quite frankly, shocking. The confirmed instances of the abuse of Church trust were determined to be centered on one person, the former Chancellor of the Church.

“At its next meeting, the Holy Synod received a detailed summary of the Proskauer and Lambrides investigative work, and concluded that a joint meeting of the Holy Synod and the Metropolitan Council would be appropriate, given the nature and scope of the breakdown of the financial systems. On December 14, 2006, Ms. Gold and Mr. Steve Lamos (named partner of the Lambrides firm), appeared before us to present and answer questions from the Joint Session. At its conclusion, a Special Investigative Committee was appointed to complete the report on the investigation and to provide its recommendations to the Metropolitan Council. On March 13, 2007, the Metropolitan Council heard the result of the considerable amount of work done by the Committee in compiling the outcome of the investigative work done by the respective firms, and received their detailed written report. The report presented reliable and verifiable evidence to support the allegations leveled against the former chancellor of the OCA. The Metropolitan Council voted unanimously to recommend the ‘immediate suspension of Father Kondratich by his bishop.’ The complete report was submitted to the Holy Synod, and was presented by Archbishop Job and Bishop Benjamin.

“In a letter of March 18, 2007, Archbishop Dmitri forwarded a request by Protobishop Kondratich to appear before the Holy Synod to ‘... answer any questions we might have related to the current situation in the Orthodox Church In America.’ After a consultation among the bishops, we agreed to permit him to appear as requested. On March 20, 2007, Father Kondratich appeared before us, presented his statement, and answered questions relating to his time as Chancellor. After substantial deliberation in executive session, we concurred that the explanations provided were neither credible nor persuasive, and

found ourselves in agreement with the recommendation of the Metropolitan Council.

“At the written request of His Eminence, Archbishop Dmitri, and following consultation with the members of the Holy Synod, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman agreed to rescind the transfer of Protobishop Robert S. Kondratich to the Diocese of the South. Further actions appropriate under the circumstances will be initiated by Father Kondratich’s Bishop, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman.

“We know that strife and enmity have entered our lives during the course of this past year. Much has been said or written during this time that has added temptation, pain and suffering to so many. During these final days of Great Lent, we ask you to join us as your Archpastors. Let us stand together before our God of mercy, and beg His forgiveness for our sins, known and unknown. Let us re-enter His presence and the joy of His love and choose life, by following Him as the true and living way, our Companion, Guide, and Guardian during our earthly journey. As we celebrate Pascha and sing ‘Let God Arise,’ may we accept the challenges contained in the text as we enter ever so deeply into the joy of His Kingdom.”

The statement was signed by Metropolitan Herman, chairman; Archbishop Kyrill of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania and the Bulgarian Archdiocese; Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas and the South; Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate; Archbishop Job of Chicago and the Midwest; Archbishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada, secretary; Bishop Nikon of Boston, New England, and the Albanian Archdiocese; Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania; Bishop Benjamin, Bishop-elect of San Francisco and the West; Bishop Alejo of Mexico City, Auxiliary to the Metropolitan; and Bishop Irineu of Dearborn Heights, Auxiliary to the Romanian Episcopate. ■

Polls from 9

What the polls say

more. Top items included religious greeting cards, religious non-fiction, and religious music, while religious-themed clothing and bumper stickers were on the

bottom of the list. Curiously, more religious jewelry was purchased than religious literature.

✓ A study of 224 United Church of Christ clergy found conflict with lay leaders or other staff and feelings of loneliness or isolation were the top stress producers.

✓ Race, gender, and personal income has little impact on Church growth. What does? A study of 523 congregations of the Presbyterian Church (USA) indicated that parishes that empower lay leaders were more than twice as likely to grow as churches that did not share authority. Other factors associated with growth included a congregation’s willingness to welcome and incorporate new members and the ability to minister to young people. Churches with a high percentage of older worshippers were the least likely to attract new members.

✓ Despite various scandals and a significant decline in the number of clergy in recent years, a national survey of Catholics found that parishioners generally were satisfied with life in their parishes. A whopping 94 percent of several hundred parishioners surveyed said their pastor or pastoral administrator is well liked, while three-fourths said their parish is close to ideal or ideal. However, respondents noted that adult education and outreach ministry to the community could use improvement. ■

Conquerer from 10

The Conquerer of death

what others say or do, regardless of who they are, we must follow Christ – not only in His time of joy, triumph, and glory, when the crowds follow, but in His humiliation, Cross, and death. The cross He offers to each one of us, that we too may share in His Resurrection. And we are free to accept or reject His offer. But if we accept it, we must accept *all* of it, for without the cross, there is no Resurrection. Seeing Christ go to Jerusalem, then, is our greatest victory. For this, the Church cries out, “Hosanna in the highest!” not to an earthly conquerer, but to the Conquerer of death!

Christ is risen! Indeed, He is risen! ■

Priestmonk Calinic [Berger] is pastor of Holy Cross Church, Hermitage, PA.

Communities

Send photos and news to TOC Communities, One Wheaton Center 912, Wheaton, IL 60187 or to info@oca.org.



New converts welcomed at Philadelphia cathedral

PHILADELPHIA, PA – Five individuals were received into the Orthodox Faith at St. Stephen Cathedral here on Lazarus Saturday. Pictured with Fr. Victor Gorodenchuk, rector, are [from left] Katie Ren, sponsor, and Amanda Gum; Sigurd, Madelyn, Sadie, and Julia Mandel and their sponsors Connie Skvir and Joe Stearne. ■

The Masons celebrate 45 years!

PORT ST. LUCIE, FL – Fr. James and Patricia Marie Mason were honored by family and friends recently on the occasion of their 45th wedding anniversary.

Attached in retirement to St. James Mission, Port St. Lucie, FL, Fr. James served parishes along the east coast for many years. ■



Archives from 21

A century of councils

Christ" as its theme, devoted itself to study and discussion of various aspects of parish life. Delegates affirmed the principle of parish property as being "held in trust" for the local diocese and decided to proceed with "fair share" funding.

A historical continuity can be seen in these *sobors* and councils. The First *Sobor* set the precedent for these gatherings. May future All-American Councils be inspired by the Holy Spirit and continue to meaningfully shape the historical destiny of the Orthodox Church in America. ■

Alexis Liberovsky is the archivist of the Orthodox Church in America. **For more info** on the All-American sobors and councils, log on to www.oca.org/DOCindex-councils.asp?SID=12.

Eagle scout constructs bell tower in Belle Vernon, PA

BELLE VERNON, PA –

Thanks to the ambitious efforts of a high school senior in pursuit of the rank of Eagle Scout, Fr. John Kluchko and the faithful of Holy Resurrection Church here now enjoy a handsome addition to their parish property. Gary Leavor, a member of the parish, undertook planning and construction of a new bell tower in partial pursuit of the coveted award. Built in traditional style, the bell tower is surmounted by a gold cupola and cross.

Fr. John recently blessed the tower, offering the gratitude of the entire parish to Gary for his amazing efforts and accomplishments "on behalf of all and for all" in his parish! ■



Princeton OCF visits monastery

ELLWOOD CITY, PA – Twelve members and friends of the Princeton University Orthodox Christian Fellowship [OCF] made a 3 day retreat at the Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration here January 27–30, 2007.

Accompanying the students was Protodeacon Michael Sochka, OCF advisor.

The students attended all the liturgical services, including those for the Feast of the Three Holy Hierarchs and helped with the readings and chanting. Three talks – on the life of the monastery's foundress, Mother Alexandra; on monastic life; and on the personal prayer life – were given by the nuns.

Most of the students were from Romania and Russia, with one students from Canada and another from the US. ■



Communities

Seattle scout recognized for saving brothers' lives

SEATTLE WA – The National Court of Honor of the Boy Scouts of America recently awarded a Seattle area Orthodox Christian scout with the BSA's highest honor for heroism.

Zachary LaGasse, 13, was awarded the Honor Medal for Saving Life during a special court of honor at St. Spiridon Cathedral here, where he is a member.

On the night of January 6, 2005, Zachary was at home, baby-sitting his three younger brothers. He noticed that one of his brothers was missing, discovering the five-year-old in their parents' bedroom, in which a fire had broken out. Smoke soon cut off the boys' only escape route.

Quickly taking charge, Zachary got the dazed youngster away from the flames, then returned to his own bedroom to rescue his other brothers, ages seven months and six years, leading them past the fire as smoke was beginning to fill the hallway. Reaching the downstairs, the boys fled to a nearby apartment and called 911. Although adjacent apartments were damaged by the flames, quick reporting of the fire prevented any injury or loss of life.

Zachary is a member of Troop 67, sponsored by St. Spiridon Cathedral in cooperation with other local Orthodox parishes. Fr. Michael Johnson, a Greek Orthodox priest who serves as the troop's unit commissioner, described Zachary's award as "scouting's equivalent to the Congressional Medal of Honor." He added, "I've been involved in scouting for over 40 years, and I have never known anyone who received the Honor Medal. This award is far rarer than Eagle Scout."

George Boulukos of New York, chairman of the Eastern Orthodox Committee on Scouting, agreed. "I do not personally know of any other Orthodox Scout who has been so honored," he said.

In addition to Fr. Michael, fellow troop members, and



Zachary LaGasse with Fr. Vadim Pogrebniak [left], family, and Seattle area scouting officials during rare court of honor at St. Spiridon Cathedral.

Grateful brothers Holding his youngest brother, just seven months old at the time of the fire, Zachary poses with grateful siblings! Zachary credits lessons he learned in scouting with saving their lives during a fire that broke out in their family home.



friends, others attending the award presentation included Fr. Vadim Pogrebniak, dean of St. Spiridon Cathedral; Patrick Hall, Troop 67 scoutmaster; George Mulvey, Boy Scout district commissioner; Jeff Nelson, assistant director of field services of the Chief Seattle Council of the Boy Scouts; and Zachary's parents, Bourke and Julie Langley. Two local TV stations sent camera crews to cover the event. ■