

Christ is Risen!

Indeed He is Risen!

Your Diocese

Alive in Christ

The Magazine of the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, Orthodox Church in America Volume XVII, No. 1 Spring, 2001



HOLOVIK'S CHURCH SUPPLY, INC.

2211 WEST FRONT STREET BERWICK, PA 18603-4105 USA

PHONE: 570-759-1581 FAX: 570-759-2297

HOME PAGE: holoviak.com



#1000w Wooden Icon Kiot

Price: \$495.00 each.

Sample shown in Walnut Finish.

Overall Approx. Size: 14 1/2" wide;

8 1/4" high (backside); 16 3/4" deep.

Note: Icon sold separately.

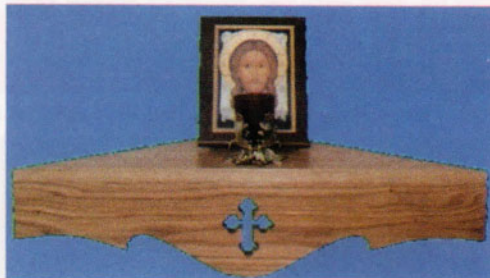


Custom Made Icon Shrine

Price: \$200.00 for sample shown made of Cedar Wood with a Plexiglass Front.

Approx. Size of Icon shown: 9 1/4" x 11 3/4".

Note: Icon sold separately.



#ICC-O Wooden Icon Corner

Price: \$50.00 each.

Sample shown in Light Finish.

Note: Icon and Lamp sold separately.



Custom Made Icon Stand

Price: \$875.00 for sample shown made of Oak/Oak Veneer.

Backside has 3 shelves and a door at the bottom.

Approx. Size: 16" wide; 54 1/2" high (backside); 14 1/2" deep.

Note: Any custom design can be made. Please send or fax a clean sketch of your design.

Prices shown in US dollars.

Shipping is extra.

Add 6% sales tax where applicable.

**CHRIST
IS RISEN!**



**INDEED HE
IS RISEN!**

Dedicated Clergy and Beloved Faithful of our Diocese:

The Holy Orthodox Church in Her divine services during the radiant night of Pascha glorifies our Lord Jesus Christ's rising from the tomb with exultant joy and holy ecstasy, and with love proclaims to all people the glad tidings that the Resurrection of Christ is the triumph of Life, the death of death, and the pledge of our own resurrection and life eternal. This proclamation is the heart of the Gospel of salvation — it is the Good News that can transform all the world's sadness, and equip us with the courage to be the light of Christ in the midst of the darkness and sin.

I greet you on this most solemn and holy Paschal Feast! Let us rejoice greatly! Let us triumph in a spirit of radiant serenity, inspired with Faith both in mind and heart, "having seen the Resurrection of the Lord"; and let us glorify the exquisite and eternal fruits of Christ's Resurrection: "From death unto life and from earth unto Heaven hath Christ our God brought us over!" He has raised us from the dust, made us like unto God, and has revealed to us "the beginning of a life new and everlasting."

May this Pascha in the new millennium illumine your life and transform your sorrow into the Joy of the Risen Christ. While celebrating the glorious Resurrection of Christ, let us also raise, from the depth of our hearts, a prayer of thanksgiving to Christ the Giver of Life, and with spiritual exultation intone the Paschal chant of love. On this Day of Resurrection, "let us be illumined with the solemn Feast and embrace one another." For Christ has risen from the dead, by His death trampling down death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life.

With love in the Risen Lord,

+ Herman,

+ H E R M A N, Archbishop of
Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania

Your Diocese
Alive in Christ

Volume XVII Number 1 Spring 2001
 The Official Magazine of the
 Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania
 Orthodox Church in America

*Now All
 Is Filled
 With Light!*
 The staff of *Your Diocese
 Alive in Christ* wishes you
 a most holy and joyful
 feast of Pascha!

In This Issue:

Paschal Greeting from His Eminence, Archbishop Herman 1
 "Our Lady of Sitka" to Visit St. Tikhon's Monastery 3
 Catechumens, Baptism, and Pascha 4
 Life in the Age to Come: Winter Teen Retreat 7
 Spiritual Fatherhood 13
 Prayer of St. Nikolai Velimirovich 18
 Orthodox Demonstrate Concern for the Unborn 19
 St. Gregory Palamas: Parable of Publican and Pharisee 22
 Pre-Lenten Winter Festival 2001 Delights Guests 26
 The Significance of the Married Saints 28
 For the Hours of Pain - *Part VI* 32
 Getting Started 37
 St. Cyril's Commentary On Gospel of John - *Part VII* 38
 Foundation Raised \$40,200 for St. Tikhon's 44
 An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith - *Part X* 45
 A Short History of Syrian Christianity - *Part IV* 49
 The Spirit of God in Us: Our Salvation 53
 St. Nicodemus: Commentary on the Paschal Canon57

Departments:

All in the Diocesan Family 69
 Daily Devotions 56
 Education Bulletin 37
 Official 6
 Pascha Listings 61



Foundation Raised \$40,200. pg.44

Your Diocese Alive in Christ

Produced by the Publications Department of the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, Orthodox Church in America (Diocesan Center, South Canaan, Pennsylvania 18459 (570) 937-4686), under the direction of His Eminence, Archbishop HERMAN.

Editor Fr. John Kowalczyk
 Photography Martin Paluch
 Staff Fr. David Mahaffey
 Circulation Fr. Leo Poore

Editorial and Subscription Office: *Alive in Christ*, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, South Canaan, Pennsylvania 18459
 Phone (res.): (570) 876-1241.

Alive in Christ is distributed free of charge within the Diocese. Those living in other areas may subscribe for \$12 per year.

Deadline for the next issue of *Your Diocese Alive in Christ* is July 31, 2001. Please submit all articles (typed) pictures, parish news, etc., on disc to *Alive in Christ*, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, Box 130, South Canaan, PA 18459, or e-mail to library@stots.edu

“Our Lady of Sitka” to Visit St. Tikhon’s Monastery At 97th Pilgrimage in May

The beloved and wonderworking icon “Our Lady of Sitka” will visit the Monastery of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk, in South Canaan, Pennsylvania for the 97th annual pilgrimage this spring, on May 25-28.

It will be the icon’s third visit to the contiguous United States. Her last visit was in the early 1980s. The icon’s presence will bring great spiritual blessing, particularly for those who come to venerate and pray before it. The icon is mentioned in several books that list and describe wonderworking Orthodox icons.

The visit of the Sitka Mother of God — known affectionately as the Sitka Madonna — will inaugurate a five-year period of pre-festivity and preparation for the centennial of St. Tikhon’s Monastery, an event which will be celebrated in the year 2005. St. Tikhon’s is the first and oldest Orthodox monastery in the New World. It was co-founded by St. Patriarch Tikhon of Moscow, Enlightener of North America, and by Archbishop (then Hieromonk) Arseny, who later became the first Orthodox bishop of Canada. The monastery grounds were consecrated by St. Raphael of Brooklyn.

The Sitka icon resides in the historic St. Michael the Archangel Cathedral in Sitka, Alaska, the first Orthodox cathedral in the New World, constructed under the leadership of St. Innocent of Alaska and consecrated in the presence of nearly 50 clergy of the Alaskan mission.

Just as those Alaskan church workers, and their flocks, were conducting the mission of Christ in Alaska during the 19th century, so today, we continue to carry on the very same mission, now throughout North America and throughout the whole world — the mission to spread the Good News of the Savior, Jesus Christ, and to build up his Holy



Our Lady of Sitka

Orthodox Church, which is the ark of salvation.

All lovers of God and of his Mother, the Theotokos, and of the Orthodox

Church in the Americas, are invited to take part in the 97th annual pilgrimage to St. Tikhon’s Monastery.



Catechumens, Baptism, and Pascha

It is well known that in the ancient Church the lenten fast was the time of preparation of catechumens for illumination (baptism), and that the baptisms took place on Holy Saturday before the paschal liturgy. Baptism then and now means what Pascha means: death and resurrection, the inauguration of new life in Christ.

Throughout the year at every Divine Liturgy the two categories of catechumens were dismissed at the completion

of the "liturgy of the catechumens" along with the penitents and others. Those remaining in Church, the "faithful," stayed for the "liturgy of the faithful." It is clear that the Church intended all those present in this second part of the liturgy to take part in the eucharistic banquet, to be partakers of Christ's Body and Blood.

The dismissal of the catechumens, then, was part of the liturgical action, including litanies and prayers. When later the intensive and highly structured

catechumenate process diminished and the baptism of infants became the "norm," some rites, such as the Roman rite, eliminated the prayers and ritual dismissal of the catechumens. The Byzantine liturgy, however, until our time has retained these materials. There are some today within Orthodoxy who question this retention. Already in some areas of the Orthodox world the catechumen prayers and dismissal have been dropped. In other areas they have been

dropped at specific times — such as the paschal season. Still others may retain them, but propose their elimination. What can be said about this? Are the catechumen references anachronisms? We offer a few reflections:

(1) Liturgy, like scripture, is part of our Holy Tradition, the sacred *Paradosis* of the Church. The appropriate attitude toward all aspects of Holy Tradition is reverence and submission. Would it be reverent to tamper with Holy Scripture, to add, subtract, “update” or otherwise attempt to make it “relevant”? By what authority is this done, and what are the criteria of deciding what should be added, subtracted, etc.? Are these criteria divine or human? Are they cultural, geographical, sociological, or otherwise earthly? If the scriptures and liturgy are in the first place divinely inspired and authored, and if the Church through the ages is guided by the Holy Spirit, is it appropriate or in any way correct to adjust the sacred treasures of God’s Word and God’s worship on the basis of human considerations? Do the scriptures and liturgy address and treat the permanent human condition with words and actions of eternal content and significance, or do they treat temporary human situations which change from generation to generation and from culture to culture and therefore need constant revision? Are we perhaps at the beginning of the third millennium of the Christian era so in awe of the principles of change and “progress” in our secular life that we have lost entirely any appreciation for the Church’s unchanging teaching and practice, her permanent *paradosis*? These rhetorical questions are obviously meant to suggest their own answer.

Some voices today cry out: but it is obvious that there have been liturgical developments and adaptations in the past; additions, deletions, changes have been enacted which addressed human conditions of Church life. If one studies with reverence and without preconceptions the history of liturgical development from, for example, ancient times to the flourishing of Byzantine worship, one will begin to notice a rather astonishing principle. Such a study does not reveal abrupt or arbitrary cultural adaptations; the process was rather more like a bud and flowering. All the essential elements of the fully developed “classical” liturgies were present from apostolic

times. Both innovations and deletions are not found. At times there are rearrangements, but nothing is added, nothing is lost. In a bud the whole flower is present but not yet apparent; in the full flowering all that was nascent becomes visible. That is the manner in which our sacred tradition of worship developed. It is not meet or right to change that principle.

(2) Our celebration of the liturgy to-

Are we perhaps at the beginning of the third millennium of the Christian era so in awe of the principles of change and “progress” in our secular life that we have lost entirely any appreciation for the Church’s unchanging teaching and practice, her permanent *paradosis*?

day in a particular place cannot be divorced either from contemporary celebrations elsewhere or from celebrations in the past or the future. We retain the catechumen references first of all to maintain our solidarity with faithful believers in ages past as well as with those in ages to come. The liturgy is not a cultural product; it is not an earthly banquet; its true location is not temporal or spatial but at the majestic throne of God in eternity. There were catechumens in the past, there will surely be catechumens in the future, and as everyone knows there are catechumens now. Is it not extremely puzzling — this attempt to eliminate something so obviously permanent.

From where did the idea come that in any given parish we pray only for that parish, its condition and needs? Do we not include in every liturgy prayers and supplications for both catechumens and faithful in other parishes, other times, other cultures? Is not prayer above all other endeavors able to cut across the usual limitations of time and space? Why do we attempt to reduce the Church to earthly limitations when in fact it is the

presence of Heaven?

Next question: if all this is true, then why do we not really dismiss these people at the words, “Depart, catechumens . . .” This is a good question. A question worth pondering.

When the Church did enact the dismissal, historically, it was not only catechumens that left; others did so as well: penitents (those under discipline for some moral or spiritual breach, and *energoumenoi* (those bothered by demons, in need of special treatment not excluding exorcism). The prayers of the liturgy of the faithful indicate both implicitly and explicitly that those who are present are qualified and prepared to partake of the mysteries and be united as one in the sacred communion.

(3) In addition to the above considerations, our liturgy from earliest times was considered as having practical and symbolic significance; these two must not be disjoined. If one studies the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* of St. Dionysius and the Byzantine commentaries on the liturgy such as those of St. Maximus, St. Germanus, St. Simeon of Thessalonica, and St. Nicholas Cabasilas, one immediately notices the principle that everything in the liturgy has symbolic significance; even if a given element has no particular or apparent practicality, it nevertheless has symbolic meaning. No element in the liturgy is merely practical. In our time there is great confusion concerning this concept “symbol.” The modern definition: something standing for something else, and as such non-real, is not the meaning of symbol in the ancient world and in the Biblical/Patristic writings and in our liturgy. Symbol means rather the conjoining of two realities. Among the realities brought together in the liturgy are: the age to come and this age, the *church triumphant* (above) and the *church militant* (below), heaven and earth. Symbols in the liturgy are a way of expressing the inexpressible, of revealing the eternal and ineffable in words, gestures, actions of the material realm. The symbolic effects a conjoining of opposites. Our Lord taught in parables which are “narrative symbols” which express a meaning beyond the narrative. The whole liturgy could be called a parable in action.

St. Maximus in his *Mystagogy* (Chapter 15) discusses the meaning of

Continue on the next page

Catechumens

Continued from page 5

the catechumen dismissal as follows:

“The closing of the doors which takes place after the sacred reading of the holy gospel and the dismissal of the catechumens signifies (symbolizes) the passing from material things which will come about after that terrible separation and even more terrible judgment and the entrance of those who are worthy into the spiritual world, that is, into the nuptial chamber of Christ, as well as the complete extinction in our senses of deceptive activity.”

For Maximus, as for the traditional Orthodox understanding of the liturgy through the ages, the closing of the doors and dismissal of the catechumens symbolizes (i.e., brings into time) the eschatological and cosmic realities of the “passing from material things” after the great and terrible judgment, and the entrance of the worthy (i.e., the faithful) into the bridal chamber of Christ, the Bridegroom. At the same time these acts symbolize also (personally) the closing of our senses in their deceptive, earth-bound use, and the opening of the transfigured senses to the eternal and most perfect Kingdom of God — a process, incidentally, which was begun at our chrismation. This view of the liturgy is not “added” to the basically functional view. It is rather seeing into the depths of the mystery of the sacred functions. It presupposes an understanding of the liturgy as the third stage of theosis, the first two being: baptism (stage of purification), and chrismation (stage of illumination). This threefold process was taught by all the holy fathers and remains foundational to Orthodoxy in all ages.

A word now about the practice of eliminating the catechumen material only at the paschal season. The logic of this is based on a false premise, that is, that all catechumens were baptized each Pascha. Certainly not so! There were two distinct categories of catechumens: first, the *katichoumenoi* (catechumens) who were sometimes designated “auditors” — engaged in a program of training which might last for three to five years. In many cases (not just a few) people delayed and extended their auditorship well beyond five years. Sermon after sermon of the holy fathers of the fourth century testify to this. Only the catechumens who were “earnest and persevered

well” (in the words of the *Apostolic Tradition*) entered the “senior class” of the school of preparation. Such persons then became *photizomenoi* — those preparing for illumination. These were carefully examined in their conduct of life before being accepted in the final stage which brought them to the paschal baptism of a given year.

So at any given paschal liturgy there were still many catechumens to dismiss, not to mention the penitents — since some disciplines lasted for a number of years, as well as others unprepared for participation in the paschal eucharist.

Each generation is responsible to guard the treasure of the faith handed to us from the past. We should be adamantly averse to any tampering with sacred things for the sake of adjusting to the times or the “spirit of the times.” We cannot be faithful to Orthodox Tradition by initiating a process of gradual dismantling of the Liturgy — as did the protestant reformers of the sixteenth century. If the world and its institutions must of necessity “keep up with the times” by innovating, eliminating, abandoning the past, and experimenting *ad infinitum*, what does this have to do with the Holy Church of Jesus Christ Who is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and whose Kingdom is not of this world!

—Archpriest Theodore Heckman

Official

Retired:

V. Rev. Michael Rachko

V. Rev. Andrew Shuga

Attached:

V. Rev. Michael Rachko - St. Herman of Alaska Church

V. Rev. Andrew Shuga - St. Tikhon's Monastery

Parish Council Confirmations:

All Saints Church - Olyphant, PA

Assumption Virgin Mary Church - St. Clair, PA

Holy Cross Church - Williamsport, PA

Holy Trinity Church - Pottstown, PA

St. John the Baptist Church - Nanticoke, PA

St. Mary's Church - Coaldale, PA

St. Michael Church - Jermyn, PA

St. Michael Church - Mount Carmel, PA

St. Michael Church - Old Forge, PA

St. Michael Church - Wilmington, PA

St. Nicholas Church - Coatesville, PA

St. Nicholas Church - Olyphant, PA

Ss. Peter and Paul Church - Minersville, PA

St. Tikhon's Summer Camp July 22 - 28, 2001

St. Tikhon's Seminary, South Canaan, Pa.

For Reservations Contact:

Martin Paluch, Box 130, South Canaan, PA 18459

570-937-4686 / depa@socantel.net



Life in the Age to Come

Reflections on St. Tikhon's Winter Teen Retreat 2001

*I look for the Resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen*

— The Nicene Creed

*Can you take me higher? To the place
where blind men see? Can you take me
higher? To the place with golden streets?*

— Creed, "Higher"

*And the street of the city was pure gold,
like transparent glass — Rev. 21:21*

These were some of the things we discussed this year at St. Tikhon's Winter Teen Retreat. Over 40 teens participated in this encounter, which took place the first weekend of February. They came from a wide variety of backgrounds, and from distant states and lands — Florida, Russia. They were supported and fed by a fully volunteer staff of concerned adults from the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, under the direction of Matushka Fran Vansuch. Our prayer is that wherever they came from, or wherever they are — spiritually, emotionally, physically — that we will someday all be together again in that blessed life in the age to come. For, indeed, this was the topic of our retreat.

Last year, Fr. Michael Anderson, Director of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries for the Orthodox Church in America, led this retreat, focusing on the idea of the millennium and what our vision for the future of this world can be, especially when we let God into the picture. This year, we continued along these lines, by looking at a little of what God has in store for us and how we should prepare ourselves. The main way that we did this, was by simply talking to one another and learning from one another. We listened as well to songs of the culture at large, such as Creed's *Higher*, to see how these could help us shape a vision for the future. I've quoted from a few of them in this article.

Our first task in the retreat was to get to know one another. St. John says that when the last times come, we shall see



Father David Subu lecturing

God as He is (1 John 3:2, Rev 22:4). We will also see each other as we truly are, stripped bare of the masks, pretensions, poses and prejudices we carry around in the course of our daily lives. What little we could do in one weekend towards that was primarily to talk together. Most importantly, we shared some of our dreams and hopes for the future. A thirst for heaven must begin with eyes looking toward eternity.

"After these things, I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, Come up here, and I will show you things which *must take place after this*" (Rev. 4:1).

Between you and me, It's hard to ever really know who to trust, how to think, what to believe (The Cure, "Blood-flowers").

Whenever we talk about life in the age to come, we are dealing with things beyond the scope of our everyday experience. There are many people out there bursting to share their vision of the kingdom of heaven and what they think you

have to do or think to get there. And there are no easy answers. The Orthodox teaching on these matters has always respected the *mystery* of our salvation and the *mystery* of the kingdom to come. This can make it extremely difficult to convey what the Church actually teaches about heaven in comparison with what others might readily teach, and certainly what is available on television and in movies. But we must try nonetheless. The lives of our youth depend on it.

Our discussion did not skirt this difficulty or this challenge. As a result, we shared some very animated discussion, even debate, about beliefs. Our teens clearly are already in the process of defining set beliefs about the nature of reality, God, and life after death — with or without our help. It is imperative that we share with them the exalted vision of eternal life found in Orthodoxy — one not found in any other "Christian" belief system. Many of us do not share it because we cannot — we are ignorant ourselves. But many of us will find that we do share the same hopes and dreams,

Continued on the next page

Life in the Age to Come

Continued from page 7

the desire to love and to be loved. Is this such a mystery, after all?

We must begin with reclaiming the Truth. Since ancient times, philosophers have tried to bottle Truth into a neat and easy package called ideas. This has been done so much that people now believe as a matter of course that Truth is a matter of ideas and beliefs and thoughts. And there are so many of these ideas available, all equally unable to contain Truth but claiming to be Truth, that many of us, especially our youth today, have thrown up their hands and given up on there being any such thing as absolute and real Truth. Truth has become a matter of personal perception, opinion, and taste, like so many flavors of soda.

But God revealed Himself to us, to show us that Truth is not a *what* — not an idea, or a belief, nor a philosophy, nor an opinion — but that He Himself is Truth. Truth is a *who*, Jesus Christ. So that our youth might know a little bit more about who Jesus Christ is, they were read three of the seven sermons that were once delivered by the Rev. Father George Calciu. Fr. George wrote these sermons in Romania during the time of communist oppression. He had already suffered sixteen years in one of the worst prison systems in human history. His sermons and story are told in the brilliant book *Christ is Calling You! A Course in catacomb pastorship*:

“He was a survivor of the scientific experiment of Pitesti: the most diabolical system of torture ever devised, which attempted to methodically dismantle the human personality. Having had the very foundation of his soul defiled, Fr. George had found the inward strength to turn to Christ, from whom he received not only restoration and healing but even the superhuman power to love and forgive his torturers. On his release from prison, he gave his homilies out of his desire to lay down his life for Christ and for young people lost in materialism. Purified in a crucible of suffering, his fiery soul cried out to them, awakening them to the purpose of existence and changing their lives forever. He was again incarcerated in 1979, and after his release in 1984 he was exiled to America. When he returned to Romania in 1989, ten thousand young people came to pray with him, despite

concerted efforts by the authorities to stop this event.”

At the end of this article, we have reprinted the two sermons, slightly edited, that were used at the retreat. The “sixth homily” was delivered as a sermon in St. Tikhon’s Church. Please share this with everybody you know. They really are that good!

I believe in the Kingdom Come, then all the colors will bleed into one. Bleed into one. But yes, I’m still running. You broke the bonds and you loosed the chains

inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?’ And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look at it. So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. But one of the elders said to me, ‘Do not weep. Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.’ And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne . . . stood a Lamb as



Father David directs group meetings



*Carried the cross of my shame
Oh my shame, you know I believe it.
But I still haven’t found what I’m looking for.*

—U2, “I still haven’t found what I’m looking for”

“And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written

though it had been slain . . .” (Rev. 5:1-6).

Hearing about the Truth and understanding the Truth are two different things. Through the Church, the pillar and ground of truth (1 Tim. 3:15), we hear about Jesus Christ. But very often we do not understand. We may have picked up some facts about His life, or

about doctrines that we are meant to believe and confess. But how often do our Orthodox, young and old alike, feel secure and comfortable speaking about their Savior? How committed are we to the Truth? What would we be willing to endure or give up for the sake of that Truth?

Therefore, the finale of our retreat was to place ourselves in the shoes of St. John, as he wept and watched to see if the Truth, symbolized by the scroll with seven seals in Revelation, would ever be known. We stood and listened in

we have the faith? Would be willing to give up and let go of the things we hold most dear in this life, for the chance and opportunity to know the Truth, the ultimate, absolute truth?

Some of us felt ready, some of us did not. But this was only a hypothetical exercise, a fire drill of sorts. The day will come for each of us when we are tested in faith. What will we hold on to then? May each of us be able to overcome our fears, our doubts, our ignorance, our hard-heartedness and every temptation that can separate us from knowing fully

thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes" (Rev. 7:14-17).

*How I wish, How I wish you were here
We're just two lost souls
Swimming in a fish bowl
Year after year
Running over the same old ground
What have we found?
The same old fears
Wish you were here*
—Pink Floyd, "Wish you were here"

This is the time of the tribulation. This life, this world, this time. Our youth are in the middle of it and need our help. They are not the future of the Church, they are the Church today, suffering oppression and attacks without end as the Church always has. We must stand up. We must fight for them and with them. Share your faith, share your love for Jesus Christ, and if you are lacking these things what are you waiting for? In the age to come, may we never have to say, "Wish you were here." Amen.

—Priest David Subu



the dark of the chapel by candlelight as the four horsemen of the apocalypse were unleashed upon the world, seeking to destroy the Truth and those who hold on to it. We waited in anticipation to find out what would happen when the last seal was opened and the Truth was revealed. And we asked ourselves, would we be willing to endure such trouble and tribulation for the sake of the Truth? Would

and completely the love of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ.

"These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. They shall neither hunger anymore nor

Homilies to the Youth

By Fr. George Calciu*

First Homily: The Call

The time has come, young one, for you to hear a voice which has been calling you. It is a voice you have never heard before, or perhaps, one you have heard but which you did not understand and to which you paid no heed. It is the voice of Jesus!

Do not shudder, do not be amazed and do not smile suspiciously, my young friend! The voice which calls you is not that of a dead man, but of One Who has risen from the dead. He does not call out merely from history, but from the depths of your own inner being. The words written and read today from the New Testament issue out of the depths within you, yet they are unknown to you. Perhaps you have been ashamed or afraid to delve inside yourself and discover them. You believed that within you lay a wild beast, a sepulcher of instincts from which there would rise frightful spirits of passions.

* Edited for St. Tikhon's Winter Retreat.

Continued on the next page

Life in the Age to Come

Continued from page 9

You did not see the face of an angel, and yet you are an angel. If this has never been told to you before, Jesus is telling you now, and His testimony is true. No one has proved Him a liar.

What do you know of Christ, young one? If all you know is what they have taught you in atheistic classes, you have been deprived, in bad faith, of a truth — of the only truth which can set you free.

What do you know of the Church of Christ? If all you know can be reduced to the concepts of [philosophers], then you have been spitefully thwarted from experiencing the light of true culture and the brilliance of spirituality, which is the guarantee of human freedom.

Friend, where did you ever hear these words: *Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who despitefully use you and persecute you* (Matt. 5:44)? If you have never heard these words, my friend, who hindered you, and with what right? Who prohibited you from knowing that there exists a better way, more just and simple than that on which you now wander blindly? Who has pulled the veil over your eyes so that you would not see the most wonderful light of the love proclaimed and lived by Jesus unto the final end?

I have seen you on the street, my friend, young and handsome; and suddenly everything changes in you: your face is disfigured, your instincts break loose, ravishing your being in elemental fury, and you become violent. Where did you learn such violence, young man? From whom? I have seen your mother, meek and tearful and your father with his face stunned by pain, and I knew that you did not learn it from them. From where then?

Lend your ears and listen to the call of Jesus, the call of his Church. Outside of her, your reckless violence will lead you to judgment and imprisonment, where your soul may be irrevocably destroyed. I have seen you in pain before the magistrates, where your actions have assumed horrible dimensions. I have seen you afraid, cynical, full of bravado. All of these attitudes show me how near you are to the edge of destruction. And I ask myself once more: Who bears the guilt for your fall?

Come to the Church of Christ! Here

only will you find consolation for your ravished soul. Only in the Church will you find certainty, because only in the Church will you hear the voice of Jesus saying meekly to you: "Son, all your sins are forgiven. You have suffered much. Behold, I have made you whole; go and sin no more."

No one has ever said such words as these to you. Yet you hear them now. Rather you have heard of class hatred, political hatred, [racial hatred,] — always hatred. "Love" is a strange word to you, but now the Church of Christ shows you a better way, the way of love. Up until this moment you were a slave

Come to the Church of Christ — to learn what innocence and purity are, what meekness is and what love is. You will find your place in life and the purpose of your existence. To your astonishment you will discover that our life does not end in death, but in resurrection; that our existence centers on Christ, and that this world is not a mere empty moment in which non-being prevails.

You will receive hope, and this hope will make you strong.

You will receive faith, and this faith will save you.

You will receive love, and this love will make you good.



Archbishop Herman presents icon to retreatants

of your instincts; your body was a simple instrument through which your instincts expressed themselves. But now you hear the words of Jesus through His apostle, pleading with you: *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* (1 Cor. 3:15).

You have been told that you descend from the apes, that you are a beast which must be trained; but now you discover an amazing thing: that you are the temple of God and in you dwells the Spirit of God. You are being called, young friend, back to your dignity as a metaphysical being; you are raised up from the low place in which false education has sunk you to the sacred office of being the temple in which God dwells.

We call you to purity. If you have not forgotten the meaning of the word *innocence*, if there is still within you an area of undefiled childhood, you will not resist this call.

This is, my young friend, the first word which Jesus addresses to you in the midst of the turmoil of this world, through the thicket of your passions, with which no one has taught you to fight, and out of the transparent dreams of innocence which still haunt you from time to time.

Jesus is seeking you; Jesus has found you!

Fifth Homily: The Priesthood And Human Suffering

Perhaps you have been asking yourself, my young friend, why I have been addressing you, and by what authority? What right do I have to give this message which is disturbing you and obliging you to face up to disquieting questions? Why have I come to confirm your own misunderstood fears and to open up to you perspectives which are so new and unexpected that they may break down

your fragile balance of defenses?

Perhaps, by uncovering for you the purity and innocence which you did not recognize, I have made you even more vulnerable in this wicked world. I have made you more open to suffering, and it is natural that you should ask what is the purpose of suffering. Has it a finality, or is it just a blind happening, a fate traced by the stars, or an endless ocean in which you swim without hope of reaching any shore?

I speak you in the name of Christ and His Church, in the name of the priesthood to which Christ called me, because nothing in this world is an interplay of

sterile and never-realized understanding of the laws of nature, then our knowledge is slavery.

If our love is reduced to the struggle for existence, and our sacrifice for the perpetuating of the species, then these things too are but slavery.

And finally, if all our convictions spring from an imposed, official doctrine, then they cannot be but slavery.

And in all this series, young friend, where is the place for your soul?

You sense that there exists, away from all the materialism with which you have been intoxicated, and far from the atheism which has been imposed upon

Christ. God has revealed to us through love the mysteries of His works. And Jesus commanded me to make it known to you so that you will say no more: "I did not know it." I speak so that you may know that you can fly, and that only spiritual flight is truly exalted. The flight of materialism is flight with broken wings . . .

I have said all these things to you because I am a priest. And because we are priests we obey the command of God which says that a burning light cannot be hid under a bushel but must shine before all (cf. Matt. 5:15).

I have said all these things, young friends, that you may judge if it is right before God to listen to men rather than to God (cf. Acts 4:19). For He who gave Himself upon the Cross for the salvation of the world commanded us not to hide the divine truth. I have said all these things to you that you may understand that through faith we shatter walls and break down the bonds of prejudice and abuse, even if we shall have tribulation in this world (cf. John 16:33).

There is a continual battle between good and evil, between right and wrong, between freedom and captivity of ideas, between purity and corruption. All these battles take place on only one field of combat — the heart of man. I, the priest of Christ, address this heart; for as Pascal has said: "The heart has its own way of thinking which reason ignores."

What then, does the priesthood mean? It means to be an enduring witness to human suffering and to take it upon your own shoulders. To be the one who warms the leper at his own breast and who gives life to the miserable through the breath from his own mouth. To be a strong comfort to every unfortunate one, even when you yourself are overwhelmed with weakness. To be a ray of shining light to unhappy hearts when your eyes long ago ceased to see any light. To carry mountains of others' suffering on your shoulders, while your own being screams out with the weight of its own suffering.

Your flesh will rebel and say: "This heroism is absurd, impossible. Where is such a man, where is the priest you describe so that I may put my own suffering upon his shoulders?" Yet, nevertheless, he exists! From time to time there awakens within us the priest of Christ

Continued on the next page



unconscious, arbitrary happenings. All things stem from a cause and hold fast towards an end which stands outside this world. The cause is God, the end is God. He is the Beginning and the End, the Alpha and the Omega (cf. Rev 1:8, and 22:13).

But what is the image of this world? What certainty does it offer us, what happiness awaits us at the unknown corners of life, what consolations in misfortune?

I will not begin with life, nor death, neither with the beginning nor the end; but with the given: that which happens to us every day.

Have you asked yourself, young person, what is your purpose in the world and whether everything is reduced simply to that? If we were born to be slaves of matter — even if only as a philosophical justification — then the end of your life is slavery.

If our freedom is reduced to need and logic, then our freedom is slavery.

If all our knowledge is reduced to

you like a violent ideology, something vaster, more authentic and yet closer to you personally than all that which suffocates you in this materialistic bath. Your spirit within you propels you towards that "something," as towards a world only envisioned and suspected. This world see its own image, like the blue sky glistening in the sun, through the grid of prohibitions which this society imposes on you.

You must know, friend, that neither an atheist ideology, nor the materialist order, no matter how authoritatively it might be imposed on you, is capable of raising up an absolutely impregnable wall between you and the spiritual world. The soul cannot be made prisoner. This is a law which the materialists refuse to recognize at their own peril. *On the spiritual level there is no captivity without hope.*

I spoke to you about these things in my previous sermons. I will continue to speak about them — for I am a priest of

Life in the Age to Come

Continued from page 11

who, like the Good Samaritan, will kneel down by the side of the man fallen among thieves and, putting him upon his own donkey, will bring him to the Church of Christ for healing. And he will forget himself and comfort you, O man of suffering.

Who else can be moved by your suffering today? Who else would bear your burden, giving you words of comfort? From whom else would you hear today the words of Christ: *Come unto Me, all that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest* (Matt. 11:28).

I have seen you, my young friend, bullied by your elders, mocked and insulted for the simple crime of being young. I spoke to you then as one in

weakness and pain, as a sensitive and defenseless being. Then I saw you, to my horror and joy, bow and kiss my hand, that of a priest of Christ who brought you comfort.

Because you have overcome death, to which atheistic doctrine had condemned you, because you have been exalted above the ruins of fallen materialism through your youth and faith, I speak to you the words which Jesus spoke through the apostles to the Gentiles. They sound absurd to the prisoner of matter and materialism, to those who substitute taverns for churches and indecency for suffering. But to you they will resound full of spiritual meaning and truth:

The preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God. For it

is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? (1 Cor. 1:18-20)

Where are all these men, my friends? There are none of them left. But you have remained here alive and whole in the Church of Christ, a holy people, won by God, a foundation stone on which the Orthodox spirit of the people is built. You are its only salvation and preservation through this age.

The translation of Fr. Calciu's sermons are taken from and are available in the book Christ is Calling You! from St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood Press.



The Priesthood and the “Good Things Promised . . .”

“O God of unutterable and unseen Mysteries, with whom are the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge, who have revealed the service of this liturgy to us, who have set us sinners, through Your great love of man, to offer to You gifts and sacrifices for our sins and for the ignorance of the people, O invisible King, who do things great and inscrutable, glorious and marvelous, which cannot be numbered: look upon us, Your unworthy servants, who stand at this holy altar

as at Your Cherubimic throne, upon which rests Your only-begotten Son and our God, in the dread Mysteries that are set forth, and having freed us all and all Your faithful people from uncleanness, sanctify all our souls and bodies with the sanctification which cannot be taken away, that partaking with a clean conscience, with faces unashamed, with heart illumined, of these divine, sanctified things, and by them being given life, we may be united to Your Christ himself, our true

God, who has said, ‘He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him,’ that by Your Word, O Lord, dwelling within us and sojourning among us, we may become a temple of Your all-holy and adorable Spirit, redeemed from every diabolical wile, wrought either by deed, or word, or thought, and may obtain the good things promised to us with all Your saints . . .”

—*Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts*

Spiritual Fatherhood As a Ministry of Reconciliation Between Man and God

Presented at the spring 2001 clergy retreat of the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, held at St. Tikhon's Seminary.

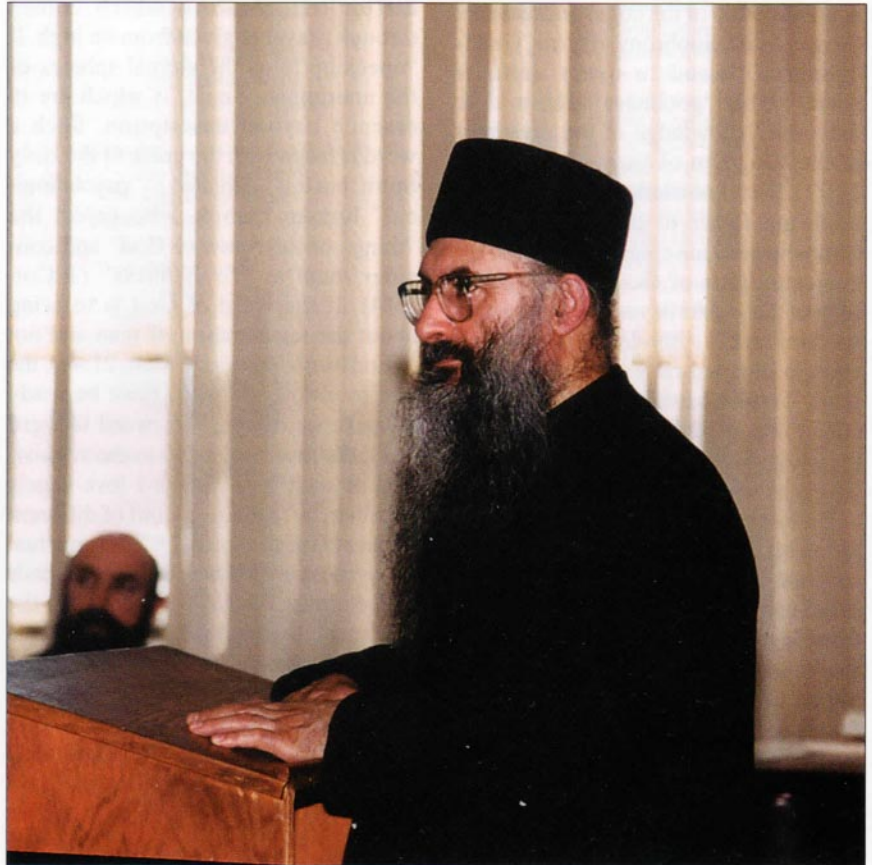
In Archimandrite Sophrony's ascetic theology and practice spiritual fatherhood is linked with the mystery of the word of God, which is begotten in the heart of man through prayer.¹ The prophet Isaiah says that when a word "proceedeth from the mouth of God," it does not find rest or return void unless it has first accomplished its work (cf. Is. 55:11). He also says that it is a fiery coal, which purifies and sanctifies those it touches (cf. Is. 6:7). This prophetic ministry of the word of God is the service of the spiritual fathers of Christ's Church. Spiritual fathers are those who with fear of God remain "unwavering in the pre-eternal current of the will of God"² and are vouchsafed to hear the "still, small voice" of Christ and to obey it with humility and discernment, overmastering their own "psychological" inclination even when this speaks against what Christ inspires. They become bearers of the word of God, and they transmit it "to the use of edifying" of the people, and "minister grace unto the hearts of the hearers" (cf. Eph. 4:29). This living word accomplishes the spiritual regeneration of the faithful.

Christ was announced prophetically in the Old Testament as "the Father of the world to come" (Is. 9:6). By His ineffable "generation" (Is. 53:8) He came and "spoke to us" the creative and life-giving "words" of His Father.³ Even more: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter" (Is. 53:7, Acts 8:32), and in His blood He "purified unto Himself" a new "peculiar people" (Tit. 2:14). The dread dispensation of His humble descent below all the creation, and His ascent "above the heavens" (Eph. 4:10), has filled "all things" with the deifying power of His presence. Nothing in the created world remained "not manifest in His sight" (cf. Heb. 4:13). His living word sowed an "incorruptible seed" (1 Pet. 1:23) and by the grace of His Spirit

¹ *On Prayer*, p. 89.

² *Prayer for a spiritual father* (unpublished in English).

³ Cf. John 6:63: "The words which I speak unto you are spirit and life."



Archimandrite Zacharias

He gave to man the gift of adoption as sons; that is, He begot the Church and made the faithful into children of the resurrection and "a kind of first fruits of His creatures" (Jas. 1:18). The completion of His way and His work set forth Christ as head and father of a new race, which "awaits" Him (cf. Phil. 3:20) as "Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe" (1 Tim. 4:10).

To redress the injustice of inequality which infiltrated human life after the fall, Christ overturned the pyramid of cosmic being and placed Himself as the head of the inverted pyramid. He bore the sin and infirmity of the whole world and restored true justice as an inalien-

able claim for the spirit and consciousness of man. He gave everyone equal value, the same commandments and His own unique example, which denied none the "ascent to the top rung"⁴ of perfection.

As mentioned above, the great value of monasticism lies in the path of humility which it follows, the "downward" path towards the summit of the inverted pyramid. In the measure that the monk approaches Christ in his descent, he will become also a partaker of Christ's spiritual fatherhood.

Monasticism is pre-eminently a spiri-

⁴ *On Prayer*, p. 98.

Continued on the next page

Spiritual fatherhood

Continued from page 13

tual gift of humility, which is cultivated by the ascetic effort of obedience. Obedience principally concerns the heart of man, and its characteristic is to disclose the deep heart, the principle and the center of his hypostasis.⁵ This is the “place” where the “incorruptible seed” of God’s word is sown, bringing forth fruit in the apprenticeship of the commandments of Christ. As Fr. Sophrony affirms, God is “generally good to every contrite heart.”⁶ This “goodness” transmits to them the “knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven” (cf. Matt. 13:11). Such knowledge is necessary for a spiritual father, to give him clear discernment between created things and the uncreated gifts of God, so that in the light of these gifts he may weigh up with wisdom and exactitude every phenomenon in life, and raise it to the spiritual level. It is also beneficial for this knowledge to be as full as possible, covering the whole gamut of spiritual states about which he ventures to teach others.⁷

Fr. Sophrony, expressing with inspiration his admiration for the work of the spiritual father, says that it is “both a dread and a fascinating one. Painful but inspiring.”⁸ It is a gift and a vocation of incomparable value and serves a supreme creative purpose: the spiritual father becomes “a collaborator of God in the creation of immortal gods,”⁹ and they are led into “eternity in the uncreated Light.”¹⁰

The spiritual father has his heart refined by repentance and continual standing before God. At the same time his intellect travels the length and depth and height of the way of the Lord. A “world of indescribable magnitude”¹¹ is opened up to his spirit. The knowledge of this way gives his life stability and deep peace. However, in order to be in a position to “sense the rhythm of the interior world of each and every man who turns to him,”¹² it is beneficial for him to take continual refuge in God with a painful heart; to seek fervently to learn God’s will and an appropriate word, and to express it in such a way as to bring

benefit and inspiration to his brethren. Even at the moment of conversation with people he has the “hearing” of his intellect alert in his heart so as to “detect God’s thinking,”¹³ the first thought which is born there.

The spiritual father’s prophetic role, staying on the path of God’s will through the prayer of repentance and announcing it to his brethren, comports many difficulties. A word which comes through prayer is given from on high. It “opens up to us the eternal spheres of the unoriginate Spirit,”¹⁴ which are in essence beyond description. Such a word is laden with the grace of the Holy Spirit, but it is addressed to “psychological” human beings, who reject the “things of the Spirit of God” and consider them as “foolishness” (1 Cor. 2:14). If the word of God is to bring about the regeneration of man and not “grind him to powder” (Matt. 21:44), the one receiving the word must be ready to make sacrifices. This word is a gift of God’s love, and a call to the acquisition of such love. But this love begets within man “a whole gamut of different torments for the spirit.”¹⁵ This spiritual martyrdom is metaphysical, and extends into eternity. Because of this, when the spiritual father realizes that the disciple is “psychological” and has not the resolution or the self-denial for struggle, he does not seek a direct word from God through prayer; instead he condescends and speaks out of his own human experience. Out of pity for the person he thus avoids leading him into the grave sin of fighting against God.¹⁶

Even when the faithful show confidence in their spiritual father and “receive him as a prophet in the name of a prophet” (Matt. 10:41), the spiritual father’s ministry is not straightforward. He cannot rely on his previously-acquired successes or knowledge. He needs to be led directly by the Holy Spirit in every case for every penitent. The spiritual father is pre-eminently a dispenser of the word of God, and the word given from Above is “not after man” (Gal. 1:11). It goes beyond man’s measure and thus appears “hard” (cf. John 6:60). It is revealed in the sphere of eternal Light, yet at the same time it bestows perfect self-knowledge. This

word provokes a prophetic “earthquake” (1 Kings 19:11) and as the Gospel says, it “cuts [a man] in two” (cf. Matt. 10:35) by “the sword of the Spirit” (Eph. 6:17). It causes his heart to break with unbearable shame over its own poverty, yet it also inspires man thereafter to sense “everything in us that resists Christ’s word”¹⁷ as the presence of death within him. If he resolutely and patiently bears the consequences and sufferings of this spiritual struggle, and becomes cleansed of all the corruption of the “old man,” the presence of God within him increases like the “voice of a light breeze” (1 Kings 19:12 LXX), without the possibility of “observation” (Lk. 17:20).¹⁸ This breeze is the humble love of Christ, which redeems fallen humans and opens to them the Kingdom of the Heavenly Father.

A spiritual father strives to bring the word of God to those who turn to him. This word is the seed of eternal life. When it is accepted, as we noted above, it cleaves the heart like a sword and gives no rest; and yet it regenerates the whole man and renders him fit for the Kingdom of heaven. This dividing asunder and tension created by the word of God must in no way be calmed or diminished by the spiritual father. On the contrary, according to Fr. Sophrony’s understanding, it is profitable for him rather to intensify these effects to the highest possible degree and to guide his disciple as it were to “the threshold of death,”¹⁹ so that he puts to death the old man, corrupt and sinful. This fearful and risky enterprise is undertaken by the spiritual father according to the measure of his discernment, his experience, and the power of the prayers he offers for his disciples. For this task the spiritual father employs two methods: one positive and the other negative.

By using the negative method he tries with wisdom and finesse to preserve the disciple from vanity about the spiritual gifts he happens to have, because vain-glory hardens the depths of the heart, the “place of spiritual prayer.”²⁰ He points out the insufficiencies and the negative elements in the conduct of the disciple. Thus the disciple’s intellect and heart are humbled, while the desire for more profound spiritual knowledge is rekindled.²¹

⁵ *We Shall See Him*, p. 173, p. 177.

⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 178.

⁷ *On Prayer*, p. 89.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

⁹ Unpublished prayer.

¹⁰ *On Prayer*, p. 88.

¹¹ *We Shall See Him*, pp. 78-79.

¹² *On Prayer*, p. 88.

¹³ *Op. cit.*, p. 90.

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 93.

¹⁵ *We Shall See Him*, p. 88.

¹⁶ *On Prayer*, p. 90.

¹⁷ *Loc. cit.*, p. 93.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Loc. cit.*, p. 101.

²⁰ *Loc. cit.*, p. 11.

Of course, what is significant is the power of grace which accompanies the spiritual father's suggestions, and not the expertise or the eloquence of the words. If the word of the spiritual father is to transmit spiritual gifts, it must come out of a burning heart, full of love for the people and praying for them out of deep compassion.²² All the prophets applied this negative method, especially St. John the Baptist. He called those who came to him a "generation of vipers" — and yet the evangelist affirms that with such words "by his exhortation²³ preached he unto the people" (Lk. 3:7,18). The same method lies behind St. Paul's words when he says: "Who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me?" (2 Cor. 2:2). The "hard words" of the Lord Jesus and all the spiritual fathers who "partake" in Him have the purpose of breaking down the "strongholds" that man's arrogance erects, and of preparing in the faithful the humble disposition to learn from the meek and humble Lord.

The positive method is on a higher level, and is even more difficult, more creative. It presupposes that the spiritual father knows not only the practice but also the theory of ascetic life. This theory is the fruit of the "greater love" of Christ, which His servant has assimilated and into which he strives to initiate his disciples. Theory which is informed by this love guarantees that everything be done for the glory of God and the good of man.

The spiritual father, having accomplished in his personal repentance the descent to the point of the inverted pyramid, becomes one with Christ and becomes a communicant in His state. In His life in the flesh Christ "lived at one and the same time the fullness — unattainable for us — both of suffering and of triumphant victory: both death and Divine glory."²⁴ In the same way too, the servant of Christ becomes in his time capable of "rejoicing with them that do rejoice, and weeping with them that weep" (cf. Rom. 12:15). Christ took upon Himself the death of man and swallowed it up in His divine life (cf. 1 Cor. 15:54). In an analogical way the spiritual father too, firmly established in communion with the grace of Christ,

takes on the death in his brethren and raises them up to divine life,²⁵ in which he has become a "partaker" (2 Pet. 1:4).

Because the spiritual father knows the path to the lowest point of the inverted pyramid, he crosses over from old world-views which Lucifer invented "in the paroxysm of his pride,"²⁶ into the new, "reverse" approach of the Gospel perspective. The Lord inaugurated the theory of this vision by His "example" and His word, which exalts the humble (Lk. 14:11, 18:14) and abominates what is "highly esteemed among men" (Lk. 16:15). In this theory Christ is found at the center of all created being, bearing the whole fullness of the Godhead. Just as in the case of the "inverted" perspective in icons the face or event portrayed emerges from the center towards which everything turns, so also in the above theory Christ becomes the sign towards which all the meanings and desires of man are directed. In the light of this theory it is easy to understand that "the last shall be first and the first shall be last" (Matt. 20:16); that "he who hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (John 12:25); and, too, that physical death does not touch the soul (cf. Matt. 10:28).

In his ministry the spiritual father strives to transmit to the faithful the theory of the inverted pyramid, which is the only one capable of inspiring the heart to repentance and transformation according to the same Spirit which blows at the point of the inverted pyramid. Then the faithful travel resolutely "downwards," and Christ becomes the reference point of their lives. Just as in Orthodox iconography the painter remains anonymous, so also the spiritual father, while showing all godly zeal to "betroth" souls and present them pure to Christ (2 Cor. 11:2). Being himself released from the passion of lust for power, he rejoices like John the Baptist to see Christ "increase, while he decreases" (cf. John 3:30).

In essence the spiritual father accomplishes an apostolic work. He imitates the Apostle Paul and preaches exclusively "Christ, and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 1:23; cf. Gal. 3:1), that men might know that He is also "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (cf. 1 Cor. 1:24). Christians are inspired by the vi-

sion of the "crucified God," of "Christ the Lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:19), who carries the weight of the upturned pyramid, and they too prefer "rather to take wrong" (1 Cor. 6:7), because to "suffer wrongfully," "in the behalf of Christ," is a thankworthy gift from God.²⁷ The spiritual father, propounding continually to his disciples the theory of the inverted perspective of the Gospel, ignites in them the effect of God's grace and brings them to the blessed honour of bearing in their bodies the "marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gal. 6:17) and of suffering wrong for the sake of Him who "first loved us" and "gave himself for us" (1 John 4:19). This theory held by the confessor can lead his spiritual children to perfect labour and inspiration, according to which their life's aim becomes a desire that Christ be magnified "whether by life or by death" (Phil. 1:20).

In other words, as Fr. Sophrony affirms, in the perspective of the inverted pyramid, true victory — which remains inviolable for all eternity — is the victory won by the "bruises" (Is. 53:5) of the Good Shepherd.²⁸ Those who follow in His footsteps, and in sufferings remain faithful to His love, become participants and heirs of this victory. Upon them "the spirit of glory and of God resteth" (1 Pet. 4:14), and they bear unfading fruitfulness.²⁹

The life of a spiritual father who abides in the protracted grief of repentance is rich with alternations between joy and pain. Like Christ, who embraced "in one eternal act heaven and earth and the nether regions,"³⁰ so also His servant with his repeated cycles of falls and rises, brings "both heaven and hell"³¹ stably and uninterruptedly into his heart. His perception is refined, and his heart, as Fr. Sophrony habitually put it, becomes "like a radar which detects all at once the whole earth." Fr. Sophrony actually saw this as "an indication of approaching likeness to Christ."³²

The spiritual father, being in the same state as Christ, becomes for the faithful at every contact an opening to eternal life. As the Almighty Lord spoke "the

²⁷ Cf. Phil. 1:29; 1 Pet. 2: 19-20.

²⁸ *On Prayer*, p. 112.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *We Shall See Him*, pp. 60-61.

³¹ *On Prayer*, pp. 99-100.

³² *Ibid.*

²¹ *Loc. cit.*, p. 87.

²² *Loc. cit.*, p. 96.

²³ The Greek word also has the meaning "consolation."

²⁴ *On Prayer*, p. 100.

²⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 96. Cf. also 2 Cor. 4:12.

²⁶ *We Shall See Him*, p. 78.

Continued on the next page

Spiritual fatherhood

Continued from page 15

words of man," but through them opened up the eternal dimension of His Absolute Being,³³ so also His minister pronounces common words, but transmits grace and becomes the means of regeneration for his brethren.

A spiritual father knows both the way of Christ and the various temptations which are met with on this way before divine love is acquired, and he can thus be a wellspring of inspiration for his disciples. Possessing an integral spiritual vision, he upholds and encourages the faithful to become partakers of Christ's sufferings, and thereby to learn existentially how high is "Divine providence for us."³⁴ The confessor, by his word, his prayer and his example, strives to introduce every man into the sphere of Christ's peace.³⁵ With patience and love he cares for those whom the Providence of the Most High has entrusted to him, that the image of Christ, darkened by the fall, be formed and established in them. He bears their weaknesses and identifies with their lives. As one who is himself "compassed with infirmity" (Heb. 5:2) he offers repentance on behalf of himself and others. In this repentance he becomes like Christ, who took upon Himself the sin of the whole world. In the present epoch, which is antipathetic to the humble Spirit of Christ, this service is burdensome, and never attains the desired result. Hence Fr. Sophrony's observation that without continual and intense heartfelt prayer which seeks out a word from God and divine blessing, this spiritual service is in vain. It becomes transformed into a "half-blind" worldly activity.³⁶

A spiritual father bears in himself the blessedness flowing from the knowledge of Christ's way, and he thus becomes the means of leading the life of men from the hell, which they have created by their contradictory passions,³⁷ to pure Christian life and spiritual freedom. He is ground down by the death which has wounded them. Even more: he endures tribulations which are a consequence of the spiritual colour-blindness of passions and human distortion.³⁸ He is held fast

by only one thought: how the person can be healed.³⁹ He tries to diagnose the cause and the intensity of the passions and the measure of spiritual death due to the ignorance of God, so that with hope in Him the sufferings and misfortunes of life may be overshadowed with divine grace and be reduced to second place.⁴⁰ In the heart of the spiritual father the tribulations of the whole earth are heaped up, and they give rise to fervent, tearful prayer, in which the petitions of every weak and suffering man are brought before God. When he feels

priceless and incomparably valuable. A man trembles lest he lose this treasure. This fear preserves the love and the love increases to the point of fullness. When the great love of Christ visits the heart and enlightens the intellect, man's spirit is enlarged and encompasses "all creation in compassionate love."⁴⁴ This fact demonstrates beyond doubt that a man is united with the God of love.

The prayer of repentance, accompanied by self-hatred, detaches man's spirit from everything created and transports it "into light-bearing infinity, into inde-



Clergy attend retreat

— once again, in his heart — that tribulation has been changed into repose and joy, he accepts this as a sure sign that his prayer has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth and that it will have a beneficial effect.⁴¹ The father confessor offers this sacred service on behalf of the "little ones," the unfortunate ones who are themselves completely indifferent. He does not plot against their freedom, but instead considers exclusively his future reward.⁴²

The spiritual father is the image of "the good Shepherd" who has "greater love," and "layeth down his life for his sheep" (John 10:11, 15:13). To acquire this love, however, and to accomplish his work in a manner pleasing to God, it helps the spiritual father if he has passed through the fiery furnace of fear of God and the path of repentance, "unto the breaking of his bones."⁴³ Only then will divine love dwell in his soul, and with it the divine fear which belongs to the perfect. This love is the "precious pearl,"

scribable depths," where "all is transformed into love of God."⁴⁵ His soul would prefer to remain in this festal joy of divine love. But this love for Christ is linked inseparably with love for one's fellow-man. Furthermore, love for man was the cause of the self-emptying of the Son of God. Hence the spiritual father in his turn also has to remain in a state of grace which is not extreme, so as to be able to engage with this world as it is and to take into his heart the difficulties and sufferings of his brethren.⁴⁶ He patiently endures apostolic *kenosis*, and as described by St. Paul, he is "spent" for the souls of the Christian faithful (cf. 2 Cor. 12:15). He finds himself in continual conflict and antagonism between the desire to be given over to the love of God and the need to collaborate with people for the sake of their benefit and progress.

The father confessor knows better than anyone that there is nothing more precious in the world than the knowledge of the true God, which is acquired

³³ *On Prayer*, p. 111.

³⁴ *Loc. cit.*, p. 100.

³⁵ *Loc. cit.*, p. 109.

³⁶ *Loc. cit.* pp. 108-109.

³⁷ *Loc. cit.* p. 90.

³⁸ *Loc. cit.*, p. 91.

³⁹ *Loc. cit.*, p. 95.

⁴⁰ *Loc. cit.*, p. 94.

⁴¹ *Loc. cit.*, p. 95.

⁴² *On Prayer*, p. 112.

⁴³ Unpublished prayer

⁴⁴ *On Prayer*, p. 103.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 104.

by repentance and by the training of sacred inner prayer and silence. But he cannot forget too the Lord's commandment: "Go and teach all nations . . ." (Matt. 28:19). He is absolutely persuaded that "one thing is needful" (Lk. 10:24), but from love for people his soul does not cease to be anxious "to help but a single soul to salvation."⁴⁷ Both aspects of life are necessary if he is to fulfil God's plan: on the one hand for him to preserve safely the treasure of the mystery of divine love; and on the other hand for him to "commit it to faithful

weak from their passions, he is himself attacked by these passions, and lives them as his own personal passions, even though in many cases he had not known them previously. He offers repentance for himself and for all the sins of all those whom God has entrusted to him. His prayer increases and takes on cosmic dimensions. His repentance resembles the sacrifice offered by Christ for the sins of the world.⁵⁰

The spiritual father's hypostatic repentance and prayer confronts the whole drama of human sin: how it began in

ences the spiritual joy of "the few" and the desolation in the souls of "the many" (cf. Matt. 7:13-14). By the painful experience of the states and misfortunes of the people he serves, he becomes extended, so as to encompass the whole of mankind throughout the ages. At the time of his repentance he becomes a participant in Christ's state, and at the same time he knows the primordial and inspiring idea of the Creator concerning man. Later, however, during his ministry the dramatic and striking contrast between this divine plan and fallen man with his passions — beyond his power of resistance — is revealed to him. He is overwhelmed by a critical dilemma: whether to confront this tragic vision psychologically, using his natural reasoning, like therapists of this world, and as a result to survive without being totally broken by the tension of universal pain; or, as Fr. Sophrony expresses it, to "continue further."⁵³ However, this "further" is inaccessible to man unless he has been previously strengthened by fullness of faith and the grace of repentance. According to the same conception, "continuing further" means that the spiritual father follows Christ into the Garden of Gethsemane and goes up with Him to Golgotha, "to live with Him, by His strength, the tragedy of the world as his own personal tragedy";⁵⁴ or, as Fr. Sophrony puts it on several other occasions, to drink the "cup of Christ,"⁵⁵ so that his spiritual service becomes identified with the Lord's redeeming work of reconciling the world with God.

Consequently, the spiritual father as he accomplishes his service breaks the closed circle of his own "individualism"; his being is expanded and he bears within himself the life of all the human race, and all the history of men's relations with God. As Fr. Sophrony notes, he enters "into the wide expanses of "hypostatic" forms of being, conquering death and participating in divine infinity."⁵⁶

Spiritual paternity, because it is a path towards the marvellous hypostatic form of being, entails superhuman effort. Without the might of God man is small,



Discussion period

men who shall be able to teach others also" (cf. 2 Tim. 2:2).⁴⁸

As we have mentioned above, in the case of monasticism, and more particularly in the ascetic effort of obedience, the monk learns gradually to bear within himself the life of all the brotherhood, and eventually the life of the whole world. In a similar manner the spiritual father too, in fulfilling his ministry, is led to the hypostatic form of existence. He ceases to live only for himself; he is concerned for all mankind and prays for them, and his prayer covers all the possible states of life, positive and negative. He adopts the tragedy of the world and "is overwhelmed by the breath of death which strikes the human race."⁴⁹ In his struggle to free the

paradise, what were its consequences and how it is blotted out by the grace of repentance, given by Christ after His resurrection. Sin, says Fr. Sophrony, began with the pusillanimity of Eve and the brazenness of Adam. It continues to be manifest in fratricide, in the splitting apart of mankind's whole nature. It was finally overcome by "the smiting of the Shepherd."⁵¹

With the break-up of human nature caused by sin, men ceased to see themselves in other human beings, and they did not recognize "our common unity of life."⁵² A spiritual father who prays for people receives in his heart a sensation, an "information" about the psychological or spiritual state of those for whom he supplicates God. He experi-

⁴⁷ cf. *Saint Silouan*, p. 341.

⁴⁸ *We Shall See Him*, p. 219.

⁴⁹ *On Prayer*, p. 109.

⁵⁰ *Op. cit.*, pp. 109-110.

⁵¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 110-112.

⁵² *Op. cit.*, p. 111.

⁵³ *Op. cit.*, p. 119.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ For example: *Saint Silouan*, pp. 47, 240; *We Shall See Him*, pp. 31, 41, 200; *On Prayer*, pp. 28, 41.

⁵⁶ *On Prayer*, p. 116.

Prayer by Bishop Nikolaj Velimirovic

The slaughter of the helpless unborn typifies, in a way, the distress and alienation of God's people, who are taught not to resist evil and to turn the other cheek. Calling the devil "the ruler of this world," our Savior predicted that his disciples would be hated for his sake. But in saying, "In the world you will have tribulation," he added, "Take courage, for I have overcome the world," and "Your joy shall not be taken from you." How, amid sufferings and tribulation, is it possible to rejoice? The prayer by St. Nicholai of Zhicha, who labored and reposed in America, helps to answer this question.

O Lord our God, God of spirits and of all flesh, do not turn your face away from us any longer, but mercifully fulfill our prayer and have mercy upon us. Here on foreign land, as if exiled and homeless, we shout for joy because of Your great glory, that even angels and all the first created powers of heaven are not able to behold in all its fullness because of the powerful shining brightness of Your eternal glory. Behold, all the earth is Yours, and also Yours is this place on which we kneel, seeking with sighs Your light-bearing Name, and praying humbly: Turn away from us Your just wrath, answer our prayer and have mercy. A foreign land is the best place to sigh in longing for You, slavery is the greatest for repentance, prison is the best place for prayer, and suffering is the best path that leads to You, our Creator and Almighty Father who are Most Merciful. You, Who are all-knowing, know that suffering and carrying one's Cross is the path to the Kingdom of Heaven, and that is why You have let all these misfortunes beset a sinful and most sinful people, that having passed through chastisement, the rusted iron of our characters may become steel, and the coal become diamonds. It was not without Your permission that the fire of our homes was put out, we have

been scattered throughout the world in foreign lands, we have fallen into slavery and been imprisoned and suffered bitter misfortune.

Nothing has happened without Your permission, nothing happens without its being Your plan, nothing is without Your all-wise providence and Your fatherly care for our souls. All these sufferings You have permitted to come upon us from demons and people, because of our indescribable sins that have led us far away from You, and that have separated us from You, that we may learn to sigh in longing for You, that we may be made clean through repentance, and that we may again walk the holy path of Your laws and hurry into Your embrace. Strong are You, O Lord, in Your just wrath from which the universe shakes like a reed from a mighty wind; but You are also incomprehensible in Your great mercy. Nothing in Your eyes is too great or too small, nor do You admire the things the sons of men admire, but You knock down and abase all who exalt themselves without You and against You, yet You lift up from the dust all the small and weak who put their hope and trust in You, and who glorify Your greatness and exalt Your name on the earth.

We are small, O great God; do not reject us who are despised by all, and do not leave us who have been deserted by people, but forgive us and heal our souls, unify and multiply us that we may again be Your people as our Holy Fathers were.

Do not reject us who are small, You Who do not despise worms that live beneath bark, and do not turn Your Face away from us sinners, as You did not turn away from the repentant King Manasseh nor from the repentant thief on the Cross.

Christ our Lord, our Teacher, our atonement, our Resurrection, Victor over Satan and death, Lover of Man, You are the God of all our fathers and mothers, God of the Holy Martyr King Vladimir and the Venerable Holy Saint Paraskeva,

God of the Holy Saints Cyril and Methodius, Climent and Naum our enlighteners, God of our Holy Father Prohor, Saint Simeon and Sava, and of all our Kings and Czars, and of builders and donors of Your Holy Churches, God of Saint Basil of Ostrog and Yanichiye Devichkog, God of millions of martyrs together with the glorious Czar Lazar, Urosh and George the golden goldsmith of Kratovac, God of all venerable priests, monks and nuns, soldiers and dukes, the great and small, known and unknown, holy women and virgins, youths and infants, through generations and generations who believed in You, lived by You, by Your might built glorious Churches, and for love of You fasted and struggled with their souls, and for You suffered and died on roadways and mountains, in prisons, on battlefields and in torture chambers — martyrs destroyed by their torturers, driven to walk in chains, sold at markets like cheap goods, like lambs being slaughtered, tortured by stakes and ropes, by fire and the sword exterminated and driven from this world, like some unlawful intruders, crucified on a million crosses for You, Who were crucified on Golgotha for all people and nations. To whom shall we turn if not to You? Who will understand us and help us if not You, our Helper and Savior? O Lord Jesus Christ, God of our fathers, fulfill our prayer and have mercy on us by their prayers, and the prayers of Your Most Holy Mother.

We do not seek from You to give us riches and glory, nor power and authority over other peoples, nor do we seek revenge against our enemies, but we pray Thee to grant us to fulfill the commandments of Your Gospel. We pray to You to give us strength and power to bear all our sufferings and not to betray You and sin against You. We pray to You to grant us Your Holy Spirit Who is a Treasury of blessings and peace, that in these suf-

Continued on page 48



Archbishop Herman addresses defenders of life

Orthodox Demonstrate Concern for the Unborn By Participating in March

Hundreds of Orthodox Christians gathered for the annual March for Life, held in Washington, D.C. on Friday, January 22, 2001. They marched in sorrowful remembrance of the twenty-eighth anniversary of the Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision which legalized abortion on demand in America.

Not long after that sad moment in our nation's history, the first March for Life meeting took place in Washington. About thirty prolife leaders — veteran prolife activists from state, county and community prolife organizations — gathered around a dining room table in a private home. They resolved to form a tempo-

rary committee, selected a chairman, and began making plans and decisions, dividing the many jobs among the volunteers. With no funds available, they found sponsors, developed flyers, recruited more volunteers, and registered the buses. It was at this first meeting that the red rose was adopted as the March for Life symbol.

The first March for Life was held on a warm and sunny January 22, 1974, one year to the day after the announcement of the *Roe v. Wade* decision. This first march took place on the west side of the Capitol. Hundreds of shining buses parked in front of the west steps; an estimated 20,000 committed prolife Ameri-

cans rallied that day on behalf of their as-yet-unborn brothers and sisters. There was an inspiring program, with members of the Congress announcing prolife legislation that they were sponsoring, and declaring their support for profilers' efforts. The program concluded with profilers marching in a "Circle of Life" around the Capitol, and then lobbying with their representatives and senators.

The success of the January 22 March for Life activities in our nation's capital has continued to grow and deepen over the past 28 eventful years. An estimated 20,000 prolife Americans took part in the march in 1974, 50,000 in 1975, 65,000

Continued on the next page

Orthodox Demonstrate

Continued from page 19
in 1976, and up to 100,000 came there after through 1986. At the 25th annual March for Life on January 22, 1998, prolife marchers were at the Capitol, along the Mall, on Constitution Ave. — we were everywhere, in numbers estimated at 225,000 strong. In 1999, profilers were again in Washington in numbers estimated at about 125,000. But Capitol Hill was busy with the Senate trial of the impeached president, and press media were busy covering the trial of the most pro-abortion president in America's history.

The Orthodox Church has become a regular and visible presence in the movement which is designed to affirm the sanctity of life and to protect that life. Her participation has been manifested particularly through the efforts of our own prolife organization, "Orthodox Christians for Life." Who can forget the leadership shown by Archbishop Herman, who in a blinding snowstorm in 1987 led the March for Life along with the march's organizational leader and president, Nellie Gray, gaining national attention. Since that famous march, His Eminence has included the march in his busy schedule, returning year after year. He has become a support not just for the Orthodox, but also for all Christians who look forward to his participation and visible support. Above all, however, he is a support and a protector of the unborn.

This year was no exception. Not only did the Orthodox participate in the March for Life as in years past, but — also as in years past — on Sunday, January 21, our most blessed Metropolitan Theodosius sent a letter to all the parishes of the Orthodox Church in America, putting his full episcopal and primatial influence and authority behind this national movement. And in each parish, special prayers were added to the augmented litany in the Divine Liturgy.

The March for Life officially assembled at noon at the Ellipse front of the White House. As before, there was inspiring music provided by the "Sounds of Liberty" who come every year, and there were many speakers and leading advocates in the national prolife movement. The opening prayer was offered by Dr. Thomas F. Gulbranson, pastor of the First Assembly of God Church in Alexandria, Va. Because of the high vis-

ibility of the opening address, and on account of the leadership he has shown and the wide national recognition he consequently holds, Archbishop Herman was asked to be the very first cleric to address the estimated crowd of nearly 150,000. His Eminence cheered crowd with his optimistic view of the hard work we do and must do, to bring home the message that "life is sacred from the womb of the mother and must be protected and preserved." He further stated that the Orthodox Church in America is committed to this reality, this truth.

This year there was a new excitement perceptible at the March for Life in our nation's capital. The impeached president was no longer in office. By the will of the American people and by the grace of God, a new prolife President has given

the movement for life new vigor. The impeached president had heartlessly signed the partial birth abortion bill, allowing thousands of babies to die, and had furthered his pro-death policy and agenda around the world. This was challenged by the new President George W. Bush, who during the march repealed the Mexican Act, stopping internal funding of abortion. This act was only a beginning of a process that will, we pray, turn the tide in our country from immorality to morality.

Archbishop Herman said, "We will never know about our successes or failures. We know we must be consistent and faithful. With determination and persistence, we continue to march to ensure that Washington officialdom understands that the issue of abortion and euthanasia



Orthodox proliferers prepare for march



Marching along Constitution Avenue

will not go away until it is resolved in favor of life." And *Roe v. Wade* is overturned.

We must be encouraged to continue with the work that has been already done during the past twenty-eight years, and to continue to save babies, keeping in mind and thanking God that by his grace we were able to help save many babies up till now by our prolife witness and work.

At 1:00 p.m. the march began, with prolife Americans assembled from throughout our United States. The Orthodox delegation, made up of hundreds of Orthodox faithful from across America, was led by Archbishop Herman with Metropolitan Nicholas of the American Carpatho-Russian Archdiocese. Our pan-Orthodox participants in the march pro-

claimed our holy Orthodox faith by carrying banners and icons and by singing hymns of praise as they went in procession along the appointed route of Constitution Avenue, publicly witnessing to the teaching of the Orthodox Church concerning the sacredness of life from the moment of conception.

After the march, Archbishop Herman led us in singing the memorial service for the departed in loving memory of the millions of aborted children of our nation. In the evening, during the Rose Banquet at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, with over 900 prolife leaders from throughout our country present, our diocesan hierarch took part in the official program and gave the benediction. He presented an icon of the "Mother of God and Nourisher of Creation."

This year's March for Life was held as we began the new millennium in 2001, the third millennium of the Christian era, with a new prolife president. The gridlock of immorality in our nation seems to be giving signs of breaking up, and the nation's heart begins to appear open to life once again. The tragedy of senseless death — now moving into the nation's schools, in the wake of 28 years of dominance in our medical institutions and practice — will perhaps awaken in the public mind the need for repentance and for godliness and peace and simple decency.

A horrible specter stands before us: the threat of cloning, the threat of organs being "harvested" from aborted infants or from euthanized patients, the threat of experimentation with living human embryos, the threat of intermingling of species through genetic manipulation



Signs fill the air during march



Seminary community at March for Life

As she always has, the Orthodox Church must publicly challenge the society's conscience on moral issues of fundamental importance, and now especially so in the field of bioethics — for as we begin the new millennium, many new threats to just and holy living, threats to Christian civilization as we have known it and as God has revealed to us, are appearing. A horrible specter stands before us: the threat of cloning, the threat of organs being "harvested" from aborted infants or from euthanized patients, the threat of experimentation with living human embryos, the threat of intermingling of species through genetic manipulation — these threats, these specters, now appear on our very doorstep.

In short, the sense of moral accountability needs to be reawakened in the nation's consciousness if civilized society is to survive. To do this, to attempt to do it, is part of our sacred mission as the Orthodox Church in America, requiring both prayer and action, both word and deed.

—Archpriest John Kowalczyk

On the Lord's Parable of the Publican and the Pharisee

Editor's note: St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica, comments on the parable read the first preparatory Sunday before Lent.

The unseen patron of evil is full of evil ingenuity. Right at the beginning he can drag away, by means of hopelessness and lack of faith, the foundations of virtue already laid in the soul. Again, by means of indifference and laziness, he can make an attempt on the walls of virtue's house just when they are being built up. Or he can bring down the roof of good works after its construction, by means of pride and madness. But stand firm, do not be alarmed, for a diligent man is even more ingenious in good things and virtue has superior forces to deploy against evil. It has at its disposal supplies and support in battle from Him Who is all-powerful, Who in His goodness strengthens all lovers of virtue. So not only can virtue remain unshaken by the various wicked devices prepared by the enemy, but it can also lift up and restore those fallen into the depths of evil, and easily lead them to God by repentance and humility.



St. Gregory, Archbishop of Thessalonica

Here is an example and a clear proof. The Publican, as a publican, dwells in the depths of sin. All he has in common with those who live virtuously is one short utterance, but he finds relief, is lifted up and rises above every evil. He is numbered with the company of the righteous, justified by the impartial Judge Himself. If the Pharisee is condemned by his speech, it is because, as a Pharisee, he thinks himself somebody, although he is not really righteous, and utters many arrogant words which provoke God's anger with their every syllable.

Why does humility lead up to the heights of righteousness, whereas self-conceit leads down to the depths of sin? Because anybody who thinks he is something great, even before God, is rightly abandoned by God, as one who thinks that he does not need His help. Anybody

who despises himself, on the other hand, and relies on mercy from above, wins God's sympathy, help and grace. As it says, "The Lord resisteth the proud: but he giveth grace unto the lowly" (Prov. 3:34 Lxx).

The Lord demonstrates this in a parable, saying, "Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican" (Luke 18:10). Wanting to set clearly before us the gain that comes from humility and the loss from pride, he divided into two groups all who went to the Temple, or, rather, those who went up into the Temple, who are the ones who go there to pray. This is the nature of prayer, it brings a man up from the earth into heaven and, rising above every heavenly name, height and honour, sets him before the God Who is over all (cf. Rom. 9:5). The ancient Temple was set in a high place, on a hill

above the city. Once when a deadly epidemic was destroying Jerusalem, David saw the Angel of Death on this hill, stretching out his sword against the city. He went up there and built an altar to the Lord, on which he offered a sacrifice to God, and the destruction ceased (2 Sam. 24:15-25). All these things are an image of the saving ascent of the spirit during holy prayer and of the forgiveness it brings — for these things all foreshadowed our salvation. They can also be an image of this holy church of ours, which is indeed set in a high place, in another angelic country above the world, where the great, bloodless sacrifice, acceptable to God, is offered for the forgiveness of the whole world, the destruction of death and abundance of eternal life.

So the Lord did not say, “Two men went to the temple,” but “went up” into the Temple. Even now there are some who come to the holy church without going up. Instead they bring down the church, the image of heaven. They come for the sake of meeting each other and talking, or to buy and sell goods, and they resemble each other, for the latter offer goods, the former words, and all receive a fair exchange. As in those days the Lord drove them completely out of the Temple saying, “My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves” (Matt. 21:13), so He also drove them away from their conversations as they did not really go up into the Temple at all, even if they came there every day.

The Pharisee and the Publican went up into the Temple, both with the aim of praying. But the Pharisee brought himself down after going up, defeating his aim by the way he prayed. Both had the same aim in going up, both went up to pray, but they prayed in opposite ways. One made the ascent broken and contrite, for he had learned from the Psalmist and Prophet that “a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Ps. 51:17). The Prophet says of himself, with the knowledge of experience, “I was brought low and the Lord helped me” (Ps. 11:66). But why am I talking about the Prophet, when the God of the prophets, Who for our sake became like us, humbled himself. “Wherefore,” as the Apostle says, “God hath highly exalted him” (Phil. 2:9). The Pharisee, by contrast, goes up bloated with pretensions

to justify himself in the presence of God, although all our righteousness is like a filthy rag before Him (cf. Isa. 6:46). He had not heard the saying, “Everyone that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord” (Prov. 16:5), or, “God resisteth the proud” (Prov. 3:34 Lxx), or, “Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight” (Isa. 5:21).

The two were different not only in their manner and way of praying but also in their type of prayer, for there are two kinds. Prayer is not only a matter of entreaty but also of thanksgiving. Of those who pray, one goes up to the Temple of God praising and thanking God for what he has received from him. Another asks for what he has not yet received, including, in the case of those of us who sin all the time, remission of sins. When we piously promise to offer something to God, that is not called prayer but a vow, as shown by the one who said, “Vow, and pay unto the Lord your God” (Ps. 76:11), and the other who said, “Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay” (Eccles. 5:4).

However, these two kinds of prayer can both be unprofitable for the unwary. Faith and contrition make prayer and supplication for the remission of sins effective, once evil deeds have been renounced, but despair and hardness of heart make it ineffectual. Thanksgiving for the benefits received from God is made acceptable by humility and not looking down on those who lack them. It is rendered unacceptable, however, by being conceited, as if those benefits resulted from our own efforts and knowledge, and by condemning those who have not received them. The Pharisee’s behaviour and words prove he was afflicted with both these diseases. He went up to the Temple to give thanks, not to make supplication and, like a wretched fool, mingled conceit and condemnation of others with his thanksgiving. For he stood and prayed thus with himself: “God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers” (Luke 18:11).

Instead of the attitude of a servant, the Pharisee’s stance displays shameless self-exaltation, the opposite of that other man who, in his humility, did not dare to lift up his eyes to heaven. It stands to reason that the Pharisee prayed to himself, for his prayer did not ascend to God,

although it did not escape the notice of Him Who sits upon the Cherubim and observes the lowest depths of the abyss. When he said “I thank thee,” he did not go on to say, “because in Thy mercy Thou didst freely deliver me, weak and unable to fight as I am, from the snares of the devil.” For he is spiritually courageous who manages to take refuge in repentance when caught in the snares of the enemy and fallen into the nets of sin. The circumstances of our lives are directed by a higher providence and often, with little or no effort on our part, by God’s help we have stayed out of reach of many great passions, delivered by His sympathy for our weakness. We should acknowledge the gift and humble ourselves before the Giver, not be conceited.

The Pharisee says, “I thank thee, God,” not because I have received any help from Thee, but “because I am not as other men are.” As though it was from his own resources and through his own ability that he was not an extortioner or unjust or an adulterer — if, indeed, he really was not. He did not pay attention to himself, or he would not have said he was righteous. He was looking more at everyone else than at himself and, in his madness, despised them all. Only one seemed to him to be righteous and chaste: himself. “I am not,” he says, “as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican” (Luke 18:11). Anyone could point out to him how foolish he was, by saying to him, “If all except yourself are unjust and extortioners, then who are the victims of extortion and injustice? What about this Publican, and the extra words you added about him? Since he is one of the rest, surely he was included in your general, your universal, condemnation? Or did he have to be condemned twice over because he was in your sight, even though he was standing far away from you. You knew he was unjust because he was obviously a publican, but how did you know he was an adulterer? Or perhaps you are entitled to treat him unjustly and insult him since he treated others unjustly?” But it is not so. With a humble mind he bears your arrogant accusation and, reproaching himself, he offers supplication to God and is delivered by Him from the condemnation of having treated others unjustly. You, however, will be

Continued on the next page

St. Gregory Palamas

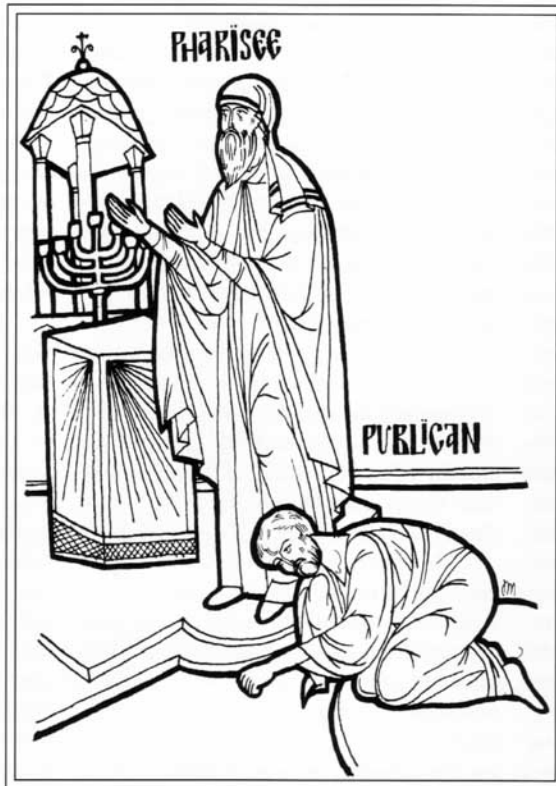
Continued from page 23

rightly condemned for having arrogantly made accusations against him and all men, and deemed only yourself righteous. "I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers."

These words show the Pharisee's disdain for God and for everybody, but also for the standards of his own conscience. He openly despises everybody and ascribes his abstention from evil not to God's strength but to his own. If he says that he thanks God, it is only because he considers all men apart from himself to be licentious, unjust and extortioners, as though God saw fit to grant virtue to him alone. However, if anyone else were like that, all the Pharisee's goods would be at their disposal as loot. But this is not so, for he adds, "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I gain" (Luke 18:12). He does not say that he gives tithes of all that he possesses, but of all that he gains, meaning the additions and increases to his fortune. So he kept what he possessed and also took without hindrance as much as he could over and above that. How could all except himself be extortioners and unjust? This is how self-confuting and self-deceiving evil is! Madness is always mixed with lies.

He put forward the fact that he gave tithes of his wealth to prove his righteousness; for if someone gives tithes of his own wealth how can he be an extortioner of other people's? He put forward fasting to show off his chastity because fasting gives rise to purity. For argument's sake, then, let us say you are chaste, righteous, wise, sensible, brave, and whatever else you wish. If this has come from yourself and not from God, why do you deceitfully pretend to pray? Why do you go up into the Temple and give thanks in vain? But if it has come from God, you did not receive it so as to boast but for the edification of others to the glory of the Giver. You should have humbly rejoiced and given thanks both to Him Who gave and to those for whose sake the gifts were given. The lamp receives light for those who see it, not for

itself. For "week" the Pharisee uses the Greek word for "Sabbath," but he means not the seventh day but the seven days, on two of which he brags that he fasts. He is unaware that such fasts are mere human virtues, whereas pride is demonic. When pride is linked with fasting, however genuine, it annuls and de-



stroys the virtues, and how much more so if the fasting is a sham.

These are the words of the Pharisee. By contrast, the Publican "standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast saying, God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13). See the extent of his humility, faith and self-reproach. See the utter abasement of his thought and feelings, and, at the same time, contrition of heart mingled with this publican's prayer. When he went up into the Temple to pray for the remission of his sins, he brought with him good advocates before God: unashamed faith, uncondemned self-reproach, contrition of heart that is not despised and humility that exalts. He linked attention to prayer most excellently. It says, "The publican standing afar off." Not "stood," as in the case of the Pharisee, but "standing," to show that he was standing for a long time continu-

ously praying and asking for mercy. Without any other intention or thought he paid attention only to himself and God, turning over and repeating the supplication of a single thought, the most effective of all prayers.

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven" (Luke 18:13). As he stood he bowed down, and his bearing was not only that of a lowly servant, but also of a condemned man. It also proclaims a soul delivered from sin. Although still far from God, without the boldness towards Him that comes from good works, it hopes to draw near to him because it has already renounced evil and is intent on good. "Standing afar off the publican would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven," showing his self-condemnation and self-reproach by his manner and appearance. He saw himself as unworthy either of heaven or of the earthly Temple, so he stood on the threshold of the Temple, not daring even to turn his gaze towards heaven, still less towards the God of heaven. In his intense contrition he smote upon his breast to show he was worthy of punishment. He sighed in deepest mourning, bowing his head like a condemned man, calling

himself a sinner and begging with faith for forgiveness, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." For he believed Him Who said, "Turn ye unto me, and I will turn unto you" (Zech. 1:3), and the Prophet who bore witness, "I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my heart" (cf. Ps. 32:5).

What happened then? "This man," says the Lord, "went down to his house justified rather than the other, for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:14). As the devil is conceit itself and pride is his own particular evil, it defeats and swallows up any human virtue with which it is mixed; whereas humility is the virtue of the good angels, and defeats any human evil that comes upon fallen mankind. Humility is the chariot by which we ascend to God, like those clouds which are to carry up

to God those who would dwell for endless ages with Him, as foretold by the Apostle: "We shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:17). Humility is the same as such a cloud. It is formed by repentance, releases streams of tears; brings out the worthy from among the unworthy and leads them up to unite them with God, justified by His free gift for the gratitude of their free disposition.

At first the Publican evilly appropriated other people's goods; later he renounced dishonesty and by not justifying himself, was justified. The Pharisee did not lay claim to other people's possessions, but by justifying himself he was condemned. What will befall those who do lay claim to other people's possessions and attempt to justify themselves?

Let us leave them, as the Lord does, for words will not convince such people. Sometimes it happens that we humble ourselves when we pray, and we may imagine that we shall be rewarded with the same justification as the Publican. But it is not so. We must consider the fact that the Publican was despised by the Pharisee to his face, even after he had abandoned sin, and he condemned himself with contempt, not only not contradicting the Pharisee but joining in with his accusations against him.

When you abandon your evildoing, do not contradict those who despise or reproach you because of it. Join them in condemning yourself for what you are like and, through contrite prayer, take refuge in the forgiveness of God alone, realizing that you are a rescued publican. Many have called themselves sinners, and so do we, but dishonour tests the heart. The great Paul is far removed from pharisaic boasting, but he wrote to those in Corinth who were speaking in tongues, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all" (1 Cor. 14:18). He who elsewhere calls himself the offscouring of all things, writes these words to restrain those who look down on those who did not have this gift (cf. 1 Cor. 4:13). If therefore Paul, who is far removed from pharisaic boasting, can write such words, it is also possible for someone to say the same words as the Publican and be humble in speech like him, but not to be justified as he was. To the Publican's words must be added his

renunciation of evil, his soul's disposition, his contrition and his patience. David shows us by his actions that anyone who considers himself guilty before God and repents must believe that the reproach and contempt of others towards him is just and to be endured. After he had sinned, when he heard Shimei speaking ill of him, he said to those who wanted to retaliate, "Let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David" (2 Sam. 16:10). According to him, God's forgiveness of David's sin against him had posted the man there. Yet David was struggling at that time with a great and terrible calamity, as Absalom had just risen up in revolt against him (2 Sam. 15:7ff).

At first the Publican evilly appropriated other people's goods; later he renounced dishonesty and by not justifying himself, was justified. The Pharisee did not lay claim to other people's possessions, but by justifying himself he was condemned. What will befall those who do lay claim to other people's possessions and attempt to justify themselves?

Leaving Jerusalem against his will and with unbearable grief, he fled as far as the foot of the Mount of Olives. There, to make the calamity worse, he met Shimei throwing stones at him, cursing him mercilessly and insulting him shamelessly (2 Sam. 16:5ff). He called him a bloodthirsty man and a criminal, as if to remind the King, to his disgrace, of the incident with Bathsheba and Uriah (2 Sam. 11:3-15). He did not stop after cursing him once or twice and throwing

a few stones, and words that strike harder than stones. It says the King with all his men went on with Shimei going along the mountainside following the King, cursing him, throwing stones from the side and spattering him with mud. The King did not lack men to stop him. Abishai, his commander, unable to endure it, said to the King, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord and king? Let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head" (2 Sam. 16:9). But David restrained him and all his servants, saying to them, "Let him curse. It may be that the Lord will look on my affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day" (2 Sam. 16:12).

The happenings which took place in those days are shown in the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee, fulfilled for ever by righteousness. If someone really accounts himself guilty of eternal punishment, he will courageously endure not just dishonour but also harm, disease and, in fact, every kind of misfortune and ill-treatment. He who shows such patience, as though in debt and guilty, is delivered by a very light condemnation, temporary and ephemeral, saved from truly grievous, unbearable and unending punishment. Sometimes he may even be delivered from dangers threatening him now, because God's kindness begins from that point, due to his patience. Someone chastened by God said, "I will bear the chastening of the Lord, because I have sinned against him" (cf. Micah 7:9 Lxx).

May we, chastened not by the Lord's wrath and anger but by His mercy, not be cast down by God's punishment, but like the Psalmist may we be raised up at the end by the grace and love towards mankind of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory, might, honour and worship, together with the Father and the life-giving Spirit, now and for ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

From The Homilies of Saint Gregory Palamas, translated by The Monastery of St. John the Baptist, Essex; edited with an introduction and notes by Christopher Veniamin. To be published by Saint Tikhon's Seminary Press in three volumes, the first of which is to appear around June of this year.



Pre-Lenten Winter Festival 2001 Enjoyed by Guests



Father Leo Poore greets guests with toast



Guests arriving for the winter festival



Cocktail hour



Banquet

The Century Association of St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary once again hosted a truly wonderful "Winter Festival." This year's event was held at the Holiday Inn in Dunmore, Pennsylvania, on Sunday, February 18, 2001. Fellowship, friendship, and festivity were all part of the day's ambiance.

Century Association President Father Leo Poore, along with a committee of local members, did an outstanding job organizing and planning the affair. Maria Proch and Kyra Fetchina handled the monumental task of taking reservations and assigning tables for the grand banquet. Father Deacon Gabriel Petorak and Kay Fedirko collected and organized the "Theme Baskets" auction — something

new for "Winter Festival 2001"! David Brzuchalski and Charles Gazdecki were in charge or publicity with the local media. Other members of the committee were V. Rev. Joseph Martin, the association's spiritual advisor, and Matushka Dorothy Sulich, its financial secretary.

His Eminence, Archbishop Herman was unable to attend this year's festival due to a prior commitment to attend the tenth anniversary celebration of Patriarch Alexei in Russia. We sincerely hope that this trip was fruitful and spiritually uplifting for him; he was sincerely missed by all in attendance.

The gala event began at 4 p.m. with a cocktail hour featuring hot and cold

hors d'oeuvres served in the beautiful reception area near the hotel's indoor pool. Following the reception, a grand banquet was held in the dining room; the main entree was a choice of chicken Kiev or baked flounder florentine. From salad to desert, the entire meal was superb and enjoyed by all.

Entertainment for the evening was provided by the ever-popular Joe Stanky and the Cadets. Many of the guests stomped the dance floor to the polka rhythms, while others listened at their tables, tapping their feet to the beat of the band, but I venture to report that all of them thoroughly enjoyed Stanky's special style. One great feature was the playing of the Russian folk dances; the



dance floor surely took a beating during this special segment of the band's repertoire.

An added attraction at this year's festival was the Theme Baskets Auction.

Guests had the opportunity to purchase tickets and place them into containers of the theme baskets that they hoped to win. Fifteen baskets were donated with such themes as Pasta, Wine, Car Maintenance, Kitchen Gadgets, Gardening, and others. With the special talent of Fr. Martin, who did some rather serious campaigning to sell as many tickets as possible, we were able to meet our goal of over \$1,000 on this auction. It was great fun while all waited (rather impatiently) for their names to be selected. Special congratulations go out to our friend "Jack" who took home at least four of the prizes — well why shouldn't he? He bought over \$100 worth of tickets!

Father Joseph Martin announces Chinese auction winners and prizes

Next, the Grand Raffle prizes were awarded. Our thanks go to the following for their generous contributions to this year's raffle: Mr. Walter Palchik who donated our first prize — a 14 karat gold cocktail ring of precious stones; St. Tikhon's Bookstore for a magnificent collector's plate handcrafted in Russia; Susan's Crystals for the beautiful decorator's vase; and Mr. Peter Holoiviak for a pair of gold-leafed icons of Christ and the Theotokos, of breathtaking beauty. Congratulations to the winners who went away with these beautiful treasures! And we pray that God, in His benevolence, grants to all our benefactors, many blessed years. Our profit from this

raffle was an overwhelming success — in excess of \$8,000.

All good things must come to an end, as did our Winter Festival. As this writer perceived it, many of the guests found it difficult to say good-bye to old friends and to make their departure for home. All in all, it was a grand time, and we would be remiss if we did not thank all who supported and helped make this affair a dynamic success. We invite all of our friends to watch for upcoming events that will be hosted by the Century Association in the months ahead, and to join us at the next fund-raiser for our much-cherished St. Tikhon's Seminary.

—David M. Brzuchalski

The Significance of the Married Saints



Editor's note: the following article was presented as a lecture at Holy Cross Church, Williamsport, Pa., on March 17, 2001

Thank you very much for inviting me to be with you for this retreat, to enjoy your fellowship, and to have the pleasure to talk together about how the Saints can help us as we strive to grow in holiness. Now I would like to share some thoughts about the *significance* of the married saints — considering such questions as:

What meaning do they have for us as Orthodox Christians? Why are they important in the life of our Church? How can they help us in our daily Christian life and our efforts to reach the Kingdom of Heaven?

But I really don't just want to give my own thoughts on these things. I am also very interested in hearing your ideas — what do the married saints mean to each of you? I hope we can have some discussion about that after this talk. Actually, there may be some here who have scarcely ever thought about our Church even having married saints. I'm reminded of the lady in a Church gathering about ten years ago who, when we were telling about our plans to write a book on the married saints, blurted out, "I didn't know there were any!" So at the very least, after this afternoon every one of you will know that our Church has married saints!

Well, what can we begin to say about



Empress St. Theodora

the *significance* of the fact that some of the saints of our Church *were married*? First, I think we can affirm that this fact *in itself* vividly demonstrates that our Church believes that marriage and marital relations are not incompatible with sanctification and deification. Or in other words, *being married is not an obstacle to holiness*.

There are many sources I could quote in support of this affirmation, but let me just give an excerpt from a book called *Holy Women of Byzantium: Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation*, edited by Alice-Mary Talbot. In the introduction to the *Life of St. Mary the Younger*, a pious housewife living in Constantinople in the ninth century, Angeliki E. Laiou,

having done an intense, critical analysis of the two extant manuscripts of the *Life* of this saint, and having carefully compared this *Life* with those of other saints of the same basic time period, states,

"The description of Mary's everyday life may, I think, be retained. The fact that the wife had the management of the household property is attested by the *vita [life]* of St. Thomais among other witnesses. The involvement of the extended family in the couple's affairs is described particularly powerfully here, but it is not unlikely. The statement that her marriage was arranged is commonplace. The sentiments expressed about the proper love between husband and wife, and the fact that sexual relations could be part of a

virtuous life, and the parental love toward the children, can be found variously in the *vita* of St. Theophano and in other tenth-century texts, those connected with the tetragamy of [Emperor] Leo VI [the Wise] and even those of the saints' Lives by [St.] Symeon Metaphrastes." [St. Symeon lived in the tenth century in Constantinople; he was the greatest early collector of saints' written lives; he paraphrased many and wrote some himself, and compiled them in the first great Menologion, or collection of saints' lives for liturgical use.] "Most important, the social virtue of charity as a way to sanctification may be found in the *vita* of St. Theophano and in that of St. Thomais who, like Mary, was accused by her husband of squandering the property of the household. Thus, charity was a prime virtue; extreme abstemiousness and asceticism in a married woman were not."¹

Angeliki Laiou's important observations here — that in the three saints' *lives* she mentions there is the affirmation of "the social virtue of charity as a way to sanctification," and that "charity was a prime virtue; extreme abstemiousness and asceticism in a married woman were not" — these observations are applicable to the lives of many more of the married saints than the three she mentions. We often find in the lives of the married saints a greater emphasis on hospitality, almsgiving, and service to the poor than on intense asceticism (that kind of extreme asceticism which often characterizes the lives of the monastic saints). This should be an encouragement to those of us who are married, reassuring us that extreme asceticism — which simply is rarely possible for those who are married — is not obligatory for living a holy life. As just one example of such a saintly married life, with emphasis on service to others rather than on severe asceticism, let us hear the short Life of **St. Theocleto the Wonderworker**, from ninth century Byzantium:

"Theocleto was a godly woman from her youth. Her parents arranged for her to marry Zacharias, a man of one mind with her, a lover of Christ and of virtue. After her marriage she continued to live as before, giving alms continually. Even though they were wealthy, she labored with her hands, and served the servants,

the poor, and those close to her. She always tried to take the path of humility.

"Saint Theocleto loved to study the Holy Scriptures and always tried to live what she read. She passed her entire life in this godly manner, and was deemed worthy to foreknow the time of her death. After her repose (in the early ninth century), her relics remained incorrupt and became a fountain of healing."²

We should add, though, that some of the married saints *were able* to practice quite severe asceticism *while* managing a household, bearing and raising children, practicing hospitality, serving the poor, and in general having a regular married life. Three such examples would be **St. Gorgonia** (sister of St. Gregory the Theologian; fourth century; Asia Minor), **St. Evfrosinia** (wife of **St. Dmitry Donskoy**, the Grand Prince of Moscow; late 14th cent.), and **St. Julianna Lazarevskaya** (of the lesser nobility in late 16th cent. Russia).

Something else we notice as we look at the married saints is how a considerable number of them were of the *royalty*: quite a number of Byzantine emperors and empresses have been canonized as saints, as well as Serbian, Russian, and Georgian rulers. It may be asked: How can average, modern-day Orthodox husbands and wives relate in a meaningful way to such imperial saints? Well, let's remember that every Orthodox couple is *crowned* in the wedding service, crowned to be *the king and queen* of their part of the world — no matter how small that part of the earth might be. And each Christian home, no matter how humble, is meant to be an abode for the King of Heaven, Jesus Christ Himself, *to dwell in* — and through His vice-regents, the husband and wife, *to rule* with His peace and love. And I wonder: Am I being too much a romantic to suggest that this royal imagery can significantly help us to shape the ethos of our family life — reminding us to conduct ourselves with dignity and decorum, and to relate to our spouse as if he or she really were a prince or princess? We remember that the Apostle Peter calls all Christians "a *royal* priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people" (1 Peter 2:9; my emphasis).

It also should be encouraging to us who are married that emperors and em-

presses, who presumably had far more responsibilities, far more details to attend to in ruling their vast dominions than we have in managing our small domains, were able to do so with Christian virtue and sanctity. Five examples of such godly imperial couples are **Ss. Theodosius and Placilla** (Constantinople; late fourth cent.), **Ss. Justinian and Theodora** (Constantinople; mid-sixth cent.); **Ss. Ethelbert and Bertha** (rulers of the realm of Kent in southeastern England; late 6th and early 7th cent.); **St. Vladimir and his wife Anna**, the sister of the Byzantine Emperor (rulers in Kievan Russia; late tenth and early 11th cent.), and **Ss. Dmitry Donskoy and Evfrosinia** (the Grand Prince of Moscow and his wife, ruling in the late 14th cent.).

It still may be asked: Well, if the married saints are so important, why aren't there more of them? It is true — there are many, many more officially canonized *unmarried* than married saints in our Church. Certainly this is partly because most saints' lives have been written by monks, who presumably would have had less contact with married people, and who would have been more interested in the great ascetic achievements of fellow monastics, such as would directly inspire them in their own ascetic endeavors.

Also, it is true that marriage implies life "in the world"; hence, married life is *less obviously akin* to the "life of the angels" led by monastics; it is *less tangibly and visibly* totally dedicated to the things relating to eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven. In monasticism, the complete dedication of one's life to God is graphically brought into focus, with the joys of marriage and family life willingly denied in order to allow for more all-encompassing concentration on prayer and worship.

This is the basic reason, I think, that traditionally in Orthodoxy, monasticism — known as "the angelic life" — has been considered to be the highest, most exalted way of life. In general, the monastics have more of an opportunity to follow St. Paul's admonition, which nevertheless is addressed to all Christians, to "*seek those things which are above*, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. *Set your affection on things above*, not on things on the earth. For you are dead, and your life is hidden with

Continued on the next page

1. Angeliki E. Laiou, "The Life of St. Mary the Younger," in *Holy Women of Byzantium — Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation*, edited by Alice-Mary Talbot (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1996), p. 250 (my emphasis).

2. David and Mary Ford, *Marriage as a Path to Holiness: Lives of Married Saints* (S. Canaan, Pa.: St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 1994), p. 225.

Married Saints

Continued from page 29

Christ in God" (Col. 3:1-3; my emphasis).

But yet, is it not true that the married saints demonstrate that it is possible for married people to live in the world and *at the same time* to have their eyes on heaven, with their highest affection directed towards Christ and their greatest efforts and energy directed towards overcoming sin and developing the eternally abiding virtues of the Christian life? And *if married people succeed* in living in the world yet without being *of it*, despite being surrounded by so many earthly obligations — if they manage, by God's grace, to bring *every aspect* of their existence in this world under the lordship of Christ — and if they allow the Holy Spirit to touch and sanctify *even the smallest details of their daily lives*, then can this be seen in some ways as being an even greater achievement than the sanctity achieved by the monastics, since presumably the married have many more "earthly cares" than typically the monastics have? At least on one occasion, St. John Chrysostom suggests this very thing:

"If anyone admires a solitary life and the avoidance of crowded society, I quite admit that it is a paradigm of patient endurance, but [this is] not sufficient proof of all-round spiritual prowess. In the harbor the man at the helm cannot yet give sure proof of his skill; but no one will deny the title of a first-class helmsman to anyone who guides his ship to safety in the midst of a stormy sea. We need not, then, give lavish praise or excessive admiration to the monk because, by keeping to himself, he avoids agitation and does not commit many serious sins; for he has nothing to goad or excite his soul. But if a man has devoted himself to the whole community and has been forced to endure the sins of all, and still remains firm and unwavering, piloting his soul through the tempest as in a calm, he is the one who deserves everyone's applause and admiration, for he has given proof enough of his prowess."³

While Chrysostom specifically had priests in mind in this passage, it would seem that the point also would apply to

all those trying to live fully Christian lives in the midst of the world — especially those living in families.

Two examples of Saints who combined excellent management of worldly household duties and social service with intense piety and asceticism are **St. Nonna**, mother of St. Gregory the Theologian, and **St. Sophia of Thrace**. We have a description of St. Nonna given by her illustrious son in his funeral oration for his father:

"Some women have excelled in thrifty management of the home, and others in the pursuit of godliness. Yet even though it is difficult to achieve both these things, she has surpassed everyone in both of them — by her eminence in each of them, and by the fact that she alone has combined them together. Even as the prosperity of her household increased through her wise and careful oversight, according to the injunctions and laws of Solomon concerning a valiant wife [Prov. 31:10-31], as if she had no concerns about piety, so also did she offer herself to God and apply herself to divine things as if she were completely released from household duties. She allowed neither aspect of her life to interfere with the other, but rather made each one confirm and strengthen the other.

"What time or place for prayer has ever escaped her? Each day this has been more important for her than everything else. Indeed, who has had such hope as she to receive immediately those things for which she asked in prayer? Who has paid such reverence to the hand and countenance of the priests? Or has so honored every kind of philosophical pursuit? Who has subdued the flesh more by fasting and vigilance? Or has stood like a pillar at the all-night psalmody as well as that during the day? Who has loved virginity more, yet kept upholding the marriage bond? Who has been a better ally of orphans and widows? Or has helped so much to lighten the sufferings of the mourner?"⁴

And concerning **St. Sophia of Thrace**:

"As is often the case, this saint was the daughter of pious parents. They were a distinguished family from the ancient

province of Ainos, in Thrace [today, the European part of Turkey]. When Sophia came of age, she was a comely and well-educated young woman. She married, and in time she and her husband had six children.

"Although in raising her children she obviously was very busy with daily life and its chores and concerns, this in no way hindered her spiritual life. She attended church often, and made her home a church through her frequent prayers and vigils. She strove in every way to fulfill the commandments, and to seek virtue. She showed by her own conduct that the concerns of everyday life need not in any way restrict one's desire to please the Lord, or one's possibility for growth in the spiritual life.

"After some time, a plague struck,

Her home became a haven for the poor and homeless, and she eagerly assisted other widows. She cheerfully and generously gave alms, preferring to go without something herself, than to see any of the poor leave her home empty-handed.

which killed Saint Sophia's husband and all their children. Having lost her own children, she became a mother to many orphans. In fact, within twenty years, she adopted over one hundred children, whom she raised in the love and fear of the Lord. Her home became a haven for the poor and homeless, and she eagerly assisted other widows. She cheerfully and generously gave alms, preferring to go without something herself, than to see any of the poor leave her home empty-handed.

"She lived a very ascetical life, constantly praying, and remembering the Psalms. She was an example of humility, considering herself least of all, in spite of her many virtues. She fasted very strictly, her Life says, eating dry bread and water; but she generously fed the

3. David C. Ford, *Women and Men in the Early Church: The Full Views of St. John Chrysostom* (S. Canaan, Pa.: St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 1996), p. 87.

4. St. Gregory the Theologian, "On the Death of His Father," parts 8 and 9; this translation is by David and Mary Ford, in *Marriage as a Path to Holiness: Lives of Married Saints*, p. 92. A late-19th century English translation is given in Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1983), 2nd series, vol. VII, p. 257.

poor and gave them wine with their meals.⁵

Here's another idea to consider: Do the married Saints perhaps point us towards the most all-encompassing vision for Christianity, that of *transforming the whole world* through Christian service to others, and through simply being *Christ-filled and Christ-like* in the midst of family life and the society at large?

Yes, the Orthodox monastics also seek to transform the world; they do so mainly through prayer (in contrast to Western monasticism, which often much more has emphasized social service), and certainly prayer is ultimately the most powerful thing we can do for others. And then again, the monastics also serve others — especially with their historic emphasis on hospitality for those who come to visit the monasteries. But by the same token, the married also pray. And of course, the married are the ones who bear and raise the monks of the future — the children who will grow up to be monastics! And it is interesting that marriage is historically considered to be one of the seven great sacraments of the Church, while monastic tonsuring is not.

But the bottom line, I think, is that *both forms of life are crucial*. We need them both; they are meant to be *complementary*. As St. Gregory the Theologian says, concerning the relationship between the monastics and the married, "Be bound together, both virgins and wives, and be one in the Lord, and each other's adornment."⁶ There should never be conflict between these two ways of life, or any sense of rivalry or competitiveness. *Each form of life has its own glory; each form is fully blessed and sanctified by God; and whatever form of life God has called us to is the highest*

one for us — the one that He deems to be the best one for us, the one most helpful for our salvation. As I wrote in my book on St. John Chrysostom's views on women,

"At the practical level, Chrysostom left the matter of whether to live a celibate or married completely to the free choice of his listeners. Ultimately, it is simply a matter of personal gift and call-



Saints Joachim and Anna

ing, and one must choose the way which will most assure one's personal salvation. As St. John says, "There are innumerable models (*eikones*) laid before you in the Scriptures of virtuous lives. . . . One has shown forth virtue through poverty, another through riches; for example, Elijah through poverty, and Abraham through riches. Follow that example which you esteem more easy, most befitting for you to practice. And also, one by marriage, the other by virginity; Abraham by marriage, Elijah by virginity. Follow whichever way you wish, for both lead to heaven."⁷

As a final consideration, it seems very reasonable to suggest that the married

saints — *by the very fact that we have them*, as well as through learning about the particular details of their lives — should be of tremendous inspiration to married Christians who are striving to really live the Christian life. Since we often pray to Saints who have some particular connection to what our prayers are about, it does seem especially appropriate for married people to ask the married saints for their prayers, their support, their love, their very presence in our midst, to help us to fulfill *the grand and magnificent vision for Christian marriage that our Church gives us* — for instance, in Ephesians 5, where St. Paul compares the love Christ has for His Bride, the Church, with the love between husband and wife.

In a similar way, since people are naturally drawn towards reading and studying the lives of saints who led lives in some particular way relevant to their own lives, it would seem that if we are married, reading the *Lives* of the married saints would be particularly helpful — to give us *concrete, tangible, vivid role models*, helping us to see *how saintly married people have actually lived* the same Orthodox faith that we are trying to live as married people. And lest we be overawed and discouraged

by the glowing descriptions of the wonderful achievements of the married saints which we often find in their *Lives*, we should remember that we are not called to measure and judge our achievements, or to compare ourselves with others, but simply, humbly, to do the best we can with our Lord's help, and with the help of the saints who are so eager for us to call upon them for strength, comfort, and consolation. And we can be very sure that they all had moments of discouragement, feeling that they were falling very far short of the holiness for which they were striving.

*Truly God is Wondrous in His Saints!
To be continued.*

—David C. Ford

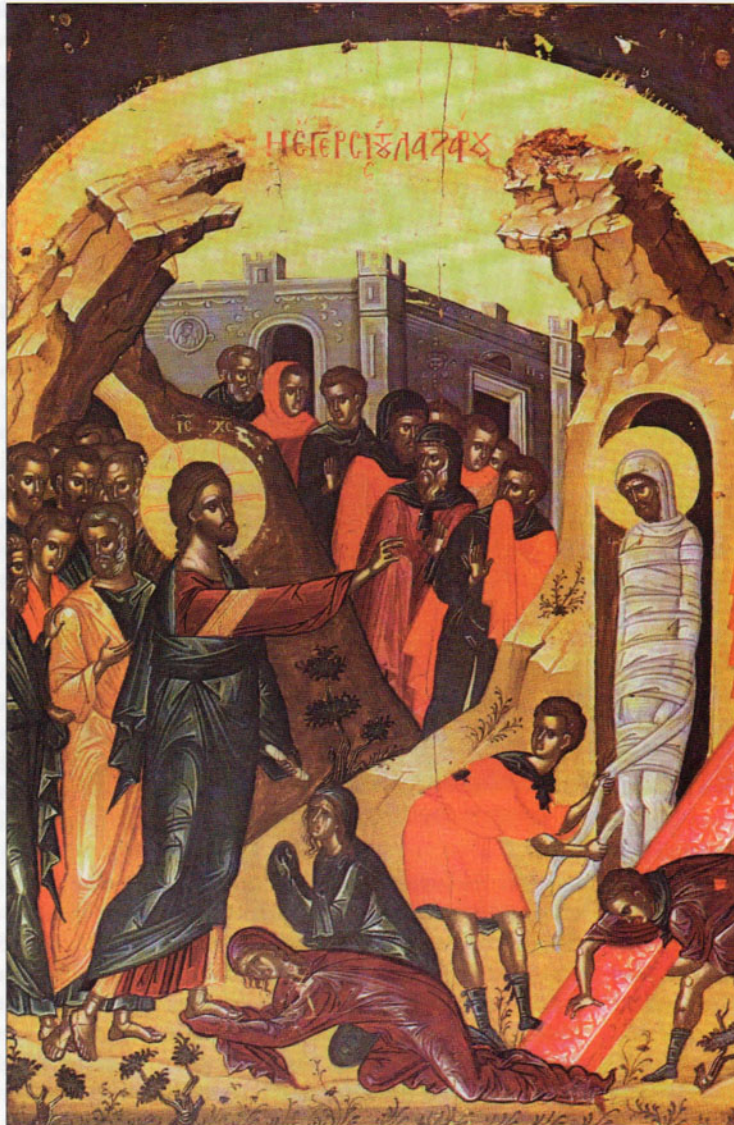
5. *Marriage as a Path to Holiness: Lives of Married Saints*, pp. 195-196.

6. "On the Words of the Gospel" (Oration XXXVII), part X; in NPNF 2, vol. VII, p. 341.

7. *Women and Men in the Early Church: The Full Views of St. John Chrysostom*, p. 88; quoting from Chrysostom's Homily XII on Philipians (NPNF, 1st series, vol. XIII, p. 240; translation adapted).

For the Hours of Pain

Part VI



Conclusion of the second chapter, "Resurrection and Life, Death and Mourning."

2.11. Reproof of those who mourn like idol-worshippers

Now we should examine some selections from the sermons of St. John Chrysostom. Many times he spoke at

length about the Christian's attitude toward death and mourning, and about the Christian hope of the resurrection of the dead. Many times he stigmatized the perpetuation, among Christians, of idolatrous customs of mourning which had no room for the Christian hope. His sermons, those of a great father of the Church also apply completely to most

Christians of today; and therefore they have never ceased to be of interest.

Speaking on the eleventh chapter of the Gospel of St. John, which records the raising of Lazarus, he says: "But in our days, among our other evils there is one malady very prevalent among our women; they make a great show in their dirges and wailings, baring their arms,

tearing their hair, making furrows down their cheeks. And this they do, some from grief, others from ostentation and rivalry, others from wantonness; and they bare their arms, and this too in the sight of men. Why do you, woman? Do you strip yourself in unseemly sort, tell me, you who are a member of Christ, in the midst of the marketplace, when men are present there? Do you pluck your hair, and rend your garments, and wail loudly, and join the dance, and keep throughout a resemblance to Bacchanalian women, and do you not think that you are offending God? What madness is this? Will not the heathen laugh? Will they not deem our doctrines fables? They will say, 'There is no resurrection — the doctrines of the Christians are mockeries, trickery, and contrivance. For their women lament as though there were nothing after this world; they give no heed to the words engraven in their books; all those words are fictions, and these women show that they are so. Because if they had believed that he who has died is not dead, but has removed to a better life, they would not have mourned him as no longer being, they would not have thus beaten themselves, they would not have uttered such words as these full of unbelief, "I shall nevermore see, I shall never more regain you"; all their religion is a fable, and if the very chief of good things is thus wholly disbelieved by them, much more the other things which are revered among them.'"

"What avail the many lamentations?" the holy Chrysostom continues. "And I have heard also another grievous thing, that many women attract lovers by their sad cries, acquiring by the fervor of their wailings a reputation for affection to their husbands. O devilish purpose! O Satanic invention! How long are we but dust and ashes, how long but blood and flesh? Let us look up to Heaven, let us take thought of spiritual things. How shall we be able to rebuke the heathen, how to exhort them, when we do such things? How shall we dispute with them concerning the resurrection? How about the rest of heavenly wisdom? How shall we ourselves live without fear? Do you not know that of grief comes death? For grief darkening the seeing part of the soul not only hinders it from perceiving anything that it ought, but also works great mischief. In one way then we offend God,

and gain advantage neither for ourselves nor for him who is gone; in the other we please God, and gain honor among men."

Speaking on the miracle of the raising of the daughter of Jairus, he again finds the opportunity to censure the anti-Christian customs of mourning which prevailed among the Christians of his time: "Why then do you wail for nought? The thing is become a sleep. Why lament and weep? Why, even if Greeks [i.e. pagans] did this, they would be laughed to

Here we have the full explanation why Christians of today are not inspired by faith in the resurrection of the dead. This is why they act like idolaters and other faithless people "having no hope," when they face the death of loved ones.

scorn; but when the believer behaves himself unseemly in these things, what plea has he? What excuse will there be for those who are guilty of such folly, and this, after so long a time, and so clear proof of the resurrection?

"But you, as though laboring to add to the charge against you, also bring us in heathen women singing dirges, to kindle your feelings, and to stir up the furnace thoroughly; and you hearken not to Paul, who says, 'What concord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has he that believes with an infidel?'

"And while the children of heathens, who know nothing of resurrection, do yet find words of consolation, saying, 'Bear it manfully, for it is not possible to undo what has taken place, nor to amend it by lamentations; are you not, who hear sayings wiser and better than these, ashamed to behave yourself more unseemly than they?' For we say not at all, 'Bear it manfully, because it is not possible to undo what has taken place,' but, 'Bear it manfully, because he will surely rise again'; the child sleeps and is not dead; he is at rest and has not perished. For resurrection will be his final lot, and eter-

nal life, and immortality, and an angel's portion. Don't you hear the Psalm that says, 'Return to your rest, O my soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you'? God calls it 'bountiful dealing,' and do you make lamentation?

"And what more could you have done, if you were a foe and an enemy of the dead? Why, if there must be mourning, it is the devil that ought to mourn. He may beat himself, he may wail, at our journeying to greater blessings. This lamentation becomes his wickedness, not you, who are going to be crowned and to rest.

"Why then disgrace the departed? Why dispose the rest to fear and tremble at death? Why cause many to accuse God, as though He had done very dreadful things? Or rather, why after this invite poor persons, and entreat priests to pray? 'In order,' says he, 'that the dead may depart into rest; that he may find the Judge propitious.' For these things then are you mourning and wailing? You are therefore fighting and warring with yourself: exciting a storm against yourself on account of his having entered into harbor.

"'But what can I do?' he says, 'such a thing is nature.' The blame is not nature's, neither does it belong to the necessary consequence of the thing; but it is we who are turning all things upside down, are overcome with softness, are giving up our proper nobility, and are making the unbelievers worse . . . If Christian teaching is not a myth, do not wail; if you think it worthy of belief, do not cry; for if you cry, how shall you convince the unbeliever that you believe?"

St. John Chrysostom indeed said such things to the Christians of his day. But these idolatrous funeral and mourning customs — unfortunately they are customs — are handed down from generation to generation; they have been perpetuated and preserved right up until the present day. Furthermore, it should be kept in mind that a large part of the Christian East was under bondage for centuries. Thus, with the teaching and enlightenment of Christianity lacking, it was easy for heathen customs to survive. Many times the basic truths of the faith were unknown. Here we have the full explanation why Christians of today are

Continued on the next page

For the Hours of Pain

Continued from page 33

not inspired by faith in the resurrection of the dead. This is why they act like idolaters and other faithless people “having no hope,” when they face the death of loved ones.

So then, today too, by the casket or the newly dug grave, we hear hopeless wailing; and in the villages of the provinces heart-rending dirges pierce the silence and echo for months and even years over the mountains and valleys, wherever the unconsolable widow directs her steps.

The reader of Homer’s Epics — where he tells about the women wailing over Hector’s body — has a very familiar picture in front of him, because this is also repeated today. Choirs of women who sing dirges responsively — first one choir and then another -- sit near the casket and compose verses extemporaneously. The fifteen syllable and eight syllable verses of the Maniacs are well known. They tell of the accomplishments of the departed, his tragic and bitter death, the calamity which his death created, and of the widow and orphans. They attack Charos, and Fate, and everything else which is considered to have anything at all to do with death! They bring in companions, not only acquaintances and friends, but animals and objects too — whatever was associated with the departed — always in a dramatic and oppressive way. Wherever there are still those exploiters of pain, those women who take money and are singers of dirges by profession, the anti-Christian grief of mourners is made unbearable. These women continue the customs of the worshippers of India, Babylonia, and Egypt, and they renew the work of “the leaders of lamentations,” as Homer calls them.

Today, too, a good many Christians are not without the other hardships of idolatrous mourners. Women in mourning are particularly susceptible to these practices. For example, they shut themselves in the house for years; they submerge the house in darkness and gloom with heavy shutters over the windows. If this wasn’t enough, they think about the departed constantly, they become absorbed in grief, and in the many other inventions of hopeless sorrow.

So it is natural then that such nervous

exhaustion, such a poisoning of the system with sorrow, and such oppression and torture of the body, undermine health, shorten life, and lead to an early grave. “Heartache can destroy one’s health; from sorrow, death proceeds,” the divinely written word assures us (Sirach 38:19). Such death must be considered as indirect suicide. Could unbelievers do any worse? Is the compulsory suicide of the Hindu wife on the grave of her husband any different? If the fruit of such affliction is such an evil, is not Paul completely right when he considers those Christians unbelievers who sorrow “as others having no hope”?

Furthermore, these people put themselves in the ranks of unbelievers by stopping church attendance, by their withdrawal from God’s House and from the Divine Liturgy. For months, for a year, for three years, for seven years, the woman in mourning does not intend to set foot in church.

Oh! Here we have the most anti-Christian of all the anti-Christian customs which have been preserved by Christians. Unfortunately, it isn’t only those who become bitter over the death of a loved one and consider God, we might say, as their opponent and enemy who has wronged them, and therefore withdraw from the Church and speak bitterly against religion; but there are so many other Christians too — mostly women — who could find comfort in the Church, to lighten the pressure which grief exerts on their soul. What is more important, many of them would also be able to accept that priceless influence which the grace of God uses on the softened hearts of the afflicted. In other words they could repent, change their lives, and set off on a spiritual course, which would definitely lead them back to God again, and to their loved one. Yet they remain far from the church. Shut up in their house of mourning with their painful memories, they waste away; they lose the priceless comfort which the Spirit of God supplies to faithful churchgoers, in order not to violate a destructive custom of unbelief and be misunderstood.

They prefer to conform to an absurd demand of people who live in ignorance and continue an anti-Christian custom, rather than obey God by fulfilling the holy requirement of going to church.

They prefer to please a few uneducated men, rather than God. They make a religion out of the customs of unbelief and violate everything that true religion teaches. They strictly practice idolatrous customs and they are excommunicated from the Church of Christ. According to the 80th Canon of the Sixth Ecumenical Synod, the Christian who stays away from church for three consecutive Sundays, without a serious excuse, is cut off from the Church and excommunicated. So they excommunicate themselves because they fear “what people will say”! Well now, are these “people” like wild beasts, that they have to be feared? Must Christian women fear them to such an extent that they do not fear excommunication, and lose sight of the comfort which they could receive in church? Furthermore, is the church an amusement center, so that a Christian woman would be condemned for going there?

Oh, what childish and anti-Christian customs these Christians try to carry out!

12. The measure

How, then, should we Christians think and act in the face of life’s most grievous occasion — when our loved ones die? Should we be cold and hard? If this isn’t possible, what then is the measure? And what is our consolation? There are reasonable questions which arise in the reader’s mind, and it is time for us to answer them.

Christian truth never asks the impossible, for it was taught by God who created man and only He knows completely and perfectly man’s true nature. It is unnatural, then, for the Christian to remain cold and indifferent and unmoved before his dead child, or wife, or parents, or brothers, or beloved friends. The natural thing is to be moved and grieve and cry. In connection with the death of Lazarus, our Lord Himself gave the splendid measure of sorrow. The Lord also bore our human nature with all its characteristics; and because he loved Lazarus with a special love and friendship, when He approached his tomb, “Jesus wept.” He expressed His peaceful and gentle emotion with the quiet and temporary shredding of tears. Behold the splendid and precious measure, taught by the Lord’s example.

Not stoic apathy, or coldness, or a stony calm. But neither loud crying and

wailing, nor unconsolable and corrosive sorrow, nor long, oppressive periods of mourning — ever. These things are unchristian, and belong to those unbelievers “who have no hope.” For the Christian, only tears are permitted, tears which every separation brings forth; tears which human nature itself demands, for it is deeply wounded by death. The man who hasn’t ached inside and wept, has never known life.

Let not those, then, who drown themselves in sorrow, says Basil the Great, put forth the Lord’s tears in defense of their mourning; because, just as the food which the Lord ate cannot be used by us as an excuse for voluptuous and excessive luxury, but, on the contrary as the best standard of temperance and moderation, so too with His tears; they do not point the way for lamentations but they are the standard of decency and an exact rule for us to use, piously and within the limits of nature, wherever we suffer. So then, St. Basil continues, neither women or men are permitted excessive mourning nor many tears; they must be serious about afflictions and shed a few tears, but this quietly, and without groaning and loud crying, or the tearing of garments, and the sprinkling of dust and the like. Only people who have not been taught and raised on the Heavenly truths, behave in such a manner.

“I am not going to hinder your crying, for you are a human being,” says St. John Chrysostom, “but I shall hinder wailing, and unlimited lamentations . . . Christ also showed this when He cried for Lazarus. You, too, likewise, cry, but peacefully and decently, with fear of God; and if you cry in this manner, you will do it not because you doubt the resurrection of the dead, but because the separation is costly to you; because we also cry for those who depart and travel to a foreign place, but we do it not because we have lost hope. Cry in a like manner, as though you are sending off a traveller, and wishing him goodbye.”

Yet, this deep comfort, this interior calm and sense of well being, which takes the sting out of lamentations and puts tears and sorrow in their rightful place, cannot be created by the formal sympathies of friends, nor by the funeral sermons of would-be orators. Such men do mourners more harm than good, because, under such unsuitable circum-

stances, they try to show off their borrowed rhetorical talent, or their doubtful esteem for the departed. Rather than give comfort, they aggravate the wound and make the pain worse with meaningless hints, or open attacks against “evil fate,” yes, even against God. They ask again and again, “Why did he get sick, and die? How could such an injustice take place?”

13. The only Comforter

The true Comforter, the perfect Comforter, is Christ. This truth needs to be

You, too, likewise, cry, but peacefully and decently, with fear of God; and if you cry in this manner, you will do it not because you doubt the resurrection of the dead, but because the separation is costly to you; because we also cry for those who depart and travel to a foreign place, but we do it not because we have lost hope.

developed fully, and for that reason, we shall refer again to those three great miracles, with which the Lord raised the dead, in order to see Him as Comforter.

First, we see Him at the funeral of the only son of the widow of Nain. With great emphasis, the Evangelist records that “when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her.” No one had asked Him to do it. The widow hadn’t; she followed the casket broken and shipwrecked after a terrible storm on the sea of life. Nor had anybody else asked Him to console her. On His own initiative, and moved by His own compassion and mercy, which He possesses as an inexhaustible treasure, He was touched by her pain. In the resurrection of Jairus’s daughter, it was the parent’s faith that was the moral condition of the Lord’s miracle-working, while, in the raising of Lazarus, it was the faith of Lazarus and his sisters. Here, however, it wasn’t anyone’s faith. Here, the only cause was His mercy, and the tenderness of His heart. His heart is so sensitive to human pain that many times and without any other condition He pours out His love on those who are ready. For this reason then, He turned to the crying and grievously hurt widow and said, “Weep not.”

Secondly, we see Him as Comforter at Jairus’s house. He had been called there, and, as soon as He entered, He said

to “the minstrels and the people making a noise,” “Depart,” because paid mourners and singers of dirges no longer have a place where Jesus is. They do not comfort, but drug the soul of the sorrowing, while Christ soothes and brings peace. Finally, He said to the members of the family, who were crying, “Weep not.”

But was there ever a death or a funeral, where friends and relatives exhorted widows and mothers not to cry? Yet, such exhortations are so feeble, that, rather than stop the lamentations, they

cause more affliction and the crying and weeping become worse. This never happens, though, where Christ’s order is heard: “Weep not.” His word is not a simple word of comfort, without power and influence. It is rather an all-powerful command which springs from the superbly joyful fact that the person whom we weep for as dead and gone, will be brought back to life by the Savior. “Weep not!” Let those who sorrow take special notice of this command of the Lord. It echoes out with the same sound as always and is directed to all those who are hurt and mourn. He has compassion for everyone; He knows everyone’s pain and tears, even if nobody else sees or suspects them. He comes to all with the deepest compassion and goodness, to comfort them. They have only to accept His comforting visit; they have only to listen quietly to hear the whisper of the Comforter: “Weep not.” Unfortunately, it is a common thing for mourners to accept every fruitless means of comfort and to reject only the Comforter, the most compassionate Jesus. You try to convince them to seek the visit of Him as Comforter, to approach Him, to receive those truths of His Gospel — especially those truths about death, resurrection, and the future life — and yet they remain so skeptical. They don’t see

Continued on the next page

For the Hours of Pain

Continued from page 35

that our worldly friends are so eager to share in entertainment and having a good time (then they want the biggest share), but they are so unwilling to take part in our afflictions. Christ, on the other hand, is the perfect, the invaluable, the incomparable friend, just as much when we are suffering as when we are rejoicing. Yes, even more so in days of affliction, when no other person or thing can comfort, He is the one who can perfectly heal every wounded heart. When He enters a house of mourning, the lamentations and wailing cease, the commotion stops, the atmosphere of hopelessness gives way to hope, the shadow of death is dispersed by the sweet light of the resurrection of our dead loved ones and by the tender meeting in our Father's house.

Thirdly, in the miracle of the raising of Lazarus, that superbly comforting fact, which we have already mentioned, is related. "Jesus wept," says the Evangelist. In this case the Lord applied that which, through the Apostles, He commands us to do: "Weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15). In other words the Lord wept out of deep *sympathy*. Sympathy, however, does not mean simple pity for the other person's plight, a pity which descends from on high to some misfortune on earth. In Greek, sympathy means a participation in other people's sufferings; to *suffer together* is a good definition. In other words we *sympathize* with others only when we "Put ourselves in their places" and feel their pain, as though it were our own. This is exactly what the Lord does here. He participates in the crying of those who cry. In a few moments he would perform a great miracle, which would warm the hearts of those that wept; and thus he could have had a foretaste of their joy. Yet, He continued to share Mary's grief as she sat at His feet. He "wept with those that wept," in order to later "rejoice with those that rejoice."

Dear readers, let us never forget the fact that the Lord shares our troubles more than anyone else, and therefore He is the only true Comforter. Yes — on the one hand He knows all our troubles, and on the other hand He suffers with us and mixes His tears with our tears. You will understand the great importance of this if you recall how much you were com-

forted when your grief was sincerely shared by friends, even though they were unable to heal its cause. For the simple reason that you also saw others sharing your pain, you knew that they loved you, and you felt a great relief. Love has, you see, tremendous power to soothe and comfort the soul. But think how great our comfort is when we have the confidence that the Lord Himself sympathizes with our pain, and participates in it. No other sympathy, of any other person, is able to give such comfort, as His sympathy. Our sorrow would be unbearable, it would be crushing — and unfortunately such is the sorrow of those who don't know Jesus well — if we hadn't learned that the sympathy of that great and infinitely priceless friend is wholehearted.

Yes! During our days of affliction, He approaches us, unseen; He soothes us with the gentle breath of the Comforter; He urges us to see that behind the troubles of our life lies His inexhaustible love.

Once again, we want the reader to meditate on the importance of our Lord's tears. Think, and say to yourself: "Jesus cried for me! He loves me enough to cry for me!" And if this thought doesn't pierce your heart, and move you to tears of gratitude, may deep consolation not be given to you!

Finally, we shall recall one more event — His own Resurrection — which shows that Jesus refreshes, soothes, and comforts, through His word and His Spirit.

Remember those two disciples who were walking toward Emmaus. They are returning from a funeral, and they are bereaved. They had put their beloved Teacher in a tomb, after watching Him die on the Cross. Sadness, and worry, and depression rule their hearts. So the first question which the Lord asks them, now that He approaches them as a stranger, is this: "What manner of communications are these that you have one to another, as you walk, and are sad?"

In this hour, they represent all the sorrowful and depressed and suffering. Look at, them, however, more carefully. In this depressed state they do not walk in silence, in which case their sorrow would increase and crush them; but "they talked together of all those things which had happened," about Christ and His death. The discussion, study, and hear-

ing of Christ's teaching are wonderful antidotes against affliction. If many people remain unconsolable in their afflictions and thus undermine their health and shorten their lives, it is because they are ignorant, or because they want to hear neither Christ, nor His comforting and refreshing and joy-creating teaching. "My soul refused to be comforted," cried David, finding himself in the midst of many afflictions. So he "remembered God, and rejoiced." He found an overabundance of comfort by thinking and meditating about God.

Notice too, that, the Lord had a special concern for the sorrow and affliction of His followers, and intervened as the good Comforter. This is clear from the very interesting question which He asked the two disciples as they walked along talking so dejectedly. As they tried to relieve their sorrow by talking about Him, he intervened to bring the joyful result. But not only then. He always intervenes, unseen, and makes glad the hearts of the afflicted, when they are thinking about His teaching or discussing it. He is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever." The eternal Savior is the Comforter, and the true Consoler, who "redeems your life from destruction," and it is He who supplies redemption from the corruption of pain and mourning!

To be continued.

Summer Camp

A FREE Fraternal Benefit



Any member of the RBO who plans to attend Summer Camp at St. Tikhon's Seminary/Monastery, South Canaan, PA next year (Summer, 2001) will receive from the RBO \$50. towards their tuition.

Call 1-800-RBO-USA1
for more details

Getting Started

When we are growing up, one of the most exciting things we learn to do is to read! Once we can read, a whole new world opens up to us. We meet new people, see new places, learn new things — all because of reading. Yet the greatest benefit we receive from the GIFT OF READING is to learn more about God — Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit — and how to live our lives as Christians. How thankful we must be for the blessing of being able to read God's Word! We must learn to use this gift wisely and thoughtfully.

Long ago and far away in the center of Russia lived little Bart — a fine young lad whose parents, devout Christians, wanted him to grow up to love and follow Jesus. Bart delighted to walk in the nearby woods, visit the monasteries by the lake and listen to the monks. When he and his brothers, Stephen and Peter, went to school, the brothers learned to read quickly. But Bart just could not make head or tail out of those strange marks on the paper. This was most upsetting to him, bringing him and his parents much unhappiness.

One day while in the woods, little Bart met an old monk and confessed to him all his school problems. Right there the monk prayed with him, gave him some holy bread to eat and assured him that he would learn to read — even better than all the others! Bart asked the monk to come home with him for the evening meal. At the prayers before supper in the chapel, the monk told Bart to read.

"But I can't, remember? I told you so in the forest," stammered Bart.

"And I told you," the monk replied, "God would give you understanding to read!"

Obedying the monk, Bart opened the book. To everyone's amazement, he read the Hours perfectly — and from then on, no book was too hard for him.

Little Bart knew it was important to read the Bible. From the day he began to read until the end of his life, Bart read God's Word and followed its teachings. In fact, he grew up to be one of the greatest saints of the Church. We know him



St. Sergius of Radonezh

as Saint Sergius of Radonezh. Because of his love for God, his whole nation was blessed, and even today his example of a holy life offers faith and hope to millions.

If we are to learn from little Bart's example, let us use the gift of reading as he used it, to read holy books, especially the Bible. No other book, boys and girls, will ever give us the food-for-life that we need as the Bible does. As we read, God Himself will teach us how to live — and become one in Christ.

The great Saint John Chrysostom (who wrote down the Divine Liturgy that bears his name) also stressed the importance of Bible reading. He kept repeating over and over again, **Study the Scriptures. Read God's Word.**

Let us set aside time each day to read the Bible. Let us keep it in our hearts by memorizing it. Let us not say, "When I grow up, I will read the Bible." Rather, like little Bart, **as soon as you learn to read, begin to read God's Word!** Grow rich in its knowledge and be strengthened by it.

READ FROM YOUR BIBLE: Psalm 119:9-48

Theme verse: "Open my eyes, so that I may see the wonderful truths in your law" (Psalm 119:18 TEV).

Something to think about and talk over with your family:

When should I read the Bible?
Who will help me to understand the parts that are hard for me?
Why should the family read the Bible together?

PRAYER

Our Savior and God, help me to grow in learning of Your Holy Word. Make me want to read it more and more so that it becomes the center of my life. Through the prayers of the Theotokos and all the Saints. Amen.

From Building to Last by Isabel Anderson (pub. by St. Tikhon's Seminary Press)

Commentary of St. Cyril of Alexandria On the Gospel of John

Part VII



Commenting on John 1:5-9a, St. Cyril continues his proofs that the Word and Son of God is not a creature, that is, a created thing, but is true God, sharing the Father's divinity. He discusses God's messenger, the Forerunner and Baptist John — whose testimony, along with other proofs, he brings forward to show that only the Only-Begotten is alone is rightly called "the true light."¹

7. That the Son is by nature light and therefore not originate,² but of the essence of God the Father, as very light from very light. (continued)

And the light shines in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not (John 1:5).

1. Square brackets indicate either alternative translations of the words preceding, or words supplied to complete the meaning (implied in the original Greek text).

2. Originate: having come into existence; originated, (hence) created. All created things are originate, but the Word is unoriginate, in the sense that He is not originated. Yet the Word is originate in a different and restricted sense: that he came from the Father's essence, though without a beginning.

The most wise Evangelist necessarily hastens to open to us the thought expressed above by this too, that is now before us. For I suppose he did not think that it would suffice to the hearers, as regards being able to think unerringly of God the Word, that he is truly the light of men, to say only *And the life was the light of men*. For I suppose it was [the case] that some would arise who would hear the things uttered without weighing them, and would moreover set forth or try to teach others also, that the Word of God is indeed truly light, but not giver of light to all; but in whomever he wills, he infuses the light of understanding, approving him who ought to receive it and is worthy of so bright a gift; and that the nature of the rest of the rational creation either gets the power of understanding from its natural descent, or God the Father ingrafts into it mind and understanding, as though the Son were unable

to do this. So, in order that God the Word, who was in God the Father, may be clearly shown to be both life and light, not of some in their turn but not of others, but immingling himself in all things that exist, by some ineffable mode of participation, as wisdom and understanding (which is what is called "light" in things rational), in order that the rational things may become possessed of reason and things recipient of sense may have sense — which in no other way they could have had — he³ necessarily says, *And the light shines in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not*.

As though he cries aloud to his hearers with all precision in this manner: "I said, sirs, teaching the truth with all my power, that *the life was the light of men*, not that any should suppose from these words that those who show themselves righteous and good receive from another,

3. That is, the evangelist, St. John.

as the reward of their conduct, the illumination from him, but that you might learn that just as the Word is life in all things that have been made, giving life to things capable of receiving life, so he is light in them also, rendering things capable of receiving understanding and sense, what they are. For God the Father is all things in all, through the Son in the Spirit.”

He calls *darkness* the whole of nature lacking illumination, that is, originate nature. For since he calls him *the light*, to show that the rational creation, which is lacking and is not participant in it, is other than it,⁴ he turns the force of the epithet used to the very contrary,⁵ doing this also — in my opinion — not without an aim, but considering in himself this above all: that the nature of originate things, producing nothing whatever from its own self, but receiving its whole being and well-being, such as it is, from its Creator, rightly hears, *What have you that you did not receive?*⁶ And since along with the rest, it also has light that is God-given — not possessing it, it receives it. But how can that which does not have light from itself, not be the opposite, or how can it not be called *darkness*? For [the statement] that *the light shines in darkness* is a credible demonstration (indeed, rather one following from very necessity) that the creation is *darkness*, [and] the Word of God *light*. For if the nature of originate things receives by participation the Word of God, as light, or as from light, it receives it then as itself *darkness*, and the Son *shines in it*, as *the light does in darkness*, even though the darkness does not know the light at all. For I suppose this is the meaning of *The darkness comprehended it not*. For the Word of God shines upon all things that are capable of receiving his radiance, and illumines, without exception, things that have a nature receptive of illumination. But he is unknown by *the darkness*. For that which is the rational nature upon earth, I mean man, *served the creature more than the Creator*:⁷ it did not comprehend the light, for it did not know the Creator, the source [fount, wellspring] of wisdom, the beginning of understanding, the root of

4. St. John calls the Word “the light,” to show that the creation is other than he, i.e. other than the light.

5. By calling God the light, he calls the creation darkness, since the light it receives is all from God, as he shows below.

6. See note 16.

7. Rom 1:25.

sense. Nevertheless, originate things possess the light, from his love for man, and are provided with the power of perceiving, implanted concurrently with their passing into being.

But we must again note here that no argument will permit the supposition that the Son of God is originate or created, but in every way he surpasses our measure, and rises above the nature of the creature, and is wholly other than they are and far removed as regards quality of essence, even as the light is not the same as darkness, but truly opposite and incomparably parted by differences into otherness of nature.

Having now sufficiently gone through the explanation about this in the foregoing, we will go on to what follows.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a testimony, to testify of the light. (John 1:6-7a)

Having before explained about God the Word, and most accurately gone through the things by which he is shown to be by nature Son of God the Father, he fortifies their faith in what they had already heard by his words. And since (according to what was said by God through Moses), *At the mouth of two and three witnesses shall every word be established*,⁸ he wisely brings in addition to himself the blessed Baptist, and introduces him, a most worthy witness, along with himself. For though he is extremely honorable, he did not think he should demand of the readers in his book about our Savior, credulity above that of the Law, and that they should believe him by himself when declaring things above our understanding and sense.

Therefore the blessed Evangelist himself testifies that *The Word was in the beginning and the Word was God and was in the beginning with God* and that *all things were made by him*, and he *was in the things made as life*, and that *the life was the light of men*, that by all these he might show that the Son is God by nature. And besides him, the divine Baptist testifies too, crying aloud, *Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight the paths of our God*.⁹ For indeed, one will say that he in whom the dignity of lordship is by nature inherent, is true God, and it is not due, rightly and truly, to any

8. Deut. 19:15.

9. Isa. 40:3.

other, since *to us* there is *one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ*, as St. Paul says; and *though there are many called gods by grace and lords both in heaven and earth*,¹⁰ yet the Son with the Father is one true God.

Therefore, the pair of holy witnesses is most noteworthy, and credence no longer liable to criticism is due to the things said by both, as [these things] have both received the fullness of the Law, and are supported by the notworthiness of the persons. Therefore, for the blessed evangelist to say anything about himself, and to take hold of his own praises, in truth would be burdensome and more-over ill-instructed. For he would rightly have heard, *You bear record of yourself, your record is not true*.¹¹ Therefore he commits to those who know him to form their opinion of him, and goes to his namesake, doing well in this too, and says that he was sent by God. For it behooved him to show that it is not of his own accord nor with self-invited zeal that the holy Baptist comes to his testimony regarding our Savior, but submitting to the commands from above, and ministering to the Father’s divine will. Therefore he says, *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John*.

But we must notice how unerringly and fitly he expressed himself as to each, and correspondingly to the nature of the things indicated. For in the case of God the Word, *was* is appropriately introduced, indicating in every way his eternity, that he is more ancient than all beginning that is in time, and removing the idea of his having been created. For how can that which always is, be conceived of as originate? But he fittingly says of the blessed Baptist, *There was a man sent from God*, as of a man having an originate nature. And it seems to me that the evangelist here, very unerringly, does not merely say *There was*, but by adding the word *a man*, he overthrows the most unadvised surmise of some.

For already there was a report noised about by many, commonly saying that the holy Baptist was not really *a man* by nature but one of the holy angels in heaven, making use of a human body and sent by God to preach. And the plea for this surmise they found in its being said

10. 1 Cor. 8:6,5.

11. John 8:13.

St. Cyril on John's Gospel

Continued from page 39

by God, *Behold I send my messenger¹² before your face, which shall prepare your way before you.*¹³ But those who imagine this err from the truth, not considering that the name of angel is indicative of ministry [service] rather than of essence, just as in the history of the blessed Job messengers¹⁴ one after the other run to announce his manifold sufferings, also ministering to those incurable afflictions. The most wise Paul himself defines something like this with respect to the holy angels, writing thus: *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation?*¹⁵

John the blessed Baptist, then, is called an angel by the mouth of the Lord, not as being actually by nature an angel, but as sent to announce, and crying aloud, *Prepare the way of the Lord.* Very profitably he declares, moreover, that the angel was *sent by God*, showing that his testimony is most sure. For he who was *sent by God* to preach, would not utter anything in his teaching that was not wholly according to the will of him who put the mission on him. True, therefore, is the testimony, as being God-taught. For the most wise Paul also, telling us that he was sent by *Jesus Christ*, affirmed that he learned the power of the mystery not from any other, but by *revelation* of him who sent him, signifying the revelation in sum, so to speak, and briefly, in saying that he was sent by Jesus Christ. Hence the fact of being God-taught entirely follows on being *sent by God*. And, it is undoubted that freedom from lying is wholly the aim of the ministers of the truth.

The man's name, he says, was *John*. It was necessary that he who was *sent* should be recognized by the mark of the name, which introduces, as I suppose, great authenticity to what is said. For an angel (namely *Gabriel that stand in the presence of God*, as himself says) when he declared to Zacharias the good tidings of his¹⁶ birth from Elizabeth, added this to what he said, namely that *his name shall be John*. It is, I think, clear and con-

fessed by all that he was so named by the angel according to the divine purpose and appointment. How then can he who was crowned by God with so great honor, not be conceived of as above all praises? Therefore the mention of his name is profitably and necessarily introduced.

But since the Evangelist has added that the holy Baptist was sent by God *for a testimony, that all might believe through him*, we will further say when our opponents fall foul and say, "Why did not all believe the God-sent? How has he who was appointed in advance by the decree from above, come to be powerless to persuade any?" — It is right, sirs, that we should not blame John for want of zeal in this, but should exclaim against the obstinacy of those who disbelieved. For so far as pertains to the aim of the herald, and the mode of his being sent forth from above, none would have been found without a share in the teaching, nor would any have remained in unbelief; but since there was diversity of disposition in the hearers and each has power over his own free choice, some, not receiving the faith, missed what was profitable. Therefore we must say to them (as it is in the prophet), *He who hears, let him hear; and he who forbears, let him forbear.*¹⁷

*This [one] came for a testimony, to testify of the light.*¹⁸ (John 1:7a)

The word *This* is full of declaration of virtue and praise of person. For he who was sent, he says, from God, he who with reason struck the whole of Judaea with astonishment by the gravity of his life and its surpassing exercise in virtue [asceticism],¹⁹ he who is fore-announced by the voice of the holy prophets; called by Isaiah, *The voice of him who cries in the wilderness*, and by the blessed David, *a lamp foreordained for Christ*,²⁰ *This one came for a testimony, to testify of the light*. Here he calls God the Word light, and shows that he is unique, and strictly the very actual light, beside whom there is nothing else that has by nature the property of illumining, and, that is not lacking light. Therefore the Word of God is foreign and, so to speak, of another nature than, the creature, since really and

truly he is strictly light, [and] the creature a participant²¹ of light. So how can he who is not classed with things made, and is therefore conceived of as being of other nature than they, be originate; rather how will he not be within the limits of deity and replete with the good nature of him who begot him?

He was not the light, but was sent to bear witness of the light (John 1:8).

The Baptist having esteemed desert abodes above the haunts of cities, and having exhibited an unusual persistence in asceticism [exercise of virtue], and having mounted to the very summit of the righteousness attainable by man, was quite rightly wondered at, and was by some even imagined to be Christ himself. And indeed the rulers of the Jews, led by his achievements in virtue to some such notion, send some to him bidding them to inquire if he is the Christ. The blessed evangelist, therefore, not ignorant of the things that were reported of him, necessarily adds *He was not the light*, so that he may both uproot the error as to this, and again build up some credibility towards him who was *sent from God for a testimony*. For how is he who is so clothed with great virtue, and so illustrious in righteousness as to imitate Christ himself, and because of the choice beauty of his piety is even imagined to be the light itself, not extremely eminent?

He was not then, he says, *the light*, but *sent to testify of the light*. In saying *the light*, with the addition of the article, he shows that it is really unique; for so it is in truth. For we will not deny that both the blessed Baptist and each of the other saints may rightly be called light, because it is said of them by the Savior, *You are the light of the world.*²² And again, it is said of the holy Baptist, *I have ordained a lamp for my Christ*, and *He was a burning and shining light, and you were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.*²³ But even though the saints are light, and the Baptist a lamp, we are not ignorant of the grace that was given them

21. Earlier, St. Cyril said that the creature is *not* a participant of [the] light, that is, of the Word. There is no discrepancy. In the first instance, he means that the creature does not participate in the light as actually partaking of the nature of the light (though this does occur in the case of deified humanity, but by grace, not by nature). In the second instance, however, he means that the creature does receive illumination from the light, and participates in that sense, without actually partaking of the nature of the light.

22. Matt. 5:14.

23. Ps. 131(132):17; John. 5:35.

12. Grk. *ton aggelon*. It must be understood that the Greek word "angelos" (from which comes the English word "angel") has the meaning "messenger" and can be translated "angel" or "messenger."

13. Matt. 11:10 from Mal. 3:1.

14. Grk. *aggeloi*, messengers, angels (see n. 33).

15. Heb. 1:14.

16. That is, John's

17. Ezek. 3:27.

18. Literally, "This [man, one, etc.] came . . . Usually translated: "He came . . ." Alternate rendering: The same came . . . etc.

19. Grk. *tais eis askesin hypervolaais*.

20. Isa. 40:3, Ps. 81(82):17. In the Psalm text reads: ". . . for my Christ."

and of their being supplied from *the light*. For neither is the light in the lamp its own, nor the illumination in the saints; but they are rendered bright and luminous by the enlightenment of the truth, and are *lights in the world, holding forth the word of life*.²⁴ And what is the *life*, whose *word* they, *holding forth*, are called light, except surely the only-begotten, Who says, *I am the life*?²⁵ Therefore, truly, one is that which is light, lighting, not enlightened; and all that is called light by participation in the one, will be considered by imitation of it.

8. That only the Son of God is true light, while the creature [creation] is not so at all, being a participant of light, as originate.

That was the true Light (John 1:9a).

The divine Evangelist again profitably recapitulates what has been said, and clearly marks off that which is in truth the light, the Only-Begotten, from those that are not so, namely things originate [having a beginning]; he differentiates clearly between that which is by nature, and those that are by grace; that which is partaken of, from those which are participant of it, that which bestows itself to those who lack, from those who are supplied thereby. And if the Son is true light, none (except him) is truly light, nor has from itself the potentiality [power] to be and to be called light, nor yet will originate things produce this [potential] as fruit of their own nature; but just as they are from non-being, so from not being light, will they rise up to being light, and by receiving the beams of the true light; and being illumined by participation in the divine nature, will they, in imitation of it, both be called and be light.

And the Word of God is light in essence, and is not so from a gift [grace] by participation; nor does he have this dignity in himself as happenstance, nor yet imported from outside as a grace [gift], but it is the unchangeable fruit and immutable good of the uncreated nature, extending from the Father into the heir of his essence. But the creature will not have the state of being light in this manner; but since it does not have, it receives; as darkness it is illumined; it has the dignity as an added grace, from the love for man of him who gives it. Hence the one

is *true light*, the other not at all. So great therefore is the difference between the Son of God and the creature, and so great a concept of separation with respect to sameness of nature: how can one not, and with reason, think that they are foolish — even more, rather outside of all good understanding — who say that he is originate, and who rank the Creator of all with things made, not seeing, as seems to me, how great an impiety their daring risks — knowing neither *what they say nor whereof they affirm*.

For to those who are accustomed to testing more accurately the truth that is in the words before us, the Only-Begotten, that is, the true light, will be shown to be not in any way originate or made, or in anything at all connatural with²⁶ the creature. One can see this from all sides, and very easily, not least through the thoughts that follow here in order, which are collected for the consideration of what is before us.

Reasons and arguments by which one may learn that the Son alone is true light, [but] the creature not at all; so that neither is he connatural with him.

If the Son, being the brightness of the glory of God the Father, is therefore true light, he cannot be connatural with the creature, so that the creature too not be conceived of as the brightness of the glory of God the Father, having, in potential, the quality of being that which the Son is by nature.

Another. If the whole creation has the power of being *true light*, why is this attributed only to the Son? For I suppose one ought by reason of equality, to give also to things made the title of being true light. But this would be fitting for none of the things that are originate, but could only be predicated of the Son's essence. Therefore, rightly and truly, would he be connatural with the creation, and not rather belong to what is above the creation, as being above it with the Father?

Another. If that which is not in truth light, is not the same as that which is in truth the light (for the manifestation of each has something of a difference), and the Son is called, and truly is, *true light* — the creature therefore cannot be true light. Therefore neither are things thus differentiated from one another, connatural.²⁷

Another. If the Only-Begotten is not alone the true light, but the creature too possesses the property of being true light, why does He *light every man that comes into the world*? For since the originate nature too possesses this of itself, it is superfluous that it be lightened by the Son. Yet in truth he does light; we all are partakers of him. Therefore, the Son and the creature are not the same in regard to quality of essence, as neither is the participator with that of which it participates.

Another. If it belongs not only to the Son to be by nature true light, but the creature too has this, it is clearly superfluous, I think, that the Psalmist says to some, *Look to him and be lightened* (Ps. 34 [33]:5). For that which truly is entirely light, cannot become light by participation in some other, nor can it be illumined by enlightenment from another, but rather will be endowed with perfect purity from its own nature. But we see that man lacks light, being of created nature; and the Psalmist is true in crying out, as to the Word of God, *For you will light my lamp, the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness* (Ps. 18:28). We are not, then, of a truth light, but rather we participate in the Word that *lights*, and are alien by nature from the *true light*, which is the Son.

Another of the same. If the mind of man is called a lamp, as it is sung in the Psalms, *For you will light my lamp*, how can we be true light? For the light is imported and given to a lamp. And if the Only-Begotten alone lights the darkness that is in us, how is not he rather of a truth light, [and] we not at all? But if this is true, how can he who is so far above the creature, be connatural with it?

Another. If it can belong to the creature to be very light, even as to the Son, man will be true light, as being a portion of it. To whom then did God the Father promise by the holy prophets saying, *But to you who fear My Name shall the Son of Righteousness arise* (Mal. 4:2)? For what thing that is truly, entirely, light, has need of the Sun to illumine it? Yet God the Father did promise to give it to us as being in need, and we have received it and are lighted. Therefore, in regard to identity of essence, we and the creature are other than the Only-Begotten, who is *true light* and able to enlighten things that need light.

Continued on the next page

24. Phil 2:15-16.
25. John 14:6.

26. Having the same nature as.
27. See note 26.

St. Cyril on John's Gospel

Continued from page 41

Another. If not only the Son is *true light*, but the creature too possesses this, it will be consequently in us too. What then induced the saints to cry aloud to God, *Send out thy light and thy truth* (Ps. 43 [42]:3)? Tell me, in what thing did they think to help us by often sending forth those words? For if they knew that man is in need of light and that he lacks this addition from another, how can anyone say with truth that he too is *true light*? But if he did not need the Word that enlightens, why, to no purpose, did they call on him who could in no way aid them? But one cannot say that the mind of the saints went astray of the truth; but again God the Father himself sends the Son as to those who lack light. Other therefore by nature, is the Only-begotten with reference to the creature, as things which enlighten [to] those that lack light.

Another. If we say that the creature lacks light, and that the Only-Begotten *lightens* it, the creature does not lead itself to the light; therefore, neither is it *true light*, as the Son is.

Another. If that which is by nature and truth light, does not admit of darkness, and the Only-Begotten is *true light* and the creature likewise *true light*, why does scripture say of the Son, *The darkness comprehended it not* (John 1:5); but concerning us Paul says, *In whom the god of this world has blinded the eyes of those who believe not* (2 Cor. 4:4)? and again the Saviour himself, *While you have the light, walk in the light, lest darkness come upon you* (John 12:35). For it is I suppose clear to all, that unless it were possible for some of us to be apprehended [grasped, seized] by the darkness, our Saviour would not have said any of this. So how can they still be the same in nature — the Only-begotten and the creature, the unchangeable and the changing, he who may not suffer anything that injures, with that which is darkened and can acquire illumination, that is, as something added to it and not inherent in it by nature?

Another. If the Only-Begotten is not the only *true light*, but the creature has this too, as connatural with him, how is it we cry aloud to God the Father, *In your light shall we see light* (Ps. 36[35]:9)? For if we are true light, how shall we be

enlightened in another? But if we, as needing light from outside us, say this, we clearly are not, in truth, light. Hence neither are we connatural with the Word, who is by nature so far above us.

Another expository. Our Lord Jesus Christ is found to say in the gospel, *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, neither comes [he] to the light* (John 3:19,20). But if the Only-Begotten is the *true light*, and the creature is likewise capable of being true light, how does he come in order to *lighten* it, and it loved darkness? How, at all, does [he say that it] *comes not to the light*, if it is itself the true light? For things that are intrinsic to nature, are firmly fixed in nature; but things which are chosen according to will, have not that inherence: as for example, one does not, of one's own will, attain to being a rational man, for one has it by nature; yet of one's own will one will consider a thing bad or good, and will likewise of one's own power love righteousness, or the reverse. If then the creature is by nature *the light* — for this is the meaning of *true* — how does he *come not to the light*?²⁸ Or how can it *love the darkness*, as though it did not clearly possess by nature the status of being true light, but rather made by choice its inclination to the better or the worse? So, either let our opponents be so bold as to say that the endowments that are above those of the creature are not naturally inherent in the Son, that they may be convicted of more naked blasphemy and may hear from all, *The Lord shall cut off all deceitful lips, and the tongue that speaks proud things* (Ps. 12:3); or, if they confess that these good things are plainly in him according to essence, then let them not connect, in unity of nature with him, the creature which, as we have just shown, does not have this.

Another. If the Word of God is not alone *the true light*, but the creature is also, just as he, why does he say, *I am the light of the world* (John 8:12)? Or how shall we endure stripping our nature of its most excellent prerogative, if it is any way possible that we too should be *true light* — the originate nature²⁹

²⁸ I.e., that the possibility existed for the creature to come or not come to the light, proves that light is not inherent in its nature; therefore it is not itself the light.

likewise possessing this? But if the Only-Begotten says honestly, *I am the light of the world*, it is plain that the creature will be light by participation with him, and not in any other way; but if this is so, it is not connatural with Him.

Another. If the Son is not in truth the sole *light*, but this exists in originate things also — what shall we say when the most wise Paul writes to us, *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light* (1 Pet. 2:9)? For what kind of darkness at all is there in us, or what darkness were we in, being ourselves also in truth *the light*? How have we been called to *the light*, who are not in darkness? But the herald of truth does not lie when he is bold to say, *Do you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me?* (2 Cor 13:3), and we are *called into his marvelous light* (cf. 1 Pet. 2:9), as from darkness, that is, and not otherwise. But if this is true, the creature is not in truth *light*, but only the Son is truly and strictly *light*, and originate things are so by participation of him, and therefore they are not connatural with him.

Other proofs (with quotations cited) that bring the readers by simpler thoughts to the confession that the Son of God alone is the true light, the nature of originate things being illumined by generosity from him — not possessing the property of being light essentially, as he is.

The Psalmist says, *The light of your countenance has been signed upon us, O Lord* (Ps. 4:7 LXX). And what is the countenance of God the Father whose light has been *signed upon us*? Is it not surely the Only-Begotten Son of God, the *express image* (cf. Heb. 1:3) and who therefore says, *He who has seen me has seen the Father?* (John 14:9). But it was impressed on us, making us of like form with himself and engraving the illumination which is through his own Spirit as a divine image upon those who believe on him, that they too may now be called, like him, both gods and sons of God. But if any of the things that are originate were *the true light*, how could it have been impressed upon us? *For the*

²⁹ Originate nature: nature that has a beginning, hence, created nature, our nature.

light shines in darkness, according to the voice of the him who bears the Spirit. For how could light be manifested in light?

Another. The Psalmist says, *A light has dawned for the righteous* (Ps. 97[96]:11). If [it has done so] for him who has and does not lack, it is superfluous. But if the light springs up as to one who does not have it, the Only-Begotten alone is light, [and] the creature participate of light and therefore of a different nature.

Another. The Psalmist says, *For they inherited the land not with their own sword, neither did their own arm save them; but your right hand and your arm and the light of your countenance* (Ps. 44[43]:4). Here again in these words he calls his revelation from the Son through the Spirit, and his directing of each of the things that are — which alone was what saved Israel and liberated them from the tyranny of the Egyptians — the light of the countenance of God the Father. If then the Only-Begotten is not alone the true light, but an equal dignity is inherent in the creature too, why were those of whom he speaks not saved by their own light, but are put forth as supplied by additions from a light that is other and unnecessary? But it is clear that the Only-Begotten shone forth as on those lacking light. Hence he, and he alone, is the *true light*, and the creature borrows grace from him. And if this is so, how, after this, can it be connatural with him?

Another. The Psalmist says, *Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of your countenance* (Ps. 89[88]:16). Why shall they too not walk rather in their own light? Why, tell me, do they, gathering illumination from another, scarcely attain for themselves salvation, if they too are in truth light, as is the countenance of God the Father, that is, the Son? But I suppose it is plain to everyone from this too, that the Word bestows illumination on the creature, as lacking it; while it³⁰ is saved by receiving what it does not have. How then are the Only-Begotten and the things made through him, still the same in essence?

Another. The Palmist says, *He has shone a light in the darkness for the upright* (Ps. 111:4). How was the upright *in darkness* at all, being himself true light

too, if the nature of originate things has this just as does the Only-Begotten? But if *the Light* is sent to the upright as not having it, we have no need of many words; for the very nature of things will proclaim aloud that that which is in need is not the same in essence with the perfect, [nor] the bestower from abundance, with the wanting.

Another. *Shine, shine, O Jerusalem, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord is dawned upon you* (Isa. 60:1). If the nature of originate things has light from its own resources — and this is strictly what we say is the case with the Only-Begotten in regard to his being *true light* — how did Jerusalem lack one to light her? But since she receives illumination as a grace [gift], the Son who lights her and gives her what she has not, is the only true light. But if this is so, how is he not wholly other by nature than she?

Another. *Behold I have given you for a covenant of the nations, for a light of the Gentiles* (Isa. 42:6). For how should the rational creature that is on earth need light at all, if by nature it is inherent in it to be true light? For the God and Father gives his own Son to it as not already having; and receiving him, it proclaims by the very nature of the thing, both the poverty of its own nature and the rich dignity of the illumining Word.

Another. *And now, O house of Jacob, come, and let us walk in the light of the Lord* (Isa. 2:3). Why do these not walk rather in their own light, but the Only-Begotten holds out light to them, implanting in them the particular good of his own essence? But not trusting in what is their own, they borrow what is another's; they know how to do this, therefore, as not [already] possessing [it].

Another. The Savior says, *I am the Light of the world; he who follows me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life* (John 8:12). Let the creature too dare to utter such a word, if it also is by nature light. But if it shrinks back from this statement, it will also flee the thing itself, confessing *the true Light*, that is, the Son.

Another. The Lord says, *While you have light, believe in the light, that you may be the children of light* (John 12:36). Would they who were by nature light, lose the light by not believing? (If indeed it is in any way possible for the originate essence to be the true light.)

And how could this be? For through negligence, the loss of things which belong by essence, happens not at all, but [loss may occur] of things of which the will brings about the possession, and which can join and depart without the damage of the subject. For instance, a man is rational by nature, but [he is] a shipbuilder by will, or [he is] infirm in body by accident. He cannot at all become irrational; he may lose his shipbuilding experience, if he is negligent for example, and he may drive away what sickness befalls him, hastening to improvement through medicine. Therefore things that belong to any by essence, have the nature of something implanted. If then the nature of originate things is, at all, the true light, how can those who do not believe, lose the light; or how will those who do believe, become children of light? For if they too are, by nature, the light, they are called children of themselves. And what is the reward to those who believe? For those who do not receive the faith, are rather their own children. Inferring the truth from such considerations, we shall say that the Only-Begotten alone is *the true light*, the creature lacking light and hence being other in nature.

Another. *Jesus then said to them, Yet a little while is the light with you; walk while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you* (John 12:35). To this too, you may apply well the argument used above. For that which is by nature light, can never be seized by darkness.

Another. John says, *He who says he is in the light and hates his brother, is in darkness even until now* (1 John 2:9). Therefore the light in us is rather by choice, and it belongs to originate things by will, rather than by essence, if he who hates his brother is in darkness. But the Only-Begotten is *light* by nature, for he does not have this dignity as the result of choice. Therefore, neither is he who is so far above things originate, connatural to them.

Another related to this. *He who loves his brother abides in the light* (1 John 2:10). Love imparts to originate things what they do not have, that is, light; but the Only-Begotten is *light*; therefore he is other than those in whom he comes to be through love.

To be continued.

Based on the Pusey-Randell translation, with revisions.

30. I.e., the creature.

Foundation Raised \$40,200 for St. Tikhon's



Michael Pasonick presents \$40,200 check for St. Tikhon's Seminary



Foundation guests



Dinner at Westmoreland Country Club

The fourth annual St. Alexis Foundation Businessmen's Dinner was held at the Westmoreland Club in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. The aim and purpose of St. Alexis Foundation is to identify and gather business people who are willing to demonstrate spiritual and financial support for St. Tikhon's Theological Seminary.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of \$40,200 to St. Tikhon's Seminary, nearly doubling the amount given last year. The gift was presented by Michael Pasonick, cochairman of the

St. Alexis's Foundation. Michael Pasonick provided matching funds from any contribution made to the St. Tikhon's Seminary. Michael Pasonick stated that he was "honored and privileged to be helping the work of St. Tikhon's Seminary in its holy and honorable task of preparing candidates for the Holy Priesthood for the Orthodox Church in America." He added, "Archbishop Herman works very hard in meeting the day to day financial demands of the seminary, and this evening, because of the generosity of the contributors and by the grace

of God, I look forward to alleviating some of the financial burden placed on the shoulders of Archbishop Herman."

Michael Pasonick thanked everyone present for being present and for the continued support everyone provides for the St. Alexis Foundation. The St. Alexis Foundation looks to providing our seminary with even greater participation and support in future years, under the continued heavenly guidance of St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre and archpastoral direction and spiritual support of Archbishop Herman.

An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith

by St. John of Damascus

Part X



St. Gabriel announces Incarnation of God the Word

In this section of his great summary of Christian doctrine, St. John of Damascus speaks beautifully about the two natures and wills and how they are united in the one Christ.

3.13 About the properties of the two natures.

Confessing, then, the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, to be perfect God and perfect man, we hold that the same has

all the attributes of the Father except ingenerateness,¹ and all the attributes of the first Adam, except sin alone, these

1. *Ingenerateness*: quality of being unbegotten, unengendered, unborn.

Continued on the next page

Exact Exposition

Continued from page 45

attributes being a body and a rational soul and intellect; and further that he has, corresponding to the two natures, the two sets of natural qualities belonging to the two natures: two natural volitions, one divine and one human, two natural energies, one divine and one human, two natural free-wills, one divine and one human, and two kinds of wisdom and knowledge, one divine and one human. For being of like essence with God and the Father, he wills and acts freely as God, and being also of like essence with us he likewise wills and acts freely as man. For the miracles are his, and the sufferings are also his.

3.14 *About the volitions and free-will of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Since, then, Christ has two natures, we hold that he has also two natural wills and two natural energies [activities, operations]. But since his two natures have one hypostasis, we hold that it is one and the same hypostasis [person] who wills and operates [is active] naturally in both natures, from which, and in which, and also which Christ our God is; and moreover that he wills and operates without separation but as a united whole. For he wills and operates in either form in close communion with the other. For things that have the same essence have also the same will and energy, while things that are different in essence are different in will and energy; and vice versa, things that have the same will and energy have the same essence, while things that are different in will and energy are different in essence.

Therefore in the case of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit we recognize, from their sameness in will and activity [energy], their sameness in nature. But in the case of the divine economy,² from the difference [distinction] in wills and energies we recognize the difference [distinction] of the two natures, and as we perceive the difference of the two natures we confess that the wills and energies also are different [distinct]. For just as the number of the natures of one and the same Christ, when considered and spoken of with piety, do not cause a division of the one Christ but merely bring out the fact that the difference [distinction] between the natures is main-

2. *oikonomias* (i.e. incarnation)

tained even in the union, so it is with the number of wills and energies that belong essentially to his natures. (For He was endowed with the powers of willing and energizing [acting, operating] in both natures, for the sake of our salvation.³) It does not introduce division, let it not be! — but merely brings out the fact that the differences between them are safeguarded and preserved even in the union. For we hold that wills and energies are faculties belonging to nature, not to hypostasis [person]. I refer to those faculties of will and energy by which he who wills and energizes [operates, acts] does so. For if we allow that they belong to hypostasis, we will be forced to say that the three hypostases [persons] of the Holy Trinity have different wills and different energies.

For it is to be noted that willing and how one wills [manner of willing] are not the same thing. For to will is a faculty of nature, just as seeing is, for all men possess it; but the manner of willing does not depend on nature but on our judgment, just as does also the manner of seeing, whether well or ill. For all men do not will in the same way, nor do they all see in the same way. And this also we will grant in connection with energies. For the manner of willing, or seeing, or energizing [being in action] is the way that one exercises the faculty of will and sight and energy, belonging only to him who uses them and marking him off from others by the generally accepted difference.

Simple willing then is spoken of as volition or the faculty of will, being a rational propensity and natural will; but willing in a particular way, or that which underlies volition, is the object of will, and will dependent on judgment [choosing will, gnomonic will⁴]. Further, that which has innate in it the faculty of volition is spoken of as capable of willing [endowed with volition; volitive]; as for instance the divine is capable of willing, and the human in like manner. But he who exercises volition, that is to say the hypostasis [person], for instance Peter, is spoken of as willing.

Since, then, Christ is one and his hypostasis is one, he who wills both as God and as man is one and the same. And since he has two natures endowed with volition, inasmuch as they are rational

3. This sentence is apparently not found in all mss.

4. *thelema gnomikon*.

(for everything rational has volition and is self-acting), we shall postulate two volitions or natural wills in him. For he in his own person is capable of volition in accordance with both his natures. For he assumed the faculty of volition that belongs naturally to us. And since Christ, who in his own person wills according to either nature, is one, we shall postulate the same object of will in his case, not as though he wills only those things which he willed naturally as God (for it is no part of divinity to will to eat or drink and so on), but as willing also those things which human nature requires for its support, and this without involving any opposition of judgment [choosing will, *gnome*], but simply as the result of the individuality of the natures. For when his divine volition so willed and permitted the flesh to suffer and do that which was proper to it, then it was that he naturally willed these things.

But from this it is clear that volition belongs to man naturally. Excluding the divine life, there are three forms of life: the vegetative, the sentient, and the intellectual. The properties of the vegetative life are the functions of nourishment, and growth, and production; that of the sentient life is impulse; and that of the rational and intellectual life is freedom of will. If, then, nourishment belongs by nature to the vegetative life and impulse to the sentient, freedom of will by nature belongs to the rational and intellectual life. But freedom of will is nothing else than volition. The Word, therefore, having become flesh, endowed with life and mind and free-will, became also endowed with volition.

Further, that which is natural is not the result of training; for no one learns how to think, or live, or hunger, or thirst, or sleep. Nor do we learn how to will; so that willing is natural.

And again: if in the case of creatures devoid of reason, nature rules, while nature is ruled in man who is moved of his own free-will and volition, it follows, then, that man is by nature endowed with volition.

And again: if man has been made after the image of the blessed and super-essential Godhead, and if the divine nature is by nature endowed with free-will and volition, it follows that man, as its image, is free by nature and endowed with volition [capable of willing, volitive]. For the fathers defined freedom

as volition.

And further: if to will is inherent in all men and not present in some while absent in others, and if that which is observed in common in all is a characteristic feature of the nature that belongs to the individuals of that nature, then surely, man is by nature capable of willing [endowed with volition; volitive].

And once more: if the nature receives neither more nor less, but all are equally endowed with volition and not some more than others, then by nature man is endowed with volition. So that since man is by nature endowed with volition, the Lord also must be by nature endowed with volition, not only because he is God, but also because he became man. For just as he assumed our nature, so also he has assumed naturally our will. And in this way the Fathers said that he formed our will [typified our will, had the form of our will] in himself.

If the will is not natural [belonging to the nature], it must be either hypostatic [belonging to the hypostasis or "person"; personal] or unnatural.⁵ But if it is hypostatic, the Son must thus, truly, have a different will from what the Father has; for that which is hypostatic is characteristic of hypostasis [person] only. And if it is unnatural, will must be a falling out from nature, for what is unnatural is destructive [corrupting] of what is natural.

The God and Father of all things wills either as Father or as God. Now if [he wills] as Father, his will will be different from that of the Son, for the Son is not the Father. But if [he wills] as God, the Son is God and likewise the Holy Spirit is God, and so volition is part of his nature, that is, it is natural.⁶

Besides, if according to the view of the Fathers, those who have one and the same will have also one and the same essence, and if the divinity and humanity of Christ have one and the same will, then assuredly these have also one and the same essence.⁷

And again: if according to the view of the Fathers the distinction between the natures is not seen in the single will, we must either, when we speak of the one will, cease to speak of the different natures in Christ or, when we speak of the

different natures of Christ, cease to speak of the one will.⁸

And in addition, the divine Gospel says, *The Lord came into the borders of Tyre and Sidon and entered into a house, and would have no man know it; but he could not be hid.*⁹ If, then, his divine will is omnipotent [all-powerful], but yet, though wishing to, he could not be hid, surely it was as man that he wished and could not, and so as man he must be endowed with volition.

And once again, the Gospel tells us that, *He, having come into the place, said, I thirst; and they gave him same vinegar mixed with gall, and when he had tasted it he would not drink.*¹⁰ If, then, on the one hand it was as God that he suffered thirst and when he had tasted would not drink, surely he must be subject to passion also as God, for thirst and taste are passions. But if it was not as God but altogether as man that he was thirsty, likewise as man he must be endowed with volition.

Moreover, the blessed Paul the Apostle says, *He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*¹¹ But obedience is subjection of the real will, not of the unreal will. For that which is irrational is not said to be obedient or disobedient. But the Lord having become obedient to the Father, became so not as God but as man. For as God he is not said to be obedient or disobedient. For these are of the things that are under subjection,¹² as the inspired Gregory said. So then, Christ is endowed with volition as man.

But, while we assert that will is natural, we hold not that it is dominated by necessity, but that it is free. For if it is

rational, it must be absolutely free. For it is not only the divine and uncreated nature that is free from the bonds of necessity, but also the intellectual and created nature. And this is clear; for God, being by nature good and being by nature the Creator and by nature God, is not all this out of necessity [obligation]. For who is there to introduce this necessity?

It is to be observed further, that freedom of will is used in several senses, one in connection with God, another in connection with angels, and a third in connection with men. For used in reference to God it is to be understood in a superessential manner [a manner above being], and in reference to angels it is to be taken in the sense that the choice goes along with the state of being, and admits of the interposition of no interval of time at all; for while the angel possesses free will by nature, he uses it without any interference or hindrance, not having either to overcome any antipathy on the part of the body nor any assailant. Again, used in reference to men, it is to be taken in the sense that the state is considered to be anterior in time to the choice. For while man is free and has free-will by nature, yet he has also the assault of the devil and the motion of the body;¹³ and thus through the assault and the weight of the body, choice arises later than the state.

If, then, Adam obeyed of his own will and ate of his own will, surely in us the will is the first part to suffer. And if the will is the first to suffer, and the Word Incarnate did not assume this with the rest of our nature, it follows that we have not been freed from sin.¹⁴

Moreover, if free-will which is a faculty of nature is his work, and yet he did not assume it, he either condemned his own workmanship as not good, or grudged us the comfort it brought, and so deprived us of the full benefit, and showed that he was himself subject to passion since he was not willing or not able to work out our perfect salvation.¹⁵

Moreover, one cannot speak of one

5. unnatural: in the sense of non-natural.

6. That is, will cannot belong to hypostasis, because if it did, the Father, Son and Spirit would have different wills.

7. That is, since the conclusion is wrong (they do not have the same essence), the presumption is also wrong: the two natures do not have one and the same will.

8. St. John's line of reasoning might be summarized as follows: There are two ways one might argue that Christ has only one will. (1) The first way would be if we suppose that will is a property of (belongs to) hypostasis, or "person". Since Christ is one hypostasis, he would then have only one will. But this is impossible because the Father, Son and Spirit would then have different wills, since they are different hypostases. Therefore the presupposition is wrong, which held that will belongs to the hypostasis. Rather, the Three Persons share one common divine nature, and it is to this (nature) that the one common will belongs. (2) If, then, will belongs to nature, perhaps Christ's divine and human natures share a single will. But this reasoning falls too, since it is agreed that those having one will must also have one and the same essence. For Christ's two natures to have just one will, they would also have to have just one essence (and one nature, nature being a property of essence). In that case Christ's natures would not be two, but one and the same. Conclusion: Christ cannot have only one will. He must have two, one belonging to each nature. 9 Mark 7:24.

10. Matt. 27:33-34; Jn. 19:28-29.

11. Phil. 2:8.

12. Lit., under the hand. Obedience or disobedience is only possible if one is in subjection to an entity to which one can be obedient or disobedient, but God, being all-powerful, is in subjection to nothing.

13. I.e., hindering his freedom.

14. That is, if the Incarnate Word did not assume (take on himself) the human will, to which first and foremost belongs capacity to suffer (experience passion), then we could not have been healed from passion, or from sin which springs from passion.

15. By this and the previous paragraph he shows that the Word did, in fact, assume our faculty of free will; this supports his argument that the Word had a human (as well as a divine) will.

Continued on the next page

Exact Exposition

Continued from page 47

thing as a compound [composition] of two wills, in the same way as a hypostasis [person] is a compound of two natures. First, because compounds are composed from things that exist in a subsistence [hypostasis], not of things contemplated with reference to another principle that is not their own;¹⁶ and secondly, because if we speak of composition of wills and energies, we will be obliged to speak of composition of the other natural properties, such as the uncreated and the created, the invisible and the visible, and so on. And what will be the name of the will that is compounded out of two wills? For the compound cannot be called by the name of the elements that it is compounded of; for otherwise we would call that which is compounded of natures "nature" and not "hypostasis." And further, if we say that there is one compound will in Christ, we separate him in will from the Father, for the Father's will is not compound. It remains, therefore, to say that the hypostasis [person] of Christ alone is compound and common, as in the case of the natures so also in that of the natural properties.

And we cannot, if we wish to be accurate, speak of Christ as having judgment (decision, choosing will, deliberative will, *gnomic* will¹⁷) and preference. For judgment is a disposition with reference to the decision arrived at after investigation and deliberation concerning something unknown, that is to say, after counsel and decision. And after judgment comes preference, which chooses out and selects the one rather than the other. But the Lord being not mere man but also God, and knowing all things, had no need of inquiry and investigation and counsel and decision, and by nature he made whatever is good his own and whatever is bad foreign to him. For thus says Isaiah the prophet, *Before the child shall know to prefer the evil, he shall choose the good; because before the child knows*

*good or evil, he refuses wickedness by choosing the good.*¹⁸ For the word "before" proves that it is not with investigation and deliberation, as is the way with us, but as God and as subsisting in a divine manner in the flesh, that is to say, being united in subsistence to the flesh, and because of his very existence and all-embracing knowledge, that he is possessed of good in his own nature. For the virtues are natural qualities, and are implanted in all by nature and in equal measure, even if we do not all in equal measure employ our natural energies. By the transgression we were driven from the natural to the unnatural.¹⁹ But the Lord led us back from the unnatural into the natural. For this is what is the meaning of *in our image, after our likeness.*²⁰ And the discipline and trouble of this life were not designed as a means for our attaining virtue which was foreign to our nature, but to enable us to cast aside the evil that was foreign and contrary to our nature;²¹ just as on laboriously removing from steel the rust which is not natu-

¹⁸ Isa. 7:16 see LXX.

¹⁹ See note 5.

²⁰ Gen. 1:26.

ral to it but acquired through neglect, we reveal the natural brightness of the steel.

Observe further that the word *gnome*²² is used in many ways and in many senses. Sometimes it signifies exhortation, as when the divine apostle says, *Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord; yet I give my judgment;*²³ sometimes it means counsel, as when the prophet David says, *They have taken crafty counsel against your people;*²⁴ sometimes it means a decree, as when we read in Daniel, *Concerning whom [or, what] did this shameless decree go forth?*²⁵ At other times it is used in the sense of belief, or opinion, or purpose, and, to put it shortly, the word *gnome* has twenty-eight different meanings.

To be continued.

Based on the NPNF translation, with revisions.

²¹ St. John brings out an important biblical and patristic teaching which is usually forgotten or distorted in Western Christianity. Sin and evil are not a part of human nature, even fallen human nature, but are merely incidental to it. Human nature was created good and remains so; therefore sin and evil are contrary to it. In English Bibles, the common mistranslation in 1 Cor. 2:14 of *psychikos anthropos* as "natural man" reinforces the error.

²² See note 17.

²³ 1 Cor. 7:25

²⁴ Ps. 83(82):3.

²⁵ Dan. 2:15.

Prayer by Bishop Nikolaj Velimirovic

Continued from page 18

ferings we may unite in our thinking, in love for one another and in our God-pleasing deeds. We pray to You to grant us a great depth of heart and an enlightened mind, that we may be able to forgive our torturers and repeat Your words O Christ, that You uttered while You were nailed to the Cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Glory to You, O Christ our God! Glory to You! We also pray to You: give eternal peace and glory to the souls of our parents and relatives and to millions of our friends who have suffered and died in this century in the battle against evil people who are likened to the ANTI-CHRIST who is yet to come. Grant them eternal rest in Your heaven, where there is great rejoicing among Your righteous and those who have pleased Thee, and who are consumed now with unspeakable bliss, beholding Your most holy and sweet Face, where together with the angelic army they ceaselessly sing of Your glory, and of the Father's and the Holy Spirit's, the Most Holy Trinity, one God,

undivided, shouting with joy: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Sabaoth! Heaven and earth are full of Your Glory! Amen.

—translated from Serbian by Marija Miljkovic

Pascha of beauty, the Pascha of the Lord, a Pascha worthy of all honor has dawned for us. Pascha! Let us embrace one another joyously. O Pascha, ransom from affliction! For today as from a bridal chamber Christ has shown forth from the tomb and filled the women with joy saying: Proclaim the glad tidings to the apostles.

¹⁶ Compounds are compounded (made up) of things that have existence (subsistence) in themselves, not of things that are merely the properties or qualities of the latter. Nature itself exists in a subsistence (hypostasis), but will does not, for it is a property of nature.

¹⁷ Grk. *gnome*. Like sin, the choosing will or "gnomic will" is not natural to humanity, is not a part of human nature, but is a consequence of the fall. Neither sin nor the choosing will are elements of what we are (our nature), but rather of what we do. The choosing will is a manner of exercising our natural free will in accordance with our fallen state. Therefore its absence in Christ does not mean that he fails to be fully human in any respect, any more than does the absence of sin in him.

A Short History of Syrian Christianity

Part IV

From the Regnum Mongolica to A.D. 1500

The Syrian Church under the Regnum Mongolica

One reason why the Muslims were so slow to recapture Crusader-held territories was because there was a much greater threat to the east — the emerging power of the Mongols. The Mongols were nomadic tribesmen whose own religious tradition was shamanistic, though some Mongol tribes had already embraced Buddhism and Nestorian Christianity. Around A.D. 1000 unknown Nestorian missionaries had traveled thousands of miles east into the heart of Asia and began to convert a Mongol tribe called the Keraites. Over the next two centuries the Keraites grew in importance, while other tribes, such as the Naiman and the Merkit, also embraced Nestorian Christianity. To the south, in what is now the Sinkiang Autonomous Region, the more civilized Uighurs had been Nestorians since at least the ninth century. Late in the twelfth century the chief of the Keraites, Toghrul Wang-Khan, became the patron of the young Temujin, the chief of a minor Mongol tribe who later became known as Genghis Khan. Genghis Khan formed a confederation of Mongol tribes for the first time in their history, one in which the Christian Keraites were greatly influential. Genghis Khan himself married a Christian Kerait princess, as did two of his sons — in fact, the princess Sorghaghtani, wife of Genghis' favorite son Tolui, became the Christian mother of three imperial sons: one a Great Khan of the Mongols, another an emperor of China, and the third

an il-khan of Persia.

Around 1206 Genghis first assumed the title of Great Khan and shortly afterward began his career of conquests. The first to be subdued was the kingdom of Hsi-Hsia, which controlled the eastern approach of the Old Silk Road into China. Next, Genghis moved farther east against the Chin Kingdom of northern China, capturing the Chin capital of Yenching (now Beijing). But with all of China relatively helpless before him, Genghis abruptly broke off his campaign and instead headed west, crossing the Altai range and into the fertile valleys of the Oxus and Jaxartes rivers. It seems that this change in direction was prompted by the treacherous murder of Mongol ambassadors by the Kara-Khitai, an important border state between China and Persia. Genghis Khan's next conquest after the Kara-Khitai was yet another Muslim border state, the kingdom of Khwarazmia. By 1220 Genghis Khan had overrun the whole of Central Asia and captured his greatest prize, the rich and beautiful city of Bukhara. By this point the Mongols were poised to invade the Abbasid empire, but for unknown reasons Genghis halted his westward thrust, though his generals did continue intermittent raids into the Abbasid Caliphate. After Genghis' death in 1227 the empire was divided amongst his four principal sons, none of whom engaged in further conquests. However, in 1251 Mongke was elevated to the Mongol throne as the fourth Great Khan, and he announced his intention to complete the

conquest of the world begun by his grandfather, Genghis. Mongke put one of his brothers, Kublai, in charge of the Chinese campaign and his other brother, Hulegu, in charge of the Persian campaign.

Crossing the Oxus river into Persia in 1253, Hulegu found an Abbasid empire already on the verge of collapse. The Caliph in Baghdad was a mere figurehead, while the dominant power was the Damascus-based Ayyubids. Egypt was already lost, with the overthrow of the Ayyubid sultan in Cairo by the Mamelukes, a Circassian dynasty that had formerly been military slaves. The Shi'i, meanwhile, had set up local strongholds in northern and eastern Iran. Hulegu's first target was these Shi'i fortresses, because of their involvement in a foolish attempt to assassinate the Great Khan Mongke. By 1256 Hulegu had completed his conquest of the Shi'i fortress and continued westward, demanding that the Abbasid Caliph submit to Mongol rule. This summons to submission was refused, yet confusion reigned in Baghdad. The grand vizier Juzjani, a Shi'i, is alleged to have secretly brokered a private agreement with Hulegu, and treacherously reduced the numbers and strength of the Baghdad garrison. It is noteworthy that after the fall of Baghdad Juzjani was reappointed as grand vizier by Hulegu. Of course, the caliph could not realistically hope to resist the Mongols by force and was eventually persuaded to surrender in 1258. Baghdad

Continued on the next page

Syrian Christianity

Continued from page 49

was systematically looted and much of its population was killed (estimates of the massacre's range place the number killed at from 200,000 to 800,000). The caliph himself was wrapped in a carpet and trampled to death by a legion of horses. So ended the line of the Abbasids, though the Mamelukes in Cairo kept a line of puppet Abbasid caliphs whose authority was recognized only in Egypt and Syria.

The new conqueror, Hulegu, was himself a shamanist, but both his mother, Sorghaghtani, and his wife, Dokuz, were Nestorian Christians. In fact, Queen Dokuz was so pious a Christian that she never traveled without a portable Nestorian chapel on an accompanying wagon. Mongol religious policy was generally tolerant, though some early Mongol rulers were notoriously anti-Muslim. Christians and Buddhists were treated unusually well and, as we have seen, there were Christians in the Mongol royal family. Great Khan Mongke received a Franciscan missionary embassy courteously, and the Great Khan kept a Nestorian chapel in front of the royal tent (probably for his personal clerks, who were Nestorians). Yet Mongke made it clear in a letter to Pope Innocent IV that he was unwilling to convert. Nevertheless, a total of ten Roman Catholic missionary embassies were sent to the Great Khans between 1245 and 1346. However, these Roman Catholic missionaries were often shocked at what they found: Nestorian priests dressed like Buddhist monks who practiced sorcery and divination; churches were filled with images of the dead; the eating of meat on Fridays and the non-observance of confession; divine offices recited in Syriac (a language the missionaries did not understand); and detectable traces of Manichean heresy in doctrine. Interestingly, in 1253 Mongke invited Manichean, Nestorian, Muslim, Buddhist, and Roman Catholic representatives to a famous debate. Mongke remained steadfastly tolerant throughout the debate and ultimately declared the Roman Catholic envoy, William of Rubruck, the winner. Hulegu treated Christians very favorably. During the sack of Baghdad, only the Christians who took refuge in the city's Nestorian

churches were spared from the massacre, perhaps because of the influence of Queen Dokuz.

Hulegu's armies, under the command of the Nestorian general Ked-buka, resumed their westward march into Syria in 1260. Hulegu formed alliances with several important local Christians, such as Prince Bohemond of Antioch and King Het'um of Lesser Armenia, though the Crusader garrison in Acre sided with the Mamelukes, permitting the Mameluke army free passage through their territory and providing it with supplies; aside from the Crusaders at Acre, practically all other Crusader leaders joined Ked-buka's coalition. The Ayyubids were hardly an obstacle to the Mongols, as Aleppo and Damascus were taken easily. The next target was clearly the Mamelukes of Egypt, but the sudden death of Great Khan Mongke caused Hulegu to return abruptly to Mongolia to take part in the election of the next Great Khan, leaving Ked-buka with fewer than 20,000 troops. The new alliance was also in trouble, as Ked-buka attempted to restrain his Crusader allies from plundering, after which they promptly began to help their former foes, the Mamelukes. The Mameluke army decisively vanquished Ked-buka at the battle of Ain Jalut (near Nazareth) and drove the surviving Mongols out of Syria and back across the Euphrates.

When Hulegu returned to Persia, after his older brother Kublai had ascended the throne as Great Khan, he set up the Il-khanate of Persia with its capital at Maragheh in Azerbaijan. Hulegu felt great attachment to Christianity, turning the palace of the former Abbasid caliph over to the Nestorian catholicos, Makika II, and entertaining close friendships with the Christian territory of Lesser Armenia and Georgia. Nevertheless, when the Christians of Tagrit, the Jacobite metropolitan's seat, rioted against their Muslim neighbors, Hulegu simply ordered the massacre of all but the very old and very young, and turned the Jacobite cathedral over to the Muslims. In 1265 the deaths of both Hulegu and Dokuz left the Christians of the Il-khanate with a sense of dread, as Muslim power was on the rise again. New outbreaks of Muslim violence against Christians even forced the catholicos to relocate temporarily from Baghdad to

Arbela. Yet the new il-khan, Abaka (1265-1282), proved as protective of Christians as Hulegu, probably because he feared encirclement by Islam. In order to ensure himself of Christian allies, Abaka married the Byzantine princess Mary, daughter of Emperor Michael Paleologus, and sent envoys to the Pope and the kings of Aragon and England. Nothing substantial came of these diplomatic maneuvers save the baptism of three Mongol envoys in Rome. Nevertheless, Abaka's reign was generally favorable towards Christians, with many Mongol and Uighur Christians serving in high governmental posts.

One of the most renowned Christians in the Il-khanate was the new Nestorian catholicos, Yaballaha III (an Ongut Mongol from northern China), under whose tenure Nestorian missionaries spread Christianity as far as China, Korea, Burma and even the Philippines! Another notable Christian cleric was the Jacobite metropolitan, Abu'l Faraj, the son of a Jewish physician and a Christian mother. In addition to being the most significant Syrian historian of the thirteenth century, Abu'l Faraj reorganized the Jacobites by consecrating twelve new bishops, moving the metropolitan seat from Mosul to Maragheh, and rebuilding shattered Jacobite churches. One of his goals was also mending relations with other Christian groups in Asia, especially the influential Nestorians.

The next il-khan, Tegunder, had originally been a Christian, but upon his enthronement he publicly announced his conversion to Islam and took the Muslim name Ahmad. Many of the Mongol commanders were seriously disturbed by this *volte face*, and revolted against him in 1284. His successor, Arghun (1284-1291), showered great favors on Catholicos Yaballaha III, who had supported him during his rebellion against Tegunder. But Arghun's favors did not signal outright preference for Christianity over other religions, though he did frequently use Christian clerics as ambassadors to the West, such as the bishop Sauma, a Nestorian Mongol whose travels through Europe included stops in Rome, Paris, and London. English King Edward I even received holy communion at the Nestorian liturgy celebrated by Sauma, while Pope Nicholas IV granted him permission to celebrate the

Nestorian liturgy in St. Peter's Basilica. Arghun continued to seek alliances with Christian Europe against the Mamelukes, writing letters to the Pope and the King of England. But alas, it was too late, as the last Crusader fortress of Acre fell to the Mamelukes in 1291.

The reign of Arghun probably represents the last zenith in the history of Nestorianism, after which it rapidly weakened. The same was largely true for other Syrian Christians, for the favor they enjoyed under the Mongols was quickly coming to an end. Meanwhile the rising power of the Mamelukes had dreadful consequences for Christians living in their territories, as Mameluke rule was rapidly becoming far more tyrannical. The Mamelukes increased the taxes and imposed new legal restrictions on non-Muslims, destroyed many Christian churches and monasteries, and closed most Christian schools. Meanwhile, the Il-Khanate converted to Islam under Ghazan, the fifth of the line of il-khans. Ghazan (1295-1304) treated both Christians and Buddhists poorly, with one of his first decrees being an order of the destruction of all churches, synagogues, and Buddhist temples throughout the land. The motive behind this decree may simply have been outright greed, as Ghazan's officials were only too pleased to be bought off. Even Yaballaha III was not immune from the onslaught, despite being a Mongol — tortured by Muslims who had broken into his cathedral, he was held captive and released only after agreeing to a costly ransom. The persecution ended in 1297, after which Ghazan was more lenient in his treatment of Christians, though still no less zealous a Muslim.

Oljeitu (1304-1316), the next il-khan, was also Muslim, and showed barely masked hostility towards Christianity, despite having been baptized Christian as an infant. Oljeitu's atrocities against Christians were numerous, but the most outrageous was a massacre at Arbela in 1310. Oljeitu was succeeded by his twelve-year old son, Abu Sa'id, the last of the il-khans. His reign was marred by endless divisions amongst his generals and civil administrators. The final *coup de grace* came in 1327, when an alliance of the khanates of the Golden Horde and Central Asia, together with the Egyptian Mamelukes, invaded the Il-Khanate, af-

ter which it became split asunder by rival warlords. Upon the death of Abu Sa'id in 1335, who left behind no male heirs, the Il-Khanate simply broke up. Syrian Christianity was wounded by the middle of fourteenth century, but it had survived the downfall of the Abbasids, the nearly fatal embrace of the Crusaders, and the onslaught of Mongol hordes. Unfortunately, the Syrian Church had yet to face the greatest threat to its existence in its entire history — the bloody terror of Tamerlane.

Tamerlane and the Decline of Syrian Christianity

The *pax mongolica* ended with the breakup of the Persian il-khanate following the death of Abu Sa'id in 1335. Mongol rule over the Near East lasted a mere 77 years, after which Persia was ruled by local warlords for another 44 years. Yet as the Mongol states in Persia crumbled, there emerged one last flash

south into India, where he sacked Delhi, before he turned westward against Persia, which he conquered in 1379. Tamerlane's sack of Baghdad in 1401 was especially brutal, resulting in the massacre of 90,000 people — including both Christians and Muslims. He claimed that he killed "infidels because they were not Muslims and Muslims because they were not faithful." His brutal westward campaign of conquest and indiscriminate slaughter continued unabated; his forces defeated the Mamelukes in Syria and the Ottomans in Anatolia. One of his few positive achievements was unintentional — by a great defeat of the Ottomans in 1402, Tamerlane temporarily prolonged the life of Byzantium. He died in January 1405 on the verge of a planned invasion of Ming dynasty China. To this day Tamerlane is still considered a hero in Central Asia and a monster virtually everywhere else.

Tamerlane's treatment of Christians

Tamerlane conducted no less than five "holy wars" against the Christian kings of Georgia, reducing the churches of Tbilisi to rubble, and at the sack of Smyrna, a great Christian stronghold, Tamerlane personally directed his soldiers to collect as souvenirs the decapitated heads of as many Christians as possible.

of terror further to the east with a conqueror who rivaled Genghis Khan in brutality, though not in statesmanship. This new conqueror was Timur "the Lame," also known as Tamerlane. Tamerlane (1336-1405) came from a well-born military family of mixed Mongol and Turkic ancestry which claimed descent from Genghis Khan. Born in western Turkestan near the ancient city of Samarkand, Tamerlane aspired to create a new Mongol empire that would champion the cause of Islam. By 1369 Tamerlane had overthrown the Chagataid Khanate of Central Asia and established Samarkand as his capital. Tamerlane attacked the southern flank of the Khanate of the Golden Horde next and then struck south against his own brother-in-law to conquer Afghanistan, where he crowned himself khan. He continued his drive

is difficult to assess. The standard historical viewpoint is that he harbored an intense hatred of Christians, yet the historical facts paint a picture of much greater complexity. Tamerlane is generally blamed for the decimation of the Assyrian Christians (i.e., Nestorians) in Mesopotamia and Persia, yet there were sizeable Nestorian communities amongst his own Uighur, Uzbek Turk, and Ongut Mongol subjects in Central Asia, whom he treated more or less tolerantly. Christians freely worshipped at the sprinkling of Nestorian, Jacobite, and Roman Catholic churches in Samarkand (the Roman Catholics had established a missionary archbishopric in Central Asia in 1320). Tamerlane conducted no less than five "holy wars" against the Christian kings of Georgia, reducing the churches

Continued on the next page

Syrian Christianity

Continued from page 51

of Tbilisi to rubble, and at the sack of Smyrna, a great Christian stronghold, Tamerlane personally directed his soldiers to collect as souvenirs the decapitated heads of as many Christians as possible. Yet when it suited him, Tamerlane posed as a friend to Christians, receiving the Castilian ambassador courteously at his court and treating Christian merchants (mostly Roman Catholics) especially well. Christians were still in sufficient numbers in Central Asia during Tamerlane's reign that the popular hymnographer, Khamis, composed Nestorian hymns written with alternating stanzas in Syriac and Mongolian. It seems that Tamerlane's general policy was to brutalize anyone who opposed him, regardless of religion, while treating with clemency those who submitted to him.

Less than a century after Tamerlane's death, the Timurid empire had practically disappeared. The Persians took back Iran from the Mongols under a new dynasty, the Safavids, which claimed descent from the Sassanids (a dubious claim, as the Safavids were probably of mixed Turkic and Mongolian extraction, like the Timurids), while the last Timurid to rule in Samarkand was defeated by the Uzbek Turks in 1500. The only permanent outpost of Timurid greatness was the Mughal Empire of India, established in 1526 by a Timurid prince named Babur.

The essential question remains as to what degree was Tamerlane personally responsible for the decimation of Asiatic Christianity in the areas in which it was strongest. It is true that the brutality of Tamerlane's reign caused the Nestorian and Jacobite communities of Mesopotamia and Persia great misery, but there is scant evidence that the suffering of Christians was greater than that of Tamerlane's fellow Muslims. One convincing measure of the devastation suffered by Christians in this era are the vacancies in the list of catholici and patriarchs during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. For example, in fourteenth century the Nestorian catholicate was vacant from 1318 to 1328 and again from 1375 to 1385. But these vacancies occurred before Tamerlane's conquest of Persia, and are suggestive of a decline

already under way.

Better evidence is the vacancy in the Jacobite metropolitanate of "the East," which lasted from 1379 to 1404 — practically the exact length of Tamerlane's reign over Persia. It is also probable that there were many more such vacancies which went unrecorded. Another way of measuring the decline is by counting the number of sees whose names cease to appear in the records. The Nestorians had 68 dioceses in Mesopotamia and Persia in A.D. 1000, 24 when Hulegu took Baghdad in 1258, and finally only 7 by 1379, when Tamerlane swept through Persia. One can expect that the Jacobites probably suffered similar contraction. Therefore, it can be concluded that it was not Tamerlane alone who obliterated the Persian Church; rather, it had been steadily eroding since the Muslim conquest. Tamerlane's impact may simply have been the "last straw" — a tyranny that an already exhausted church could no longer bear.

By 1500 the status of the Nestorian Church had become so precarious that it resorted to making the catholicate hereditary, from uncle to nephew, rather than elected by a conclave of bishops. This measure was taken so that succession would be less troublesome and more shielded from outside interference. Around the same time, the catholicate was forced to abandon Baghdad in favor of the mountain village of Gagarta, located northwest of Mosul. But this

meant the end of an effective church organization east of the Euphrates, for the catholicos could hardly maintain communication with churches far to the east from the foothills of northern Iraq. Thus the process of contraction was, if anything, hastened. Over the course of the fifteenth century the Nestorians, along with smaller numbers of Jacobites, found themselves caught in the middle of Muslim civil war — Sunni Turks against Shi'i Persians — with the shifting frontline running straight through the middle of Mesopotamia.

Thus, devastated by border wars and Muslim oppression, the Nestorians slowly retreated from the cities into the hills and valleys of Kurdistan, Azerbaijan, and northwestern Iran. Little else remained to the Nestorian Church, aside from the largely autonomous community of "Mar Thoma Christians" on the Malabar coast of India. Ecclesiastical administration had largely collapsed, church records disappeared, and the greater number of the Nestorian Church's members simply merged into the dominant Muslim culture. Safavid rule over Persia only furthered Muslim pressures against Christians, as did the frequent warfare between Safavid Persia and the Ottoman Empire, the brunt of which was borne by areas where Nestorian Christians were still fairly numerous.

To be continued.

—Priest Sophrony Royer

WELCOME - PUBLIC INVITED

THIRD ANNUAL

CHICKEN BARBECUE

Saturday, August 18, 2001 11:00 a.m. -- 3:00 p.m.

St. Tikhon's Seminary / Monastery South Canaan, PA

\$6.50 - Advance Sales, by August 10, 2001 - \$7.00 at door

Indoor FLEA MARKET -- BAKE SALE

FEATURING: FRESH PRODUCE -- ETHNIC FOODS -- COLLECTIBLES

If you would like to be a friend and donate any baked goods, garden vegetables, collectibles and flea market items, please contact John Paluch at 570-937-4806 or the Seminary Office at 570-937-4411

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

John Paluch -- 570-937-4411

Sponsored by: SOCIETY OF FRIENDS OF ST. TIKHON'S
TO BENEFIT ST. TIKHON'S MONASTERY

The Spirit of God in Us: Our Salvation

Right from the very moment of our expulsion from paradise, preparation for the descent of the Holy Spirit upon us began. It began even before that in some sense, because the fulfillment of eternal life in paradise in all its fullness would have been a complete union with God in the Holy Spirit if there had not been a fall. The fall brought about just the opposite; instead of the Holy Spirit, the door was opened to the other spirit — the spirit of evil, the spirit of darkness and temptation.

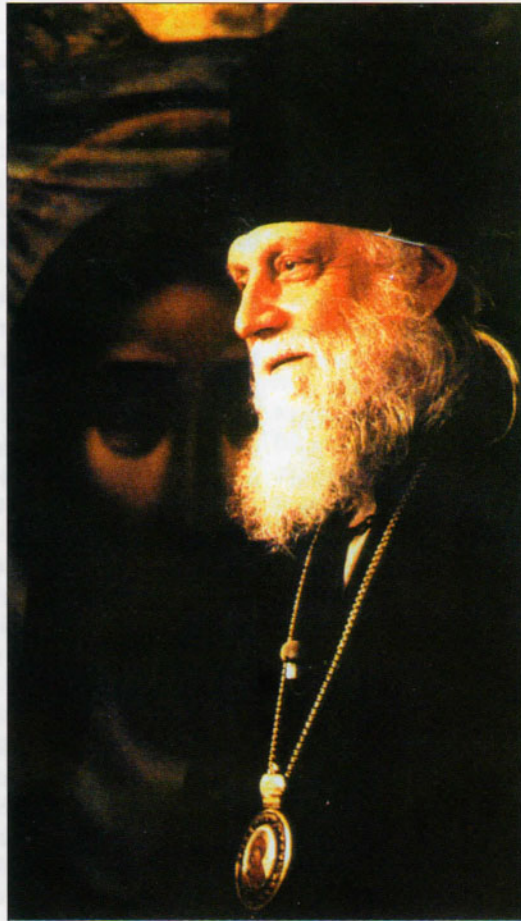
The spirit of evil tempted the ancestors of man and got into this world with them. In the words of the holy gospel, this was the devil and he became the prince of this world. This spiritual exchange happened in this way — spirit entered into the world and came upon man, but it was the wrong spirit. We can feel his presence in the world and we see the results of his terrible inspiration. We have experienced his terrible doings throughout our entire human history and especially in our own time. These are well known to everyone: all our newspapers write about such things. They are shown on television and broadcast on the radio.

But the mercy of God did not allow a final victory of evil. The Providence of God began immediately to prepare the world and to prepare man for the coming of the Holy Spirit of God upon him. If the evil spirit divided the world, man, and living creatures, leading the human mind to a state of proud exaltation, which brought about the division of languages and the total misunderstanding of each

other — the Tower of Babylon — then the Holy Spirit coming upon man leads him in the opposite direction — towards the establishment of unity, mutual understanding, overcoming of language differences and complete understanding of one another's thoughts — to the union of all who are saved by God in the Kingdom of Heaven. This union with God is our salvation, salvation from the horror in which the devil has plunged mankind and the world. This is why the Holy Spirit came upon us and accomplished the salvation that Christ brought to this earth by His sacrifice on the cross for all people. The *Holy Spirit* is the very power

of God that fulfills complete unity in God Himself. The *Holy Spirit* unites in himself the *Father* and the *Son* to such a boundless degree that in him the *Father* and the *Son* are one in their infinite love. Love cannot exist in isolation. Then it is not love but rather self-love. Alone, closed into himself, an individual god is not God, but just the opposite — an individual Demon, knowing only himself, loving only himself, being proud only of himself, seeing only his own narcissism in constant admiration of himself and, therefore, hating everything and everybody. As Lermontov put it: "He despised

Continued on the next page



Bishop Basil (Rodzianko)

Spirit of God

Continued from page 53
and he hated."

Divine love can only be Trinitarian as it is reflected in us, humans. Its principle is the complete overcoming of any self-ness, the removal of all barriers in our relations with each other, the absence of any self-centeredness whatsoever, so that all our attention, all our thoughts, all our feelings — all concerns are directed to the other, not to oneself. If this is not the case then it is an egoistic love. This is true even with regard to two people who love each other, closed into their own love and not having a third person or persons, whom they could love together.

This kind of exclusive love between two is, for example, the love between homosexuals and lesbians who cannot have children and therefore, do not direct any feeling towards a third person or persons. Such love is essentially demonic. The family is the image of God in humans and in human love — the remnant of paradise, as we say. It is precisely in the family that humanity has preserved heavenly love. The love of a man for his wife and the love of a wife for her husband is not complete if it is not based on a common love of God. Such a tragedy was already revealed in paradise when the first people — the first pair — distanced themselves from God in an egoistic love towards each other. But if the family is genuine, then that love is really heavenly, holy. The love of a father towards the mother and of a mother towards the father is not exclusive because from the very beginning the aim of that love is not only in each other but in the children who are the result of their love and to whom their parental attention, care and love are directed even before they are born. If by the providence of God there are no children, then their love is directed to God and to other people, to a "third" in their life. This is always the case. The same thing applies to genuine friendship: be it male, female or mixed. In our depraved century friendship often falls under suspicion and becomes a subject of gossip and jealousy but only if it is exclusive. When two friends regardless of their sex, relate to other common friends, and when there is always in their friendship a place for a third common dear friend, then that friendship is

pure. Even the most suspicious look cannot find anything since such a friendship is open, lucid and inviting. This is most frequently found in monasticism as St. Basil the Great described just in this way. Thus genuine, human love is always trinitarian; all human relationships are trinitarian.

The entire life of man and of the world is trinitarian; the relationship to time — past, present and future — is trinitarian. The relationship to space — in measurement — is trinitarian; and relationships to other people are also trinitarian. There is no language in the whole of mankind — no grammar that has a so-called, fourth person. The grammar of all languages has only three persons: I, you, and he, she, or they. The whole phenomenon of trinitarianism in the world is a fantastic image of God in the world. It is the image of Divine trinity, uniting all people into one spirit of the salvation of mankind. The basis of this trinitarianism is the image of the Holy Spirit of God that came upon the Apostles, upon all of us Christians and upon the whole church of God. In this trinitarianism — this coming — the church of Christ was born. This birth took place within a unity that is the spirit of human salvation.

The same phenomenon happened even before the birth of the Church, when the risen Christ came to the disciples, revealing himself to them through the locked doors behind which they had hidden in fear of enemies. They were there not out of the fear in which they had run away at the time of the crucifixion, but they were gathered together, united in a common distress. Before the Holy Spirit came upon those who were present, they were already together in one common spirit. This oneness of spirit was the human base on which the Holy Spirit built the Church.

But there was a long period of preparation of this common spirit which extended over the course of thousands of years, beginning at the very moment of our expulsion from paradise and even before that, from the very moment of the creation of the world. We see this in the first words of the Bible. Holy Scripture begins with this:

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was a formless void, there was darkness over

the deep, And God's spirit hovered over the water. God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. God saw that the light was good; and God divided light from darkness."

The darkness, emptiness and blackness as it is interpreted by some — was the beginning of the created earth of Adam, still in a potential state, not formed and not realized, that is, in a state of energy. This was the foundation of the future matter — its vital force — with regard to the earth. The spiritual world of the angels — the heavens — was created in the very beginning, even before the earth and matter. Unlike matter, this spiritual world was then in the fullness of its created perfection because there is nothing stated concerning its further development as is stated concerning earth.

Heaven, that spiritual world that is not subject to any kind of physics — the metaphysical world, a world of different dimensions and different transcendental coordination — is the world that spiritually surrounds the heavenly Father, God, who brought it into creation. Without that created heaven, God would have been totally beyond the limits of everyone and everything, absolutely and completely incomprehensible and imperceptible. Heaven is the highest form of creation, in which the light of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Heavenly Father and his threefold golden bond of divine love in the Holy Spirit, becomes visible. This unified world — bond is *syndesmos* in Greek — is the creative force of divine light in the act of creation. It is the world of the angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim and all of the heavenly forces, aflame with the fire of threefold love to God, to each other and to the human beings created after them. Within this radiant aura is the "Father who [art] in heaven," as it is said in the prayer the "Our Father." And so, as it seems to us, it is just from this heavenly aura that the light of the Holy Spirit first descended upon primal matter, and, as the Bible says, "was hovering over the face of the waters," in the first stage of its development. The Hebrew verb to hover is similar to that which is used to describe the nesting of a brood hen, giving life to the chickens inside the eggs by the warmth of her maternal love. Characteristically, the word for "spirit" in Hebrew — *ruakh* — is in the femi-

nine gender.

All the rest of creation, after the fall, is led by Divine Providence to salvation, which is accomplished through this maternal love of the Holy Spirit, the Divine Love of the Father and the Son, the three-in-one unity of the consubstantial Trinity. Throughout all of this creative action the uncreated light of the Holy Spirit is shining, its divine grace transforming all of creation. This grace is specifically evident in unanimity. The grace of the Holy Spirit gathers together the fundamental principle of creation, primal energy and its first stage, water. As we have seen in the biblical story of creation, the Holy Spirit unifies all parts of the world, in the diversity of its appearance and with all of the varied forms of life. This takes place in six days of continuous creation.

The Garden of Eden is the highest form of this diverse world and its center, the tree of life. Thus, the Savior calls himself the *vine: I am the vine, and you are the branches*, which cannot do anything without the vine. And here the Savior says to the disciples: *You can do nothing without me*.

The purpose of the Incarnation is to accomplish the unity of mankind with one other and with God in Christ. The voice of God in paradise, after the fall, calling: "Adam! Where are you?" is the same voice as the light of the Holy Spirit, this time bringing forth grace and the call to repentance.

This divine call — this heavenly voice and appeal — could be heard through the entire age of preparation for the coming; first of the Savior and then the maturing of that people, that family, in which the Incarnation was to take place; then finally the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles and the whole Church. The last prophets, through whom this same voice of the Holy Spirit would sound and the same light would be seen, creating one single spirit of saved man, would talk about this. The holy Apostle Peter, on the very day of the descent of the Holy Spirit, would cite one of these prophets, recognizing this voice and seeing this light:

"In the days to come — it is the Lord who speaks — I will pour out my Spirit on all mankind. Their sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; Even on my slaves, men

and women, in those days, I will pour out my Spirit. I will display portents in heaven above and signs on earth below. The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great Day of the Lord dawns. And all who call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts of the Apostles, 2:17-21). "For on Mount Sion there will be some who have escaped, as Yahweh has said, and in Jerusalem some survivors whom Yahweh will call" (Joel 2: 28-32).

The essence and meaning of this prophecy is that the descent of the Holy Spirit represents an eschatological moment in the history of mankind, equal to the last days, the end of the world and the coming of Christ in the last judgment. This means that the descent of the Holy Spirit is already the beginning of this eschatology, this movement of the whole of human life, and those who are yet to be saved, to the other world. This must begin already now, here on earth. The descent of the Holy Spirit is a return to Paradise lost and an ascent to heaven; it is the entry of the Kingdom of God on earth, the descent of heaven on earth. Heaven and earth, earth and heaven — these are different categories of life, already not of the fallen world, but rather the beginning of its transfiguration, its coming into the resurrection with Christ and into the original life of creation — into the light of the Spirit of God. The reference to the sun turning into darkness and the moon into blood — calls to mind the prophecy of Christ concerning

the end of the world, which states that the imperfection of the fallen world, including the cosmic universe, will be corrected and the scattered world will return to its primary state of unity.

Mystically, all this has already begun in a new life in the Spirit of God. This is the nature of the Church that was born at this moment.

The sudden sound from heaven coming like the wind, tongues of fire over the heads of all who were present — these are all images of the other world and symbols of the new birth — the fire and light of the Holy Spirit — Divine power.

The ensuing miracle of speaking in previously unknown languages, and the understanding and preaching in these languages, about the great works of God — testifies to the restoration of the unity that was destroyed by sin. The tower of Babylon and the mutual misunderstanding that occurred at that time is overcome. Now there is the symbol of the One, Universal, Catholic church — the body of Christ, and the coming of the Kingdom of God.

O Lord, Jesus Christ, our God, open our hearts and pour out on us Your living water and Your Heavenly Light, Your Holy Spirit, that is everywhere present and filling all things, treasure of blessings and Giver of life! May He abide in us, cleanse us from all impurity and save our souls. Amen.

—Bishop Basil; translated by Marilyn Swezey



Diocesan scholarship recipients: James Chuta, Brian Paul Fetsko, Barnabas Fravel, Michael Hollar and Father James Weremedic

Daily Devotions

MAY

1. Acts 8:5-17 John 6:27-33
2. Acts 8:18-25 John 6:35-39
3. Acts 8:26-39 John 6:40-44
4. Acts 8:40-9:19 John 6:48-54
5. Acts 9:20-31 John 15:17-16:2
6. Acts 9:32-42 John 5:1-15
7. Acts 10:1-16 John 6:56-59
8. Acts 10:21-33 John 7:1-13
9. Acts 14:6-18 John 7:14-30 (Midfeast)
- Heb. 2:11-18 John 5:1-4 (Blessing of waters)
10. Acts 10:34-43 John 8:12-20
11. Acts 10:44-11:10 John 8:21-30
12. Acts 12:1-11 John 8:31-42
13. Acts 11:19-26,29-30 John 4:5-42
14. Acts 12:12-17 John 8:42-51
15. Acts 12:25-13:12 John 8:51-59
16. Acts 13:13-24 John 6:5-14
17. Acts 14:20-27 John 9:39-10:9
18. Acts 15:5-34 John 10:17-28
19. Acts 15:35-41 John 10:27-38
20. Acts 16:16-34 John 9:1-38
21. Acts 17:1-15 John 11:47-57
22. Acts 17:19-28 John 12:19-38
23. Acts 18:22-28 John 12:36-47
24. Acts 1:1-12 Luke 24:36-53
25. Acts 19:1-8 John 14:1-11
26. Acts 20:7-12 John 14:10-21
27. Acts 20:16-18,28-36 John 17:1-13
28. Acts 21:8-14 John 14:27-15:7
29. Acts 21:26-32 John 16:2-13
30. Acts 23:1-11 John 16:15-23
31. Acts 25:13-19 John 16:23-33

JUNE

1. Acts 27:1-44 John 17:18-26
2. Acts 28:1-31 John 21:15-25
3. Acts 2:1-11 John 7:37-52, 8:12
4. Eph. 5:9-19 Matt. 18:10-20
5. Rom. 1:1-7,13-17 Matt. 4:25-5:13
6. Rom. 1:18-27 Matt. 5:20-26
7. Rom. 1:28-2:9 Matt. 5:27-32
8. Rom. 2:14-29 Matt. 5:33-41
9. Rom. 1:7-12 Matt. 5:42-48
10. Heb. 11:33-12:2 Matt. 10:32-33,37-38, 19:21-30
11. Rom. 2:28-3:18 Matt. 6:31-34, 7:9-11
12. Rom. 4:4-12 Matt. 7:15-21
13. Rom. 4:13-25 Matt. 7:21-23
14. Rom. 5:10-16 Matt. 8:23-27
15. Rom. 5:17-6:2 Matt. 9:14-17
18. Rom. 3:19-26 Matt. 7:1-8
17. Rom. 2:10-16 Matt. 4:18-23
18. Rom. 7:1-13 Matt. 9:36-10:8
19. Rom. 7:14-8:2 Matt. 10:9-15
20. Rom. 8:2-13 Matt. 10:16-22
21. Rom. 8:22-27 Matt. 10:23-31
22. Rom. 9:6-19 Matt. 10:32-38, 11:1
23. Rom. 3:28-4:3 Matt. 7:24-8:4
24. Rom. 5:1-10 Matt. 6:22-33
- Rom. 13:11-14:4 Luke 1:1-25,57-68,76,80 (St. John)
25. Rom. 9:18-33 Matt. 11:2-15
28. Rom. 10:11-11:2 Matt. 11:16-20
27. Rom. 11:2-12 Matt. 11:20-26
28. Rom. 11:13-36 Matt. 11:27-12:8
29. 2 Cor. 11:21-12:9 Matt. 16:13-19
30. Rom. 6:11-17 Matt. 8:14-23

JULY

1. Rom. 6:18-23 Matt. 8:5-13
2. Rom. 12:4-5,15-21 Matt. 12:9-13
3. Rom. 14:9-18 Matt. 12:14-16,22-30
4. Rom. 15:7-16 Matt. 12:38-45
5. Rom. 15:17-29 Matt. 12:46-13:3
6. Rom. 16:1-16 Matt. 13:4-9
7. Rom. 8:14-21 Matt. 9:9-13
8. Rom. 10:1-10 Matt. 8:28-9:1
9. Rom. 16:17-24 Matt. 13:10-23
10. 1 Cor. 1:1-9 Matt. 13:24-30
11. 1 Cor. 2:9-3:8 Matt. 13:31-36
12. 1 Cor. 3:18-23 Matt. 13:36-43
13. 1 Cor. 4:5-8 Matt. 13:44-54
14. Rom. 9:1-5 Matt. 9:18-26
15. Rom. 12:6-14 Matt. 9:1-8
- Heb. 13:7-16 John 17:1-3 (Fathers)
16. 1 Cor. 5:9-6:11 Matt. 13:54-58
17. 1 Cor. 6:20-7:12 Matt. 14:1-13
18. 1 Cor. 7:12-14 Matt. 14:35-15:11
19. 1 Cor. 7:24-35 Matt. 15:12-21
20. 1 Cor. 7:35-8:7 Matt. 15:29-31
21. Rom. 12:1-3 Matt. 10:37-11:1
22. Rom. 15:1-7 Matt. 9:27-35
23. 1 Cor. 9:13-18 Matt. 16:1-6
24. 1 Cor. 10:5-12 Matt. 16:6-12
25. 1 Cor. 10:12-22 Matt. 16:20-24
26. 1 Cor. 10:28-11:7 Matt. 16:24-28
27. 1 Cor. 11:8-22 Matt. 17:10-18
28. Rom. 13:1-10 Matt. 12:30-37
29. 1 Cor. 1:10-18 Matt. 14:14-22
30. 1 Cor. 11:31-12:6 Matt. 18:1-11
31. 1 Cor. 12:12-26 Matt. 18:18-22, 19:1-2,13-15

AUGUST

1. 1 Cor. 13:4-14:5 Matt. 20:1-16
2. 1 Cor. 14:6-19 Matt. 20:17-28
3. 1 Cor. 14:26-40 Matt. 21:12-14,17-20
4. Rom. 14:6-9 Matt. 15:32-39
5. 1 Cor. 3:9-17 Matt. 14:22-34
6. 2 Peter 1:10-19 Matt. 17:1-9 (Transfiguration)
7. 1 Cor. 15:12-19,29-38 Matt. 21:18-27
8. 1 Cor. 16:4-12 Matt. 21:28-32
9. 2 Cor. 1:1-7 Matt. 21:43-46
10. 2 Cor. 1:12-20 Matt. 22:23-33
11. Rom. 15:30-33 Matt. 17:24-18:4
12. 1 Cor. 4:9-16 Matt. 17:14-23
13. 2 Cor. 2:4-15 Matt. 23:13-22
14. 2 Cor. 2:14-3:3 Matt. 23:23-28
15. Phil. 2:5-11 Luke 10:38-42,11:27-28 (Dorm)
16. 2 Cor. 3:4-11, 4:1-6 Matt. 23:29-39, 24:13-28
17. 2 Cor. 4:13-18 Matt. 24:27-33,42-51
18. 1 Cor. 1:3-9 Matt. 19:3-12
19. 1 Cor. 9:2-12 Matt. 18:23-35
20. 2 Cor. 5:10-15 Mark 1:9-15
21. 2 Cor. 5:15-21 Mark 1:16-22
22. 2 Cor. 6:11-16 Mark 1:23-28
23. 2 Cor. 7:1-10 Mark 1:29-35
24. 2 Cor. 7:10-16 Mark 2:18-22
25. 1 Cor. 1:26-29 Matt. 20:29-34
26. 1 Cor. 15:1-11 Matt. 19:16-26
27. 2 Cor. 8:7-15 Mark 3:6-12
28. 2 Cor. 8:16-9:5 Mark 3:13-19
29. Acts 13:25-32 Mark 6:14-30 (St. John)
30. 2 Cor. 9:12-10:18 Mark 3:20-35
31. 2 Cor. 11:5-21 Mark 4:1-9

St. Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain On the Canon from Paschal Matins

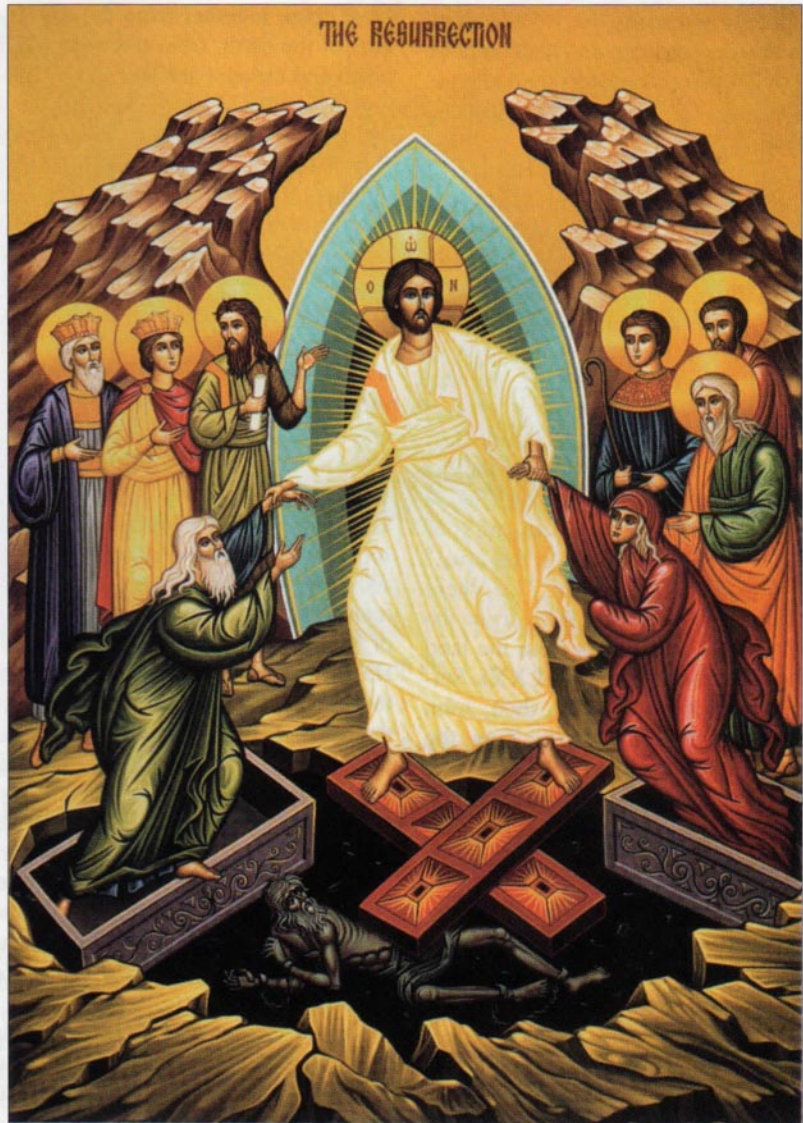
A Poem of St John of Damascus

Editor's note: This fourth and final installment completes St. Nicodemus's Commentary on the Easter Canon, sung at paschal matins. Previous installments appeared in the spring issues of *Alive in Christ* beginning in 1997.

Ode 8, Troparion 1: *Come, let us commune in the new fruit of the vine, in the divine gladness, on the high day of the rising and the Kingdom of Christ, singing praises to Him as God unto the ages.*

Three things usually happen among Christians on the bright day of the Resurrection. Firstly, they rise earlier than usual to praise the risen Christ and rejoice in His Resurrection with fitting songs and hymns of praise. Secondly, they light candles and lamps and lights with which to go in spirit to meet the risen Master who has shown to all the light of His Resurrection. And thirdly, they partake of the divine and spotless Mysteries of the risen Saviour, provided there is no canonical impediment and they are prepared.

It is to this third canonical and most holy practice of the Christians, namely Communion in the spotless Mysteries, that John exhorts us in this troparion.



Hence he takes the words of the Lord where He says to His disciples, "I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom," (it is the Resurrection that is called the "Kingdom of the Father," according to Chrysostom and Theophylact), and says: Behold,

Christians, the high and radiant day of Christ's Resurrection and His Kingdom has come, in which He promised to give us the new drink and new fruit of the vine. So come today, brethren, on this high day, and let us drink of the divine gladness of the new draught from the

Continued on the next page

St. Nicodemus

Continued from page 57

vine. He calls it “divine gladness” because this spiritual wine, the mystical Blood of our Lord, makes glad our hearts as we commune in it, as the Psalm says: “And wine that maketh glad the heart of man” (Ps. 103:15). And he calls it a new draught because it gives renewal and incorruption to our decrepitude and corruption. Come and let us commune in the spotless Mysteries, that we may drink from this new draught and walk in newness of life, singing praises unto all ages to Christ the God-man who has granted us this gift.¹

Ode 8, Troparion 2: *Lift up thine eyes round about, O Zion, and see: for behold, thy children have come to thee, like lights divinely radiant, from the west and the north, from the sea and the east, praising Christ in thee unto the ages.*

The Prophet Isaiah provides the material and the subject matter for this troparion. For he speaks as follows: “Lift up your eyes round about, Zion, and see your children gathered together. For all your sons have come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried in the arms” (Is. 60:4, LXX); and again: “Lo, these shall come from afar. These from the north and the sea, others from the land of the Persians” (Is. 49:12, LXX). Setting these words to music, then, John addresses himself to the new Zion, the Church catholic, and especially to the Church in Jerusalem, the Mother of the

¹ All Christians, therefore, should obey this exhortation of St John's, and receive Communion today even if they have received Communion on Holy Thursday or Holy Saturday. For it is the one who receives Communion today who truly and literally celebrates Easter, our Passover since the true Passover of the Christians is Christ, of whom we partake in the Mysteries, as St Paul affirms: “For Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us” (1 Cor. 5:7); and Chrysostom says, “For the Passover is not a fast, but the offering and the sacrifice and the [eucharistic] gathering which takes place every day” (*On those who fast at the first Passover*). Those who fail to receive Communion today even though they have no impediment are not celebrating a true Passover but a secular feast, with their festive paschal foods and the fine clothing they wear. Again, those who are spiritual fathers should also heed St John's exhortation, and should not prevent their spiritual children but should encourage those who have no canonical impediment to receive Communion on this bright day, paying attention to the divine Chrysostom who urges Christians to receive Communion, crying out in his Easter Homily: “The table is laden (i.e. with the Divine Mysteries); let all fare sumptuously. The Calf is ample (i.e. Christ who lies upon the Holy Table); let none go away hungry. All of you, enjoy the banquet of grace.” The spiritual father who on this day keeps from the Mysteries those who have no impediment is contravening the canons of the Holy Fathers, and therefore justly deserves to be condemned for being a pleaser of men, and for following the new and illicit practice of certain people who are commonly held to have discernment. Anyone who wishes can refer to Canon 66 of the Sixth Ecumenical Council, where they will discover that throughout Bright Week, Christians are meant to absent themselves from theatres and games and spend their time in church, praising the risen Christ, hearing the Holy Scriptures and receiving the Divine Mysteries. O most holy practice of the early Christians — how have you abandoned the wretched generation of today's Christians?

Churches, and speaks thus: O New Zion, divine Church of the Orthodox, cease to cast down your eyes after the fashion of those who mourn and are sorrowful (those who are sorrowful look down — hence the expression “downcast”), but lift up your eyes and look around you. For look! Your spiritual children have come to you, those whose spiritual mother you became through holy baptism. Look, I tell you, and see how they have come together from the four corners of the earth, from the west and the north and the east and the sea — meaning the south, since the sea lies to the south of Jerusalem. All your spiritual sons have gathered together, brightly illumined, shining truly like lights divinely radiant, since they have been justified through faith in Christ and through holy baptism.

If they have been justified, it follows that they are filled with ineffable light, as the Lord said: “Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the glory of their Father” (Mt. 13:43); and as the Apostle says, “Among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life” (Phil. 2:15-16). In other words, they serve as a lifegiving power to others, according to St Gregory the Theologian's interpretation.² For when Christ the Sun of Righteousness rose out of the grave, He did not only dispel the darkness from those who believe in Him; He also gave them a share of His divine light, making them divinely radiant lights and new suns. Hence Gregory of Nyssa says: “The prize for virtue is to become god and shine with the purest light, becoming a son of that day which is not interrupted by darkness. For that day is made by a different Sun, the one who flashes forth the true light” (*On the inscription to Psalm 6, For the Eighth Day*).

On the above verse of Isaiah, see also the commentary of Cyril of Alexandria:³ “The term ‘children of Jerusalem’ would be applied not only to those who are of the blood of Israel, but also to those of every nation and country who are called through faith into the light of truth... Since therefore a multitude has already gathered from among the Gentiles and worships Christ, I tell you, lift up your

² Hom. 40, *On Baptism*, 37; *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (series 2) 7, p. 374.

³ Translator's note: St Nicodemus refers the reader to his commentary on the troparion of the Fifth Ode of the Palm Sunday Canon which says: “Zion, holy mountain of God, and Jerusalem, lift up thine eyes round about.” We insert here the passage of St Cyril that he refers to: *On Isaiah Bk V, Vol. 4, PG 70:1325B-1328D*.

eyes round about; in other words, look around the whole world, and from every part of it you will see your children running to you. And they will come even though they were once far off — distant not in space, but in attitude and habit of mind. Hence the most wise Paul has written of Christ came and preached peace to those who were far off and those who were near (Eph. 2:17) . . . They will make their approach to God through faith without any pain or difficulty; for they will be carried in arms. The terms in which this is expressed provide an example for our condition. For newborn babes love to be given the breast, and want to rest in the embrace of their Mothers.”⁴

Ode 8, Troparion 3: *Father Almighty, and Word and Spirit, unified nature in three hypostases, supraessential and supradivine, into Thee have we been baptized, and we bless Thee unto all ages.*

One might well wonder why, on the day of the Lord's Resurrection, the melo-dist mentions Baptism. In answer to this question, we may say that when the Lord appeared to the Disciples after the Resurrection on the mountain in Galilee, He sent them to preach, commanding them first to make disciples of the Gentiles who were unbelieving and had gone astray, and then to baptize them in the name of the Holy Trinity, saying, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt. 28:19). This is why the Church of Christ is accustomed to baptize her catechumens on this night of the day that brings light. Hence the holy Apostles in their “Constitutions” ordain as follows: “. . . as you keep vigil through the night, you read the Law until cock-crow; and when you have baptized your catechumens and read the Gospel and addressed the people, cease from your mourning.”⁵ This is also why in the Divine Liturgy at Easter we sing “As many of you as have been baptized into Christ” in place of the Trisagion.

Being aware of all this, John turns to the Holy Trinity and speaks on behalf

⁴ Translator's note: St Nicodemus refers the reader to his commentary on the troparion of the Fifth Ode of the Palm Sunday Canon which says: “Zion, holy mountain of God, and Jerusalem, lift up thine eyes round about.” We insert here the passage of St Cyril that he refers to: *On Isaiah Bk V, Vol. 4, PG 70:1325B-1328D*.

⁵ *Apostolic Constitutions V.19; Ante-Nicene Fathers 7, p. 447.*

of all baptized Christians together, and especially those newly-enlightened at that time, saying: O Holy Trinity, Father Almighty and Word and Spirit, O nature supraessential and supradivine,⁶ which in three hypostases or persons are unified according to the identity of Your essence, according to the single source of Your power and according to the equality in honour of Your Godhead: we Christians have all been baptized in Your own name. All of us are Yours. We all worship You. And we all bless You unto the ages. The Melodist does not say this because the Holy Trinity is unaware that we have been baptized in Its name, but in order to draw down upon ourselves more richly the grace and aid of the Holy Trinity. In the same way, when the Prophet David is about to call on God to save him, he starts by saying to Him: "I am Thine; save me" (Ps. 118/9:94); for it is natural for a master to become gentler and more compassionate towards his servants when he hears them say such humble and contrite words.

Ode 9, Irmos: *Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord has risen upon thee. Dance now and rejoice, O Zion. And do thou, pure Mother of God, delight in the rising of thy Child.*

The Melodist has heard the Prophet Isaiah saying "Draw water from the wells of salvation" (Is. 13:3) (the "wells of salvation" are to be understood as the Holy Scriptures, according to the commentators). This is why up to now he has drawn many ideas from Scripture, and used them to water the spiritual gardens of his Canons; and now again he draws from the same prophet the passage that says: "Shine, shine, O Jerusalem, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you" (Is. 60:1, LXX). Setting it to music in the present irmos and altering it slightly, he says: "O new Jerusalem, the catholic Church of Christ, shine, shine!" The poet repeats the verb for one thing because of the certainty of the illumination, and for another, because of his exceeding joy. For it is usual both for people giving assurance of something, and for those who are

exceedingly joyful to repeat the same word. Thus the great Gregory says, "This festival is renewal, renewal, brethren. Let it be said many times out of delight."⁷ Shine, I say, because the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. The glory of the Lord, according to Theodore Prodromos, is the Cross of Christ, as Scripture says: "Now is the Son of Man glorified" (John 13:31). According to Gregory the Theologian, however, it is the Godhead of Christ, as Paul spoke of the "Father of glory" (Eph. 1:17), i.e. of Godhead. According to others, the "glory of the Lord" is the divine light and the brightness of His countenance, as in "the glory of the Lord shone around them" (Lk 2:9, referring to the shepherds). All three of these have risen upon you, O Church of the Gentiles.

It happened so that the Jews who appeared to see might not see, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, but the people that sat in darkness, that is the Gentiles, might see the great light of the knowledge of God. For to those Jews, Christ the Sun of Righteousness was hidden because of their unbelief; when he was put to death by them, He hid Himself, going down and setting in the grave and in Hades. But for us who are believers from the Gentiles, He has risen, because we have recognized the rising of His Godhead and been illumined by the light of godliness and virtue. The Melodist tells the New Zion to dance in spirit and be glad because of the Resurrection of her Bridegroom Christ, because the joy and gladness of Christ are also her own. Then he turns to the Mother of God, not idly or as something secondary, but in order to show that this is the Irmos of the Ninth Ode, of which the Lady Mother of God was the composer, originator and poet, and hence he says to her: You too should delight and rejoice, O Mother of God, at the Resurrection of your Son. Earlier, the sword of sorrow pierced your heart because of the passion and death of your Son, as Symeon had prophesied. And now likewise it is right that you above all others should delight and rejoice in the Resurrection of your Son, as you prophesied in song when you said, "My spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour" (Lk 1:47).⁸

Ode 9, Troparion 1: *How divine, how*

dear, how very sweet is Thy voice; for Thou hast promised faithfully to be with us to the end of the age, O Christ. Holding fast to this as an anchor of hope, we the faithful rejoice.

The Melodist has taken this troparion too from those gladdening final words that the Lord spoke to his disciples after the Resurrection, on the mountain in Galilee: "And lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt 28:20). John relates these words with wonder and thanksgiving, saying: What a divine voice it was that you uttered to You holy Apostles, O Jesus Christ, God and man! For how could it not have been divine, coming from Your divine and venerable and most holy lips? What a most dear voice it was in which you spoke to Your dear disciples! For how could it not be most dear, when it is the living proof of such ultimate friendship towards us? How very sweet was that voice from Your honeyed lips! For how could it not be most sweet and full of delight, when it leads to such good things? For, our Saviour, You have promised absolutely faithfully to remain always with Your holy Apostles, and through them to remain also with us who are their disciples but Your own servants, and who believe in You and worship You. And what is

⁶There are also other reasons why the Mother of God should rejoice today even more than the other Apostles or the other Myrrhbearers. Firstly, because she was the first of all people to receive the good news of the Resurrection of her Son. Secondly, because she was the first to see her Son risen, and to speak to Him and clasp His pure feet. Thirdly, because the tomb was opened for her; and fourthly, because she received the good news of the Lord's Resurrection from the Archangel Gabriel, who had already appeared to her with good news at the Annunciation. The great Gregory (Palamas) of Thessaloniki demonstrates and affirms this in his homily on the Sunday of the Myrrhbearing Women, where he speaks as follows: "There is something obscurely spoken of by the Evangelists, which I shall reveal to you. As was fitting and right, the Mother of God was the first of all people to receive from the Angel the good news of the Resurrection. She saw Christ risen before anyone else, and delighted in His divine conversation; nor did she simply see Him with her eyes and hear Him with her own ears, but she was also the first and only one to touch with her hands His most pure feet — even though the Evangelists do not say this plainly, being reluctant to put His Mother forward as a witness, so as not to give unbelievers grounds for suspicion. But now that, by the grace of Him who is risen, we are speaking to believers... this too shall come to the light, for the reason given by Him who says, 'Nothing is hid that shall not be made manifest'" (Lk 8:17) (Hom. 18, PG 151:237C-240). St Gregory goes on to harmonize the Evangelists who deal with the Myrrhbearing Women, showing by many proofs that the Mother of God was the first to be accounted worthy of all the above. For he says, "It seems to me that that lifegiving tomb was opened for her first of all; for all things have been opened first to her, and through her to us, all that is in heaven above and on earth below. And it was for her that the Angel shed such light that, even though the hour was still in the grip of darkness, she could see by the abundant light of the Angel not only that the tomb was empty, but also the grave clothes, lying neatly and witnessing in many ways to the rising of him who had been buried. For it was the angelic bringer of good news, Gabriel himself" (PG 151:241C). Nikephoros Kallistos says the same in the Synaxarion for Easter Sunday: "The Resurrection was made known first to the Mother of God, as she sat opposite the tomb with Mary Magdalene, as Matthew says. But lest there should be any doubt about the Resurrection because of the close relationship with His Mother, the Evangelists say that He appeared first to Mary Magdalene."

⁶On the word "supradivine," see the theological footnote to the troparion of the Theophany Canon that says: "The manifestation of the Trinity took place in the Jordan. For this is the supradivine nature" (First Canon 8.3). [In that note, St Nicodemus relates the term to the apophatic language of Dionysius the Areopagite, who speaks of "the supreme cause of every conceptual thing" as "neither one nor oneness, divinity or godness" (*Mystical Theology*, Ch. V; PG 3:1048A).]

⁷ St Gregory the Theologian, Hom. 44, *On New Sunday*, 2; PG 36:609A.

Continued on the next page

St. Nicodemus

Continued from page 59

most wonderful is that You promise not to be parted even for a short space of time from them or from us, until the end of the present age.

It is this voice of Yours, then, O Master, and this faithful promise that we Christians hold onto as a most sure anchor of hope. So when the winds of temptations blow against us and the waves of the sea of life rise up and threaten our ship, we cast this divine promise of Yours as a great anchor, and at once are delivered from the storm and from drowning in the spiritual sea. For the sea, both physical and spiritual, knows Your voice, since You often rebuked it and it became quiet. So as soon as it hears us say, "Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age," it immediately stops its waves, and there is a great calm. We rejoice in this dear promise of Yours, Lord. So even if tyrants threaten us with the most terrible and horrific of fates, we are not afraid. Even if impious persecutors torture us with various punishments, we take no account of it. If poverty pinches, it does not concern us. If sicknesses trouble us, we are not worn down. Simply put, whatever sorrows or misfortunes come upon us, whether from demons or from men, we have only to recall this most sweet promise of Yours and at once we are comforted; at once we are filled with gladness, and at once our every sorrow is turned to joy. For we suppose that You are present with us invisibly and mystically, our most sweet Master, encouraging us in our sicknesses, comforting us in our afflictions and difficulties, and as it were saying on our hearts: "Do not be afraid: I am with you. Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."

Our Godbearing Father Gregory of Thessaloniki has some fine and most valuable words in interpretation of this saying of the Lord, for he says: "The Evangelist does not say that this was the third time Jesus *came* to them, beside the Sea of Tiberias, but that He *appeared* to them (cf. John 21:14) — indicating that He was present with them even when He was not actually visible. For He granted them to see Him whenever He wished — such is the power of immortal bodies. And He is present with each of us, brethren, even though He is not visible to us. This is why He said as He was taken up, 'Lo, I am with you always, to

the close of the age.' Let us therefore stand in awe of Him, as being present, every day, and do what is pleasing in His sight. Even though we cannot see Him with our physical eyes just now, yet we shall reap great benefits from this. For this vision does away with every sin, destroys every passion, estranges us from every evil. This vision is productive of every virtue, engenders purity and dispassion, grants us life eternal and the

boundless Kingdom. If we care diligently for this joyous vision and gaze on Christ with our mind's eye as if He were present, each of us will say with David: 'Though a host encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, in this I hope' (Ps. 26:3)."⁹

⁹ Gregory Palamas, Hom. 23, *On the Tenth Sunday Matins Gospel*, PG 151:304AC.

—translated by Elizabeth Theokritoff

Spiritual fatherhood

Continued from page 17

and as he follows Jesus in the ascent to Golgotha he feels "dazzled" and "fearful." His service as a spiritual father is made more difficult by the mass apostasy of our times, which Fr. Sophrony identifies with "the hour, and the power of darkness" (cf. Lk. 22:53).⁵⁷ In a father confessor's ministry, his bodily constitution also resists; the body is exhausted, and according to its instinct of self-preservation, it wants to close its eyes to the vision of the pain and of the innumerable calamities of mankind, his fellow-sufferers. But whoever has become a partaker of the Spirit of Christ cannot avoid meeting the ocean of human misfortune.⁵⁸ Just as in his repentance it was revealed to him that he belongs to that great body which is the totality of mankind, and is inseparably bound up with its "lot," so also now, in order to "continue further," he is opened up to greater spiritual sufferings, and with a deeper agony of prayer he embraces all of suffering mankind. He shares in the Lord's Gethsemane prayer, which was given to us as an example.

As he sheds intense tears, his soul

"suddenly, unexpectedly, unwittingly"⁵⁹ becomes widened, and he enters ontologically into the essence of sin, which is to say, separation from the Light of the Face of God. His soul takes on supernatural dimensions. He also experiences his personal sin as the sin of the whole human race and as a repetition of Adam's sin.⁶⁰ In the prayer of total repentance "energy will appear, of another order, not of this world."⁶¹ The effect of this energy is that "the horizons of [the spiritual father's] individual life are immeasurably widened,"⁶² and individualistic limits are surpassed. That is, "death [the voluntary death of repentance] overcomes death [the involuntary death caused by sin], and the power of the Resurrection prevails,"⁶³ which is the reward of hypostatic spirits. By his lowly "downward movement" of repentance he overcomes the "all-destroying passion of pride," and "the blessing of Christ-like humility descends on man, making us children of the Heavenly Father."⁶⁴

—Archimandrite Zacharias

⁵⁹ *On Prayer*, p. 114.

⁶⁰ *Op. cit.*, pp. 109-110, 115.

⁶¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 116.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Op. cit.*, p. 117.

⁶⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 114.

⁵⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 112.

⁵⁸ *His Life is Mine* (London: Mowbray, 1977), p. 87.

Today, a sacred Pascha is revealed to us, a new and holy Pascha,
A mystical Pascha, a Pascha worthy of veneration,
A Pascha which is Christ the Redeemer, a blameless Pascha,
A great Pascha, a Pascha of the faithful,
A Pascha which has opened for us the gates of Paradise,
A Pascha which sanctifies all the faithful.

Christ is Risen!

Holy Annunciation Church Berwick, PA

V Rev Andrew & Mat. Maria Shuga
Larissa Shuga
David Shuga
Charles & Irene Andrews
Tamara, Jordan, & Zachary Beckley
Helen Beckevich
Mr & Mrs John Beily
Mary & Alex Berbick
Mary K. Burns
Mr & Mrs Joseph Ciganek
Mrs Anna DeMelfi
Jean Ann & Ernie Drum
Mr & Mrs Roy Ervin & Fam.
Peter, Christopher, Christine Ervin
Mr & Mrs Michael Harrison, Jr.
Mrs Susan Holoviak
Paul & Jean Husak
Mr & Mrs Andrew Jurbala
Mrs Anna Jurbala
Mrs Mary Jurbala
Joan Kost & Michael
Gloria Kundrat
Richard & Elena Lockard
Diane, Alyssa & Tom Macri
Mary Z. Maholick
Mrs Mary Mahonchak
Andy, Lisa, Kristin, & A.J. Mihaly
Mr & Mrs Andrew Mihaly Sr.
Stephen Mihaly
Mr & Mrs John Parker
John Parker
Thomas & Barbara Paskewitz
Ann Marie & Roy Peckham
Margaret & Robert Perau
Helen & Frank Petak
Michael C. Petak
Lisa, Tom & Gabriella Popko
Mr & Mrs Metro Rudy
Mrs Alice Sacco
Mr Joseph Skopic
Anita & Vincent Spaits
Mr & Mrs Todd Spenberg
Mrs Helen Umphred

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church Bethlehem

St. Nicholas Altar Society
Dorothy Stafiniak, President
St. Nicholas O Club
Barbara Roman, President
St. Nicholas Church Choir
Nicholas Lezinsky, Director
V Rev Eugene & Mat. Fran Vansuch
Reader Jason Vansuch
Gary & Marie Angstadt & Sons
Mrs Sue Barto
Mr Stephen Belzner
Mr & Mrs David Bench
Martha Billy
Mr & Mrs Gerard Bobal & Fam.
Mrs Patricia Brandstetter
Dr & Mrs Gregory Brusko
G. Damian Brusko
Cameron Nicholas Bruoko
Helen Butch
Theresa Kasmer Butler & Fam.
Joseph & Jean Butrymowicz
Nicole Campbell

Paul Chernay
Greg & Cindy Chernay
Mrs Johanna Chomko
Basil & Helen Choman
Mrs Rose Chromiak
Dennis & Lynn Chrush
Alyssa Chrush
Ruth Condit
Lisa Curry
Mr & Mrs Andrew Cuttic
Mrs Natalia Danczenko
Mr & Mrs Dennis Danko & Fam.
Michael & Mary Dorosh
Marina M. Dorosh
Michael J. & Toni Dorosh
Damian A. Drasher
Mr & Mrs Donald Fair
Andrew Fartuch Family
Ted & Betty Fedora
Patty Felix
R. Seraphim Freedman
John & Olga Frimenko
Mr & Mrs Paul Gaynor
A Friend
Mrs Elizabeth Grigoruk
Mr & Mrs Walter Grigoruk
Gregory Guiditus
Mr & Mrs Charles Guiditus
Mr & Mrs Glenn Guanowsky
Taras & Yuri Guanowsky
Mr & Mrs Alan Guidicci & Fam.
Elizabeth Hahalis
Mary Ann Hanas
Helen Haney
Andrew Hasenecz
Charles Hasenecz
Elizabeth Hasenecz
Nadine & Elias Hasenecz
Timothy Hacenez
Rose Marie Heckman
Doctors Julius & Anna Herz
Mary Holva
Mary Howell & Sons
Mary Hudak
Ann Marie Hutz
Mr & Mrs Michael Isbansky
Dr & Mrs Gary Jenkins
Peter Jubinski
Sarah Jubinski
P. Daniel Jubinski
George & Rose Mary Jubinsky
Mrs Mary Jurta
Mrs Helen Karel
Mrs Mazy Kasander
Eric Kasander
Jeffrey J. Kasander, D.M.D.
Jim, Nadia Kelly & Family
Mrs Anna Keretz
Bill & Sandi Keysock & Fam.
Vera Kiak
Albert & Esther Kiechel
Gary Kiechel
Mr & Mrs Jesse Kiefer & Fam.
Mr & Mrs Peter Kohudic
Selar & Jo Ann Konsevitch
Mr & Mrs Gregory Konsevitch & Fam.
Mrs Donald Koretski
John Koretski
Mary Koretski
Stephanie Koretski

Joanne Kuhns
Ann Krill
Michael H. Kuchka
Dr Michael R. Kuchka
Mr & Mrs Austin Kurisko
Vladimir B. Laury
Nicholas & Judy Lezinsky
Kyra, Matthew, & Peter Lezinsky
Lichtenwalner Family
A Friend
Mr & Mrs Jeffrey C. Lovell
Mary Madensky
Mr & Mrs Randall Marsh & Fam.
Eugenia Jane Meilinger
Mr & Mrs Peter Metz & Fam.
Mr & Mrs Thomas Miller
Mrs Helen Motir
Mrs Irene Momrock
Mr & Mrs John Monarek & Fam.
Mrs Theresa Nalepa
Bill, Susan & Elizabeth Nielsen
Robert & Ellen Novatnack & Daughters
Mrs Catherine Papaharalambos
Mr George Papaharalambos
Mr & Mrs Ray Pasquel
Mrs Helen Perlow
Margaret Petrovich
Eleanor M. Phillips
Mr & Mrs Joseph K. Pinkowicz & Fam.
Reader & Mrs William Podlusk & Fam.
Cyril, Valeria, Andrej, Anna Quattrone
Mrs Pauline Radchuck
Dr Gregory & Rosalie Radio
Scott, Kerry & Jason Radio
Mary Radio
Laura Riley
Valerie Ristvey
Mr & Mrs George Ristvey
Gordon & Valerie Roberts
Matthew, Alexander, & Nicholas Roberts
Mr & Mrs Nicholas Roman
Alex & Gregory Roman
Nancy A. Sabol
John Saharuk
Mrs Olga Sawarynski
Mr & Mrs Steve Sherbechuk
Alexandra Schichalew
Helen Schweisgut
Mr & Mrs James Seifert & Fam.
M/M Joseph Senick, Jr.
Joseph Senick III
Mr & Mrs Michael Slivka, Eric & Peter
John Smakula
Laura Smakula
Margaret Smakula
Wasley Smakula
Mr & Mrs Gary Solan
Mr & Mrs Michael Stafiniak
Mr & Mrs Joseph Stafiniak
Michele Stafiniak
Stephen Stafiniak
Boris & Vera Stoiancheff
Julia Strohl
Olga Sviatko
Anastasia Symanovich
Ola Tatusko
Wash & Helen Telepach
Rachel Toroney
Damian, Stacey & Gabriel Vansuch
Basil & Kate Vansuch & Isabelle Claire

Christ is Risen!

Andrea Vinsky
Martha Wagner
Mr & Mrs James Weida
Dr & Mrs Thomas J. Weida & Fam.
Catherine Witko
Rosemary Ziegenfus

Holy Trinity Church Catasauqua, PA

V Rev John Bruchok, Jr.
Mary Bruchok
Tanya Bruchok & Vern
S/Sgt Michael Bruchok, Doris & Mark
Fr Dn Chris & Mat. Mary Ann Rowe,
Katherine & Samuel
Reader Michael & Vincentine Brusko
Edward & Pauline Bachert
Richard & Mary Baker
Mildred Bowski
Andy & Pat Brusko & Zachary
Sue Cressman
David & Janice Cudlic, Laura & David
Helen Cudlic
Kip & Sherri Fedetz, Andrew & Alex
Richard & Jean Garrison
Charles & Helen Gaston
Michael Gaston, Lucas & Michael
Susan Greitzer
Helen Haas
Joseph & Mary Horoschak
Peter & Sue Kandianis & Laurel Ann & William
John Karpeuk
Anna Katchur
George & Harriet Mazur
Jack & Sandy Miller
Dana Morgan, Alexis & Joshua
Don & Gail Ortner & Alexander
Anna Piha
Robert & Rebecca Romanchik
Dr Serges & Fay Salivonchik
Helen Suda
Lucy Wasco
Mary Yuhas
Max & Mary Yurconic & JoAnn
Mary Zbur
Mark & Jeanne Zelios, Catherine & Anastasia

St. Marys Church Coaldale

Rev Andrew & Mat Suzanna Diehl
Jason, Nicholas, Alexander & Thomas Diehl
Mat. Irene Borick
George Barrett
Mrs Gloria Bench & Fam.
Helen Berezniak
Harry Bialis
Ted Bogash
William Bybel
Melanie & David Christman
Analisha & Vanessa Christman
Nadine & Ray Fegley
Josiah & Katherine Fegley
Olga Hebda
Joe Herbert
Anna Horoschak
Janet Jupin
Olga Kash
John King
Mary King
Wash & Helen King
Michael Lorchak

Ted & Pauline Lorchak
Mary Lutash
Ben & Olga Macalush
Pauline Maholick
Paul & Kay Maliniak
Helen McCullian
Jack & Mildred O'Shura
Helen & Marie Ostrosky
Petrina Poko
Irene & John Puschak
Otis & Claire Remington & Fam.
Douglas & Mary Ellen Rudenko
Nicholas & Julia Rudenko
Paul & Helen Sheers
Althea Shillock
Anna Slanta
John & Eleanor Sidiriak
Olga Sidorik
Simon & Martha Stafiniak
Mr & Mrs Nick Teno
Elizabeth Pick Warcholak
Anna Wargo
Harry Wyshosky, Jr.
Mary K Zemanik

St. Nicholas Church Coatesville, PA

Rev George & Presvytera Mary Giannalis
Altar Boys
Church Choir
Parish Council
George Babich
Samuel Babich
Karin Campbell
Mary Collier
Sandy & Val Dzwonczyk
Sakis Evangelou
Jim & Valerie Fox
Mr & Mrs Gaskin
James Giannaris
Alex Griskevich
Nanette Hare
Vera Hatcher
John Kosturos
Jean Papst
Nina Petro & Son John
Nicholas & Ann Ruczhak
Chuck & Sheri Sarosi
Michael Sarosi
Peter & Georgette Sarosi
Martha & Ted Skiadas
Tony Skiadas
Peter & Effie Svokos & Fam.
Maria Toth
Ann Wilson
Athens Zaferes
Ita Zaferes

St. John the Baptist Church Dundaff, PA

V Rev Dionysius & Mat. Marion Swencki
Mary Allen
Tamara & Peter Anderline & Fam.
John Jacob Bidgood
Kimberly Collins
Catherine Conick
Eugenia Congdon
Gregory Congdon
Mary Ann Congdon
Louise & Henry Gosh

Anne Janusz
Tiffany Kilmer
Peter Kowalsky
Timothy Kowalsky & Son Timothy
Larissa & Sam Laing
In mem. of Mary & Thomas Mikolaichik
Kathryn & Edward Owens
The Sheypuk Family
Joseph Shipsky
Mary Steponaitis
Elizabeth Wargo
Stephen Wargo
Janice Witko
Ann Wolfe
Ronald Wolfe
William Wolfe
Elsie Woytowich
Martha Woytowich
Mary Woytowich
Donald Zablotzky
Patricia Ann Zimowski
Michael G. Zuk

St. John the Baptist Church Edwardsville, PA

V Rev Protospresbyter Michael &
Mat. Ann Marie Slovesko
Lorraine Arner
Anna Billek
Nadine Booth
Paul Booth
Julia Capp
Mary Ann Capp
Mary Cunyar
Helen Deletconich
William Deletconich, Jr.
Anna B. Dutko
Elizabeth Dutko
Olga Evans
Elizabeth Ervin
Kathy Harmanos
Kyra Harmanos
Eva Kopko
Florence, Jean, Rita Kotch
Beatrice Kowalskie
Patricia & Michael Kulikowich
Lydia & James Lynch
Lynch Children Mary Catherine & James
Helen Medar
Anna Pengrin
Mary Pengrin-Sal
Michael & Mary Rilko
Henry & Dr Angela Sal
Helen Sharock
Julia Sitar
Eva Souchick
Paul Stevens, Sr.
Eva Turaj
Wanda Wanko
Sandra Williams
Elizabeth Wozniak
Joseph Wozniak, Jr.

Holy Ascension Church Frackville, PA

V Rev Paul & Mat. Ropitsky
Mat. Helen Kuchta & Christina
Michael Ropitsky
Anna Andrusichen
Julie Beltrami
Anna Bendinsky

Indeed He is Risen!

Bosock Family
 Mr & Mrs Donald Bricker
 Olga Chrush
 Sergius Chrush
 Olga Chuma
 Elias, Jr. Theresa & Michele Chuma
 Dr & Mrs Richard Chwastiak
 Nicole & Richard Chwastiak
 Mr & Mrs Michael Cuttic
 Mary Diffenderfer
 Anna Dikun
 Anna Dudash
 Stephen Dura
 Michael Dyszel
 Anna, Val, Renee Eippert
 Barbara Eximitas
 Mr & Mrs Thomas Fletcher
 Jack & Pat Frie
 Alice Green
 Mr & Mrs Frank Holowaty
 Larissa Holowaty
 Anna Jordan
 Mr & Mrs Shawn Kane & Fam.
 Michael Kasmer
 David, Gregory & Daniel Keysock
 William & Mary Keysock
 Vera & Patrick Kleman
 Anna Lesko
 Daniel Lesko
 Danny Lesko
 Alexis Lesko
 Lorraine Lesko
 Stephany Lesko
 Mr & Mrs John Malinchok
 John & Nancy Malinchok
 Paul & Martha Malinchok
 Mr & Mrs Joseph Martin
 Mel Martin
 Paul Martin
 Eva Mucha
 Mr & Mrs John Nester
 John & Margie Orris
 Sophie Osenbach
 Midge Paulonis
 Midge & Mike Paulonis
 Mae Parano
 Peter & Barbara Pelak
 Myron & Helen Polanchyck
 Peter Rachko
 Carole Sagan
 John & Julie Semanchick
 Andrew Smarkanic
 Greg, Rita & Gregory Tatusko
 Gregory Tatusko
 Nicholas Tatusko
 Vera M. Timko
 Mary Torick
 Christine Varanka
 Michael, Roseann & Michael Weremedic
 Peter & Marie Weremedic
 Peter Weremedic Jr.
 John & Elizabeth Wittig
 Olga Williams
 Elizabeth Yust

St. Hermans Church
Gradyville, PA
 V Rev. John J. & Mat. Eugenia Perich
 V Rev & Mat. Nicholas S. Yuschak
 Church School

Church Choir
 Mat. Mary Fedoronko
 Taisia & Alexandra Perich
 Mrs Sonya Perich
 Ralph Bitsko
 Valerie Bonak
 Debbie & Emily Bradley
 Claire & Mary Ellen Brown
 Eleanor Barolak Bryan
 Walter Chernous
 John & Virginia Child
 The Chobany Family
 Reader Oleg & Gene Dudkin
 Sandra Goffney
 Kevin & Marta, Zack & Dan Grewell
 The Hammerer Family
 Alex & Peg Hendrick
 Reader Gregory & Sharon Hubiak
 Katya & Alexander Hubiak
 Eugenia & Leroy Hughes
 Anastasia Jabkowski
 Ann & Martin Kelley & Fam.
 Mary & Bill Kessler
 Doris K. Koveal
 George & Christel Krugovoy
 Patti Lynch & Family
 Don & Lu Ann Motel
 George, Danielle & Larissa Pahomov
 Tamara Pahomov
 Susan & Chrysa Pasqualone
 Olga Pishtey
 Francis Plasha
 Geroge & Stasia Plisko
 Geroge Plisko, Jr.
 Nancy & Alan Pecolyar & children
 The Pusey Family
 Jose Luis Ramos
 Nita Harris Siciliano
 John & Mollie Smarsh
 Millie Sokol
 Bill & Jeanne Sokurenko
 Len Soroka
 Deborah Stanton & Samantha
 Stephen M. Sissons
 Nadezhda Stulpin
 Svetlana & Serge Taptikoff
 Daria, Tony, Natalya & Michael Tatasciore
 Mr & Mrs George Taylor & Sons
 Andrew & Mary Anne Toroney
 Theresa Veronick
 Juliann & Paul Whittington & Fam.
 Mary Ann Wood & Children
 Anna C. Woodring
 Jim, Donna, Christa & Cayla
 Ilassi of St. Herman

Christ the Savoir Church
Harrisburg
 Father Dan & Theodora Ressetar
 Mather Michael & Olga Kovach
 Subdeacon Richard & Shirley Hathaway
 Mr & Mrs Roy Ambertsumian,
 Sebhatu Andemichael
 Mr & Mrs James Antonio & Fam.
 Igor & Elina Arakelov
 Haitham, Luna, Riham & Marie Ayoub
 Margaret Balog
 Mrs S. E. Barbu
 John R. Barns
 Dan & Donna Bretz

Drs. John & Judy Blebea
 Nathalie Borozny
 Dan & Donna Bretz
 Deborah Bricker
 Patti, Danny, Michael & Andrew Bromley
 Mr & Mrs John Buddwalk
 Dan Buddwalk
 Monica Burgett
 John Caba, Jr.
 Marina Cameron
 Christine Carter
 B & B Challenger
 Bogdon & Cristina Ciocirlan
 Gerald & Ann Cole
 John & Angela Costas
 George Cvijic, Sr.
 Betty Danko
 Susan Demchak
 Zekerias Dermas
 Pamela DeWall
 Mrs Lode DiClemente
 Anna K. Doray
 John & Jean Dotsey
 Paul Dotsey
 Mrs Mary Dotsey
 Susan Dotsey
 Thomas Drebot
 Mr & Mrs Paul Drebot
 Pat Drebot
 Terry Drebot
 Robert Drozd
 Mr & Mrs David Dugan
 Mrs Marianne English
 Mr & Mrs Robert Ensslen
 Mr & Mrs Michael Essis
 Mr & Mrs Salem Essis
 Mrs Mary Essock
 Joseph Fatula
 Andrew & Dorothy Fedetz
 Timothy Fedetz
 Brian Paul Fetsko
 Joseph & Paula Fetsko
 Jeffrey Fetsko
 Mr & Mrs Mario Fromml
 Milton & Elizabeth Gaither
 Amanuel Ghebremichael
 Mr & Mrs Kidane Ghebremichael
 Dr Razvan Gramtovici
 Mr & Mrs Paul Hadginske & Fam.
 Mr & Mrs Dennis Hair
 Bethann Hancher
 Ronald Hancher, Jr.
 Ronald & Elizabeth Hancher
 Mr & Mrs Dennis Hanratty
 Christine Hardenstine
 Vickie & James Henry & Fam.
 Georgianne Herrigan
 Mr & Mrs Carl Hisiro & Fam.
 Mary Hornak
 Mrs Elizabeth Howe
 Mrs Marie Intrieri
 Mrs A. Jacobs
 Symeon & Rebecca Jekel
 Mrs Jayne Johnson
 Kathleen Kalina
 Mr & Mrs William Kantor
 Greg Kaznowsky
 Hattie & George Kaznowsky
 Cathi Kemp
 Ludmilla Kern.

Christ is Risen!

Mrs George Klipa
Gary Kneiss
George & Evelyn Krempasky
Mr & Mrs Thomas Krizmanich
James Krut
Bazil & Anna Kuchta
Mrs Tessie Kuchta
Katherine Kuchwara
Atty. & Mrs John S. Kundrat
Mrs Helen Kurylo
Mr & Mrs Alex Kuzupas
Harry & Carrie Linsinbigler
Mrs Stephen Macut
Alexandra, Paul & Herman Makosky
Mrs Gloria Maliniak
Adam Mallick
Michael & Alice Mallick
Lydia Mantle
David, Cheryl, Christina & Joey Martin
Mr & Mrs John Matangos
Mrs Maryann Mawhinney
Joseph Mazurek
Keyra McBurnett
Mrs Deborah McGinnis
Douglas McGinnis
Ms. Angela McGreevy
Mrs Myra McInnis
Mrs Christine McKeown
Timothy McMahon
Mrs Thomas Middlesworth
Mr Jon Midlick
Sonya Miele
Mr & Mrs Michael Mihalaki Sr.
Paul G. Miller
Mrs Ellen Motoviloff Miller
Eugene Minarich
Johnathan Minrich
Mr & Mrs Eli Mioff
Ted Motz Jr.
Mrs Elizabeth Motz
David & Joann Nesko
Dr John D. Nester
Dr & Mrs Joseph Norato
Joseph Norato
Mr & Mrs Gerald Norko
Mrs Evelyn Onufer
Glori Onufrak
Walter Onufrak, Jr.
Mr & Mrs Walter Onufrak
Mr & Mrs John Osuch Jr.
Brian Osuch
Katherine Pankiw
Rita Papach
Stephen Pawlak
Dr David Pawlusch
Mr Michael G. Pawlusch
Paul & Betty Pellegrini
William Perbetsky Jr.
Nicholas Pestrock
Donald Pidich
Carl Polansky
Mr & Mrs John Pylypeiw & Fam.
Alexander Ressetar
Dimitri & Sophia Ressetar
Gregory & Candi Ressetar
Nicholas Ressetar
Mrs William Risser
Mark Rodak
Joseph Russian
Elena Sarkisova
Mr & Mrs Russell Sass

John & Nadzia Schilling
John, Natalie & Nicholas Schilling
Michael Schubert
Aziz Shunnara
Mr & Mrs J. Shunnara
Mr & Mrs J. William Sinclair Jr.
Mr & Mrs Frank Skirpan
Larry & Megan Smith
Mr & Mrs Nicholas Somple
Andrew Spaseff
Mr & Mrs John Spaseff
Mrs Effie Spaseff
Mrs Marie Spaseff
Bill & Irene Suple
Mr & Mrs Nick Sutovich Jr.
Mr & Mrs Harry Sysak
Mr & Mrs Maksym Szewczyk
Mr & Mrs Peter Taleff Jr.
Mr & Mrs Jamie Taleff
Mr J. Milton Taleff
Mrs June Taleff
Mrs Helen Tatusko
Mrs Natalie Treece
Mrs Anne D. Trunk
Mrs George Volscko Jr.
Mr & Mrs Joseph Washburn
Mr & Mrs Leo Washburn Sr.
Mr & Mrs Ronald Webb
Mrs Joanne Wevodau
Mr & Mrs Gaij Windemaker
Mildred & Susan Wofe
Sandy & Rick Wood & Fam.
Mrs Helen Yannone
Mrs Mary Young
Andrea & Michael Zart
Larry Zedlovich
Aghesom Zerezgi
Mr Teklai Zerezgi
Michael & Janice Zuro & Fam.

St. Michael's Church

Jermyn

Father John & Mat. Kowalczyk, Sophia & Nicky
Father Gabriel & Mat. Petorak
Reader Vasilii Gardecki
Debby & Barry Bernosky & Fam.
Wendy & Serge Bochnovich & Fam.
Mary Bowan
Sue & Willard Brown
Eileen & Ed Brzuchalski
Dennis & Sonia Buberniak
Cindy Butler
Dave & Ann Butler
Sandy, Kevin, Morgan & Megan Carney
Sandy & Jeff Cavanaugh & Fam.
Sharon & Randy Cleary & Fam.
Denise Cobb & Kyle
Eileen & Bob Dance
Eva Demchak
Courtney, Alexa & Billy Derkasch
Marie Derkasch
Stephen & Chris Derkasch
Dr & Mrs William Derkasch
Kaye Fedirko
Donald & Rosalie Fives
Tammy, Bill & Shelby Lynn Fives
Annabelle Franchak
Paul & Nicholas Frenchko
Mat. Elizabeth Geeza
Tom & Helen Grancey

Dorothy & Andy Hanchak
Joan & Bill Hanchak
Julia Hanchak
Elizabeth Hockin
Atty. John A. Hockin Jr.
Mary Kay & John Hockin
Jon, Debby & Jonathan Jaye
Olga Jaye
Dorothy Keklak
Rose Kelechawa
Julia Kitchura
Michael & Gloria Klapatch & Sons
Henry II & Jeremi Korpusik
Mary & Henry Korpusik
Eva Krenitsky
Mr & Mrs Joseph Krenitsky
Maria & Nicholas Landi
Mike Mancini
Sam & JoAnn Mattise
Scott & Paula Melesky & Mark
Tom Meredith
Mr & Mrs Andrew Michalczyk
John & Barbara Nayduch
Justine Orlando
Stephanie & Rob Pliska & Fam.
Willard Puzza
Al & Barbara Radtke
Mary Joan Rusiniak
Elda Sebastianelli
Adam & Mary Ann Serafini
Delores Sernak
John Sernak
Mary Sernak
Ron & Lorraine Sernak & Ann
Delores Serniak
Steven Serniak
Gloria & Tom Shaw
Marilyn & Jerry Soroka & Fam.
John Susko
Irene Swirdovich
Chap. Col. (R) Peter & Martha Telencio
Damian & Stephen Telencio
Bob & Millie Telep
Rebecca Telep
John & Yvonne Wargo & Family
Mary Wozniak
JoAnne Yurchak
Julia Zaccone
Peter D. Zaccone
Mary Zielinski
Joe & Dorothy Zrowka
Betty Zrowka

St. Vladimirs Church

Lopez, PA

Hieromonk Michael Thier
Rosalie Burke
Mr & Mrs John J. Caccia
Alice Dworsky
Helen Fullerton
Alexandra Gulich
Vera Gulich
Helen M. Kachmarsky
Rosemary Kachmarsky
Peter, Helen Kachmarsky
Craig Kachmarsky
Mary Kravetz
Mr & Mrs Daniel Kravitz
Theresa & Daniel Kulsicavage
Mr & Mrs Andrew Matychak
Olga Rodka

Indeed He is Risen!

Robert Rodka
Paul & Sandy St. Germain
Robert B. Teese
David Vanderpool
Mr & Mrs Richard Vanderpool

Holy Ascension Church Lykens

V Rev John & Mat. Daria Mason
V Rev Michael & Mat. Sonya Evans
Margaret Carl
John & Nancy Coles
John M. & Chris Coles
Olga Hrinda
Michael Leshko
Ann Mahoney
John & Mary Mehalko
Dr & Mrs Alexander Pianovich
Dr & Mrs Paul A. Pianovich
Alex & Stephen Pianovich
William & Susan Pinkerton
Nadia Sass
Catherine Siemons
Ann Sovich
Nicholas Sovich
John R. & Judy Sweikert
John N. Sweikert
George Tiazkun
Helen Timko
Joe & Patti Welsh
Kathleen Welsh

Holy Trinity Church McAdoo, PA

V Rev & Mat. Claude Vinyard
John & Kim Buckeye & Sons
Helen Cortez
Anna Lee Davidovich
Pearl Elko
Anna Fanelli
Rosella Gardecki
Mary Ann Graino
Michelle & Michael Klesh
Anna Kubulis
Daniel Kurtz
Greg & Cathy Kurtz & Children
Joe & Linda Kurtz & Sons
Anna Kurtz
Michael & Jan Kurtz, Jr. & Son
Danny Oneschuck
Helen Osuch
Cindy Polli
Lonnie Polli
Clark & Sophie Shuman
Paul Smerconich
Mary Stronko
Irene Yaworsky
Michael Zabitchuck

S. Peter & Paul Church Minersville

Fr. Michael & Mat. Hatrak
Natalie Hatrak
James & Anna Antonio
JoAnn Brinich
Ralph & Kathy Brinich, Jenn & Adam
Susie Frew
Elsie Herman

Rick & Lynda, Ricky & Lauren Hutton
Olga Kirkauskas
The Malusky Family
Mr & Mrs Harry Oakill & Fam.
Mr & Mrs Luke Oakill
Anna Olexa
Michael & Lisa, Christian & Sofia Pascuzzo
Mr & Mrs Andrew Skrincosky
Stablum Family
David Studlack Family

St. Michaels Church Mount Carmel

V Rev Michael & Mat. Sonia Evans
Michael Evans
Mr & Mrs Thomas P. Alekseyko
Olga Berkoski
Sandra Bohaczyk
George Bortnichak
Mary & Jerry Breslin
Florence Bubernak
Chris Buchkarik
Julia Bushick
Mr & Mrs Charles Chidovich
Deanna Ciocco
Marie Cuff
Ben & Leah Evert
Brian & Gloria Evert
Anna Gondal
Mrs Mary Homicz
Mr & Mrs Peter Horoschak
Mary Kandrot
Joseph Katchick
Bob & Marie Kuchta
Olga Leuch
Daniel Leon
Adam Leschinsky
Bernie & Tanya Malkoski
Leon Markovich
Jean & Chris Mathias
Costy Melnick
Mary Moroz
Margaret Olaf
Olga Paduhovich
Anna Panikarchuck
Geroge Panikarcheck
Peter Paskell
Stephanie Peek
John & Theresa Pochekailo
C. Shaffchick
Mr & Mrs Walter Sebasovich
Hal Smith
Helen Sorocka
Helen Timpko
Joseph & Sandy Tosca
Mildred & Ben Trefsgar
Pearl Winnick
Anna & Delores Wislock
Paul Wislock
Valentine & Victoria Wood
Peter Yastishak
Stanley & Vera Zbicki

St. John the Baptist Church Nanticoke, PA

Father & Mat. Stephen Karaffa
Peter & Elizabeth Hetman
John & Theresa Klos
Jillian Paprota
Joe & Mary Paprota

Joseph P. Papropa
Joey Paprota
John Pihanich
Jay & Marge Sokol
Paul & Olga Sulewski
Peter & Patricia Truszkowski & Fam.
Warho Family
Mary Zupko
Mike & Pearle Zupko

St. Michaels Church Old Forge

Father David & Mat. Karen Mahaffey
V Rev Theodore Orzolek
Nikolas Mahaffey
Michael Mahaffey
Seth Mahaffey
Kyra Mahaffey
Mary Adamiak
Kate, David, Alexa & Adam Barsigian
Margaret & Jacob Barsigian
Sandra & John Barsigian
Agnes Buranich
Helen Chesniak
Sandra & William Condon
Cushner & Ermolovich Family
The Elko Family
Maria & Jacob Emily
Dr Tanya Ermolovich
Walter & Anne Marie Ermolovich
Neal & Ann Freeman
Mrs Nicholas Halchak
Mr & Mrs Aleck Jadick
David Jadick
Michael & Margaret Jadick
John Jadik
Al & Mary Krenitsky
Tina Ludwig
Joseph & Ann Marie Macijowsky
Helen Percy
Lovie & Ann Peregrim
Theresa & Helen Polanchik
Anna I. Pregmon
Margaret & Walter Pregmon
William & Mary Pregmon
Al & Mary Pritchuk
Irene & John Pritchuk
George & Marilyn Serniak
Stephen & Amanda Serniak
Stephen & Ingrid Serniak
The Tumavitch Family
Mildred Wozniak
Anna Zupko

All Saints Church Olyphant

Rev & Mrs Nicholas Wyslutzky
Joachim, Simeon, & Gabriella
Mr & Mrs Brian Brown & Matthew
Helen Bryer
David & Mary Brzuchalski
Stephana Butchko
Joe Dzwonczyk
Elizabeth Generotti
Mary Jane & Tanya Gilbert
Irene Glowatz
Mr & Mrs Nicholas Holowatch
Justine Horhutz
Anna Howansky
Natalie Hoyniak

Christ is Risen!

Harry & Elizabeth Hunyak
Ken & Stacey Kashuba
Stephanie, Kaitlyn, & Zachary Kashuba
Anna Klemko
Mr & Mrs Theofan Koziar
Eleanor Krushinski
Mr & Mrs Michael Kuzmiak, Jr.
In memory of Jeanne Masko
Fran Meholic
Dr Gregory Meholic
William Mezick & Katherine A. Mezick
Claudia Mikulak
Mary & Maria Oles
Vera & Olga Paulishak
Mr & Mrs George Perechinsky
Mike & Sonia Prestys & Sons
Barbara Puhalla
Ashley Puthorosky
Mr & Mrs John Puthorosky
Marguerite Puthorosky
Peter & Joni Rezanka
Ann & Joseph Schlasta
John & Annette Schlasta
Joseph & Helen Semon & Fam.
Mary Semon
James & Donna Specht
Kyra, Chelsea & Ian Specht
Dan & Susan Stafursky
Samantha & Stephanie Stafursky
Ken Stafursky
Mrs Mary Stafursky
Steve & Pat Stafursky
Linda Stuchlak
Michael Stuchlak, Sr.
Julia Voloshen
Mary Wasilchak

St. Nicholas Church Olyphant

Fr. & Mat. Vladimir Fetcho
Richard & Julie Cesari
James & Jonathan Cesari
John & Josephine Chichilla
Mr & Mrs Jerry Dreater
Mr & Mrs Paul Dreater
Capt. & Mrs Paul Dreater Jr.
Dorothy Fetchina
Joseph Fetchina
Kyra Fetchina
Marie Grabania
Michael Grabania
Theresa Havirlak
Laura Howanetz
Mr & Mrs. David B. Hughes
George Kopestonsky
Olga Kuzmick
Vera & Tom Price
Mr & Mrs Stephen Rebar
Dr & Mrs Laity R Sherman
Ann Thomashefsky
Helen Thomashefsky
James Thomashefsky
Mary Youshock

Assumption of the Holy Virgin Philadelphia

Fr. John Udics
Matuska Mildred Soroka
David & Emilie Albrecht
Dr David E. Albrecht, Jr.

Melanie Albrecht
John & Helen Alexander
Norman, Barbara, Matthew, Chris & David Andrews
George Brasko
Emma Burychka
Julianne Carrol
Elizabeth R. Chadwich
Robert & Grace Corba
John & Julia Drimak
Helen Dzugan
Paul & Julia Gavula
Emily Gerasimoff
Simon & Mary Herbert
Sandra & Neil Hourahan
Julia Jugan
Albert & Catherine Kavalkovich
Ken, Debra, Alex & Anastasia Kavalkovich
Irene Kavcsak
Marie Lamarr
Richard, Dana & Jason LeRoy
Anna Mackiewicz
Julia Makara
John Marko
Anne McCartney
Michael McCartney
Mrs Susan Mohnach
David Pellack
John & Margaret Pellack
John, Mary & Emily Pellack
Joseph, Michael, Sr. & Michael Pence, Jr.
Joseph Rabik
Joe, Kathy & Anastasia Renzetti
Mary Robovitsky
Florence Savchak
George & Olga Vail
Ann Varhula
Helen & Timothy Wanenchak
Michael Wanenchak, Jr.
Sharon Wanenchak
Lisa Welle
Arthur Willis
Peter & Annamae Witiak, Jr.

St. Stephens Cathedral Philadelphia

Fr. Daniel & Mat. Mary Geeza
Mat. Mary Fedoronko
Barbara Afanassiev
Natasha & Mark Afanassiev-Purvis
Mary Ann Alfimow
Anastasia Babovchikina
Barbara & Karen Belsito
Mr & Mrs Igor Bergners
Mary Birkenbach
Ron & Kathy Bisaga
Sonia, Dan, Stephen & Christine Bondira
Nicholas & Zoya Bubernak
Mr & Mrs Robert Burch
Anna Burdziak
Anna Cebular
Paul Cholakis
Judy, Jack & Jennifer Clyde
Mr & Mrs Charles Colter
John & Kate Cox
Nicholas, Alexander & Andre Cox
Nicholas Cronin
Dorothy Crossan
Helen Davis, Mark & Steve & Fam.
Ray, Michelle, Matthew & Natalie Decker
Willis & Lubie Dietrich

Reader Daniel & Taissa Drobish
David Drobish
Dr George & Pauline Englesson
Margret Englesson
Elaine Ezrow & Joe Clark
Paul, Diane, Laura & John Fedoronko
Dr Jack, Irene, Alexander, Halina & Kyra Forest
Nina, Bill, Kathie, Michael & Matthew Gavula
Olga & John Gazak
Elizabeth Gentieu
Ekaterina Gorbatchevsky
Jelena Grabania
Lester Grabania & Paul
Mary Gressen
Michael & Jenny Garb
Anna M. Fedryck-Hargrave
William & Nina Hartzell
Agnes & John Herbut
Nicholas & Nina Horsky
Zachary, Stacy & Aleksei Hulayew
Galina, Michael & Lena Imms
Arnold, Katherine, Anna & Alexa Jensky
Catherine, Leonard, Christopher, Michael & Nicholas
Jones
Jeff, Mary Ellen Jones
Helene Jones
Peter Kalandiak
Lorraine & Harold Kane
Alice Karpiak
Nadia Kolesnik
Mr & Mrs John Kolesnik & Fam.
Mr & Mrs Michael Kolesnik & Fam.
Mr & Mrs Stephen Kolesnik & Fam.
Kolomyec Family
Annette Kopistansky
John Kozlowski
Bill Kraftician
Alex & Valentina Kuzman
Greg, Lydia & Kira Kuzmanchuk
Helen Lackatos
Steven Lackatos
Nicole Lamprieck
Peter & Martha Linski
Sonia, Larissa & Michael Jr. Mariani
Mr & Mrs Merdziuszew
Anna Miller
Walter & Mary Mokriski
Adele & Lev Mozhaev
Janice Nass
Christine Nass
Phil & Irene O'Brien & Dasha
John O'Brick
Joseph O'Brick & Kern Irene
Olga Oprouseck
Catherine Paulasack
Helen Plunkett
Heinz & Tamara Poessel
Stephan & Marge Pron
Pron-Zwick Family
Mary Radick
Tom, Nina, Nicholas, Deanna & Victoria Rapak
Valentina, Sarah, Jonathan & Alexa Rhoades
John, Denise, Sonia & Michael Rowe
Olga Russin
Julia Shestkov
Al Silveira Jr.
Anna D. Simpson
Joseph C. Simpson
Martha, Jack, Megan, Adam, Jacob & Amelia Sisko
Larry, Connie, Jon & Chris Skvir
Vasil, Eva & Anna Smith

Indeed He is Risen!

Joe Stearne
 Walter & Carolyn Stephan-Stephanowich
 Tatiana Stephan & Kristin LaMacchia
 John & Helen Szulak
 Robert Gregory Tallick
 Dr Michael, Amelia, Michael & Natalie Taptykoff
 Lydia Tichy
 Alice Victor
 Eva & Bill Wasser
 Mr & Mrs Andrew J. Yencha
 Andrew & Megan Yencha
 Maura Ann Yencha
 Diane, Vincent, Nicholas & Knistina Zanghi
 Irene Zaroff
 Margarite & George Zlatkowski

Holy Trinity Church Pottstown

Fr Stephen & Mat. Jessica Evanina & Jacob
 The Joseph Bendyk Family
 Anna Marie & Jon black
 Mr & Mrs John Black & Evyn
 John & Helen Boretsky
 Brilla Family
 Mr & Mrs Michael Brilla & Fam.
 Mr John Cheptz
 Kraig & Albena Diener & Fam.
 Mr Joseph Dutzer
 Dorothy Ecker
 Nettie Hart
 Christina Hutnyan
 Mr & Mrs James Hutnyan
 Rebecca Hutnyan
 Helen Kline
 Mr & Mrs Daniel & Marina Long
 Michelle Marsteller & Family
 Mary Monarek
 Helen Pershinsky
 Mr & Mrs Joseph Pihanich
 Angie Rapchinski
 Christine Rapchinski
 Mary Rapchinski
 Effie Romanik
 Mr & Mrs Ken Sekellick & Daughters
 Mr & Mrs Charles Wurster

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church

St. Clair

Fr. Michael & Mat. Hatrak
 Natalie Hatrak
 Leah Chrush
 Olga DeMarkis
 Tusha Dernbach
 Marguerite Dimoff
 Jim & Ruthann Kerick
 Pete Kovach
 Steve & Justyna Pelak
 Ted & Jeanette Sagan

St. Herman Of Alaska Orthodox Church Shillington

V Rev & Mrs John A. Oriofrey
 The Parish Council
 The Sunday School Teachers & Students
 The Our Lady of Kazan Sisterhood
 The Parish Choir
 Mr & Mrs Joseph Anderson & Fam.
 Mrs Vera Bortniak
 Ms. Louise Coleman
 Mr & Mrs Michael Drenchko

Marie & John Drosdak
 Christopher, Stephanie, Mark & Joshua
 Mr Bill Dudash Sr.
 Mr William M. Dudash
 Mrs Gloria Duty & Sons
 Nicholas & Kathy Ermolovich
 Mr & Mrs Jefferson Gore & Sons
 Bill & Rosalie Hardman
 Barbara, Joseph & Jacob Hetrick
 Terry & Debbie Hojnowski
 Daniel & Xenia Hretz
 Mr & Mrs Ed Hyland
 Bradley & Rebecca Kauffman
 The Kawood Family
 Mrs Eva Kopera
 Dr & Mrs Vadim Kurjanowicz
 Mr & Mrs Bernard Kusior
 Mr & Mrs Fred Leer & Fam.
 Mr & Mrs John Lorchak
 Michael & Vera Losk
 Mrs Irene Lupco
 John, Dana & Raymond MacKoul
 Michael & Janice Mallick
 Mr & Mrs Stephen Matsick & Fam.
 Mr & Mrs John Melniczek
 Mr Dikembe Mutombo
 Mr & Mrs Karl Osterburg
 Mrs Alexandra Prawlocki & Fam.
 Mr & Mrs Joseph Reba & Fam.
 Mat. Margaret Ressetar
 Mrs Ruth K. Ruth
 Mr & Mrs Michael Savage
 Mr & Mrs John Seman & Fam.
 Ms. Sandra Semion
 Mr & Mrs Nicholas Sichak & Fam.
 Ms. Gloria Spitko & Kyra
 Mrs Catherine & Sonja Terenchin
 Ms. Cheryl Terenchin
 Kyle & Daria Teter
 Mr & Mrs Steve Vlasak & Sons
 Mr & Mrs Eugene Wanenchak & Fam.
 Miss Tina Marie Waselus
 Mr & Mrs Chip Weaver & Fam.
 Mrs Deborah Wissler & Michael Lucas
 Mr & Mrs Edward Yurick & Daughters
 Hank & Anne Zerbe

St. Basil's Church Simpson, PA

Fr. Leo Poore
 James & Mary Anne Braun
 Maria K. & Jefferson H. Braun
 Olga & John Buberniak
 Sharon & Nicholas Christian
 Mary Chupeck
 Sam & Nadine Demianovich
 Helen Dorval
 Judy Fleming
 Olga Gallick
 Helen Hrichuk
 Stephen & Ester Kowalsky
 Thomas & Elaine Kravetsky
 Laurie, Lynn & Kimberly Kravetsky
 Helen Kutch
 Michael & Theresa Luczkovich
 Julia Mazza
 Anastasia Mikulak
 Michael J & Julia Mikulak
 John & Mary Okorn
 Marie Proch

Maria & John Proch
 Walter & Mary Anne Proch
 Christina M & Elizabeth A. Proch
 Dr David & Daria Roat
 Alexandra & Benjamin Roat
 Jo Ann Sample

St. Tikhons Monastery Church South Canaan

His Eminence, Archbishop HERMAN
 V Rev Daniel K. & Mat. Dolores Donhick
 V Rev Alexander, Mat. Elena & Alex Golubov
 V Rev Michael Lepa
 Rev James, Mat. Lisa, Jimmy & Victoria Weremedic
 Protodeacon Keith S. Russin
 Reader Thomas Donlick
 Reader Gregory Hatrak
 Reader Gregory Sulich
 Mat. Dorothy Sulich
 Galina Abolins
 Jeremiah, Terah & JoAnna Andrews
 Marge Barna
 Alice Boga
 Betty Figura
 Drs. David & Mary Ford & Emmelia
 Daisy Geeza
 Harrison Hubiak
 Mr & Mrs William Huniak
 Julia Jacewicz
 Ron & Lorraine Kavalkovich & Ron, Jr.
 Paul, Linda & Michael Kupchick
 Nicholaus Kuzemchak
 Victor Kuzemchak
 John & Mildred Naholnik
 Alexandra OShanicik
 Mr & Mrs John Paluch
 Martin Paluch
 Ann Sernak
 Kathryn Short
 Stephanie Sklarsky
 Paul Wozniak

Holy Trinity Church Stroudsburg

Fr. & Mat. Neal J. Carrigan
 Rebecca & Brian Boyle
 Anna Demianycz
 Victor Demianycz
 Geroge & Pam Fetch
 Fetch Family
 Russ & Nancy Futchko
 Tom & Helen Kessler
 Michael & Joanne Kondratik
 Gail & Raymond Mastroberte
 Lisa & David Mastroberte
 Olga Nameck
 Kathryn Pinto
 Martha & Harold Siegfried
 Peter & Helen Stavisky
 Dorothy Strelczyk
 Walter & Marion Zablotsky

Saints Peter & Paul Church Union Dale, PA

Rev Hieromonk Alexander (Mayba)
 Donald & Ann Bock
 Vladimir & Betty Demianovich
 Martha Dorosh
 Peter Jubinsky
 Peter & Linda Jubinsky & Fam.
 Rose Kennedy

Indeed He is Risen!

Lubov & Ronald Kilmer
 Lovey Klym
 Antonette Terry
 Walter & Lorraine Terry & Fam.

Holy Resurrection Cathedral Wilkes-Barre

Archpriest Joseph Martin & Mat. Gloria Martin
 Marina Martin
 Elena Martin
 Reader David & Kathryn Kessler
 David, Tatiana & Hannah Kessler
 Andrew Buleza
 Michael Nancy & Abby Pieck
 Mary Onufer
 Helen Humko
 Kyra Zoranski
 Edward & Evelyn Wysocki
 Evelyn Suhoski
 Olga Layton
 Agnes Timchak
 Marge Kotarski
 Ray & Vera Kraynanski
 Tom & Marguerite Czekalski
 Rose & Sam Ostopick
 Bill & Mary Cooper
 John & Anna Dulsky
 Sandy, Julieann & Nicholas Kapelan
 Charles & Irene Urban
 Charlene Faust
 Joseph & Myra Tarantini
 Walter & Zora Narkoff
 Wendall & Marion Thoman
 Michael & Marianne Dunsavage
 Michael & Arlene Pasonick
 Carol & Nick Zedock
 Alice Laskowski
 Mr. & Mrs. Charles Romanuski
 Margaret Anthony
 Justine Gulczynski & Family
 George Sapp
 Lydia & Julio Rivera
 Mitchell & Lindsey Rivera

Holy Trinity Church Wilkes-Barre

Fr. David & Mat. Sharon Shewezyk
 Timothy & Nicholas Shewczyk
 Mat. Anne Pawlush
 Holy Trinity Altar Boys
 Theodore & Eleanor Sovyrda
 William & Mary Gurka
 Peter & Theresa Pawlak
 Anna & Stanley Bishop
 Melanie & Nicolas Bishop
 Mr & Mrs Edward A. Gudaitis
 Mr & Mrs Vladimir Dutko
 Dolores & Paul Gozick
 Anna Goobic
 Nettie Kompinski
 Mary Banks
 Sue Bawn
 Joe & Nan Zula
 Mary B. & Stephen Krill
 Barbara King
 Stephen Lukachik
 Mr & Mrs Joseph Sanders
 Mary Piznar
 Mr & Mrs Richard Kuhl
 John Pawlak

Andrew Dennis
 Mrs Helen Zavada
 Mrs Mary Petro
 Mr & Mrs Stanley Zielinski
 Evelyn Kozmiski
 Sam & Lydia Cross
 Michael & Leona Stchur
 Mildred L. Mayher
 Michael & Vera Lisko
 Lydia Homick
 Peter & Mary Jo Pawtak
 Pearl Tutko
 Liz & John Gurka
 William Talpash, Jr.
 Valerie Czahor
 John & Denise Meck
 Paul, Corie & Abby Meck
 David & Deborah Mills
 Dr & Mrs Clement Valleta & Fam.
 Mrs Robert T. Rhodes
 Marion & Eve Sowyrda
 Mrs Anna Bromuko
 Marianne & Jeremy Haugh
 Michael & Rita Goobic

Holy Cross Church Williamsport

Fr. Dan, Myra & Natalia Kovalak
 Mr & Mrs Paul Beard, Paul & Tatiana
 Paul, Christina, Pavlo, Dimitra & Sophia Beiter
 The Bezuhly Family
 Yvonne & Nathan Bohlander
 Ann Chabal
 Matt & Evelyn Chabal
 Mr & Mrs George Haagen
 Henry & Cally Herman
 Dr & Mrs Minas Hiras
 Eileen Juran
 Phil Kundis
 Lamprinos Family
 Sergius Lange & Family
 Elsie Skvir Nierle
 Nancy Pashchuk & Sem. James Chuta
 John, Michael & Stephanie Raptis
 John Sam Jr & Family
 Mr & Mrs Lew Shatto
 Sinatra Family
 John & Yvette Skrip
 Michael & Julia Stefanick
 Williams Family

St. Marks Church Wrightstown

Archpriest Theodore Heckman
 Fr. Dn. Gregory & Martha Moser
 Reader George Nakonetschny
 Janet M. Kalenish
 Badri & Leila Ergemlidze & Children
 Myron, Linette, Stephen & Anastasia Sedor
 Connie, Zack & Sergei Borichsvsky
 James & Monia Pitra
 Dee Marmaluk & Family
 Betsy Werner
 Shasron, Anna & Doug Yates
 Michael Kuchka
 Ryan, Bethany & Reese Union
 J. W. Adams
 Deborah Vivirito
 Llucy & Michelle Znak
 Joseph Horoschak

Jeanette Ruano
 Kevin, Mary Ann, Ryan & Gregory Swan
 Peter, Sandy, & Stephanie Bohlander
 John & Barbara Malriat
 Cynthia & Anatole Bredikin
 Samuel Mervis, Jr.
 Ken, Dorothy, Nichole & Stephen Martiak
 Dana & Chris Toma
 Peter & Vicki Kiproff
 Stephanie & Valerie Ristvey
 Sergei & Irene Arhipov
 Boris & Joanne, Damian & Brian Borichevsky
 John & Elizabeth Sherbin
 Gil & Helen Harvey
 The Mitchells
 Justin & Chryste Heckman

St. Michaels Church Wilmington, DE

Fr. Andrew & Mat. Karen Anderson & Fam.
 Mr & Mrs James S. Riley
 James & Anne Riley & Fam.
 Paul, Vera, & Matt Chalfant
 David, Christine, Kristen, & David Jr. Roberts
 Mr & Mrs Hary Kutch
 Mr & Mrs Nedwin Minnick
 Mr & Mrs James Flynn
 Olga & John H. Maloney
 Dolores E. Karawulan
 Ed, Karen, & Leah Hojnicky
 Stephanie & Ed Hojnicky
 Bill & Alice Dryden
 Thomas & Lynn Sulpizi & Children
 Mr & Mrs Nabih K. Harb
 Marie Karawulan
 Peter & Elizabeth Melnik
 Olga Rybachak
 John & Helen Ciach
 Joanne, Kent, & Kevin DeVries
 Mr & Mrs Michael Sinovich
 Olga S. O'Neill
 Chuck Kruse & Gail Sherwood
 Darin Kruse
 Basil & Cindy Peck & Fam.
 Mr & Mrs Larry Conover & Hannah
 The Kemperman Family
 Harry & Emily Wujcik
 Helen Kansak
 Rdr. Timothy E. Hojnicky
 Paul Marianne, Barbra & Juliana Newmeyer
 Nihmat & Alice Morjana & Fam.
 Mark & Claudia David
 Sofia M. Puit
 Mary Guresky
 Maria Gregors
 JoAnna, Jason, & Rebecca Stump
 Dorothy & Onofry Zabinko
 James & Frances Wilson & Fam.
 Mona & Rashid Elia & Fam.
 Sacha Stoyanova
 Kristina Kraitier
 The Fedak Family
 Bill & Marie Herrman & Fam.

All in the Diocesan Family

Berwick

Holy Annunciation Church

A family communion breakfast was held in November with a cookie sale fund raiser. During the Nativity fast, the children collected canned goods for the Berwick Soup Kitchen. A program was held for the Feast of St. Nicholas with a social hour enjoyed by all.



St. Nicholas Program at Holy Annunciation Church



Children with canned goods in Berwick

Coaldale

St. Mary's Church

Fr. Andrew Diehl was welcomed as the new pastor with a dinner held in his honor. The 29th annual Christmas Bazaar was held on November 11-12 at the parish hall, with many handmade crafts and homemade food items enjoyed by all. Helen King, President of the St. Mary's Ladies Aid Society was awarded a gramota by His Eminence, Archbishop Herman for her many years of service to the Church. The church school children presented their annual Yolka on Sunday, December 9. In January, the church school enjoyed a day of snow tubing at the Blue Mountain ski area. The annual pre-lenten dinner was held on Meatfare Sunday.



Live Nativity scene in Berwick



Helen King receiving her gramota



Coaldale's Yolka players in costume

**Gradyville
St. Herman of Alaska Church**

The Christmas Yolka was held on January 7. On February 18, many of the faithful of St. Herman's went to the Faberge Exhibit at the Riverfront Arts Center in Wilmington, Delaware. On February 18, the church school class received visitors from the neighboring St. George's Greek Orthodox Church for a joint lesson and fellowship. The students from St. Herman's returned the visit to St. George's on March 25. The parish held a maslenitsa in traditional Russian style on Cheesefare Sunday.



Church school children at Blue Mountain

**Harrisburg
Christ the Savior Church**

Baptisms: Irina Ioanna, daughter of Christina and Bogdan Ciocirlan, Oct. 1. Nicole Barbara, daughter of Andrea and Michael Zart, Oct. 6.

Chrismation: Jane Ann Volscko, February 3.



Annual Yolka in Gradyville



Catherine Blebea with the lucky coin from the Vassilopita cake on New Year's Day

**Minersville
Saints Peter & Paul Church**

Ricky Hutton, son of Richard & Lynda Hutton, won a poster contest at the Pennsylvania Agricultural Farm Show in Harrisburg. His first place award includes a \$500 savings bond presented by Samuel Hayes, Penn. Secretary of Agriculture. Everyone at the parish is proud of his accomplishment.



Allyssa Nesko and Michael Bromley receive FOCA scholarships

Christ is Risen!

Indeed He is Risen!



Ricky Hutton, Minersville, with his first place winning certificate for pottery at the PA Farm Show



Priest Stephen Evanina with the newly baptized Anya and her parents

**Pottstown
Holy Trinity Church**

Holy Trinity Church is involved in a parish improvement project, refurbishing the domes and crosses.

Baptism: Anya, daughter of Thomas and Leanne Harrison.

Chrismation: Kristina Bendyk.



Installation of the newly refurbished cupolas in Pottstown



Fr. Stephen chrismates Kristina Bendyk

**Shillington
St. Herman of Alaska Church**

The annual Nativity program was held on Sunday, December 11 and was enjoyed by all the faithful. A bus trip to the Riverfront Arts Center in Wilmington, Del. to see the Faberge exhibit took place Saturday, January 13. Daniel Dougherty, son of Elaine



Daniel Dougherty receives Eagle Scout

Continued on the next page

Dougherty, received the prestigious rank of Eagle Scout on Monday, February 26. Archbishop Herman made an archpastoral visit to the parish on April 1 and elevated Fr. John Onofrey to Archpriest.



**South Canaan
St. Tikhon's Monastery**

Marriage: Peter & Paula Holoviak, November 12, 2000. Archbishop Herman celebrated the wedding together with Frs. Vladimir Petorak and Eugene Vansuch.



Nativity program at St. Herman's in Shillington



Mr. & Mrs. Peter Holoviak with Archbishop Herman

**Pastoral
Ministries
Conference
June 4 - 6, 2001**

St. Tikhon's Seminary
South Canaan, Pa.



Thomas Donlick tonsured a reader



Deacon Seraphim Hipsh being ordained to the Holy Priesthood



Deacon Emmanuel with his family and the Archbishop



Newly ordained Priest Seraphim and family with Vladyka Herman



Emmanuel Rodriguez being ordained to the holy deaconate

Deadline for the next issue of

Your Diocese Alive in Christ

is
July 31, 2001

Submit names and photos of graduates, and other articles by that date

**Williamsport
Holy Cross Church**

The annual Advent program was held Sunday, Dec. 17. Dr. David Ford, professor at St. Tikhon's Seminary, presented a lenten retreat at Holy Cross Church on Saturday, March 17. Altar boy Doug Brown, son of parishioners Doug and Patti Brown of Northumberland, was recently cited in the Young Americans column of the *Daily Item* newspaper in Sunbury. The parish will sponsor a team in the 24-hour Relay for Life of the American Cancer Society to be held May 18-19. Last year's team raised over \$1,200 for the cause. Team captains are John Raptis and George Lamprinos. Progress continues on the Fellowship Center at Holy Cross thanks to the dedicated labor of the volunteers. The parish has raised nearly \$100,000 towards this project. Completion is expected later this year.



Fr. Daniel Kovalak with his church school children



Volunteers hard at work on hall in Williamsport



Sergey and Yuliya Lebedev with attendants, Maria Plamadeala and Scott Seyler, and pastor Fr. Daniel



**ANNUAL
WOMEN'S RETREAT**

Saturday, August 4, 2001
St. Tikhon's Seminary

St. Tikhon's Bookstore

P.O. Box B, St. Tikhon's rd. South Canaan, PA 18459

Phone: (888) 454-6678, Fax: (570) 937-3100

E-mail: bookstore@stots.edu



Icon of Resurrection
(4 1/4 in. x 2 7/8 in.)



St. Raphael of Brooklyn
(7 1/2 in. tall!)

- SPECIAL \$195 -

(After May 31 - \$220)

*These handpainted collectible eggs will be available in June, 2001.
On the reverse side of each egg is St. Tikhon's Monastery Church.*

Eggs will be handpainted in a limited quantity.

Please send in your order with a partial payment of \$100.

The remaining balance will be due upon receipt of your egg.

You are Cordially Invited to Attend the

St. Tikhon's Seminary Grand Banquet

in honor of the

59th Annual Academic Commencement

Sunday, May 27, 2001

6:00 p.m. - Cocktails / 7:00 p.m. - Dinner

At Genetti's Convention Center, 1505 S. Main St. Dickson City, PA

\$35.00 per ticket

For Banquet Reservations, please contact:
Mrs. Florence Boyko, Reservations Chairperson
206 Summit Pointe, Scranton, PA 18508
Phone: (570) 343-2232

*Checks must accompany all reservations.
Please makes checks payable to: St. Tikhon's Seminary*
Reservations Close May 20, 2001

AREA HOTEL AND MOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS

This list reflects availability of rooms for Saturday, May 26 and Sunday, May 27, and, in most cases, a special rate for pilgrims and guests. Therefore, you are asked to call the hotel or motel as soon as possible and **identify** yourself as a St. Tikhon's Pilgrim / Guest. Please reserve your room two weeks in advance.

Comfort Inn, Hamlin, PA
800-523-4426 Single / Double: \$59

Days Inn, Rt. 6 & 11 Clarks Summit, PA (Sun. only)
570-586-9100 Single / Double: \$85

Fife and Drum Motel, Honesdale, PA
570- 253-1392 Single: \$39 Double: \$49

Holiday Inn, Dunmore, PA
570-343-4771 Double: \$84.00

Quality Hotel, Scranton / Carbondale Hwy. PA
570-383-9979 Single / Double: \$58.50

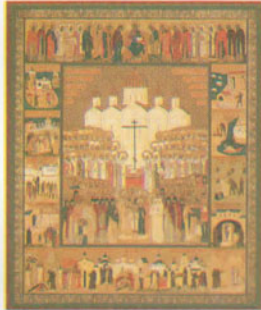
Victoria Inns, Route 315, Pittston Township, PA 18640
570-655-1234 Single / Double: \$63



St. Tikhon's Bookstore

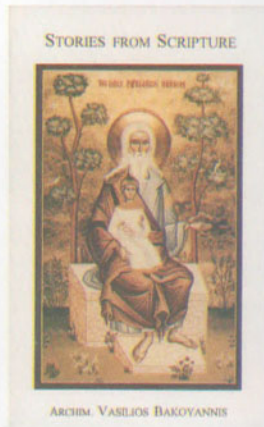
P.O. Box B, St. Tikhon's Rd. South Canaan, PA 18459
Phone: (888) 454-6678, Fax: (570) 937-3100
E-mail: bookstore@stots.edu

Sobor of New Martyrs.



Icon of the Glorified New Martyrs of Russia. Wood Mounted 4 1/2 x 5 1/2 - \$10.00; 8 5/4 x 7 3/4 - \$15.00. Cardboard Mounted 8 5/4 x 7 3/4 - \$5.00; 13" x 16" - \$15.00.

Stories From Scripture. \$13.00



By Archimandrite Vasilios Bakoyannis. Order# SS2010. St Tikhon's Seminary Press is proud to release Stories From Scripture. The Old Testament is full of exciting stories. They are unique in their own way and full of drama, wisdom, and truth. Stories such as these, and the great

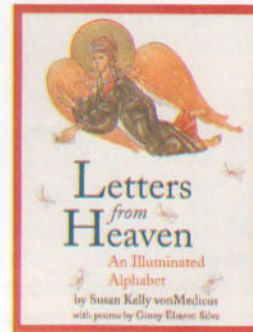
wisdom they provide, are presented within these pages. Stories From Scripture is unique in its own way in that it presents the spiritual truths of Holy Scripture in a most applicable way for contemporary man.



Icon of the Royal Family \$5.00

Newly Glorified Passion Bearers of the Russian Church. Cardboard Mount 8 5/4 x 7 3/4.

Letters From Heaven: An Illuminated Alphabet. By Susan Kelly vonMedicus \$22.00.



With its beautiful artwork, its accompanying poems, and its many other special features, Letters From Heaven is much more than an alphabet book – it's a book your children will enjoy for years to come!

Sacred Songs of Russia. \$16.00



Gloriae Dei Cantores under the direction of Elizabeth C. Patterson \$16.00 order# CD081 Sacred Songs of Russia contains selections from throughout the Liturgical

Year, as well as from the Divine Liturgy. The group, a mixed choir, sings selections from Tchaikovsky, Racmaninoff, Chesnokov, and other noted Russian Composers. 19 Tracks. 70 min.

Resurrection Tryptych \$15.00



An ideal gift for the Paschal Season. The front of the tryptych shows the Myrrh Bearing women meet-

ing the Angel at the empty tomb of Christ. Inside is an icon of the Resurrection of Christ. The tryptych is approximately 8"x5" when open.

Please add \$3.50 shipping for the first item, \$2 for each additional item.

Ninety-Seventh Annual Pilgrimage

St. Tikhon's Orthodox Monastery — South Canaan, Pennsylvania

May 25–28, 2001

The Brotherhood of the Monastery of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk, America's first Orthodox Monastery, located in the village of South Canaan, Pennsylvania in the beautiful Pocono Mountains, invites you to gather with our Venerable Hierarchs, Beloved Clergy, and faithful Orthodox Christians to celebrate the 97th Annual Pilgrimage

Pilgrimage Schedule

Friday, May 25, 2001

- 4:00 p.m. Formal Opening of the Pilgrimage — Vespers and Matins — Monastery Church
- 6:00 p.m. Procession around the Monastery Church and Akathist to St. Tikhon of Zadonsk, followed by the veneration of his relics

Saturday, May 26, 2001

- 9:00 a.m. Hierarchical Divine Liturgy
- 2:00 p.m. The 59th Annual Academic Commencement of St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary — Seminary Auditorium
- 4:00 p.m. All-Night Vigil — Monastery Church

Sunday, May 27, 2001

- 9:00 a.m. Hierarchical Divine Liturgy
- 4:00 p.m. Vespers and Matins — Monastery Church*

Monday, May 28, 2001

- 7:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy — Monastery Church*
- 9:15 a.m. Pilgrims' Procession to the Monastery, Greeting of the Primate and Bishops, and vesting of the Main Celebrant
- 10:00 a.m. Hierarchical Divine Liturgy — Pavilion
- 2:00 p.m. Molieben to the Most Holy Theotokos and Anointing of the Sick, Infirm, and all Pilgrims — Monastery Bell Tower
- 4:00 p.m. Vespers and Matins — Monastery Church

*Priests will be available for confessions at these times.



Spirit of Orthodoxy Choir, Aleksei Shipovalnikov, Director