

Spring, 2005

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vision

the same yesterday, today and tomorrow



Around the Diocese

by His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN of Berkeley
(See accompanying photos on pages 3-5)

As most of you already know, my travels have taken me throughout the Diocese of the West since my consecration a little over a year ago. And, I believe, I have visited almost every parish and institution of the Diocese, with one or two exceptions, since my arrival from Alaska in January of 2004. During that time, I have had the rare opportunity of not only meeting the clergy and faithful of our Diocese, but of seeing each of them and their various communities “in context”, as part of and describe every mission in our Diocese, but I might mention one or two.

One of the great joys of my episcopate has been the opportunity to spend time in our monasteries. The Diocese of the West has four monasteries, three in California and one in Colorado. The monasteries not only make it possible for men and women to live lives of repentance, but enable the faithful and clergy of our Diocese to find spiritual respite and restoration in the liturgical cycle of prayer, quiet and experience of the superiors. I am especially grateful to God for the great and awesome blessing of tonsuring several men and women into the ranks of the monastics. And, the fact our communities are growing and forced to find more room and additional property to accommodate a growing number of men and women who seek the angelic life of monasticism, shows a very healthy level of maturity in our diocesan life. We should keep our monastic communities in our prayers and ask our loving God to continue blessing them and increasing their numbers.

Our monastic communities are growing. The Saint Barbara Monastery in Santa Barbara, CA has recently purchased a second house and acquired a full time chaplain. And the brotherhood of the St. John of Shanghai Monastery, currently in Point Reyes, CA has been in search of new and larger quarters for more than a year now. They have outgrown their accommodations.

Another sign of God’s grace and blessing is the growing number of missions in our Diocese. New missions have been established in Kona, Hawaii and Tempe, Arizona. Almost one half of the parishes of our Diocese are missions! Our Missionary Deanery is unique in the Orthodox Church in America, a non-geographical deanery dedicated to the setting up and nurturing of missions. It is impossible in this article to enumerate



Driving across an almost lunar landscape from Boulder City, NV for a little more than two hours, one finds the tiny mission of St. Peter the Aleut in Lake Havasu City, Arizona. A small, but tenacious, group of Orthodox Christians from a variety of backgrounds have managed to build a little Orthodox temple on a hill overlooking Lake Havasu. While they have not yet grown to the point where they can support their own full-time priest, one cannot help but be impressed by their tenacity. It is my sincere hope they will be able to have a regular priest living in their community within a year.

The St. Mary Magdalene Mission of Merced, California, was founded one year before the Lake Havasu City mission in 1986. Having had several visiting missionary clergy, the mission was assigned a resident pastor, Priest David Thatcher, several years ago. With a very generous gift, the mission was able to purchase a tract of undeveloped land and broke ground in September of last year to build a new temple. The construction of a new University of California campus nearby, means the St. Mary Magdalene parish will be well positioned for campus ministry and very visible as faculty and students travel to and from the new campus.

One other development is being felt in many places within our diocese. The arrival of new immigrants from the former Soviet Union has created the need for a different kind of missionary activity. San Francisco has the largest Russian population outside of Russia in the world. Los Angeles, Seattle, and even Las Vegas are seeing a substantial increase in Russian-speaking parishioners. In places as unlikely as Montana, Russian speakers are turning to us to meet their spiritual needs.

(Continued on page 18)

Operational Principles: Christ in our Midst @ Raphael House

Have you ever gone into a bank or a real estate agency or even a fast food restaurant and seen the company's statement of values hanging on the wall? You read them and think, "Oh, that sounds nice," but you can't remember them fifteen seconds later. Then you look at the young fellow behind the counter and you suspect maybe he can't remember them either. Maybe they aren't worth remembering. Maybe they don't really say anything.

And then there's the other extreme. You apply for a job. You get hired. You sign a piece of paper that says you read the employee manual and you understand it completely. It may be good and necessary information, but it has its limits. It won't tell you anything about thriving in your job, or even how to minimally cover the basics of what is expected of you. For all of our advancements in the printed word, most of our essential knowledge about day to day living is gained through oral tradition.

The same is true in our families. We learn values, attitudes and "second nature" behaviors through oral transmission (at the dinner table), and only secondarily from signs on the refrigerator. When I was young, oral tradition was heralded by phrases such as "if I've told you once, I've told you a thousand times..."

And that's how we learn at work. We see how our co-workers really carry out their duties and we listen to how they talk. Then, assuming we like our job and want to keep it, we function according to expectations.

To help our new employees and volunteers at Raphael House in this organic process of learning, a few years ago I wrote down eight key assumptions – phrases and ideas that describe our outlook. This is not a systematic presentation of programs or processes, but an attempt to articulate underlying principles that help Raphael House staff members and volunteers to stay alive, idealistic and hopeful as we serve at-risk families.

Operational Principles of Raphael House

(1) Beauty and Order: Everything at Raphael House should reflect beauty and order.

I remind donors, staff and volunteers that the reason Raphael House can receive families in crisis is that we are not in a state of crisis. Daily, healthy, safe, predictable patterns for children are the first step towards helping children behave well and overcome the feeling of being homeless.

Parents also benefit from an orderly, peaceful, attractive environment; they can begin to create a new plan, rather than simply reacting to the chaos of trauma.

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(2) God heals: Staff members act on the belief that healing occurs in peoples' lives during their stay at Raphael House when we don't get in the way through judgment, anger or fear.

The name "Raphael" was originally chosen because our Archangel's name in Hebrew means "God has healed." While this may be the most idealistic and intangible of principles when it comes to job performance, I find that people who really believe this can persevere in service work for many years, focusing on ways to improve and heal. Conversely, staff members who primarily react to problems do not have the same resiliency as time goes on.

(3) Neighborly Relationship (a.k.a. The Golden Rule): We treat residents the way we would want to be treated if we were in crisis and in need of help.

All material help is given in the context of neighborly relationship. We want to have the same standard of courtesy and consideration for a new family as we would give to our most major donor.

Over the years we've had discussions about how neighborly we ought to be, if by "neighborly" you were to mean "friendly". Real neighborliness requires respect for privacy, too. It's the "mending wall," to use Robert Frost's words, of agreed upon boundaries. Good manners, for example, often reflect respect for boundaries, allowing people to be in close proximity to one another while preserving a sense of order, space, and safety.

As a matter of fact, passable manners – social skills – are an essential part of social mobility. We are practicing at Raphael House the skills that everyone needs in the world. I emphasize the word "practice" because it is a work in progress.

Every job at Raphael House involves relationship. We recognize that impersonal interactions are sometimes desirable in the world at large. Paying for gas at the pump is a commercial example. There are very legitimate services provided by non-profit and governmental agencies that fall into this category of impersonal efficiency (social security checks, tax refunds, restraining orders). Our contribution is to help parents navigate a sometimes complicated world. So, even our approach to referral services is to help families feel connected, rather than isolated.

(4) Virtue and Responsibility: In our services for families, we operate adopt traditional Judeo-Christian virtues. We don't require families to adapt our religious faith or practices. But we do require staff to be proactive in the presentation of virtue and responsibility in daily life. Staff may not encourage abortion, premarital sex, defrauding landlords, or lying in order to receive benefits, jobs, or entry into housing. Our operational principle is to help families find strategies to negotiate the world that are honest and responsible.

(5) Entrepreneurial spirit: We are entrepreneurs not social workers. We are always looking for ways to improve on what we do, getting the most out of what we are given.

(6) Children must grow as children: All of our children's programs are aimed at nourishing the developing child (rather than on premature adaptation to adulthood).

(7) We tell our story: We keep track of what we do and we communicate it. In every department (including the kitchen) we are involved in showing what we do to the public. Through statistics, case histories, newsletters, staff meetings, internships, volunteer trainings, inter-agency collaborations, tours, and certainly in fundraising – our agency's continued existence depends on our ability to tell our story.

(8) God blesses us to grow: In accordance with our Christian foundation, we must grow. God brings us opportunities and we feel a deep and divine mandate to do what is in our power to help the families we serve.

The more wisely and aggressively we do this, the more God will grant an increase. Even in times of massive economic recession (when our actual income may drop) we expect God to increase our ability to help.

Sometimes, after a hard budget meeting in which we see insurance and utility costs spiraling out of control and capital improvements depreciating before our eyes, I pull out these eight points and think to myself, "Wow, what refreshing naïveté! Did I really used to think that?" And the answer is, yes I did. I believed it as recently as this morning when I got out of bed and I'll believe it again by the time I go to sleep tonight.

While all ministries are fragile works that change over time, there is something being built here – in those we serve and those who do the serving – that outlasts any of my concerns about bills, bricks and mortar. In the midst of change, we experience Christ and His healing in our midst – the same, yesterday, today and forever.

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Visits by
Bp. BENJAMIN



St. Seraphim's, Santa Rosa, CA



Our Lady of Kazan Skete, Santa Rosa, CA



St. Peter the Aleut Mission, Lake Havasu City, AZ

(Bp. BEN visits, cont'd. from page 3)



Kona Mission, Kona, HI



Monastery of St. John, Pt. Reyes, CA



Raphael House, San Francisco, CA



St. Innocent Mission, Livermore, CA

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Point Reyes Station, California 94956
Phone (415) 663-1705
office@monasteryofstjohn.org
www.monasteryofstjohn.org



St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, Billings, MT



Portland, OR area parishes, (St. Nicholas' shown)



Helena Mission, Helena, MT



St. Gabriel the Archangel, Ashland, OR



St. Anthony the Great Orthodox Mission

Please note: A page has been added to our diocesan website that will serve as a photo diary of Bp. BENJAMIN's travels throughout the diocese. Go to the home page (ocadow.org) and click the link, "Hierarchical Visits," in the left margin.

His Grace's schedule, beginning with Pascha, is as follows:

- Pascha, Holy Transfiguration Cathedral, Los Angeles, CA
- May 6th, Life Giving Spring Retreat Center, Boulder, NV
- May 7th & 8th, Berkeley, CA
- May 8th & 9th, Saratoga, CA
- May 14th & 15th, W. Sacramento, CA
- May 21st & 22nd, San Anselmo, CA
- May 26th, Diocesan Council, Anza, CA
- May 28th-30th, St. Tikhon's Monastery
- June 4th & 5th, Sacramento, CA
- June 8th & 9th, Olympia, WA
- June 10th-12th, St. Spiridon's, Seattle, WA
- June 18th & 19th, St. Paul's, Las Vegas, NV
- June 21st & 22nd, Dean's meeting, Pt. Reyes, CA
- June 25th & 26th, Poway, CA

Bp. Benjamin may be reached through the Lifegiving Spring Retreat Center, 702-293-7208, or at vikenty@msn.com.

Scouts, Brownie, earn Chi Rho awards

His Grace, Bp. BENJAMIN, presented the Chi Rho Scouting award to three parishioners of St. Paul's Orthodox Church in Las Vegas, NV. The Chi Rho award is given to Cub Scouts and Brownies who completed the requirements on Church knowledge and service. This year's recipients are Eliena Kokalis, Austin Stojanovich and Alexander Tosi.



In picture from left to right: Priest Eric George Tosi, Alexander Tosi, Austin Stojanovich, Eliena Kokalis and His Grace, Bp. BENJAMIN.

Fr. Victor Sokolov undergoes treatment for cancer

Fr. Victor Sokolov, archpriest of San Francisco's Holy Trinity Cathedral, is undergoing treatment for cancer that first appeared in his lungs. Fr. Victor began feeling pain in his left side at Thanksgiving time last year, along with shortness of breath and coughing. A CT scan detected a lump in his left lung. He was diagnosed with advanced stage *squamous* (non-small) cell carcinoma that had begun to metastasize into his ribs and hip. Upon news of his illness, support poured in from around the diocese and beyond.

An Unction service was held at the Cathedral on Sunday, January 9th, attended by clergy and faithful from the San Francisco Bay Area, the Diocese of the West and from as far away as New York. Bishop BENJAMIN of Berkeley presided at the service. Fr. David Brum presented Fr. Victor with a reliquary cross on behalf of Metropolitan HERMAN as a reminder of prayers being offered for him throughout the Orthodox Church in America. Fr. Victor, prevented from projecting his voice due to the illness, relied upon a written statement to thank all who had prayed for him. He asked continued prayers for his wife, Barbara, his children, and for his own endurance in suffering. A reception followed in the parish hall.

On January 13th, Fr. Victor began chemotherapy, consisting of six to eight sessions every 3 weeks, six to seven hours in duration. On January 31st, he underwent surgery on his vocal chords, moving the paralyzed left chords closer to the still-active right ones to increase the volume of his voice—the loss of which had kept him from celebrating Liturgy since December 13th, the commemoration of the Glorification of St. Herman of Alaska and the repose of Fr. Alexander Schmemmann.

Examinations in February revealed that the cancer had stabilized. Fr. Victor reported optimism at this finding, given the cancer's initial aggressiveness, and indicated improvements in the quality of his life since beginning chemotherapy. The surgery to his vocal chords, and the use of a microphone and amplifier, had allowed him to resume celebration of the Liturgy. As of March 16th, plans were underway to begin radiation treatment to supplement chemotherapy.

Information on Fr. Victor's ongoing condition is accruing and regularly updated on the Holy Transfiguration Cathedral website (www.holy-trinity.org/about/frvictor). He concluded his January posting, the first since the onset of his illness, with the following:

“Just as an expectant woman constantly attends to her inner self, excitedly “listening” to the new life that is growing and maturing within her, a sick person is tempted, with anxiety and

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alarm, to monitor the growth and spread of illness within his body. Your love and friendship are tremendously helpful in turning attention from the last enemy — death — towards life. Love is life, for God is love.”



Fr. John Pierce (Holy Resurrection, Tacoma, WA)
Administers Holy Unction

Fr. Victor has requested that correspondence be made to him by e-mail rather than telephone. He can be reached at <rector@holy-trinity.org>.



The Archpriest Victor, March 1, '05

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Sitka Icon to Tour Lower 48

With the concurrence of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman and the Holy Synod of Bishops of The Orthodox Church in America, Bishop NIKOLAI of Sitka, Anchorage and Alaska has blessed the initial preparations for a special pilgrimage of the Wonderworking Sitka Icon of the Mother of God. This pilgrimage has been scheduled for September 7-November 7, 2005 and will include the visit of the Icon to approximately forty parishes throughout the “Lower 48.”

This Wonderworking Icon has been venerated in the Cathedral of Saint Michael the Archangel in Sitka, Alaska, for over one hundred and fifty years and many miracles have been attributed to it. Originally part of the Cathedral’s main iconostasis, the Icon is now permanently enshrined in a special place of honor.

The Icon is considered to be the work of the famous Russian iconographer, Vladimir Lukich Borovikovsky, a protégé of Catherine II and instructor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Saint Petersburg. Borovikovsky painted many of the icons for the Cathedral of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God in Saint Petersburg, completed in 1811. Painted on canvas according to the pattern of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God, the Sitka Mother of God Icon measures 36" x 17 1/2". It is covered with an exceptionally beautiful silver riza, with the image of God the Father blessing from above. The Icon was originally received as a gift from the employees of the Russian American Company in 1850, two years after the Cathedral was completed.

The Icon will be accompanied by a small team of clergy that will be able to also preach at the scheduled services or speak at a gathering that might be held so that clergy and faithful alike can learn more about the history of the Orthodox Faith in Alaska and the special role of the Wonderworking Sitka Icon of the Mother of God. A traveling bookstore and religious center will also travel to each location visited by the Icon.

Parishes to be visited will be contacted by Fr. David Lucs, Assistant to the Chancellor for Communications and Development.



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Dean of Students gives Encore Presentation @ Mission Deanery Retreat in Boulder City

Fr. Paul Lazor addressed the Mission Deanery Retreat at the Lifegiving Spring Retreat Center in Boulder City, NV last February. Fr. Paul was invited to follow up on his popular appearance two years ago at the same event, making it his second address to Mission clergy and lay-delegates in three years. The event takes place annually during the week of the Publican and Pharisee.

Fr. Paul spoke on Confession, tracing its historical development from John the Faster in the 6th-century, and how the rite evolved in the Greek and Russian traditions. He outlined its practical and pastoral elements: the time, place and order in which Confession takes place. He stressed its medicinal, therapeutic nature—more akin to rehabilitation in a hospital than confession in a courtroom. Confession provides the opportunity for disclosure and healing now, in anticipation of the great eschatological confession at the end of time, in which “the hearts of all shall be laid bare.” The priest, a fellow-sinner, stands as the witness

and usher to this event. At one point, Fr. Paul cited the late Archbishop John (Shahovskoy) of San Francisco, who reminded priests of the danger of assuming that those who come to confession are less spiritual than themselves; in reality, he said, they are often much higher and deeper.

In particular, Fr. Paul encouraged the use of educative penance, in which the one who confesses is given a responsibility that aids them in spiritual growth, and helps him or her to avoid further sin. Always, the priest has to know the one confessing “by name,” understanding the particular place this person occupies in life, and their unique temptations, challenges and aspirations. This is one thing, he said, that distinguishes a real shepherd from a mere hireling—that “he knows his flock by name.”

Fr. Paul serves as Dean of Students at St. Vladimir’s Seminary in New York. He’s recently been recovering from dif-



Fr. Paul with Fr. John Strickland (St. Katherine Mission, Kirkland, WA)

ficult hip-surgery.

Rocky Mountain Teen Retreat

During the season of our Lord’s Nativity, youth from the Rocky Mountain region gathered for the ’04 Annual Winter Teen Retreat, which began with a slip-slide adventure up an icy hill towards Rocky Mountain Camp on Pike’s Peak.

Each year the Retreat focuses on a particular book of Holy Scripture. This year we looked at St. Paul’s First Epistle to St. Timothy. Centered on the verse, “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (4:12), our retreat prepared us for godly lives as youth, made possible to us through Holy Tradition.

The camp’s staff hospitably prepared meals and made sure activities were ready to go. The snow-tubing run was a favorite for all. Ping-pong, foosball, and casual time getting to know other Orthodox teens from Colorado filled the time between prayer, teaching, and discussion.

The 52 participants visited Holy Protection Monastery, where Mother Cassiana welcomed us with a meal after the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. The last night, we basked in the waters of Mt. Princeton Hot Springs near Buena Vista.

The retreat was a tremendous blessing, an eye-opener for some, a great encouragement for all. Seeds were planted and, with God’s help, will spring forth to the glory of God. Grant it, O Lord!

by Reader Daniel Armstrong, St. Herman’s parish, Littleton, CO

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*Historical Perspective**Orthodoxy in Seattle*

The following, the third of four segments to be featured in *The Vision*, was prepared in 1985, on the occasion of Seattle's St. Spiridon Cathedral's 90th anniversary.

A significant portion of the parish assisted in the work of the Russian War Relief Committee of Seattle. Collections, gala evenings and dinners netted several thousands of dollars which were used to purchase medical supplies, thousands of cases of milk, and clothing (which also was collected, sorted and packed in downtown warehouses) for ship transport to Russia.

Sailors from the Russian ships stationed in Seattle's harbor would entertain the guests at the gala evenings with balalaika orchestral music and popular folk music. Among the parishioners contributing to this philanthropic work were the Imshenetsky (Shane), Farafontoff, Doroshenko, Notkin, Koznlin, Kaluzhinof, E.R. Kovtunovich, Dimitrieff, Kochegin, and Kuzin families.

In 1945, V. Usachevsky was the choir director; the Liturgy of Saint James was served on October 23; the Sisterhood consisted of 72 members - Anna I. Pershin, president; Anna I Mihailoff, vice-president; Antonina E. Pavlevsky, treasurer; Galina A Gorohoff, secretary; Tatiana P Shchegolkov and Nina A Nizenko, membership; Tamara I. Chagin and Claudia A. Magarinsky, auditing committee. The Sisterhood was indispensable for the smooth function of the parish. The parish library contained over 1,000 books and journals; Tamara Kovtunovich was the librarian. A Russian school for the children had been established as many of the children of the parish's Russian refugees could not speak the language. A church school was also established. The Russian School teachers from 1930 to 1944 were: Father Vasily, P.F. Koropachinsky, N.F. Kulikova, A.I. Troitsky and M.S. Richkoff. The latter two women annually organized and directed very professional dramatic productions; Galina Gorohoff assisted with costumes and scenery. Members of the Russian colony placed a high value on the cultural activities, and even the general public looked forward to the annual productions. The parish was proud of the fact that it owed no money and had a savings account containing more than \$3,000.

As if foreseeing the coming popularity of the Ecumenical Movement, the parish took part in services with the neighbor-

ing Greek Churches and interacted with Episcopal parishes in Everett, the University District (Christ Church) and Seattle (Saint Mark's Cathedral).

Fr. Vasily became ill, and Hieromonk Pahomy Deliman arrived in October 1944, and served through Pascha 1945. Although Father Pahomy was here only a short time, he left one lasting remembrance of himself-he started the regular reading of the Creed in English during Sunday Liturgy.

On May 27, 1945, Father Eugene Serebrennikoff became rector of the church and continued the task of enlarging the fund for construction of the projected Parish House. In the fall of 1946, Father Eugene and Mr. Nicholas V. Bogdanoff represented the parish at the 7th All-American Council (Sobor). During a visitation here of Metropolitan Theophilus, June 20, 1947, Father Eugene was elevated to Archpriest for his services.

With the arrival of Father Eugene's successor, Archpriest Paul Jeromsky, in the fall of 1947, the revitalized parish entered a period of renewed activity. On Sunday, October 10, 1948, full consecration services for the Church were held with Met-

ropolitan Leonty as the celebrant. The following year, the Parish House was built on the lot behind the Church, according to plans of engineer Peter V. Richkoff.

The parish continued to grow slowly. Through intermarriage with Americans and with Orthodox people from other parishes, the parish gained such valued co-workers as Vera Jedenoff, Isabel Kovtunovich, George Goetz, Merrill Kuehn, Tanya Jeromsky, Ira Eppler, and David Haan.

In 1949, John Kovtunovich, a parishioner since 1923, became a charter member of the "Russian American Society for
(Seattle, cont'd. on page 10.)



Fr. Vasily and Ludmilla Kuvshinoff

(Seattle, cont'd. from page 9.)

Aid to Displaced Persons” which helped to resettle 85 to 90 persons, displaced by World War II, in the United States. In 1951, he became president of the society, which was still incorporated in 1970, in the State of Washington, as a charitable organization, helping sick, aged and disabled Russians in Europe through clothing and fund drives.

Many Russian refugee families from this time are still part of the Saint Spiridon community: the Theodore Fabers, the Alexander Popoffs, George Kropotoffs, Clem Pencos, Vasily Melniks, D. Scherbinas, S. Lomonosoffs, A. Warnickys; to name a few.

With the aid of Father Deacon Nicholas Sanin ¹⁰, who joined the Parish’s official family in August 1952, as choir director, the young people of the church were organized into Chapter 169 of the Federated Russian Orthodox Clubs (FROC), the senior group of ten charter members on April 7, 1953, and the juniors in 1960. Father Deacon Nicholas helped the “Seattle Orthodox Club”, as the group was known, to focus on the Christian idea of service to the church and on mission and witness. The “O” Club associated all its activities with the cathedral: younger members attended Sunday School, older members, such as John Kovtunovich were instrumental in the organization and teaching of the Sunday (church) school; all who could participated in the church choir, served as church readers and acolytes, members of the Parish

Council and Sisterhood; the group helped in church renovation projects, assisted Orthodox communities in Alaska, Korea, and other places.

The geographical isolation of the Seattle “O” Club was significant. The only national activities it participated in were the annual United Fund drive and Building Fund contributions. The creation of the Pacific-Alaska District of the FROC on June 30, 1957, reduced this sense of isolation. Two club members, Vera Herman and Serge Chagin, became district secretary and treasurer respectively; other Seattle members who served at the district level were Myrrah Dimoff, Kathi Mercurief as secretary; Roderick Dimoff as United Fund director, lieutenant governor, secretary and governor; and John Kovtunovich as publicity director, lieutenant governor and governor. The club sponsored district conventions in 1962 and in 1967. The

Junior chapter worked hand-in-hand with the Seniors; however, when Father Nicholas left Seattle (he retired as parish choir director in 1960 and was replaced by Arkady A. Juskaeff, but remained to continue his work with the youth of the parish) to tend to the spiritual needs of the Alaskan students at the Chemawa Indian School near Salem, Oregon, the membership of the Junior chapter decreased, and the group became inactive on January 1, 1970.

The life-strengthening role played by the FROC on the west coast in its support of the Chemawa School cannot be estimated. Father Nicholas received \$30 a month from the Diocese of San Francisco; \$30 additional dollars a month came from the National FROC Board of Trustees. The Alaska Project Fund of the District FROC contributed a further \$3,000 to pay Father Nicholas for his herculean efforts to bring religious education and spiritual guidance to the more than 175 secondary school age Orthodox Alaskans then attending this federal

center of learning. Also, funds were collected to decrease the amount of the mortgage payment on the “Trailer-Church-On-Wheels” of the Chemawa school.

Other missionary work undertaken by the “O” Club emphasized Alaska. John Kovtunovich traveled to Alaska; as a result of his work, “O” Club Chapters were temporarily re-established in Sitka, Juneau, and Kenai.

Mention is made of the existence of a Serbian parish of Saint Savva in Seattle in the early 1950s. Young people from this parish as well as from the Greek parishes of the Assumption, Saint Demetrios, and Saint Nicholas (Tacoma) were encouraged to join the Seattle Orthodox Club; however, the Greek Orthodox Youth Association (GOYA) began to organize in Seattle at this time, and a pan-Orthodox association of young people did not materialize. Although local clergy were on very friendly terms, there was little or no contact among the laity. The 1962 Seattle World’s Fair was to prove to be a turning point in this unfortunate tendency toward ethnocentrism.

Meanwhile, John Kovtunovich helped to organize a drive in the Washington State Legislature for the recognition of Eastern Orthodoxy as a major faith in the state. This drive culminated in official recognition on February 11, 1959. He also helped to organize the Russian community in Seattle, and has been editor and publisher of the “Bulletin of the Russian Colony of Seattle” since 1962.

In the 1960s, there were many new developments in the life of the parish. Socializing after services through coffee hours



The Cathedral Sisterhood (and an early Barar?) Antonia Skorniakos, Vera Jedeneff, A. Voronoff, Kira Koerlikin, A. Michailoff, Unknown, A. Sosonoff, A. Zlenko, Zena Brovikoff and Olga Bostick.

¹⁰ Father Nicholas graduated from a conservatory and had conducted many choirs in Europe before coming to the United States.

and salad luncheons began about 1961. This distinctive feature of post-war American church life (called the “eighth sacrament” in some churches) was sponsored by the Seattle “O” Club. It was not popular at first because some believed that worship should not be a social occasion. Eating, drinking, and socializing after church, however, has a long history in America, especially in the West, where people came to church from great distances and stayed afterward to share food they had brought and “catch up” on each other’s lives since last they met. Not only does this remind us of the agape feasts mentioned by Saint Paul in I Corinthians, but conditions at Saint Spiridon’s are similar: many come from long distances and get to see each other only on Sunday and church holidays. Coffee hour has gained steadily in popularity over the years, and now it is a fixture of parish life, co-ordinated by the Cathedral Sisterhood and attended by 60 to 100 people on a given Sunday.

The World’s Fair (Century 21) came to Seattle in 1962, and the local Orthodox churches had their part to play in it. An Orthodox Week was organized by the GOYA and FROC at the Christian Witness Pavilion; it featured displays of icons, taped liturgical music and daily morning and evening church services in Greek, Slavonic and English in a small Orthodox chapel. Volunteers from the churches were also on hand to answer questions about Orthodoxy. A Vespers service at Assumption Church culminated this week of activity. At least one pan-Orthodox service has been held annually, usually on the Sunday of Orthodoxy; at least one weekly pan-Orthodox Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts has been held since 1984, and joint celebrations of Vespers, Matins and the Divine Liturgy have been held on patronal feast days since 1985.

The Seattle “O” club continued to expend much energy just on survival; however, Father Nicholas’ focus on service had taught the “O” Club members that they were much more than a social group limited to parties and the annual Tatiana Day ball. In addition to its philanthropic activities, the “O” Club sponsored lectures by Father Georges Florovsky, Doctor John CavaMos, and Father Alexander Schmemann. The energy expended by the “O” Club continued to increase, but with the influx of WASOs — White, Anglo-Saxon Orthodox - and the changes in American family life - two working parents movement of sports activities for children to Sundays, a lack of a sense of identity with the historical reasons for the foundation of the “O” Club, the membership in the Seattle chapter decreased until the 1980s. The club continues to exist pro forma

in 1985, but its work has been taken over by the parishioners as a whole.

In 1963, Saint Spiridon’s “broke” with tradition at its annual meeting by electing a woman Mary Warnicky, to its Parish Council. Though traditionally a man’s job, Parish Council members have included women since Miss Warnicky’s time.

Later that year the parish welcomed the model of Christian womanhood when the wonder-working Kazan icon of the Mother of God was brought to Seattle for veneration.

Icons were much on the mind of many parishioners as Saint Spiridon’s set ready to replace the iconostasis. Installed in the new church building in 1937, the old white and gilt iconostasis had been built to fit the space at Saint Barnabas’ Chapel and consequently was too small for Saint Spiridon’s—the ends of the screen did not touch the wall on either side. Considered a temporary expedient for over twenty years, money had been collected slowly through pledges and from a special collection plate passed every Sunday. Finally in 1969, action was taken.

Parishioner Eugene Bivoino, designed a new iconostasis to be constructed out of natural teak and trimmed with gold. Space on the lower tier allowed for two icons for which there was no traditionally required subject. The parish decided that on the left hand side they would place an icon of Saint Euthymios the Hermit in memory of Efim Minko, the much-loved choirmaster, who served from 1936 to 1952. The icon of Saint George was placed on the right-hand side. This icon was donated by Eugenia Grant in memory of her husband George.



St. Spiridon's Youth in the 1960's

The icons were painted by the San Francisco iconographer Nicholas Zadorojny (sometimes anglicized as “Rodeway”). The icons of Christ and the Theotokos are copies of icons painted for the renovation of Kiev Cathedral in the eighteenth century and link us with many churches worldwide, including the Tokyo Cathedral. The other icons were rendered in the nineteenth-century style.

A devoted worker among the young, Father Deacon Nicholas Sanin, whose job as choirmaster (1952 to 1960) had only begun to describe his many contributions to the parish, was ordained to the priesthood in 1968 for the Holy Trinity Church, Wilkeson by Archbishop John of San Francisco. Father Nicholas was proud of his Russian heritage and was active throughout the Russian community in Seattle. He organized memorable yolkas, a Saturday Russian School at Saint Spiridon’s, and both a Russian Student Choir and a Balalaika Orchestra at the Russian Center. Nevertheless, he was keenly aware of the need

(Seattle, cont'd. on page 12.)

(Seattle, cont'd. from page 11.)

for the Orthodox church to both accommodate the needs of its young people growing up in an English language society and of those drawn to Orthodoxy from outside the circle of Russian speakers. As choirmaster he had introduced English into the church services and encouraged the growth of the English language Sunday School. When he arrived at Wilkeson, he began using both English and Slavonic in the church services. He was an eloquent extemporaneous preacher, despite a mild stutter, and his tireless service attracted many to church. During the two short years of his service there this elderly priest (he was seventy-nine) drew a crowd of 150 to the service at Pascha in 1969. A former vaudevillian and life insurance salesman, he was sixty-two when he began a new career in the church here and served it for another thirty years.

Another ordination took place a short time later when Michael Johnson, a convert long active in the parish was made a deacon on Saint Spiridon's Day, December 25/12, 1970. Father Michael did much to make visitors feel welcome and prepared a guide to the Divine Liturgy and an explanation of the church and its icons. Indeed, three years later he was made a priest for Holy Trinity, Wilkeson, and served there from 1973 to 1975.

Changes in the national church life in 1970 had their impact locally. This was the year that the Moscow Patriarchate offered canonical autocephaly or full self-government to the Russian Orthodox Churches in the United States and Canada. Most of the parishes accepted the offer, and the old "Metropolia" jurisdiction formally became the Orthodox Church in America (OCA). Though some other Orthodox churches did not accept it, the granting of autocephaly recognized de jure what de facto had been the case for some time. Autocephaly also helped the OCA to re-establish its relations with its mother church and to gain a sense of missionary purpose. Fittingly enough, one of the OCA's first actions was to canonize a notable missionary, America's first saint, the spiritual elder Herman who came from Valaamo Monastery in Finland in 1794 as part of the first group of evangelists sent by the Russian Church to North America.¹¹

¹¹ Despite what is often said about Orthodoxy, when it is free to do so it has been a very mission-minded Church. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Russian missionaries were very active in converting the native peoples of Siberia; and today there are extensive Greek supported missions in Africa.

This event had a special meaning for Saint Spiridon's, for not only were some parishioners (including Father Paul Jeromsky and the then-Father Deacon Michael Johnson) able to be present at the canonization, but also because parish members from Alaska had passed word of this remarkable servant of God through many generations.

A missionary spirit was manifested in several other ways in the parish during the 1970s. The first was the inspiring visit of a wonder-working icon, the Sitka Mother of God (a copy of the Kazan icon), which normally resides in the chapel of Saint Michael's Cathedral, Sitka, Alaska. Bishop Gregory of Sitka's nationwide tour with the icon began at Saint Spiridon's. The FROC throughout the United States helped make this trip possible by collecting Betty Crocker coupons, which the Seattle FROC Chapter used to buy a Volkswagen van for the transportation of the icon, Bishop Gregory, and a small group (including John Kovtunovich from this parish). Touring through the "lower forty-eight," Bishop Gregory shared one of the riches of Alaska's long Orthodox life.

In 1977, Saint Spiridon's sent its first (of many) seminarians to Saint Vladimir's Seminary. Mark Stokoe, a remarkable young man of Norwegian ancestry, graduated from the seminary and became, successively, Secretary to Bishop Basil of San Francisco and, two years later, General Secretary of Synodesmos, a fellowship of international Orthodox youth organizations head-



Fr. Nicholas and Altar Servers at the Chapel-on-wheels at the Chemawa Indian School

quartered in Kuopio, Finland.¹²

That same year Father Paul Jeromsky began to hold general confession after the Saturday night vigil. Authorized by the OCA Synod of Bishops, it promoted a constant theme in Father Paul's preaching: the importance of frequent communion. Many who began coming to Spiridon's at that time can remember the special quality that this service lent to the preparation for the Sunday liturgy. With the church lights dimmed, Professor Coachman would take a candle from one of the candle stands and begin Psalm 51. Father Paul would say the preparatory prayers and all would go forward to be covered by his stole and to receive the words of absolution.¹³

¹² Other seminarians: Stephen Supica, Roben Latsko, Bonnie Michal, and Thomas Dykstra have been sent by Saint Spiridon's to Saint Vladimir's Seminary since Mark Stokoe.

¹³ Though Father Paul (then in his 80s) was nervous about using much English publicly, he had remarkable insight as a confessor and spiritually transcended any language barrier that existed on other occasions.

The same year individuals in the parish spent approximately \$500 to establish an English language lending library. With the same generosity, a pamphlet rack, which included translations of the services for special holy days, the Liturgy itself. Matins and Vespers, and various tracts, was installed on a wall at the entrance to the parish hall, and a table for the sale of Orthodox religious books was set up in the church in conjunction with the church tours at the time of the Annual Bazaar.

In 1978 an Agape Breakfast was begun by the Cathedral choir as a fitting way to conclude the triumphal celebration of Pascha, the gem in our parish's liturgical crown. No better occasion could be imagined for this kind of sharing than at Pascha when we sing for the need we have to love each other:

*Pascha of beauty,
The Pascha of the Lord,
A Pascha worthy of all honor has
dawned for us.
Pascha!
Let us embrace each other joy-
ously,
O Pascha, ransom from afflic-
tion!...
This is the day of resurrection.
Let us be illumined by the feast.
Let us embrace each other.
Let us call "brothers" even those
who hate us, and forgive all
by the
resurrection, and so let us cry:
Christ is risen from the dead
Trampling down death by death,
And upon those in the tombs
bestowing life.
The table is full-laden; feast ye
all sumptuously.
The calf is fatted; let no one go hungry away.
Enjoy ye all the feast of faith:
Receive ye all the riches of loving-kindness...*

In the fall of 1979, Father Paul Jeromsky demonstrated spiritual insight when he instructed a parishioner to begin a catechumen class when there was not one potential catechumen in sight. Obedient to her spiritual father, she began preparations and, one by one, fifteen people presented themselves and ultimately twelve were chrismated as a group in May 1980. Because of the arduous physical exercise involved in chrismating twelve people at once, and in order that it might be served in English, Father Vadim A. Pogrebniak was flown up from San Francisco to administer the sacrament of chrismation.

As Father Paul Jeromsky was about to retire, the above service served as a fitting introduction to Father Vadim, who was

chosen to be the next dean of the Saint Spiridon's Cathedral. As Saint Spiridon's now had its first fully bilingual rector, the services, which had been primarily in Slavonic, began to include more English, and the sermons were preached in English on a regular basis for the first time. Meetings of the parish and the sisterhood were conducted primarily in English as well. In 1982 Bishop Basil (Rodzianko), in a bi-lingual sermon memorable as an example of polished, eloquent, and logical persuasion, required Saint Spiridon's to join other parishes in Seattle in using the revised Julian calendar.

Bishop Basil returned to consecrate a new altar in a moving Liturgy served in a crowded church. Invited to mutual forgiveness and a personal spiritual renewal by both dean and bishop, nearly everyone in church received communion. After the service, the cloths used to wipe the Holy Chrism onto the surface of the altar were cut into pieces and distributed to members of the congregation as a sacred memento of this rare spiritual experience.¹⁴

Under the direction of Father Vadim, the parish has been returning to more traditional liturgical forms. One outstanding example is the celebration of one of the Presanctified Liturgies each week of Great Lent in the evening (as it was originally served). Beginning in 1984, Saint Spiridon's joined with Saint Demetrios' and Assumption churches to serve the Presanctified Liturgy followed by a Lenten educational event in each of the Orthodox churches in town. The series was inaugurated in 1984, by

Father Thomas Hopko, teacher of Dogmatic Theology at Saint Vladimir's Seminary, who served the Liturgy at Saint Demetrios Church and spoke afterward in that parish's recently completed parish hall. In the same vein of inter-parish cooperation, a series of Bible studies on Thursday night began in the same year and continues to this day at Assumption Church, under the direction of Father Steven Tschlis.



*Coffee hour in 1995, still a time to "catch up" on what's been happening during the week.
(left to right) Mark Vinson; Amy, Pat and Dick Wilson; and Steve Crown.*

(To be continued--and completed--in next issue.)

¹⁴ The new altar, was a memorial to Father Paul Jeromsky who died in 1981. The design of the new altar allows greater freedom of movement in the altar area.

Ask Father Joseph

The Rector of Denver's Transfiguration Cathedral and dean of the Rocky Mountain District, Fr. Joseph Hirsch, answers your questions.

Dear Father Joseph: Every year on the First Sunday of Great Lent, we celebrate the “Triumph of Orthodoxy” which seems to have something to do with Icons being taken out of Churches and then put back. The whole idea of Icons is confusing to me. Some of my Protestant friends say that they are “Idols”; some Orthodox books seem to indicate that they are visual aids or teaching devices. Our priest says that they are a Holy Mystery and are “Windows into Heaven”. What is the real meaning of Icons? Why were they taken out of the Churches at one time? Why were they put back? Are they really necessary and, if not, why do we have so many of them since they seem to bother many non-Orthodox people?

Dear Reader: Well, these are all good questions. The Church's teaching about Holy Icons is very important and can seem somewhat complicated. I will attempt, here, to give you the basic answers and suggest that you read more or talk with your Parish Priest for a more detained study of the matter.

We know that in the Old Testament the people of Israel were commanded not to make any “Graven image” of any creature to bow down before or to worship. We are told how the people of the Exodus were tempted to make a visible Egyptian type god; a golden calf, when they thought that Moses was not going to return from the mountaintop. We know that they were severely punished for this unfaithfulness. We are also aware of how the Holy Prophets ridiculed those who carved an idol of wood and then bowed down to it, saying, “This is my god who made me”. We are certainly aware that one of the chief reasons for God's anger against His People had to do with their “Limping with two opinions” about the idols. So, how is it that the People of the New Israel felt that they not only could but should make and keep images for their devotion and worship?

First, we must understand that the Old Testament prohibition was clearly not against all images or even against all statues in as much as God Himself commanded the Israelites to make images of the Cherubim and Seraphim for the Tabernacle and the Temple. What was forbidden was any attempt to depict God or any false god in material form. Simply stated, God had not shown himself to human beings in any physical

form but had only appeared in types and shadows. Moses had beheld His Uncreated Energies but could not behold His Face. For this reason, any attempt to imagine or represent what God had chosen not to reveal to people, was, certainly, a grievous offence.



However, we understand that the Incarnation of Our Lord was, precisely, the act of the Incomprehensible God becoming visible and touchable to human beings. He is “The invisible God in visible form”. “In Him, the Fullness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell bodily.” “God, who at various times and in diverse manners spoke to our fathers by the Prophets” has, in Him, spoken unto us, “Face to face”.

Now, in as much as the Eternal Son has appeared in time and in the flesh, the prohibition against trying to describe God in material form is superseded by the command to preach and proclaim the Gospel of the Incarnation to every creature. To this end, far from being the fantastic imaginings of humans as to the appearance of the Divine, Holy Icons are pictorial proclamations that, “The Word be-

came flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His Glory: Glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father.”

The two groups of early heretics who eschewed Holy Icons were the Manicheans and similar Gnostic and Neo-Platonic groups who denied that the Word had, indeed, become flesh. Regarding Jesus humanity as an illusion or His body as detached from His Divinity, these heterodox would not reverence a fallen and disposable body, which was either illusory or temporarily borrowed.

(Fr. Joseph, cont'd. on page 19.)

Memory Eternal!

Metropolitan Anthony

His Eminence Metropolitan Anthony, first bishop of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco, departed this life in the hope of resurrection on December 25th, at 4:05pm, following a battle with Burkitt's Lymphoma. His Eminence passed away at UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento, California, surrounded by his family and loved ones. His departure was "painless, blameless, and peaceful."

Metropolitan Anthony served at the helm of the Diocese and later Metropolis for over twenty-five years. His enthusiasm, vigor, and prophetic vision for the Church in this region will be missed, and never forgotten.

A Funeral was held on Tuesday, December 28th, at the Annunciation Cathedral in San Francisco.

Beloved mothers of two diocesan priests

Condolences to, and prayers for, the families of priests David Lowell and John Mancantelli, both of whose mothers passed away in February. Fr. David's mother had been ill for some time. He and his entire family were visiting his mother when she passed away. Zabel Dervishian Mancantelli, Archpriest John Mancantelli's mother, passed away on the 27th at the age of 94 years.

"What's On Your Mind?"

Subdeacon Dmitri Solodow, PhD

"After analysis, the patient has been placed in a position in which he can get well; before analysis this was not possible. But whether he really will get well depends upon his wish to recover, on his will." Sigmund Freud.

"Even though knowledge is true, it is still not firmly established if unaccompanied by works. For everything is established by being put into practice." St. Mark The Ascetic.

Oops. There's a contradiction here, a contradiction faced by Orthodox Christians seeking professional help in dealing with psychological issues. Traditional therapies (and therapists) focus on making the unconscious conscious, on revealing the hidden drivers of our behaviors. But the Fathers of the Church, writing and guiding from their experiences, tell us that this knowledge is insufficient unless accompanied by real changes in our behavior. And that the changes are only effective if they bring us closer to God.

For the Fathers, becoming closer to God means actively following His commandments, loving our neighbors, acknowledging and repenting our own sinfulness and praying for God's help. And recognizing that our sinfulness is acting in ways which

pull us away from God. For St. Maximos The Confessor, "evil is not to be imputed to the essence of created beings, but to their erroneous and mindless motivation."

In my psychotherapy practice, I am consulted by people for all sorts of reasons, bringing all sorts of problems. For Orthodox Christians (and some others) who consult me, the solutions they seek must bear witness to their faith. Thus, they desire to live their lives as God created them be. This is the source of their "adjustment" and "happiness."

The principle is simple: since God loves us, He wants what is best for us. Acting in ways He wants for us brings us true joy and happiness. Putting this into action, however, is not so simple.

Not so simple because we are raised in the world, and the world is fallen. It seems to reward our vices. Competition can be cutthroat, selfishness can be automatic, jealousy comes easily, deceitfulness can make relationships seem easier, pride can blind us to the reality of others. Those living in these ways often seem to get away with it, even to be rewarded. Acting according to the virtues, as a Christian, can be like swimming upstream, against the current.

Living according to the world can thus become uncomfortable, even painful. We experience something to be out of kilter, we feel our separation from our true selves. We may not know what it is, but we know something is wrong. We may seek professional help.

In my own work with clients, I have tried to develop an approach which combines the insights of psychotherapy with the wisdom and experiences of the Fathers. Initially, both are similar: we must first understand what is driving our unwanted behaviors. As St. Hesychios says, "many passions are hidden in the soul; they can be checked only when their causes are revealed." We begin, then, with understanding the "whys" of the client's behavior.

When we first encounter a new situation (as children and as adults), we bring to bear in understanding and mastering it all of the learning and experience we have acquired. These may be adequate to the task, or not. If they are, we add this to our psychological database of behaviors. If they are not, we do the best we can, and add to that database behaviors which are, in the long run, inadequate. One way of understanding our collection of behaviors is to see ourselves applying the solutions we have learned in the past to whatever is before us in the present. In some situations this will work, in others it will not. Our task is to learn what works better in those instances.

This is where we must depart from the traditional approach of psychotherapy. For us as Orthodox Christians, what works best is not necessarily what will simply get us through the situation, but rather what will get us through it as God intends. Again, St. Maximos is instructive: "(we) must raise our intellect and the resolve of our soul from what is human to what is divine." In our intellect we know what God wants us to do, in our soul we know that is what will ultimately be right for us,

(Solodow, cont'd. on page 16.)

(Solodow, cont'd. from page 15.)

but it is hard.

Hard because, as St. Theodoros The Great Ascetic says, “the intellect has to exert itself to oppose the downward drag of the senses; and this contest and battle against the body continues until death.” We are always free to choose, and the world will seem always to reward those choices based on our self-will. But, St. Diadachos of Photiki reminds us, “with God’s help man can become good through careful attention to his way of life.” And, “good, which exists through nature, is more powerful than our inclination to evil. The one (good) has existence while the other (evil) has not, except when we give it existence through our actions.”

So it is in our actions that we overcome our vices and practice the virtues. This is the goal of Orthodox psychotherapy, and of our lives as Orthodox Christians.

Let me share with you a clinical vignette which may be useful. I am working with the General Manager of a division of a high-tech manufacturing company. She consulted me to help her deal better with her new boss. His problem, she stated, was his unwillingness to acknowledge the successes her group had achieved and his desire to have things done his way. She felt unappreciated, angry and frustrated.

At one point in our work, she related a situation in which she could make a necessary decision, but wanted him to do so, because that would demonstrate his support of her position. Not for the first time, we discussed why his validation was so important to her, more important even than her own. She knew she could act, but her pride prevented her from doing so. She chose to stay stuck, and hurt, rather than to act and to move on. As she became more aware of the role pride was playing, of how she was digging in her heels and demanding someone else “fix it,” she could see the patterns of the past getting in the way success in the present. She said, with a pout, “this isn’t working, is it? I don’t have to keep getting stuck in this way, but I feel I’m getting gypped here.”

She realized that pride was the issue here, that she was ‘demanding’ another’s recognition and validation. We turned to our shared faith for the solution. We prayed for God’s guidance. I called her attention to a prayer of St. Silouan: “Oh, Lord, make humble my heart that I may be ever pleasing to Thee.” She asked more about the saint, and I suggested she read “Wisdom From Mt. Athos” the collection of his writings by Archimandrite Sophrony.

At our next session, she was smiling as she said, “I’ve read the book, and taken it with me to work, where I’ve also read it. He knows what he’s talking about. I made the decision myself and found myself laughing as I did. It was so freeing.”

Thank you, St. Silouan, who reminds us that “when the Lord enlightens you, your soul will feel His presence, will feel that the Lord has forgiven you and loves you.”

Dmitri Solodow is an active member of the Diocesan Council.

Life as Death and Resurrection

Fr. Peter Tobias

We know from our experience in the life of the Church that there is never a feast without a fast. There is always preparation, whether it be an extended period of intensified prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, or how we live out each day during the week to prepare ourselves to receive the Holy Mysteries. Preparation also includes personal and theological reflection (these two really being one). Our efforts are crowned with a feast, a rest from our labors in the joy of what is proclaimed, witnessed to, and participated in.

In Her profound knowledge of human nature and of what we need for salvation, the Church provides us with this liturgical pattern because it is analogous to life itself. True and authentic life is death and resurrection in Christ. Our life on this earth begins with baptism and ends with the sacrament of burial. It is a fast because we are to spend it in repentance, dying to our propensity to love ourselves before God. We are to die to this world, forsaking all desire and hope for that which passes away. This is the life of the cross to which our Lord calls us to (Luke 9:23), and, which, St. Paul captures in the words, “I die daily” (1Cor. 15:31). Finally, life is also resurrection since it is through self-denial that we become less self-centered and more God-centered. We die daily to the old nature, which is subject to wrath, so that we may grow in the image of God, going from one degree of glory to the next (John 12:24; 2Cor. 3:18).

If there is any comfort in the life-long struggle to break our hearts of those things which are not of God it is that such a struggle leads to an experience of the Kingdom of Heaven here and now. We do not, in other words, live as pilgrims in this world for the sake of acquiring something we know nothing about. Rather, we are persuaded by what we have already tasted and seen, with a promise from God of a greater fullness thereof. We have been given the Holy Spirit. We have received the Body and Blood of Christ. We have experienced the kind of community and worship our hearts desire. We have experienced the “lightness” that follows confession. We have been filled with joy by serving others and being served by them. We have come to know the mercy and love of God personally in our lives. These are all examples of how we have already tasted and seen the Kingdom.

If we are honest with ourselves, however, we will admit that it is difficult, if not impossible, to spend our entire life working toward what at times may seem a distant, if not a forgotten reward. How many of us ever really concern ourselves with the long-term consequences of youthful choices and behavior? How often do we witness our own children making the same mistakes? Like children, we still tend to live in the moment of our passions.

The Church knows that this is difficult for us and helps us by breaking down our life into smaller segments that are easier for us to manage. These are the daily, weekly, and annual cycles

of the Church's liturgical life. Together, they make up a microcosm of our entire life. If we spend our lives participating in them according to our strength, we will arrive at the end of our pilgrimage having run the race and having fought the good fight (1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7).

We begin with the daily cycle because it is when "we [must try to] enter upon a spiritual manner of living, both thinking and doing such thing as are well-pleasing unto [God]" The daily cycle is a microcosm of life because each new day is a gift from God to begin anew, to start over. St. Anthony the Great arose each day believing it to be his last and retired each evening believing he would not awake the next day. This awareness that at any time death can come upon us is what inspires us to live each day perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Cor. 7:1). It helps us to remember God's presence and His judgment in every moment, encounter, and circumstance. It motivates us to die daily to the old nature in order to be continually resurrected in the nature that Christ has deified.

In practical terms, each day should include a rule of prayer, the study of Scripture, and the reading of the lives of the Saints. We must also be attentive in common daily activities such as eating, conversing, and relating with others. We must also guard our minds and hearts from all that this world represents. For example, we should not accept what the world defines as love, happiness, hope, peace, and quality of life. Only God can satisfy our yearning for these things since He is their embodiment. The goal of each day is to become more and more aware of God's presence within us and to maintain at all times this consciousness. This is accomplished by avoiding all worldly distractions and by obeying Him in all things. The psalmist puts it this way, "Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it" (Ps. 34:14).

Each day finds its end in the Kingdom, which itself will be fulfilled on that final Day when Christ returns. As mentioned above, though, it's not always easy for us to look at each day with this long-term perspective in mind. Therefore, we can break all the days of our lives down into seven day, or weekly increments, each crowned with our participation in the Eucharist. Just as each day can be a microcosm of our life, so too can the week be one. The day begins with our being raised from our beds and ends with a rest from our many toils and labors. Likewise, each week begins and ends with the celebration of the Eucharist, the participation in the Kingdom to come.

A good time to begin the weekly cycle is at the end of the Liturgy, with the words of the celebrant, "Let us depart in peace." It is on this New Day that we can begin the daily struggle described above to preserve the peace and contemplate the true Light we have seen, the heavenly Spirit we have received, the true Faith we have found, and the worship of the undivided Trinity Who has saved us. This also helps us to prepare to receive the Eucharist and hear the Gospel proclaimed at the next Divine Liturgy. If we spend our whole life going from day to day and week to week in this manner, we will find ourselves at the end of the race, having fought the good fight.

Finally, there is the annual celebration of the Great and Holy Pascha of our Lord. If the daily and weekly cycles show us that life consists of fasts and feasts, of little deaths and little resurrections, it is only because at Pascha the Church cries out, "Christ is risen!" It is on this Feast of Feasts that we are filled with the joyous news that all things, especially our own humanity, have been renewed in Christ. We are not simply given the chance to start over. We are made a new creation in Christ. One implication of this is that we are no longer faced with the meaninglessness, hopelessness, and purposelessness of this fallen world. Our communion with God, our share in the life of the Trinity, is restored. Everything in this life, including sufferings and tribulations of all kinds, has been transformed by the Cross. Even the most tragic of events can lead to our perfection. As St. Paul teaches us, "... we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope" (Rom 5:3-4).

In order to experience this renewal, it is necessary that our participation in the liturgical component of Great Lent be accompanied by our reflection of how well we lived according to the Gospel during the past year: did we respond like Christ in all our dealings with those around us and in all the unforeseen events that took place; did we always do what we could to reveal the love of God to our neighbor; were we a slave to righteousness, or was mammon our master; did we spend each day and night as if it were our last; and finally, did we go from week to week as one who had received the Body and Blood of Christ and who was preparing to receive it again? After we have reviewed the past year (most easily accomplished by reflecting at the end of each day and week of the year) we must repent and confess where we fell short. Where we discover that some good was accomplished, we give God the glory.

If we go through the period of preparation before Pascha like this God will grant us the joyous news of the Resurrection in a most profound and personal way because we will be ready to receive it as such. It will be a joy that will last and carry us well beyond Bright Week and Pentecost. We will go on to spend every moment, of every day, of every week, of every year of our entire lives going from one degree of glory to the next in the joy of the Resurrection.

All the liturgical cycles of the Church reveal the truth about this life: that by the death and resurrection of Christ, we can be sanctified. In this fallen world, we can share in God's love, life, righteousness, truth, peace, mercy, wisdom; i.e.: the Communion of the Holy Trinity. In this fallen world there is life. It is Christ's life, in whose image we are being restored. The liturgical life of the Church is a means by which we can embrace this life as such. Let us therefore commend ourselves and each other and our whole life unto Christ our God. For He, through His Church, has made it possible for us to do so.

Fr. Peter is rector at St. Anthony the Great Orthodox Mission in Bozeman, MT, along with Matushka Maria and children. He also oversees the diocesan website.

Upcoming

St. Eugene Summer Camp

(Pacific Central Deanery) July 3 - 9

Location: St. Nicholas Ranch, Dunlap, California

Director: Kathy Pieracci (209) 931 - 0584

Spiritual Advisor: Archpriest Basil Rhodes (408) 867 - 0628

Ages 7 and up

Camp Activities include: Canoeing, hiking, archery, camp carnival, visit to the Great Sequoias and Hume Lake in the Sierras, crafts (including Ukrainian Egg Dyeing, "Pysanky".)

Spiritual Activities: Twice-daily services, daily religious education and activities, frequent and personal encounter with Deanery clergy, meet and interact with His Grace Bishop Benjamin, visits to the Life-Giving Spring Greek Orthodox Monastery usually including a visit with the Abbess with questions and answers.

Annual Pilgrimage to Fort Ross

The pilgrimage to this southern-most outpost of the Russian Empire, and stopping point for Saint Innocent in 1836, takes place on July Fourth every year (unless it falls on Sunday.) The fort is located north of San Francisco, on the ruggedly beautiful coast of Northern California, on Highway 1. The Hierarchal Divine Liturgy will be celebrated at 10:00 a.m., and OCA and other Orthodox clergy from all around will come to celebrate at this sacred and historic site. Please come and join us on the 80th year since these pilgrimages began!

Pacific Southwest Deanery Camp

Please contact Fr. Michael Senyo at (323) 666-4977 for information.

Tarzana's St. Innocent to celebrate 50th

Preparations for the California church's celebration are being coordinated by Fr. Nicholas Boldireff, (818) 881-1123.

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(Bp. BEN, *Around the Diocese, cont'd from inside front cover*)

I would also like to mention two very remarkable temples. The St. Seraphim Church in Santa Rosa, California and the Theophany Church of Colorado Springs, Colorado are truly magnificent buildings. Not to be rushed, these two communities are in the process of completing beautiful examples of what an Orthodox temple should be. Their traditional architecture and the iconography within are eloquent statements about the Orthodox Faith and have, because of their traditional beauty, brought inquirers to the Faith of the Apostles. It is such a pleasure to worship in them, to hear good choirs, and to experience the power of spiritual beauty to change hearts. The consecration of the Theophany temple will take place as part of our Diocesan Assembly in October.

Finally, it should be noted the Dormition parish of Calhan, Colorado celebrates its 100th anniversary this August. Much of our attention as a Church is being focused on the 100th anniversary of the founding of St. Tikhon Monastery in South Canaan, PA. But, as St. Raphael was turning the soil to begin the construction of the first monastery in the Lower 48, St. Tikhon was breaking ground in the far away and rather wild West. May God grant the faithful of Calhan another 100 years of witness to the Orthodox Faith in the high plains of Colorado.

It is indeed difficult to enumerate all the blessings God has bestowed upon us in the Diocese of the West. As I travel throughout the diocese, I am grateful to God for being appointed the auxiliary to His Grace, Bishop TIKHON in the West.

+Benjamin
Bishop of Berkeley

Stewards of the West



701 Park Place,
Boulder City, NV
tel. 702-293-7208

(Fr. Joseph, cont'd. from page 14.)

The other ancient Iconophobes were the Arians and, later, the Nestorians, who denied that the Incarnation was the taking of flesh by one of the Eternal and Uncreated Trinity. The Arians taught that Christ is an "Emanation" or expression of the Eternal Father, of similar nature but not the same Nature. For this reason, the face of Christ would not, in fact, be the face of the Eternal God. The Nestorians seem to have felt that Christ is not only possessed of two natures but is, some how, two distinct persons: one of whom was born of The Virgin and the other "divine person" who, some how showed up after Christ's birth. Of course, I simplify, but, suffice it to say that these, still extant, heretics refuse to call Our Lady "Theotokos" or "Birthgiver of God", using the title "Christotokos" or "Christ bearer", implying that the Messiah but not The True God abode in her womb.

Man of these heretics later became Muslims and, in fact, Saint John of Damascus, who seems to have understood Islam as well or better than any of The Fathers, and who wrote in defense of the Holy Icons, posits that, in its early days, Islam was little more than a variant of Nestorianism.

The Iconoclast convulsion to which you refer and whose repudiation we celebrate on the First Sunday of Lent, seems to have effected none of the Orthodox Churches except that of Constantinople and the former Arian Church of the Gauls. It was initiated, in part, by an emperor from Assyria, the hotbed of Nestorianism, and appears to have been an effort to appease the Muslims who took the positions that all images of any kind are idols and violate the commandments of Allah. The Church dealt with this error by declaring that Holy Icons are not idols but vehicles for the Human Soul to enter into contact with the Divine. "The honor offered to the Antitype or Icon is not a veneration of wood and pigment but passes through the Image to the Divine reality which it represents.

Now, as you point out, some Orthodox publications seem to minimize this spiritual dimension of Holy Icons and to imply that they are mere teaching aids. Sometimes we will read that they exist so that our minds, contemplating their subjects, can

learn to "Imitate the pious acts of the Holy Ones depicted in them". While there is, clearly, a didactic dimension to the Holy Images, it doesn't take much to figure out that this idea came from the Latinized school Kieven scholasticism which attempted to counter Unite aggression with quasi-Romish intellectual prattle. It just serves to remind us of the need to stand by the Holy Tradition and not to attempt to outdo the Fathers in contending with error.

Now, for one more issue which you do not directly address. How is it that we not only venerate Icons of Our Lord but also of His Holy Mother, of the Bodiless Powers and of those Saints that have glorified Christ by their lives and deaths in every generation? The answer to this is found in the themes of the Second Sunday of Great Lent: the Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas. It is on this Sunday that the Church speaks to us, of the Uncreated Light of Christ, which Illumines and Deifies the Saints. That circle around the countenance of the Holy Saints. Which the Western Church turned into an insipid

"Hallo " is nothing less than the representation of the Light of Christ, the Uncreated Energy of God, causing and showing the Theosis of the Holy Saints. So, understanding the words of Holy Apostle Paul that "It is no longer I who live but Jesus Christ Who lives in me." We understand that every true Orthodox Icon of a Saint is an Icon of Christ who indwells, sanctifies and deifies that Saint. It is, perhaps, because the Latin Church never really accepted the Uncreated Energies of God, The Doctrine of Theosis or any of the other Patristic Teachings which St. Gregory so simply, brilliantly and faithfully collected and taught, that the Romans and their Protestant offspring never really came to terms with the Orthodox veneration of the Holy Icons.

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Helping The Homeless Elderly In Ethiopia

by Deacon Michael Savko

On receiving our Diocese's 2005 Stewards of the West Appeal, I was very pleased to read that in addition to four worthwhile outreach activities in our Diocese, our two bishops and the Diocesan Council have added a fifth activity, one that provides for assistance to the homeless elderly in Ethiopia.

Specifically, 100% of the funding will be sent to the Gobeze-Goshu Home for the Elderly in Adwa, Ethiopia, a facility recently completed that is the vision of one Ethiopian native, Tsige-Roman Gobezie, a member of our Annunciation Church in Santa Maria, California.

Tsige-Roman Gobezie is a native of Adwa, a town of around 40,000 people in northern Ethiopia, who left Adwa when she was 8 years old after her father died. She eventually became an American citizen and worked until her recent retirement as a pharmacist for Santa Barbara County. On her first trip back to Ethiopia in 2000, Tsige-Roman was devastated by the poverty she witnessed, especially in Adwa where many elderly were living in the streets without food, shelter, or hope. On inquiry, she discovered that church, government and international aid agencies have limited programs in place to assist Ethiopian children and the handicapped, but no programs existed for the homeless elderly. You should be aware that Ethiopia is one of the poorest of the third world nations that has experienced recent severe droughts, food shortages that have resulted in thousands of deaths, and major health threats due to water-related diseases. This country of 65 million people embraced Orthodoxy (Monophysite) in the 4th Century, and is still a majority Orthodox, with the remainder mostly Muslim and a few Protestants.

On her return to the United States, Tsige-Roman made a firm resolve to help. In her own words:

"I cannot help all these people, but I will pick one of these groups and do at least a little. I am retired, and all I have is a home here, so whatever I get from the sale of my house and my possessions and my retirement that is invested I will use to build a residence there."

A few months after relocating to Port Hueneme, California, I met Tsige-Roman last year at the monthly gathering of the Friends of St. Barbara Monastery in Goleta, California as she

was about to leave for Ethiopia to start her good work there.



She described to us her vision of housing sixty people of her village who would be over 65 with no home, no family and no income. They will be provided with beds, clean clothes and regular meals. In January, 2005, Tsige-Roman returned from Ethiopia for a minor operation and spoke with some of us at the Monastery gathering about her progress.

A few years ago, the Ethiopian government donated some land in Adwa with a small river running through it. On this property Tsige-Roman has built her home, a caretaker's house, an office, and the facility for the elderly. Plans are for crops to be raised by the river as a source of income and food for the facility along with a bakery. The residence plans to rely on solar power for cooking to reduce expensive electrical expenses, along with a fuel-powered pump to pump water from the river to irrigate the fields. Tsige-Roman foresees a time when the facility will be self-sufficient, but until that time when the crops are established in five or six years, she must rely on financial assistance.

The pictures of the facility on this page are from a slide presentation that Mr. Brian Diederich made at the April 11, 2005 Monastery gathering upon his 23-day Ethiopian visit. Brian informed us that the 60 elderly will be selected by the local churches and government officials in Adwa, with two elderly from each of the ten nearest churches. God willing, by Pascha, the first twenty elderly (10 men and 10 women) will arrive and the facility becomes operational, increasing the number of elderly helped as time progresses.

Official dedication is planned for November of 2005 with the Prime Minister and the Patriarch of Ethiopia in attendance to lend their support. Tsige-Roman must report to two governmental boards in Ethiopia in addition to coordinating with another support board in Italy and our own Board of Trustees of which Brian is finan-



cial coordinator.

Brian informed us that Tsige-Roman is very happy in Ethiopia, but misses her church in Santa Maria and her friends here. She does have some family nearby in Adwa and in near-by Axum



who have pledged to keep this facility in perpetuity as a family-controlled project. Mother Victoria, on behalf of all of the Friends of St. Barbara Monastery at the meeting, asked Brian what Tsige-Roman needs most in the form of aid. I must confess I expected to hear him request us to send money and more



money. After all, according to the brochure, \$10 will help support one needy elderly person for two weeks. What Tsige-Roman prays for most are able-bodied volunteers – preferably skilled in the care of the elderly – to assist her on-site for three months, six months or a year or more. She can provide the room and board and will be most happy to do so. She realizes that the rub for most of us is the time commitment and the cost to get to Ethiopia, but she prays that this will happen.

Perhaps in one of our parishes or missions we have someone fresh out of high school or college who would like to do such a good work before embarking on college or a career. If airfare is

a deterrent, perhaps contributions from the local parish would help. Just a thought...

Those who would like to contribute to this Diocese of the West outreach project can send their donations to:



The Gobezie-Goshu Home for the Elderly
 P.O. Box 5624
 Santa Maria, CA 93456



Or send them directly to the treasurer:
 The Gobezie-Goshu Home for the Elderly
 c/o Brian Diederich, Treasurer
 834 Bougainvillea Street
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Unlike most charities, 100% of your tax-deductible contribution will go directly to benefit the elderly residents, as everyone involved with the project freely volunteers their time, talents, and resources for the benefit of helping the destitute elderly. E-Mail inquiries may be sent to GobezieHome@sbcglobal.net.

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