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Glorify Him!

Your Diocese

Alive in Christ

The Magazine of the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, Orthodox Church in America Volume XVII, No. 3 Winter, 2001





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Christ is Born!

Glorify Him!



Dearly Beloved in Christ:

Today our hearts are filled with joy with the Nativity in the flesh of the Son of God “Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven.” He is our precious gift on Christmas Day and He becomes for us the Gift-giver, who will offer Himself “for the life of the world.” Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace who comes to us in the midst of tragedy and suffering.

This year more than ever, Christ’s Nativity is for us a time for reflection, a time for the healing of the grief that has lain upon our souls ever since our nation was attacked by terrorists on September 11. It is only the newborn Savior who can give the newness of His forgiveness, and the grace to see our life as a priceless gift that we must cherish every day. It is only Christ who can forgive the sins of this world and thus open our hearts to the everlasting Peace. He is the only comfort we need. He can bring our families together and unite our nation and strengthen our Church. It is only in Him that we can find the grace to forgive our enemies.

Beloved in the Lord our God and Savior: venerable Pastors, God-loving Monks and all devout Children of our diocesan family, let us thank the Lord, Who descended to us, for His ineffable love. Let us glorify Him as the Prince of Peace.

May the Son of God shed His radiant light on all of you, and may the peace that only Christ can give be fully yours at this time of Christmas and throughout the year.

With love in Christ,

+ *Herman*

+HERMAN

Archbishop of Philadelphia
and Eastern Pennsylvania

Your Diocese

Alive in Christ

Volume XVII Number 3 Winter 2001
The Official Magazine of the
Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania
Orthodox Church in America

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Your Diocese Alive in Christ

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Thirty-Eighth Diocesan Assembly



Archbishop Herman addresses assembly

The 38th Diocesan Assembly of the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania was held at St. Michael's Church, Old Forge on Saturday, October 20, 2001. Archbishop Herman celebrated the Divine Liturgy assisted by Fr. John Kowalczyk, diocesan secretary/treasurer, Fr. Dimitri Ressetar, dean of the Frackville Deanery, Fr. Joseph Martin, Fr. Michael Lepa and Fr. David Mahaffey, host pastor. Fr. Daniel Kovalak directed the choir of clergy and delegates. Immediately following liturgy, a molieben was celebrated entreating the Lord that He would bless the good intentions and efforts of His servants with the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Delegates gathered for a continental breakfast and registration following services. The 38th diocesan assembly was opened with prayer and the blessing of Archbishop Herman at 11:30 a.m. The agenda sent to all delegates prior to the assembly was read and accepted. The credentials committee reported the composition of the council: one hierarch, twenty-eight clergy delegates, twenty-

nine lay delegates, three alternates, six observers and guests and one diocesan council representative. The following assembly officers were elected: Fr. Vladimir Fetcho, clergy vice-chairman; Mr. Gene Haverlak, lay vice-chairman; Fr. David Shewczyk, clergy secretary and Mrs. Marie Proch, lay secretary. The minutes of the 37th diocesan assembly were approved.

In his report, Archbishop Herman welcomed all of the clergy and delegates. He asked the assembly delegates to concentrate on ways to renew the life of the diocese and build up Christ's holy Church. He expressed his shock over the tragic events of September 11 and asked everyone to offer prayers for those who are still suffering and for those who were killed. He said that our life in this country has changed, perhaps forever. His Eminence encouraged all of the diocesan faithful to be good citizens and lead our country in the right direction. He noted that many people have returned to the Church as a result of these tragic events. Parishioners need to work together to be

sure that those returning to the parishes stay in the parishes and continue to come to the church to thank the Lord for all He has given us. Our faithful should also reach out to others in the community and tell them they are welcome in the parish.

Archbishop Herman reviewed the life of the diocese. Two newly-ordained priests were welcomed into the diocese, Fr. Timothy Hasenecz, now serving Holy Trinity Church, McAdoo and Fr. James Weremedic, now serving Holy Annunciation Church, Berwick. Fr. Michael Dahulich has been released from the Carpatho-Russian Diocese and accepted by the Orthodox Church in America. He is now full time at St. Tikhon's Seminary serving as the Seminary's administrative dean.

His Eminence made note of the hundredth anniversary of Holy Trinity Church, McAdoo and the twenty-fifth anniversary of Holy Trinity Church, Stroudsburg. Upcoming anniversaries include the 90th at St. John the Baptist Church, Nanticoke and the 110th at St. Michael's Church, Old Forge, both to be celebrated in November. He also noted the blessing of the new bell tower at St. Stephen's Cathedral, Philadelphia, and the 85th anniversary, new addition and blessing of new icons at St. Nicholas Church, Bethlehem. In 2002, All Saints Church, Olyphant will celebrate its 100th anniversary and Holy Cross Church, Williamsport will celebrate its 25th.

Archbishop Herman encouraged the faithful to support the work and events sponsored by the diocese and attend events of other diocesan parishes. He

Continued on the next page

Thirty-Eight Diocesan Assembly

Continued from page 3

talked about the success of the youth winter encounter, clergy retreat and the annual Memorial Day celebration. Metropolitan Onuphrey of the Russian Orthodox Church visited St. Tikhon's Monastery during the Memorial Day celebration. He was very pleased to see the many activities of our diocese and the Orthodox Church in America. He looks forward to another visit to America. The summer camp was a great success this year. A number of clergy, clergy wives and faithful volunteered to be camp counselors. Fr. John Onofrey and Fr. John Bruchok received thanks for their work at the summer Camp. His Eminence noted that children of former campers are now coming to camp.

expresses his humble and deep thanks to all of the faithful for their cards and prayers during his medical leave. His Beatitude had received many invitations to travel abroad prior to his medical

His Eminence discussed the letter written by the Holy Synod of Bishops concerning the terrorist attacks. The Holy Synod received many favorable comments about the letter.

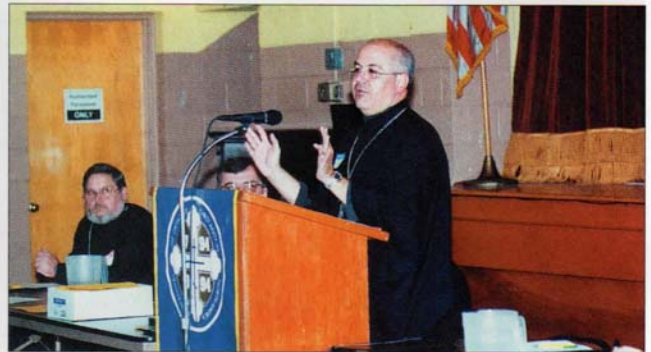
iliary to His Beatitude, is now in Alaska. Bishop Nikolai will probably be nominated to that see. Bishop Innocent has been granted retirement.

His Eminence discussed the letter written by the Holy Synod of Bishops concerning the terrorist attacks. The Holy Synod received many favorable comments about the letter. An encyclical concerning stem cell research has also been published and sent to all parishes. He also noted the correspondence between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia concerning unification of the two. The Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America has also sent correspondence on this matter.

Archbishop Herman represented His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius at the 950th anniversary of the Kiev Lavra. Representatives of all Orthodox



Delegates cast their votes



Archpriest John Dresko speaks on fair-share giving

The annual women's retreat continues to be a success. The retreat is attended by our diocesan women as well as many women from New York and New Jersey. The men's retreat has been postponed three times in the past. Another attempt to hold the men's retreat will be made for next summer or fall. An altar boy retreat will be scheduled before or right after Pascha. His Eminence also thanked Fr. John Kowalczyk and Fr. David Mahaffey for their work on the diocesan magazine, *Alive in Christ*. Many of the magazine articles are translated and enjoyed by Orthodox faithful in Russia and Poland.

Archbishop Herman turned his attention to the Orthodox Church in America. His tenure as the temporary administrator of the Orthodox Church in America came to an end on September 1, 2001. His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius

leave. He will attempt to fulfill this vocation schedule over the next two to three years. He will also celebrate his 25th anniversary as primate of the Orthodox Church in America. Metropolitan Theodosius will be honored during the 13th All-American Council to be held this July in Orlando, Florida. More details about this celebration will follow in days to come. His Eminence reminded all parishes that they should make the necessary preparations to send clergy and lay delegates to the council.

His Eminence stated that Archbishop Peter of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey has been in ill health since August. He asked the diocesan faithful to pray that Archbishop Peter will be able to quickly return to his archpastoral responsibilities. Archbishop Herman also spoke about some of the challenging issues in Alaska. Bishop Nikolai, an aux-

Churches attended this event except from Japan and Finland. The Metropolitan of Japan is ill and the Church in Finland will soon elect a new Primate. There are many difficulties and challenges facing the Orthodox Church in Ukraine. All of the visiting Orthodox bishops offered their support to Metropolitan Vladimir of the canonical Orthodox Church in Ukraine during these difficult times.

His Eminence then spoke about efforts towards the unity of all Orthodox Churches in America and the difficult path to unity. SCOPA met in May 2001 and will meet again in Syosset in November.

Archbishop Herman ended his report by thanking everyone for their efforts during the past year. He encouraged everyone to continue to give of themselves and to be a shining example in imitating Christ. He asked everyone to continue

to work for the building up of the Church. His Eminence then intoned *Memory Eternal* for Fr. Andrew Shuga who fell asleep in the Lord during the past year.

Fr. Vladimir Fetcho, clergy chairman, thanked His Eminence for his report. Fr. Fetcho also noted Archbishop Herman's extensive labors for the diocese, the Orthodox Church in America and for Orthodoxy throughout the world.

Throughout the remainder of the council, the delegates received and considered the reports of the diocesan council secretary, diocesan treasurer, diocesan auditors, diocesan deanery reports and the various department reports including religious education, missions, publications / public relations, youth, and the Metropolitan Council report. Many of these reports were published and included in a packet sent to the delegates for review prior to the assembly. The diocesan budget of \$159,420. was discussed and passed. The budget does not include an increase in the diocesan assessment for 2002.

Following lunch, Fr. John Dresko, a member of the Metropolitan Council, offered a program on fair-share giving. Fr. John noted the financial crisis at every level of the Church. He pointed out the need for the faithful to give "biblically." The 12th All-American Council mandated that a move be made toward fair-share giving. Fr. John talked about



Assembly registration

several proposals including proportional giving, tithing, and hybrid fair-share giving. These proposals have been drafted to meet the mandate of the last Council. He noted that the continued growth of the Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards (FOS) and endowments is crucial. Stewardship education on the local parish level is also essential. Archbishop Herman commended Fr. John for his informative presentation on these challenging matters of financial support for the Church.

In other matters, His Eminence

thanked Fr. Daniel Kovalak for re-forming the Bicentennial Choir for the purpose of singing concerts for the benefit of the Emergency Relief Fund.

Fr. John Kowalczyk then offered thanks on behalf of the diocesan faithful to Archbishop Herman for his archpastoral service both as diocesan archbishop and as temporary administrator of the Orthodox Church in America. The Assembly was adjourned with prayer and the blessing of Archbishop Herman at 3:00 p.m.

—Archpriest David Shewczyk

*The Most Reverend Archbishop Herman
and
Orthodox Christians for Life
Request the honour of your presence for
The Orthodox Witness on the
Sanctity of Human Life
at the*

**2002 March for Life
Tuesday, January 22, 2002**

The Ellipse, Washington, D.C.

RSVP by January 14, 2002
Orthodox Christians for Life
P.O. Box 805, Melville, NY 11747

Official

Ordination

Deacon Timothy Hasenecz was ordained to the Holy Priesthood on August 26, 2001 and assigned Acting Rector of Holy Trinity Church in McAdoo, PA.

Parish Council Confirmations

Christ the Saviour Church — Harrisburg
Holy Annunciation Church — Berwick
Holy Resurrection Cathedral — Wilkes-Barre
Holy Trinity Church — Wilkes-Barre
St. John the Baptist Church — Edwardsville
St. John the Baptist Church — Nanticoke
St. Mary Church — Coaldale
St. Nicholas Church — Bethlehem
St. Stephen Cathedral — Philadelphia

The Shepherds



It was not the glorious of the earth, or the leaders of the synagogues or temple who first saw God in the flesh. It was rather a group of humble shepherds:

There is always something very special about being first. Mary Magdalene, a woman transformed by Christ's love, was granted to be first to behold the Resurrected Lord. St. Nicholas of Myra, while

a priest, was chosen to be bishop because he, providentially, was first to enter the Church on a certain day. The first-born son in a Jewish family was given the right to inherit the family leadership and a double portion of his father's estate. The first-fruits of the harvest were considered worthy of sacrifice, as were firstlings of the animals. These were, by law, to be turned over to the sanctuary because they belonged to the Lord.

Throughout Holy Scripture the image of the shepherd, the sheep, the lamb, the flock occurs again and again as a fundamental reference. Our Lord Himself accepted the title "the Good Shepherd" who came to the human race to gather His sheep safely into the ultimate sheepfold, the Kingdom of Heaven. This image has deep roots in the earliest Hebrew experiences and throughout the long history of Israel. The ancient patriarchs were shepherds, semi-nomads living in tents and wandering from place to



place in search of seasonal pasture for their flocks. The greatest king of Israel, David, was as a youth a shepherd boy, and his psalter is full of imagery of shepherd and sheep. Perhaps there is no more universally known and loved Psalm than the 23rd: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want, He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters . . ." These "green pastures" and "still waters" exist below the terraced farms in the areas around Bethlehem — the setting of the first announcement of the birth of Jesus, God's Child and the long-awaited Messiah.

Many other psalms refer to the shepherd and sheep: "Give ear, O Shepherd

of Israel, Thou who leadest Joseph like a sheep . . ." Here again the shepherd is God Who "dwells between the cherubim" and is appealed to to "come and save us" (Ps. 80). Psalm 95 says, "He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand . . ." Similar expressions are in Psalm 77 and 79.

The Prophet Isaiah relates a particularly touching image of the gentle shepherd caring for his sheep (made all the more familiar by Handel's tender music in Messiah):

*He shall feed His flock like a shepherd;
He shall gather the lambs with His arm,*

and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young (Is. 40:11).

Ezekiel also portrays the shepherd-messiah referring to David the King: "I will set up one Shepherd over them, and He shall feed them, even my servant David . . ." (Ezek. 34:23) and "David my servant shall be king over them all, and they shall have one shepherd" (37 :24). And to emphasize that the Prophet was not referring to the historical David who lived and died like all men, but an *eternal* David, verse 25 says, "My servant David shall be their prince *forever*."

Prior to these passages Ezekiel has already identified the shepherd as God: "Behold, I, even I, will both search My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered, so will I seek out my sheep and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered . . ." (Ezek. 34:11-12). "I will feed my flock and cause them to lie down, says the Lord God!" (34:15).

In the latter chapters of Isaiah we hear about the "Man of sorrows" — despised and rejected and acquainted with grief (53:3). He is "wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities . . ." (53:5). And now something startling: the Divine Shepherd is *also a lamb*: "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before its shearers is speechless, so He opens not His mouth . . ." (53:7). Is this not amazing: all the saving events carefully narrated in the New Testament are foreshadowed in detail in Old Testament prophecy.

Even the very place of the birth of this shepherd-king and sacrificial lamb is foretold (Micah 5:2):

*But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah,
Though thou be little among the thousands of Judah,
Yet out of thee shall come forth unto Me
He that is to be ruler in Israel,
Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*

The original question: why the shepherds? These simple and humble laborers are fully in the tradition of God's chosen. And now they become little

icons of the Good Shepherd before Whom they stand in awe in the cave in Bethlehem. The shepherd who carries out his duties conscientiously, cares for the sheep, feeds them, waters them, and protects them from thieves and wild animals. He gathers them, and when one wanders away he goes to retrieve it. "And if it so be that he finds it, truly . . . he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety-nine that went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father in Heaven that one of these little ones should perish" (Matt 18:13-14). And more than that, the shepherd is faithful to his sheep, even to the point of laying

The idea of the shepherd is so deeply significant, that in the New Israel, the Church, it was applied to the leaders of the new communities. "You were as sheep going astray, but now are returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (1 Peter 2:25).

down his life for them. Our Lord says, "I am the Good Shepherd; the Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep" (John 10:11).

Such a rapport is established between a shepherd and his sheep that they know his voice, distinguishing it from others and following his directions. They follow him in complete confidence. And as he is faithful to them, they in return are faithful to him. Is this not the perfect image of God and man in the most harmonious and fruitful relationship!

The idea of the shepherd is so deeply significant, that in the New Israel, the Church, it was applied to the leaders of the new communities. "You were as sheep going astray, but now are returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (1 Peter 2:25). The Apostle Peter

was commanded by Christ — after asking him three times to affirm his love — to "feed My sheep" (John 21:15-17). Church leaders ever since, from patriarchs to local parish priests, have been called "pastors," originally a Latin term which means precisely "shepherds." In the Acts of the Apostles we read, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you Bishops, to shepherd the Church of God which He has purchased with His own blood" (20:28) — the advice of Apostle Paul. And Peter again, speaking to a group of priests exhorts them to "shepherd the flock of God . . . not by constraint but willingly, . . . neither being lords over God's heritage, but examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, you will receive a crown of glory that fades not away" (1 Peter 5:1-4).

Finally, the image of shepherd and sheep extends even to the end of time, to the gathering of all nations at the Final Judgment. Here the Son of Man (the Lamb and Shepherd) will separate the people "one from another as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats." The sheep are set on His right hand, but the goats on the left; those on the right inheriting the Kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. They are granted life eternal (Matt. 25:31-34).

Perhaps we can add one more observation. At the very beginning, in Genesis, when the sons of Adam presented their sacrifices to God, Abel, the younger son, was a keeper of sheep and offered the firstling of his flock. The older son, Cain, brought a grain offering, the "fruit of the ground." God accepted the sacrifice of Abel, but He rejected that of Cain; He accepted the lamb but not the grain. This scene became the occasion of the first homicide, as Cain in jealousy slew his brother. The puzzling question is: why did God not accept both? He seems arbitrary and grossly unfair here. The answer is in the symbolism: God accepts the sacrificial lamb as a foreshadowing of the ultimate sacrifice: the Lamb of God Who on the Cross takes away the sin of the world. He and He alone could atone for the sins of all humanity and open again the gates of Paradise.

—Archpriest Theodore Heckman

“Sobornost”: The Nature of the Orthodox Church

Delivered at St. Tikhon's Seminary Oct. 2, 2001, as the keynote lecture in the 2001 fall lecture series.

When we are talk about the Church as a working together of the body of Christ, basically what we are talking about is the analogy that St. Paul uses of the members of the Church individually and personally working together as a living organism, as a living entity that is under the headship Christ. The very nature of our Church is that working together. It's just not a platitude; it's just not a theological idea. The very nature of that Church is what we call in Russian *sobornost*. *Sobornost* is derived from the Russian verb *soborat'*, which means to gather, to assemble — a state of being united. And so, the root for the word *sobor*, which can mean either “council” or “church,” is the base of this concept.

Sobornost is the state of being together. We might say in English “togetherness.” Now, you know the Creed. When you used to recite it in Slavonic, when you came to “one holy, catholic and apostolic church” it's *sobornaya* in Slavonic. That's how Cyril and Methodius translated it. So we're going to have to understand exactly what that means. Bulgakov tells us that to believe in a *soborny* church is to believe in a catholic church in the original sense of the word.

You remember that in the original days of the Church, the Church was not a worldwide organization. It was a tiny gathering of people in Jerusalem. It was

the Lord, and His apostles, and His disciples and the other believers of the faith. And so, it's a Church that assembles and unites. It has something in common: a belief in the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit, besides God the Father, in what makes us Christian. It's to believe in a conciliar Church, a Church that is, in the sense that Orthodoxy gives to that term, a Church of the councils — because it's the council that unites us. We'll talk about that later. Now to translate *sobornost* into a single word, Bulgakov uses the French word *conciliarité*. In English what we mean is: a harmony, a unanimity, that we work together, that we think together, that we are together.

Now, most of us think of “catholic,” besides the notion of Roman Catholic, we think of catholic as meaning ecumenical, worldwide, universal, and that's really the notion that took hold in the western church. But in the east that quantitative sense of catholic doesn't take hold. Florovsky tells us that the catholicity of the Church is not quantitative, it's not geographical, it doesn't depend on the worldwide dispersion of people. The universality of the Church is the *consequence*, the manifestation, not the *cause* or the foundation of catholicity. The Church was catholic even when the Christian communities were but solitary rare islands in a sea of unbelief and paganism. The Church will remain catholic even to the end of time, when the mystery of falling away will be revealed and when the Church once more will dwindle to a small flock. So for us



Archbishop introduces 31st lecture series

“catholic” doesn't mean simply a sense of universal, it has a deeper richer meaning. It implies the ideal fullness, from the Greek “on the whole.” That's what St. Ignatius meant when he talked about the *catholic church* — wherever Christ is there is the fullness of His indivisible body. This is the reason why “catholic” was later used to describe the true Church, the Church in its fullness; as opposed to a schismatic or heretical group that refused the fullness of the apostolic doctrine, the integrity of the life in Christ. So the catholicity of the Church

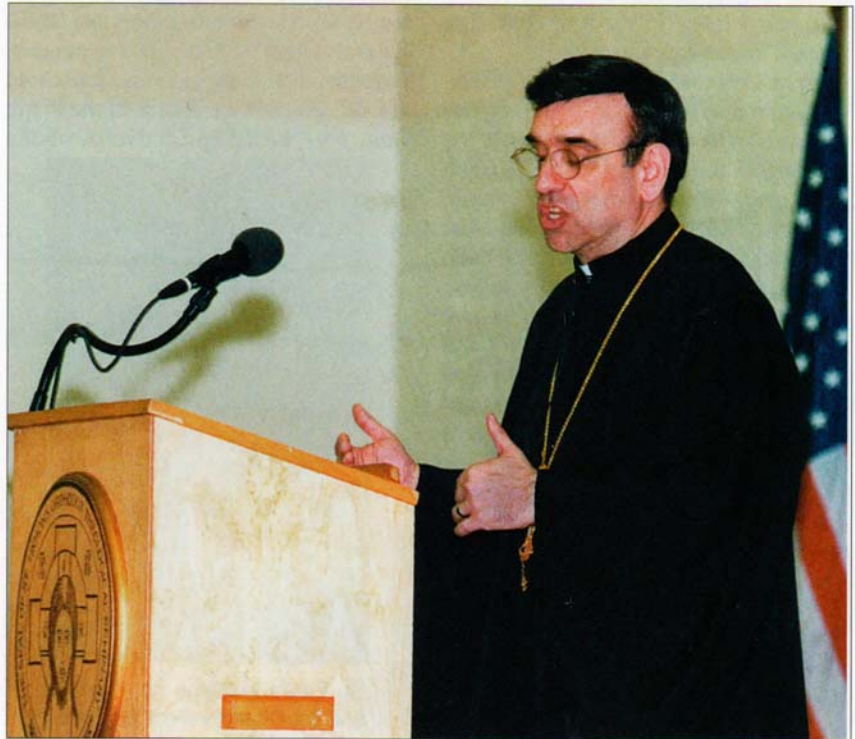
is a doctrinal cosmic moral universality, not a geographical one.

For Orthodoxy conciliarity is the only way, the only form of the Church. With individuals there is always a tendency for variety of thought and expression, and that's good. But the variety of expression should not lead to separation of members; it shouldn't lead to distancing from one another, not speaking to one another, leaving one another. In the Church the variety should flow from love; and in the *sobornost* of the Church the one body and one spirit is what we want to come to. We do that in council, the common work of the Church, the common work of theology. It's a continual exchange of ideas, of conciliation, of coming together of minds, of hearts, of souls, of faith. Meyendorff tells us that nothing in the Church is individual; everything is done in common. Nothing is purely natural and human, but everything is sacramental. That is why doctrinal issues are settled in accordance with the common mind of the Church, it's sealed by the sacramental teaching office of the bishops, who meet themselves in council to rule on appropriate matters.

Now conciliation can exist outside of regular councils. Nevertheless the assemblies, the synods of the Church, the councils of the Church — in the real sense of the word — are the most natural and the most direct means of bringing people together to share the faith, to work together, to be the Church. Councils have been taking place since the very first council of the Church in 49 AD in Jerusalem. They are a tangible expression of the spirit of *sobornost* and its realization. Now we must say a word about this: where we live in America where there has been, as His Eminence said, a non-Orthodox understanding of God and non-Orthodox expression of the faith in God. We live in a country of religious indifferentism. We talked about this before, you've heard it said before "Well, there's only one God, it doesn't make any difference." Well, there is only one God, and that's true. But the true God needs to be worshipped in a correct way, and needs to be believed about in a true way — the way that His Son has revealed Him to the world, and the way the Holy Spirit has guided us in accepting, understanding, and sharing that truth. And so Orthodoxy not only sees itself as catholic, but it sees itself as *the* Catholic

Church. Father Thomas Hopko says in confessing itself to be the one, holy, catholic church of God, the Orthodox Church identifies itself with the one catholic Church in history and claims that there is an absolute identity with that one catholic Church, from the time of the apostles to the very day. The Orthodox Church identifies the catholic Church in history as the apostolic Church which is witnessed to in the canonical

Church tries to be as close an image as possible to an image of the Trinity, which is a communion of persons in heaven, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit working together in creation, in salvation, in the process of making us holy even to this very day. Metropolitan Maximos once wrote that the Church is an image of the Holy Trinity, and the sacrament of Trinitarian life, the presence of the life of the Holy Trinity in this



Father Michael Dahulich

testament scriptures, the Church of the seven ecumenical councils, and the Orthodox Church of the east, which continues to exist today in separation from the western churches of Rome and of the reformation. Only in this Church do the Orthodox recognize the absolute identity and complete unbroken continuity of the catholic faith, the life of the one Church of Christ.

Now we've talked about already *sobornost* as a council, as conciliarity. What does that mean? Well, in the teaching of the Church about itself, the image that we want you to picture is the Trinity, because the Church as a gathering people of God is a communion and a continuity of persons called by God to be His own people and an epiphany and a presence of His kingdom on earth. That kingdom on earth is an image. The

world. As a reflection of the Trinity, the Church is unity and a community of persons, in which unity and diversity are preserved, as they are in the three persons of the triune God. The Holy Trinity is a *council*, a unity of three divine persons who live in communion with one another, and thus conciliarity is inherent in the Church, since the Church is also a council, an image and reflection of the council of the Holy Trinity. And so, like the Holy Trinity, the Church is a communion of persons, equal and identical in nature and value. The three persons of the Trinity are divine persons; they share the divine nature. We're human persons, sharing human nature. Each person in the Church has his or her own individual mode of existence, vocation and duty to fulfill. Like the Trinity, there

Continued on the next page

“Sobornost”

Continued from page 9

is a hierarchical structure to this communion, an order and a form. In and through this hierarchical structure the one body of Christ, the Church, realizes in itself its thoughts, its words, its deeds — with one mind, one heart, one soul and one voice. If you flip to the very last page of the handout sheets, you’ll see some drawings there of two triangles. It’s a simple way of talking about the Trinity as three persons in the one God. The Church imitates that.

It reflects that. It’s the image of that. It’s a community of persons working together, equally important, sharing in the working of the body of Christ. Bishop John, who ordained me, used to explain it to little kids this way. He said the Church is like a three-legged stool. Each leg has got to be equal, and if you lose one leg, what happens? It doesn’t stand. Each leg is as important as the other, and together they do what they’re supposed to do. And so, this is what we want to convey, this notion of the Church as a council, and image of the Trinity. Now besides the common divine nature, what unites the Trinity — and this is important from the beginning — is their love. The Father loves the Son, the Son loves the Spirit, the Father loves the Spirit, the Son loves the Father, the Spirit loves the Son, the Spirit loves the Father. There’s an exchange of love that is operating in the Holy Trinity, and that’s what has to be operating in the Church. A communion of love, a unity of love, that’s what brings us together and enables us to work together. It’s like in a well-oiled car. If you don’t put that lubrication in the car, it’s not going to work. Well, if we don’t have that love, we’re not going to work like the Trinity.

In the hierarchy of the Trinity the Father is the Godhead. In the Church there is a hierarchical communion, in that in every community of believers — in a patriarchate, in a diocese, in a parish, in a family (which is a mini-church in the home) — there is one who oversees, who is the head and, like God Himself, is called father. So, in your home, if everyone is there, the head of the household is the father, and in a parish it’s a father, and in a diocese it’s a father, in a patriarchate it’s a father. It’s an imitation of the Trinity. And so, that head of the church community is a type, a figure of

the Father. That’s the reason for the title. In the words of St. Paul to the church of Ephesus, “I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every fatherhood in Heaven and on earth is named.” Even in the country, we call George Washington the father of this country, so we have that kind of notion even here, we bring it over from ideas that have come from the old world. Father Hopko tells us that the members of the church community, the diocese, the parish, the home, the monastery, are fathers and mothers and brothers and sisters and sons and daughters. Together they constitute the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the “pillar and bulwark of the



St. Paul’s teaching on marriage and the Church reflect the Trinity

truth,” as it is referred to in Timothy 3:15. Each has his or her own being, calling, mission, task, duty to perform. This can be accomplished and fulfilled only in obedience to the other and in obedience to all for the sake of Christ, in gratitude and love. None lords it over the other, none has a prestige or privilege which is not the possession of all. Each one is a servant of the other to the glory of God and for the common good. Each is a willing slave for the salvation of the neighbor.

Now you know in a marriage, in the home, where you have a father, and a mother and children, there’s a hierarchy there, but everyone is equally important, and everyone is working for the other. Everyone is not only working materially, to provide food and clothing and warmth and education and finances, but for spiritual things, for the mutual salvation of

one another. The husband and the wife have become one in Christ to help each other in the journey of the road to salvation. They have to help their children. Sometimes, in the end of life, the children have to help the parents and hopefully that’s what happens. That love that bound the family from the beginning continues to bind the family. We do that in the Church, it’s the same thing in the Church, if we’re functionally correctly. So then patterned after the model of the Trinity. The nature of the hierarchical conciliarity of the Church is this: the bishop is the head of the local church, the diocese. And because, as the Church grew, bishops couldn’t be in more than one place at one time, priests are their delegates. The priest is the father of that parish, unless the bishop comes and then the bishop takes his place. So the priest is the head of the local parish. Nothing is done on either level without the head, and St. Ignatius tells us. On the other hand no bishop in his diocese, no priest in his local parish, does anything in isolation from his brothers in the episcopate or in the priesthood, or in isolation from the people. And the people do nothing without their leaders and without each other, just as the Father does nothing without the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Son nothing without the Father and the Spirit, and the Spirit nothing without the Father and the Son. This is the notion of how we work in love.

Now you might say that this principle of hierarchy implies the idea of obedience, and it does. But not subordination. The Son is always obedient to the Father, even to the point of dying on the cross. He was obedient to the plan that the Father had for salvation. But in saying that He obeyed the Father, we don’t say that He was subordinated. They are still equal persons, they are still united in love, they still work together. So obedience is not subordination. Relationships are not a matter of power or submission. What obedience really is is a recognition of the order of the personal gifts and charisms of each member of the Church, just as it is in the Trinity. The Father created us, but He created us with the cooperation of the Son and the Spirit. And the Son, Jesus, saved us by dying on the Cross in cooperation with the Father and the Spirit. And the Spirit who sanctifies us, who leads us, who gives us life (at the beginning of everything

we pray "O Heavenly King") is working with the Father and the Son. So, it's the same thing in the Church. If we recognize the personal gifts that a bishop has, that priests have, that laypersons have, and we utilize those gifts together in love, then we're working like an image of the Trinity.

It's the same thing in a marriage. Today, a lot of people — especially if we have individuals who are not familiar with our Church — don't understand why in the marriage service we read the epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians, because it's so offensive. It talks about

life, but that genuine, authentic communion in decision-making actually occurs. That we're one, in love for God, in love for the Church, and whatever perspectives we have, whatever talents we have, we join them in making the decisions happen. It means that all members of the body, the ordained and the unordained fathers, with the mothers and the brothers and the sisters, sit down in one place at one time to come to common decisions which are realized in common actions. To use the words of the apostolic Church recorded in the book of Acts: it seemed good to the apostles and the presbyters



wives obeying their husbands. Well, what does it say: Wives obey your husbands, as the Church obeys Christ. And husbands be willing to lay down your life for your wife, as Christ laid down His life for the Church. See, if you leave that out it seems like an unfair relationship. But, when you read St. Paul in the fullness of his understanding, it's a relationship not of submission, not of power, but of being willing to serve the other, willing to give for the other, willing to be obedient to the point of living or dying for the people that you love, for the person that you love. In this way, then, the Church is truly an image of the Trinity, and a gift of Trinitarian life, as Father Schmemmann mentions. The Church is not an autocratic institution where despots rule over their subjects by some divine right, or subjugate them to pray and pay and obey.

On the other hand, the Church is not a pure democracy where all the power belongs to the people and we have congregationalism and the community leaders are just employees. That's not *sobornost*. That's not an image of the Trinity. *Sobornost* means, according to Father Hopko, not only input and feedback operating at all levels of churchly

and the whole church, "seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." That's how the Church is supposed to work.

Now theologians looking back in history will say that this really existed in the Church from the very beginning. In the scripture we know that Jesus established a Church that consisted of clergy and faithful. There were twelve specially selected, trained apostles, from the disciples of the Lord, the other followers. In these they see the earliest forms of what we call the bishops, clergy, and laity. Together they labor, united in the Christian community to spread the gospel, to handle the affairs of the Church under the supervision of the bishops, who were the successors of the apostles. We see the participation of the lay person right from the beginning with the clergy in chapter one of the *Acts of the Apostles*. There was a meeting of some hundred and twenty people to select the successor to Judas, who had who had betrayed the Lord and lost his apostleship. Two candidates were selected; Matthias by lot became the apostle. But the whole Church gathered. Acts 6 records another meeting of the Church. The apostles explained to the gathered multitude they needed help in

carrying out the work of the Church. And the assembly chose seven men. The apostles proceeded to ordain the first deacons by prayer and the laying on of hands.

To be continued . . .

—Archpriest Michael Dahulich

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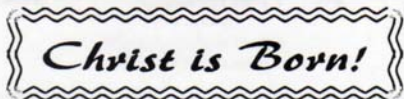
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Daily Devotions

JANUARY

1. Col. 2:8-12 (Circumcision) Luke 2:20-21, 40-52 (Circumcision)
- 2 Tim 4:5-8 (Sun. before) Mark 1:1-8 (Sun. bef. Theophany)
2. James 1:1-18 Mark 12:28-37
3. James 1:19-27 Mark 12:38-44
4. Rom. 6:3-11 Mark 1:1-8
5. 1 Tim. 3:14-14:5 (Sat bef.) Matt. 3:1-11 (Sat bef. Theophany)
- Col. 1:3-6 Luke 18:2-8
6. Titus 2:11-14, 3:4-7 Matt. 3:13-17
- 1 Cor 10:1-4 (Bless. waters) Mark 1:9-11 (Blessing of waters)
7. James 2:14-26 Luke 17:20-25
- Acts 19:1-8 (St. John) John 1:29-34 (St. John)
8. James 3:1-10 Luke 17:26-37
9. James 3:11-4:6 Luke 18:15-17, 26-30
10. James 4:7-5:9 Luke 18:31-34
11. 1 Pet. 1:1-2, 10-12; 2:6-10 Luke 19:12-28
12. Eph. 6:10-17 (Sat. after) Matt 4:1-11 (Sat. after Theophany)
- 1 Thess. 5:14-23 Luke 16:10-15
13. Eph. 4:7-13 (Sun. after) Matt. 4:12-17 (Sun after Theophany)
14. 2 Tim. 2:20-26 Luke 19:37-44
15. 2 Tim. 3:16-4:4 Luke 19:45-48
16. 2 Tim. 4:9-22 Luke 20:1-8
17. Titus 1:5-2:1 Luke 20:9-18
18. Titus 1:15-2:10 Luke 20:19-26
19. Eph. 1:16-23 Mark 10:23-32
20. Col. 1:12-18 Luke 18:35-43
21. Heb. 3:5-11; 3:17-19 Luke 20:27-44
22. Heb. 4:1-13 Luke 21:12-19
23. Heb. 5:11-6:8 Luke 21:5-7, 10-11, 20-24
24. Heb. 7:1-6 Luke 21:28-33
25. Heb. 7:18-25 Luke 21:37-22:8
26. Eph. 2:11-13 Luke 13:18-29
27. Col. 3:4-11 Matt. 22:35-46
28. Heb. 8:7-13 Mark 8:11-21
29. Heb. 9:8-10; 9:15-23 Mark 8:22-26
30. Heb. 10:1-18 Mark 8:30-34
31. Heb. 10:35-11:7 Mark 9:10-16

FEBRUARY

1. Heb. 11:8, 11-16 Mark 9:33-41
2. Heb. 7:7-17 Luke 2:22-40
3. Col. 3:12-16 Matt. 25:14-30
4. Heb. 11:17-23, 27-31 Mark 9:42-10:1
5. Heb. 12:25-26, 13:22-25 Mark 10:2-12
6. James 1:1-18 Mark 10:11-16
7. James 1:19-27 Mark 10:17-27
8. James 2:1-13 Mark 10:23-32
9. Col. 1:1-2, 7-11 Luke 16:10-15
10. 1 Tim. 1:15-17 Matt. 15:21-28
11. James 2:14-26 Mark 10:46-52
12. James 3:1-10 Mark 11:11-23
13. James 3:11-4:6 Mark 11:22-26
14. James 4:7-5:9 Mark 11:27-33
15. 1 Pet. 1:1-2, 10-12, 2:6-10 Mark 12:1-12
16. 1 Thess. 5:14-23 Luke 17:3-10
17. 1 Tim. 4:9-15 Luke 19:1-10
18. 1 Pet. 2:21-3:9 Mark 12:13-17
19. 1 Pet. 3:10-22 Mark 12:18-27
20. 1 Pet. 4:1-11 Mark 12:28-37
21. 1 Pet. 4:12-5:5 Mark 12:38-44
22. 2 Pet. 1:1-10 Mark 13:1-8
23. 2 Tim. 2:11-19 Luke 18:2-8
24. 2 Tim. 3:10-15 Luke 18:10-14
25. 2 Pet. 1:20-2:9 Mark 13:9-13
26. 2 Pet. 2:9-22 Mark 13:14-23
27. 2 Pet. 3:1-18 Mark 13:24-31
28. 1 John 1:8-2:6 Mark 13:31-14:2

MARCH

1. 1 John 2:7-17 Mark 14:3-9
2. 2 Tim. 3:1-9 Luke 20:46-21:4
3. 1 Cor. 6:12-20 Luke 15:11-32
4. 1 John 2:18-3:10 Mark 11:1-11
5. 1 John 3:11-20 Mark 14:10-42
6. 1 John 3:21-4:6 Mark 14:43-15:1
7. 1 John 4:20-5:21 Mark 15:1-15
8. 2 John 1:1-13 Mark 15:22, 25, 33-41
9. 1 Cor. 10:23-28 Luke 21:8-9, 25-27, 33-36
- Heb. 12:1-10 (Martyrs) Matt. 20:1-16 (Martyrs)
10. 1 Cor. 8:8-9:2 Matt. 25:31-46
11. 3 John 1:1-14 Luke 19:29-40, 22:7-39
12. Jude 1:1-10 Luke 22:39-42, 45-23:1
13. Joel 2:12-26 Joel 3:12-21
14. Jude 1:11-25 Luke 23:2-34, 44-56
15. Zechariah 8:7-17 Zechariah 8:19-23
16. Rom. 14:19-26 Matt. 6:1-13
17. Rom. 13:11-14:4 Matt. 6:14-21
18. Genesis 1:1-13 Proverbs 1:1-20
19. Genesis 1:14-23 Proverbs 1:20-33
20. Genesis 1:24-2:3 Proverbs 2:1-22
21. Genesis 2:4-19 Proverbs 3:1-18
22. Genesis 2:20-3:20 Proverbs 3:19-34
23. Heb. 1:1-12 Mark 2:23-3:5
24. Heb. 11:24-26, 32-12:2 John 1:43-51
25. Heb. 2:11-18 (Annunciation) Luke 1:24-38 (Annunciation)
26. Genesis 3:21-4:15 Proverbs 3:34-4:22, 5:1-15
27. Genesis 4:16-26 Proverbs 5:15-6:4
28. Genesis 5:1-24 Proverbs 6:3-20
29. Genesis 5:32-6:8 Proverbs 6:20-7:1
30. Heb. 3:12-16 Mark 1:35-44
31. Heb. 1:10-2:3 Mark 2:1-12

APRIL

1. Genesis 6:9-22 Proverbs 8:1-21
2. Genesis 7:1-5 Proverbs 8:32-9:11
3. Genesis 7:6-9 Proverbs 9:12-18
4. Genesis 7:11-8:3 Proverbs 10:1-22
5. Genesis 8:4-22 Proverbs 10:31-11:2
6. Heb. 10:32-38 Mark 2:14-17
7. Heb. 4:14-5:6 Mark 8:34-9:1
8. Genesis 8:21-9:7 Proverbs 11:19-12:6
9. Genesis 9:8-17 Proverbs 12:8-22
10. Genesis 9:18-10:1 Proverbs 12:23-13:9
11. Genesis 10:32-11:9 Proverbs 13:19-14:6
12. Genesis 12:1-7 Proverbs 14:15-26
13. Heb. 6:9-12 Mark 7:31-37
14. Heb. 6:13-20 Mark 9:17-31
15. Genesis 13:12-18 Proverbs 14:27-15:4
16. Genesis 15:1-15 Proverbs 15:7-19
17. Genesis 17:1-9 Proverbs 15:20-16:9
18. Genesis 18:20-33 Proverbs 16:17-17:17
19. Genesis 22:1-18 Proverbs 17:17-18:5
20. Heb. 9:24-28 Mark 8:27-31
21. Heb. 9:11-14 Mark 10:32-45
22. Genesis 27:1-42 Proverbs 19:16-25
23. Genesis 31:3-16 Proverbs 21:3-21
24. Genesis 43:26-32; 45:1-16 Proverbs 21:23-22:4
25. Genesis 46:1-7 Proverbs 23:15-24:5
26. Genesis 49:33-50:26 Proverbs 31:8-31
27. Heb. 12:28-13:8 John 11:1-45
28. Phil. 4:4-9 John 12:1-18
29. Exodus 1:1-20 Job 1:1-12 Matt. 24:3-35
30. Exodus 2:5-10 Job 1:13-22 Matt. 24:36-26:2



The Priest: A Spiritual Father to his Flock

Delivered at St. Tikhon's Seminary Oct. 2, 2001, as the third lecture in the 2001 fall lecture series.

It is a pleasure and privilege to be with you this autumn. This season is a time for school, for lessons, for fall sporting events, for new TV shows, for off-Broadway plays, for gathering the harvest and homecoming. Somehow, those themes imbued my reflections on being with you today.

Autumn's Magic Circle

Driving from Boston, I reflect upon the many connections between the Albanian Orthodox Church and this oldest and most venerable of theological schools and spiritual centers in our land. It is a kind of homecoming and a magic circle.

His Eminence, Archbishop HERMAN — when he had oversight for a time of the Diocese of New England — visited our cathedral in Boston for worship and we all harbor fond memories of those occasions. One of our kids told me at the time: “He reminds me of a favorite teacher I once had. He was kinda strict, but I liked him a lot.”

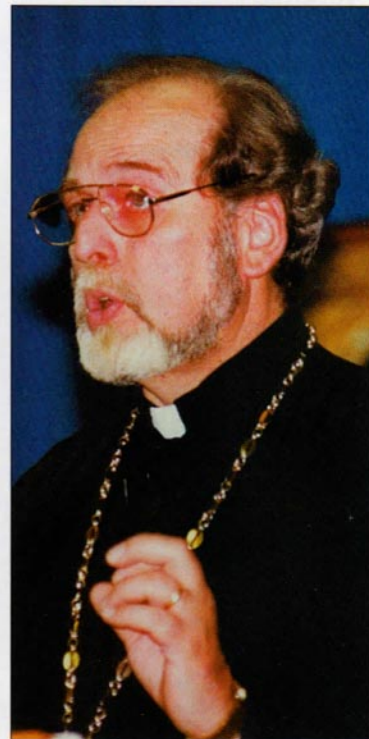
Your capable dean, Fr. Alexander Golubov once served as choral master at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Boston and was guest speaker at our diocesan assembly a few years back in a remarkable address. One of your faculty and local pastors, Fr. Eugene Vansuch once served devotedly in two of our parishes with distinction and his stalwart sons were born there. His ministry is still recalled with affection and my respect is enduring. Most of all, we miss Matushka Fran

and her sisterly demeanor. She gave my own wife an outstanding recipe for poppy seed bread, which is still my unrivaled favorite. Ask her for some; you'll love it! The original recipe calls for sour cream — a Russian staple; but being Albanian we use yogurt instead! Here is an important lesson for pastors: take care of your spouse: she is often a very special link with your flock. Sometimes your flock may even prefer to ask her questions first, before coming to you!

Lessons and Connections

Other of your bishops and priests also provide interesting links both with our faithful folks in the Albanian Archdiocese and with the theme of spiritual fatherhood. Two of them, in fact, are now saints of our Church: one a bishop and the other a priest. Foremost among them, of course, was the Sainted Bishop RAPHAEL (Hawaweeny), who was canonized right here in South Canaan and whose relics it is our blessing to venerate. He had ordained our own Metropolitan THEOPHAN (Noli) as a deacon, back in 1908, to whom our epistle lectionary is dedicated. Those two hierarchs symbolize for me their role as leaders of their respective ethnic heritage — one being Arabic and the other Albanian. Yet they were men who laid the groundwork and retained the crucial vision for a unified American Church on this continent. They knew very well from scripture that: “Without a vision, the people perish.” For the parish priest and spiritual father: it is an important lesson to keep foremost in mind.

Then there is Metropolitan PLATON



Father Arthur Liolin

(Rozhdestvensky) who ordained many of our first Albanian-American clergy and my own predecessors in Boston. Our first gospel lectionary in English was dedicated to his memory. Another who was most helpful to then Fr. Theofan Noli was an archpriest, recently canonized through his martyrdom in Russia: St. Alexander Hotovitsky. Back in 1908 in New York, he had taken Fr. Noli into the crypt of St. Nicholas Cathedral in New York and said, “Go in and take what you need” — since the poor Albanian priest had no vestments, no chalice, nothing. As a new missionary, Noli even had to translate the liturgy from Greek for his first liturgy in Boston. But at least he was given what he needed from a future saint! And when his parish was being formed — the one I now serve — another of your

Continued on the next page

The Priest

Continued from page 13

esteemed brothers, Fr. Dhimitri Grigorieff, then in Salem, came and helped organize our first choirs: in Boston, then in Natick, in Worcester and in Southbridge. More lessons for us: help, share and assist all missions. For as the Lord charges: "To whom much is given, much is expected."

The blessed remains of Metropolitan LEONTY (Turkevich) lie not far from here, behind the apse of the temple. I have wonderful memories of him when I was a teenage American Orthodox activist. Back in the late 1950s, as SCOBA was being formed, my brother, Nick — also now a priest — and I were intent on meeting him. We told our father, "Would you drive us to meet Metropolitan LEONTY. I need to register a complaint." After an initial questioning look, our Dad said: "C'mon let's go; all they can do is shut the door in our face." So we drove, unannounced, to

his home and — lo and behold — he received us warmly. I'll never forget it: here was a 16-year-old loudmouthed teen and his pious brother being received by a venerable Archbishop, who welcomed us unannounced. Another good lesson for spiritual fathers: be accessible to listen and hear ideas from anyone. As in the Epistle of James 1:19: "Be quick to listen, careful to speak and slow to anger." You just never know. Later at Princeton, I studied chemistry with his son, Professor John Turkevich, who was later ordained a priest after we founded the OCF at the university.

But this magic circle includes others as well. I remember with great affection a fine hieromonk from St. Tikhon's, Fr. Roman Serdynsky, who had helped out at one of our Philadelphia parishes. More than that, when in the late 1960s our diocese was undergoing certain doldrums and controversies, his quiet example and objective advice persuaded many to reconcile their legitimate complaints with

a broader vision of church unity. As in Timothy 2:23, he would avoid "stupid arguments, because they only produced quarrels." Although Fr. Roman suffered with dialysis, eventually reposed and is interred here, he had never ceased to give courage and counsel to those physically healthier than he, myself included. Even in sickness, he made a difference. Following Corinthians 4:16-17, he "never lost heart," for though "outwardly we waste away, we are being renewed day by day . . . and momentary troubles



achieve eternal glory which outweigh them all." Another couple of lessons for us pastors: a) where there is dissension, foster unity and harmony; and b) even if you must suffer temporally in your own body or mind, accomplish the Lord's eternal work with joy and gladness of heart.

The priest: "A Spiritual Father to His Faithful Flock"

When invited to speak to you on this subject, I was given explicit directions on this topic. Let me restate the theme: "As a representative of the bishop to his parish, the priest is the pastor of his flock; he watches over his fold, caring for their spiritual needs, feeding them the soul-nurturing sacraments and guiding them in their pilgrimage toward their ultimate goal: the Kingdom of Heaven."

The Game Plan

Now this is a very clear-cut and noble concept. It is kind of a "game plan," or

the script of a play. Indeed, in Acts 20:24, life in Christ is described as a "race." It is what each of us as seminarians and priests aspires to do — and be. In many ways, it has just as much to do with the lay men and women among us, since it is from the laity that future clergy are drawn and, after all is said and done, they constitute our flock. Furthermore, it has become an accepted norm that not only does the local shepherd guide his flock, but our parishioners — being "reasoned sheep" and valued as a "royal priesthood" — contribute much to one's priestly formation: before, during and after ordination. It is a very special and sacred relationship — that between pastor and flock — which is beautiful in God's sight. For me, it is a task and a thrill, a duty and indescribable fun. It is both a privilege and a joy . . . most of the time. Like the cross we bear, it may also require sacrifice and frustrations; and as every athlete knows: "no pain, no gain."

Permit me to address our theme in two parts. Some of it is a little controversial and I hope that His Eminence will not scold me too much afterwards; I ask his indulgence beforehand, sincerely. And I thank him in advance for his forbearance, since he knows where the heart is.

In Part 1, the first half, I wish to explore with you some of the implicit areas which are directed by this theme; and in Part 2, I would like to share some actual priestly portraits. Part 1 is about theory, Part 2 about reality. Part 1 is about our pastoral intentions and goals; Part 2 is about how it has played out for some of us. To mix metaphors, it is kind of a "Play in 3 Acts," and you will provide the content of the third act. OK, let's play!

Part I: The Praying Field

Driving here through Pennsylvania in October, I am reminded of the rolling hills and farms which grace the region and also of football, soccer and the many sports which take place in this common-

wealth. Every game has a defined playing field, a clearly marked surface with rules of engagement and most of all with participants who play, who referee, who coach, who cheer and who watch. There are even those who sell kielbasa and perogis at half-time. On a pastoral level, we too have our "praying field," with those who participate actively, those who guide the outcome, those who encourage us and even those who just sit on the sidelines. Our praying field, however, extends beyond a stadium.

A pastor without people is like a quarterback with no linemen. Or, to continue our images: he is like a farmer with no field to cultivate, a playwright with no actors, a sower with no earth in which to plant the Gospel's seed, or a waterwheel with no stream to channel the Holy Spirit's grace. It is like the score of a symphony with no instruments or a libretto with no voices to embody the sounds of our spiritual lives. Just as he is sent as emissary by his bishop, a shepherd must have a place to go and a flock to serve. Indeed, the principle of serving God, fulfilling his bishop's directions and nourishing the spiritual needs of *others* is his primary purpose and reason for existence.

I emphasize these images with intent, because there is too often a temptation among priests and future priests, however unwittingly and unintentionally, to regard their vocation as a personal "career," the fulfillment of individual potentials and specific ambitions, or a vehicle to actualize his own unique interests and special skills. While our vocation may include those elements, certainly what we do as shepherds is not that alone, and we must guard against forms of isolation from our pastoral destiny as parish priests.

As John Donne wrote: "No man is an island . . ." and it is an implicit aspect of a priest's expected role to serve and to link people in the Eucharist, join them each and every day to one another, to their parish, diocese, the Church as a whole and ultimately to Christ and communal salvation with all others. We must never lose sight of our being set aside *by* another and *for* others. The phrase in the liturgy: "On behalf of all and for all," aside from its theological meaning, is also an implied command on those of us who are privileged to proclaim it. It is a reminder that our ordination constitutes

our own "Declaration of Dependence." There is no getting around that basic and inherent nature of our work.

For this reason, when our theme suggests that the pastor tends to "his" flock, it would be more balanced and scripturally accurate to say that it is "His flock," with a capitol "H." It is the Lord's flock which we tend, not our own select group of followers. Now, let us look at our opponent on this praying field.

Our Opponent

Many clergy start out with the sincere desire to serve others and are filled with noble and good intentions. They study hard and make many personal sacrifices for God and the Orthodox faith. We get excited in choosing just the right fabric for our first vestments and we look with envy on the latest jeweled crosses. "Oh," I think, "I can't wait to be have the honor to wear that velvet skufia." Like any adolescent or young adult, we fall in love with our vocation and all that it means. It is charming, inspiring and brings delight to our spouses and honor to our parishioners. But time and earthly considerations and frustrations often have a way of eroding our ideals: the ecclesial garment we sought and justly received may even lose its luster. We try hard to recover and pray hard to retain our joy, especially after we bury a young parishioner before her time, or are pained to see a friend fall away from the faith, or we become disillusioned with a clergy hero. It takes an enormous effort to regain and season our original pastoral dreams. But if we do, we become better "pastors for HIS flock." In my experience, those types of disappointments have been redirected, healed, and helped by a confessor, a spouse, a bishop and most of all, by lay members of that very flock that I was supposed to guide. True enough, being alone is part and parcel of our actual work, but an aloof isolation ought not to be, and is destructive to our pastorate. One antidote is to turn also to your flock. For a time, and for many reasons, I found it difficult to make hospital calls; it was something I wished to avoid. However, I discovered that when I am feeling down or spiritually drained, visiting an elder at home or someone in chronic care, would actually uplift my spirits. My flock was ministering to their priest. Indeed, God is wondrous in his works.

One of the Evil One's most effective weapons in his arsenal against our priesthood is boredom, ennui, constant repetition without enthusiasm. He works on us to make us despondent and depressed, for it brings an end to all that is vibrant and joyful in our work. He just hates the title of the publication: *Alive in Christ!* Well, too bad about the devil. Just too bad. He is a wily adversary. But he can be beaten right on the praying field of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who has a subtle strategy of His own. In Romans 5:20, we are reminded that "where sin is to be found, so is Grace also working."

Our Team

Our given theme is excellent and well-worded. It tells us what the priest *ought* to do. It sets the standard, as it were, and presents us with the ideal, our goal and game plan. However, we must also look a bit at how the priest *is*. Our theme asks us to look at "how" the pastor behaves and conducts his ministry, but not *why* he may do so, and more important how this comes about. It refers to how he *appears*, but we need also to look at how he *actually* may feel. In fact, I think we need to do both. One is about tactics, the other about strategy. One is about intention, the other is about purpose. One is about deeds, the other is about love. Like the old song: "Love and Marriage . . ." you can't have one without the other.

Like every athlete is asked to keep his eye on the ball, here are some mental notes to keep in mind: The first comes as a metaphor about our armor, our uniform. In Ephesians 6:10-19 we are asked to "put on the entire armor of God . . . the sword of the Spirit (which is the word of God), the shield of faith, the breastplate of righteousness, the belt of Truth and the helmet of salvation." This is our raiment in the contest with the Evil One.

The Bishop, the Priest and the Holy Spirit

The Bishop is the goal-setter, the priest is the implementor. But the energy, impetus, inspiration and fuel for it all is bestowed through God, the Holy Spirit. He is the Comforter, the Illuminator, Sustainer, the One who channels the flow and rewards our meagre, willing efforts. He fulfills and replenishes "all that is lacking."

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The Priest

Continued from 15

The Holy Spirit is the fiery fountain for our ministry: He is the One who provides: "Grace upon Grace . . ." The parish priest is seen as one who transmits and serves to channel God The Holy Spirit's Divine Energies (Ephesians 3:7). He enables us to accomplish The Father's Will, permeates our prayer life in and through the Holy Mysteries we conduct and celebrate. This is the basic first step on our ongoing walk: the most visible function and the pastor's most tangible exercise in serving his flock. Indeed, from the beginning, we are enveloped by this Grace, like a waterfall of spiritual energy. Our bishops receive it in a most special way; the pastor holds it as well by derivation, discernment and obedience. And each believing lay person: man, woman and child partakes of it throughout the course of our earthly life.

If the parish priest is considered, observed or regarded in any way, it is most of all revealed and made known in the sacramental actions he initiates and transmits. He is accountable to his bishop for them, he safeguards and protects them, he takes great pains to see that he follows the norms passed down to him from time immemorial. Not as crusty, old artifacts or stilted encumbrances, but as expressions of a faith full of life. Not as plastic flowers of surface beauty, but as real plants: full of aroma, texture, growth and containing the seeds and the impulse to propagate. Not as acquisitions, but as gifts.

And if he is wise and ever renewed, the pastor goes about his tasks as if it were just yesterday that they were given. Isn't it refreshing whenever we meet a priest who acts just as enthused and excited as if he were recently ordained? For this reason, always "be a seminarian"; keep the fire burning in your mind and heart for knowledge and wisdom, for the delight in discovering every day some new aspect of our salvation and in unfolding yet another level of understanding the Lord's Will. Revelation is not a onetime acquisition, but an inheritance which regenerates again and again with each liturgy, each sacrament; and yes, even more so with each sinful stumble we have overcome. As in Galatians 6:8-9: "Let us sow to please the Spirit, never

weary in doing good, and thus reap a harvest if we do not give up."

The Praying Priest

"Pray for me, Father," we hear time and time again. "For my sick child, for my ailing mother, for the wholeness of my marriage, for my doubts and sins . . . for the well-being of my family, pray for me . . ." we hear asked of us. Our principal means of communication with God for our flock is through prayer, both pub-



lic and private. It is prayer which characterizes a pastor's life and role most of all. Indeed, it is the *sine qua non* and underlying link of people and priest. It envelops our personal life and imbues our sacraments and the manner with which we approach our eucharistic life. In a way it is the food by which we are nourished, the food with which we feed others and more so, the food we offer back to God for transformation. Prayer is our leaven, the real yeast in our bread. As Orthodox, we are wired for prayer; and anything in parish life that distracts us from prayer, short-circuits us from one another and from God.

Chrism and Blood: As a member of the human species, we are bound by bloodlines and family identity, by national background, by language and dialect, by regional connections, by custom, by our convictions and most of all by our beliefs. We ask our priest to honor these ties and to bless their worthy aspect. However, part of his job is to help us see beyond those things, to search and look behind them and thus to orient us to a proper and deeper relationship with our God. Most people say: "Blood is thicker than water." For the priest, however: "Chrism is thicker even than blood."

The Priest as Guide

What does a loving "Father" do? He begets, he disciplines, he sets examples,

he pioneers, he gives permission to take risks, he welcomes home, he sets rules and follows them, he provides, he protects, he seeks new knowledge of how to implement his obligation to "be all things to all people." His loving example as shepherd and guide is embodied most of all in sacrifice, which he does willingly and even with joy. Such it is and ought to be with the priest.

The models for Part One, our first

half are contained in scripture, in the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, in the Lives of the Saints and in a plethora of books: *The Diary of a Russian Priest* by Fr. Alexander Elchaninoff, is one fine example. Take a browse through the seminary bookstore and there will be plenty of such wonderful works and guides, inspiring testimonies and reflections. It is well worth it to do so.

Part II: A Mundane Hagiography: Some Alumni

Now, I would like to take you for a walk through aspects of the real world in which some clergy have had to live and carry out their ministries. Let's look together at a gallery of priest portraits, a few "alumni players." This will not be a typical hagiography, which points out their major trials and usual martyrdom. It will be a more mundane look. Martyrdoms can take different forms, and glories come much later, if at all to human eyes. Some of these portraits are about the well-known and some about the unknown. Some are eloquent, some are average. All tell our story, as the play unfolds.

Let's keep some questions in mind as I review this list, for later reflection. For example: see if you recognize aspects of your own pastor or yourself in them. Or those you have known, even if from a distance. How do you differ from

them? Do you share commonalities? Whom do you relate to or respect most? How do you pray to be? Were they perfect? Could you learn from and be blessed even by the less than perfect ones? You will have questions of your own. Let us enter this "world of the priest" together and see what we find. Maybe there's some choice morsel of wisdom to be gained. Or a lesson to be learned. Or perhaps an impediment to be avoided. Or all of the above.

I have not chosen what is thought to be the most typical of pastors, but rather the most atypical. Because this may help us more to focus on aspects which provide the cutting edge of understanding and growth. These were not impersonal people of "stained glass," but those who fought their flaws and failures while serving others. They are priestly folks who never ceased to wrestle with themselves in a search for holiness. Some may be seen as marathon men or holy mavericks, while others are priestly profiles in courage. If they are ever counted among the saints, it is precisely because they were open to the work of the Holy Spirit which enabled them to transcend and overcome impediments to salvation. Like that old TV program: they were "real people."

In scripture, there are priests whose devotion have become our principle models: Aaron the brother of Moses, whose life speaks of loyalty and of honor; and Melchizedek who "was a priest forever." But there are others in sacred history and more recent times: St. Danax of Illyria whose martyrdom in the early centuries reminds us that we may be called to witness to Christ even unto death.

Or Fr. Dhimitri Dudko, who served during great duress and personal risk, and perhaps failed at times, but who reminds us that pastors have a strong side as well as a vulnerable and weak side.

Or Fr. John of Kronstadt, who was holy and creative, who loved the simplicity of the Gospel but also relished to adorn his priesthood with beautiful things.

Or Fr. Alexander Men, whose writings and example were so gentle and soul-searching, but whose demise was so bloody and savage.

Saintly Sinners

There are so many actors in the pas-

toral play, so many athletes in this sacred sport. But let me tell you about a few I knew and who are closer to us in time and a little closer to home for me. I call them "saintly sinners." Let's see if we can derive lessons from their lives; for "there is no fear in love" (1 John 4:16-20).

Costaq Belba: An engaging man who had eight children and a loving wife. He had little formal education, but in some ways was a perpetual student and avid reader. He would often go to audit seminary courses and take us teenagers along with him. His thirst for spiritual knowledge was unquenchable. But he also had some quirks — don't you just love a priest with quirks? He liked to drive his car fast, which we kids loved. On one occasion he was driving from New York to an Archdiocesan Council in Boston. He was going so fast, the state trooper in Rhode Island stopped him. Father told me: "Now I'm going to do something; but don't you do it." He lied. He told the state trooper: "Officer, I am late for a funeral in Boston." The trooper said: "OK Father, I'll lead the way for you." Poor Fr. Costa told me: "Now see what happens. My lie will get me into more trouble." Fortunately, the state trooper stopped at the Massachusetts border and we could continue on to Boston without a chaperone. Fr. Costa said: "Well, God saved us again this time. But learn a lesson from all of this." Once he went into a seedy bar room to fetch a parishioner. I was astounded and said to him: "Father, how can you go into a place like that, being a priest?" He answered: "If you have the cross on your chest and a clear conscience, you can go anywhere." You tell me: was he a saint or a sinner?

Fr. Mihal Terova: Fr. Mihal was ordained a deacon and served his bishop for nine years before migrating to the U.S. He had studied at the seminary in the old country and knew his texts inside and out: but his sermons always spoke of real things to real people. The World War and Cold War slammed shut any contact and cut him off from his wife and family from 1938 until he died in 1986. Even letters were censored or confiscated. He did not remarry. He served two parishes. At the last one, the folks were very strong-willed. "We run this parish," they would say. The priest is just an "employee." That's the scenario.

What did he do? More important: What would *you* do?

He had a lyrical voice that would make you weep. But when serving with other priests, he would tone down his chant rather than show off. As a loner by circumstance, his humble apartment became a refuge for d.p.'s of any background. If there was someone in need, Fr. Mihal would find a place for him. He could also drink you under the table! He was a celibate by accident of history, but a convivial comfort to many. Fact is: he was much loved by all. He would take off his collar and sing folk songs at parish picnics: everyone gravitated to him. Some thought he was a man's man and Clint Eastwood type. He would go to the coffee house and play poker, win every time, and give his winnings to the poor. For this reason, we used to call him: "Father Robin Hood." (Now I wonder whether some of his cronies lost to him on purpose!) He liked the younger priests and took them out for Chinese food: *moo goo gai pan* was his favorite. You could just feel that he liked people. Eccentric that he was, he eventually persuaded his independent-minded parish to join a diocese, adopt the statute and begin some normalcy in parish life. Let's see, that took him about 25 years to accomplish. Before he died, he remarked: "I came here as your priest on a temporary basis, and I've been temporary for 30 years!" You tell me: was he a saint or a sinner?

Fr. Pandeli Checho: Fr. Pandi was a gentle soul and an idealist. He lived through great poverty and turmoil in his homeland before coming here. He had become an agnostic from all the savagery he had seen: how could God permit such terrible things to occur? Still, he had an overwhelming love for people and wanted to serve them. You know something: he was well liked, respected and even loved. So he petitioned for ordination, was accepted and ordained. He was always there when you needed him; he would buy cookies and sweets for the Sunday School kids and take the choir members out for pizza after rehearsal — which he paid for himself from his modest wages. In those days, there was no line item in the budget for such things. At services, he would do what he was taught and radiated a human warmth. Only he knew that something was

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The Priest

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missing: God. Or was He? As he read through the Gospel, chanted the tones, followed the festal hymns, the stichera, the katabasia, the anthems, the readings . . . a funny thing happened on the way to church. He was converted by the hymnography! And all this after his ordination.

Some say, as he celebrated liturgy, they saw tears well up in his eyes, behind his thick spectacles and slowly roll down his cheeks. You tell me: was he a saint or a sinner?

Fr. Sokrat Soter: He was a robust, big man with a powerful and sonorous voice that would echo through the temple

court, held up his hands and shouted: "Stop the Game." There was complete silence in the massive gymnasium. Then he appointed to the priest from the opposite bench and gestured for him to come to the middle of the court. In a thick accent he said: "If your boys want to fight, my boys will fight. If your boys want to play basketball, my boys will play basketball. Now decide!" Now you tell me, was he a saint or a sinner?

Fr. Zacharias of Himara: Fr. Zacharias Shishko lived during the difficult times of oppression behind the iron curtain. His beard was shaved to humiliate his priestly calling and he was put to work to serve the totalitarian state, laboring on a cooperative farm in the hot sun. Once he had been a devout, no-non-

conversion. Sometimes, a priestly "sermon" does not have to be excessively long. Like Alexander the Great's swift cut through the Gordian knot, an insightful few words can accomplish what tomes often cannot. But the real lesson here, for me at least, is that those few words, like the tip of an iceberg, only reveal just a little of all the underlying grounding of preparation which sponsored it. Prior to ordination, priests must study, pray and prepare for years at seminary, undergoing sacrifice of earthly gain, before they reach the point of those few poignant words and gestures. And as the saying goes: "God is in the little details." Now you tell me, was he a saint or a sinner?

On to Act III or the Post-Game Rally

All of the above shared in common: the love of Christ and His Church; a fervent desire to serve the people of God. They were true to themselves, although they had their eccentricities, frailties and sins. They also enjoyed the supervision, discipline, patience, immense forbearance and understanding of their bishop and the love and admiration of their flock. So whenever you think your bishop has an easy time of it, think of some of the priests and people he has to oversee, guide and shepherd. Hopefully, you will be one of his star players.

Now it is your turn in our three-act play, our pastoral harvest, our sacred sport. As a Monday morning quarterback, how would you evaluate these priestly portraits? What do you value most and seek in a pastor? How do you view their strengths and weaknesses. Most of all — how would you help your bishop in guiding and your parish priest in serving this magnificent Orthodox Church of ours and the wondrous people who compose it? It is a question for each of us to answer: for spiritual shepherd and for faithful flock.

As the Apostle wrote to the Colossians (3:16): "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom; and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God."

—Archpriest Arthur Liolin
Father Arthur is chancellor of the Albanian Diocese (O.C.A.) and pastor of St. George's Cathedral in Boston.



and beyond. There wasn't anything about the priesthood he didn't like. But when he was a layman, he was somewhat of a rabble-rouser, engaged in controversy and parish squabbles, causing lots of problems, especially for the bishop. He had been a leader of a rebellious group which broke away from a parish. But somehow the Holy Spirit thought it expedient to rechannel his energies and redirect his motivations. After a period of repentance, of study and of training, that same bishop he had bothered decided to ordain him a priest. Those were days I guess when it was possible to take an adversary and turn him into a friend and an ally. Well, as a priest, Fr. Sokrat was exceptional in every way. He always supported the bishop and stood up for his flock. Here's one instance. There was a basketball rivalry between St. Mary's Albanian and St. Spiridon Greek Church. It was fierce and hotly contested. At one notable championship game, he sat on the bench with the players. When the opponents got particularly rough, he went into the middle of the basketball

sense and pious priest, respected and adored by his parish in a hill town high about the Adriatic sea. Deprived of his Godly calling, he succumbed to circumstances — or did he? Typical of his villagers, he had a wry sense of humor, which he used with great effectiveness and even without fear. One day as he was walking in the town square, the local commissar — who knew him — walked by and greeted him in this way: "Good morning priest, who buries the dead." Unruffled and in quick retort, he responded: "And good morning to you, Mr. Commissar, who buries the living."

In that brief greeting, he may have given the best sermon of his life. It encapsulated by stark contrast the Gospel of Christ with the ideology of this world. Like St. Paul, he employed the method of his adversary to defeat his opponent's argument. For sure, that little exchange spread like wildfire throughout the region, so much so that even unbelievers were first amused, then brought to sincere thought about matters of faith and belief. More than a few were brought to

A Short History of Syrian Christianity

Part V (Conclusion)

From A.D. 1500 to 2000

A Survey of Syrian Christianity from 1500 to 2000

The subsequent history of the Assyrian Church of the East (i.e., the Nestorians) is a sad tale of divisiveness and unabated decline. The hereditary succession of the catholicate failed to work as intended, and it actually became the cause of the most serious division in the Assyrian Church's entire history. In 1552 a portion of the clergy challenged this nepotistic practice and elected a more popular candidate, Sulaka, as catholicos. But this schismatic group of reformers lacked the requisite three metropolitans to enthrone the new catholicos, and so they appealed to the Pope of Rome, Julius III. Consecrated by the pope himself, Sulaka became primate of the Chaldean Catholic Church, bearing the title "patriarch of Babylon." The mere issue of arranging a consecration was not the only motive for this union with Rome — for the Chaldeans discovered that their union with Rome offered the advantage of Western intercession on their behalf with the Ottoman and Safavid empires. Even the Assyrian Christians who remained Nestorian noticed the potential benefits of some form of accommodation with Rome, as they initiated abortive attempts at union with Rome from time to time. Thus, in 1607 and 1610 Bishop Elias II of Mosul sent deputations to Pope Paul IV, in which he explained his desire for a reconciliation between Rome and the Nestorians. Another approach from the Nestorian side

took place in 1657, when Elias III of Mosul expressed his readiness to unite with the Roman Catholic Church on two conditions: (i) that the pope would allow the Nestorians to have a church of their own in the city of Rome; and (ii) that they would not be required to alter their doctrine or discipline. Of course, nothing came of this offer. A few years later, Bishop Simeon of Ormus sent a confession of faith to the Pope Alexander VII to demonstrate his orthodoxy, but again nothing came of it. The main body of the Assyrian Christians continued to dwindle in isolation and poverty, while the Chaldean Catholics gained adherents at their expense. In 1681, yet another body of Assyrian Christians joined the Chaldean Catholics, when the bishop of Diyarbekir quarreled with the catholicos and turned to the pope, who elevated him to the then vacant office of "patriarch of Babylon." The arrival of Jesuit missionaries over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries further helped to consolidate the gains made by the Chaldean Catholics, as did their securing of legal recognition as a *millet* ("nation") from the Ottoman sultan. While

the Assyrian Church of the East was confronting these challenges from their Chaldean rivals, communication with their metropolitanate in Malabar became completely cut off, eventually driving the Malabarese Church to renounce Nestorianism and unite with Rome in 1599 (in 1653 about one-third separated from Rome and submitted to the jurisdiction of the Jacobite patriarch of Antioch, forming the Syrian Orthodox Church of Malabar). By the nineteenth century European missionary societies began displaying interest in the plight of the Assyrian Christians. The two most active were Church Missionary Society (Anglican) and the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society (Russian Orthodox). In 1885 the Archbishop of Canterbury, Edward White Benson, sent a mission to Qudshanis (the seat of the catholicos since the 1540s) to assist the Assyrian Church's educational and humanitarian efforts.

The Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society, founded in 1885, did not limit the scope of its activities to Palestine; rather, it established contact with Eastern-Rite Christians throughout the Near East, including the Assyrians. The activities of these British and Russian missionary societies were not entirely altruistic, but were partly intended to enhance the Near Eastern political policies of their respective governments. Thus, in the 1890s the bishop of Urmia renounced Nestorianism and joined the Russian Orthodox Church (while retaining the "Assyrian Rite"). This small community of Assyrian Christians were headed by

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1. The only conceivable way of arriving at such a high figure for the "Assyrian nation" would be by using the combined sum of all Syrian Christians, regardless of denominational affiliation.

2. This was not the first time that a bishop of Aleppo had entered into union with Rome. In 1656 Bishop Andrew Akhijan converted to Catholicism in protest to the recent reception (1653) of the formerly Nestorian "Mar Thoma Christians" of Malabar by the Jacobite patriarch of Antioch. He accepted union with Rome on the basis of the Council of Florence, at which the Jacobites (along with the Copts and Armenians) had signed the decree of union in 1442. The Monophysites' participation in the union of Florence lasted no longer than that of the Eastern Orthodox Church, but the Council of Florence's decrees of union continued to be the basis under which most Eastern Rite Catholics had entered into union with Rome. This earlier group of Syrian Catholics led a precarious existence and had virtually disappeared by 1700. Thus, the current Syrian Catholics originated with Archbishop Michael Garweh's union with Rome in 1783.

Syrian Christianity

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bishops owing allegiance to the Russian Orthodox Church until 1962, after which no further bishops were consecrated for them. Today, there only remains a single church in Tehran, Iran ministered by visiting priests affiliated with the Russian Synod Abroad. Partly because of the influence of the above mentioned missionary societies, the Assyrian Christians joined the Anglo-Russian side during the First World War and were forcibly relocated by the Turks, during which many people died from starvation, disease, and massacres (the Assyrian holocaust was no less grave than the better-known Armenian holocaust of 1915-16 which caused the deaths of about 600,000 Armenians). The Assyrians returned to their homes in Kurdistan in 1918, but many of those living in southeastern Turkey were exiled to Iraq and Syria in 1920-22. After World War I some Assyrian Christians began immigrating to the USA; these immigrants maintained their religion as best they could, but some found it easier to join Roman Catholic or Russian Orthodox congregations. In 1940 Catholicos Shimun XXIII moved his seat to Chicago and later to San Francisco, and today the Assyrian Church claims an estimated North American membership of about 10,000. In 1975 a schism occurred because of disputes over the election of a successor to Catholicos Shimun XXIII. Catholicos Dinkha IV maintains residences in Morton Grove, Illinois and Tehran, Iran with eight bishops (only two in Iraq) loyal to him and claims to be the rightful successor to Shimun XXIII. His rival, Catholicos Addai II, resides in Baghdad and has seven bishops affiliated with him. The Assyrian Church claims about 3 million adherents worldwide -- an impossibly high figure! A more probable, yet still generous, estimate of the Assyrian Church's membership would be closer to 500,000 (living mainly in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Iran, and India). The Chaldean Catholics number about 250,000 (almost entirely in Iraq); their Patriarch of Babylon resides in Mosul, Iraq.

The Jacobites suffered a drastic decline for many of the same reasons as the Nestorians. Since many lived east of the Euphrates river, the impact of the collapse of the Il-Khanate and the tyr-

anny of Tamerlane caused their numbers to plummet in the fourteenth century. Those living west of the Euphrates fell under oppressive Mameluke rule until 1517, when the Ottomans conquered the Mamelukes. They were further diminished by the establishment of the Syrian Catholic Church in 1783, when the archbishop of the important see of Aleppo, Michael Garweh, agreed to renounce Monophysite doctrine and submit to the authority of the Pope of Rome.² The Ottoman government officially recognized the Syrian Catholics as a separate entity in 1830. That, together with the talented leadership of the scholarly Patriarch

spread throughout North and South America. The Syrian Catholics count about 80,000 adherents, who are headed by a patriarch residing in Beirut, Lebanon.

The Maronites are by far the largest group of Syrian Christians. This Lebanese Christian community of former Monothelites entered into union with Rome in 1182, but trace their origins back to St. Maro, a friend of St. John Chrysostom that founded a monastery on Mount Lebanon. Enthusiastic supporters of the Crusaders, they held a dominant position in Lebanese society even during the "dark days" of Mameluke and

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عِنْدَ ٱللَّهِ . كُلُّ شَیْءٍ بِهِ كَانَ وَبِغَیْرِهِ لَمْ یَكُنْ شَیْءٌ مِّمَّا كَانَ . فِیهِ كَانَتِ ٱلْحَیْوةُ وَٱلْحَیْوةُ كَانَتِ
نُورَ ٱلنَّاسِ . وَٱلنُّورُ بَیضٌ فِی ٱلظُّلْمَةِ وَٱلظُّلْمَةُ لَمْ تَدْرِكْهُ
اِكَانَ ٱنْسَانٌ مُرْسَلٌ مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ ٱسْمُهُ یُوحَنَّا . هُنَا جَاءَ ٱلِلشَّهَادَةِ لِیَشْهَدَ ٱلنُّورِ لِكِی یُؤْمِنَ

Opening verses of John in Syriac (top) and in modern Arabic

Ignatius Ephrem II Rahmani (1898-1929), enhanced the growth of the Catholic group at the expense of the Jacobites. The submission of a relatively large segment of the Church of Malabar to the Jacobite patriarch of Antioch in 1653 ironically resulted in there being four times as many Jacobites in India than there are in the Near East. During World War I, like the Assyrians and the Armenians, many Jacobites were relocated and massacred by the Turks. Today there are about 250,000 Syrian Jacobites (i.e., not counting the over 1 million Indian Jacobites), whose patriarch is headquartered in Damascus. The Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch (i.e., the Jacobites) has 23 dioceses worldwide, including one in the USA. Most Jacobites live in Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq — though fairly large numbers are

Ottoman rule. In 1584 Pope Gregory XIII founded a Maronite college in Rome for the training of their most gifted clergy. Among the more famous alumni of that college was Joseph Simonius (1687-1768), editor of the *Bibliotheca Orientalis* (a collection of Syriac documents, especially on the history of the churches in Syria, Egypt, and Mesopotamia). His other accomplishments include editing the works of St. Ephraem the Syrian, with complete Latin and Greek translations, the *Bibliotheca Juris Orientalis Canonici et Civilis* (a collection of Syriac canon and civil law), and the unfinished *Kalendaria Ecclesiae Universae* (the lives of the saints of the entire world). He attended the First Maronite National Council in 1736 (an early attempt to obtain Lebanese state-

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Saint Basil's Church in Simpson Blessed

It was like experiencing the Kingdom of Heaven: people's faces were radiant; gentle joy was rising up in our hearts; petitions for the souls of those who had been killed in the recent attacks arose from an overflowing thankfulness for the goodness of God notwithstanding the evil present in the world.

On Saturday, September 15, 2001 only four days after the attack on the World Trade Center, the parishioners of St. Basil's, Orthodox Church in America, in Simpson celebrated the triumph of the completion of our new sanctuary with His Eminence, Archbishop Herman presiding. What marked this feast was the real joy, surpassing peace, and palpable light of God's presence among us amidst our friends both lay and clergy, all offering many petitions for the welfare of the souls of those who had suffered in the disaster as well as for their grieving friends and families and the nation as a whole.

Greeting His Eminence was Michael Mikulak, the oldest member of our parish, with bread. Mrs. Julia Mazza, president of the Protection sisterhood together with Alexandra Roat, the youngest female member of our parish, presented him with flowers. Our parish priest, Father Leo Poore, greeted him with the cross.

Providentially this feast was set to follow the Elevation of the Cross on September 14, for the veneration of the cross in our lives and services and sacraments is what enabled us to proceed with our plans for the celebration. For the Cross of Christ is a sign of ultimate victory.

The Resurrection verses of the divine liturgy show this most clearly:

"Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the holy Lord Jesus, the only sinless one. We venerate Thy cross, O Christ, and Thy holy Resurrection we praise and glorify; for Thou art our God, and we know no other than Thee; we call on Thy name. Come all you faithful, let us venerate Christ's holy Resurrection! For behold through the cross joy has come into all the world. Ever blessing the Lord, let us praise His



Archbishop Herman reads prayer for the blessing of a church

Resurrection. For by enduring the cross for us, He destroyed death by death."

Yes. As so many of the saints attest, the experience of the Orthodox divine liturgy is the experience of the kingdom of heaven on earth, where death has passed away, where we stand in the presence of the throne of God, where past and future all come to join in the present and the ends of every paradox are united in Christ Jesus, the Alpha and Omega, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords as well as the Lamb that was slain; the Of-

ferer and the Offered. But this is the victory celebration; how did we get here, what did we endure?

Well, this parish has endured almost twenty years of worshiping in a temporary place, having to set up and pack up time and time again. For years we had to find another location when the owners of the building wanted to use it themselves. None of this was easy.

It was not easy for a parish of about 75 members, few of whom are under 40, to undertake a building program. It was

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Sanctifying the temple

St. Basil's

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not easy to agree on a plan of action or a building plan or a feasible financial strategy. But then it was not easy to continue when in 1982 a dispute began that took from this group our church family and our church. Yet we had always persevered. We had remained loyal to our bishop and believed the words of Christ that "He who perseveres to the end will be saved." This we had done and God granted us the victory.

This victory is in large part due to the loving leadership of Father Leo Poore, and eldress Marie Proch as well as parish council president Maria Proch and all the council members; the planning committee members: the Protection sisterhood members, the choir under John Proch, and the altar servers, and in fact every single person in the parish, young or old, rich or poor — for participating, for bringing their all, for doing their part and for submitting to one another in love for the sake of Christ.

At the head table were our leaders, friends and former pastors of the parish: His Eminence Archbishop Herman; the V. Rev. Vladimir Fetcho, dean of Wilkes-Barre deanery; the V. Rev. Daniel Geeza, the V. Rev. Michael Evans, the V. Rev. David Shewczyk, the Rev. Joseph Irwin, the Rev. Leo Poore, the V. Rev. Michael Lepa, and Maria Proch. The presence of Matushka Dzury reminded us of the pleasant times when Father Valerian Dzury of blessed memory served here. And David Kessler led the expanded choir for the event.

In her short speech during the banquet, parish council president Maria Proch mentioned the rocky path to the church and said that things should be smooth so that we could experience peace. She also said that due to the recent tragedy we shouldn't put things off. The time is now (for action, for being, for loving, for the Lord's work) just like the building of the church was at the right time.

Yes. It was the right time and the right thing to do. The new building in its beauty and simplicity uses light as an architectural element. This light was full of the presence of God on that day. Further, everyone present had agreed, "It is good for us to be here!"

We experienced what the final Res-

urrection hymns speak of. "Shine! Shine! O New Jerusalem! For the glory of the Lord has shone on you! Exult now and be glad, O Zion! Be radiant, O Pure Theotokos, in the Resurrection of Your Son!" "O Christ! Great and most holy Pascha!

Wisdom, Word and Power of God! Grant that we may more perfectly partake of Thee in the never-ending Day of Thy Kingdom."

—Judy Fleming



His Eminence presents gramota to St. Basil's



Diocesan and visiting clergy



Marie Proch shares a lighter moment with former pastors



Holy Trinity Church

Twenty-Five Years of Orthodox Witness In the Pocono Mountains

The families and friends of Holy Trinity Eastern Orthodox Church in Stroudsburg, PA gathered together in the small Pocono Mountain town on September 30, 2001 to joyfully celebrate the 25th anniversary of the founding of the parish.

Just the Wednesday prior to the event, three golden domes had arrived on the property, were blessed by Archbishop Herman, and were hoisted by crane to rest in glory on top of the beautiful post-and-beam structure. Most of the parishioners would see those domes for the very first time when they arrived for Divine Liturgy that morning. Archbishop Herman had also blessed the newly constructed bell tower. An array of mums beautified the church grounds, which already had several perennials in fall color. The parish hall, kitchen, candle stands, icons, pews and chandelier were cleaned until they sparkled. The altar boys donned new gold vestments, the choir reviewed liturgical music, young

girls held baskets of flower petals, flower arrangements were in place. Parish president David Donlick, was standing near the door with the traditional bread and salt to welcome the hierarch. The parishioners were saying prayers of liturgical preparation, and pastor Archpriest Neal J. Carrigan in new gold vestments was



Archpriest Neal Carrigan awarded jeweled cross

ready to greet Archbishop Herman. The timing was perfect; all necessary preparations had come together for the beginning of a glorious and blessed celebration.

The day's activities began, appropriately, with Divine Liturgy led by His Eminence Archbishop Herman along with Fr. Neal, Archpriest Daniel Donlick, former pastor, and Archpriest Michael Lepa, who has assisted at the parish over the years. During liturgy Father Neal received the esteemed award of the jeweled cross, and alter server David Mastroberte was tonsured a reader. Gramotas (archpastoral citations) were presented to Helen and Peter Stavisky, George & Pamela Fetch, Dorothy Strzelczyk, Nicholas and Laura Kessler and Kathryn Pinto for their work and dedication to the parish.

After liturgy, more than two hundred people from the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pa. and from neighboring

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states of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut attended a grand banquet at the Stroudsmoor Country Inn. Speakers included Archbishop Herman; Father Carrigan; Father Donlick; Father Vladimir Fetcho, dean of Wilkes-Barre Deanery; Father John Kowalczyk, diocesan secretary/treasurer; and David Donlick, president of Holy Trinity parish council. Blessings and congratulations, sent by His Beatitude Metropolitan Theodosius, were also read.

Holy Trinity Eastern Orthodox Church was founded in 1976 with the specific mission of reaching out to people of all ethnic backgrounds, and to everyone living or visiting in the picturesque Pocono Mountains. The first meeting of interested Orthodox Christians from various backgrounds occurred at East Stroudsburg State University. From that humble beginning to a weekly gathering of 70 to 100+ people, the focus, objective, and goal has been the mission

of Orthodox worship, and has remained constant. The most frequent comment of visitors is, "Everyone is so warm and friendly at Holy Trinity." This is followed closely by, "For a small group, you have done so much in such a short time." Perhaps the spirit of mission has been the needed momentum.

—Rebecca Boyle and
Matushka Sherry Carrigan



Preparing to receive the holy gifts



Reception of the holy Eucharist



Welcoming toast at the anniversary banquet

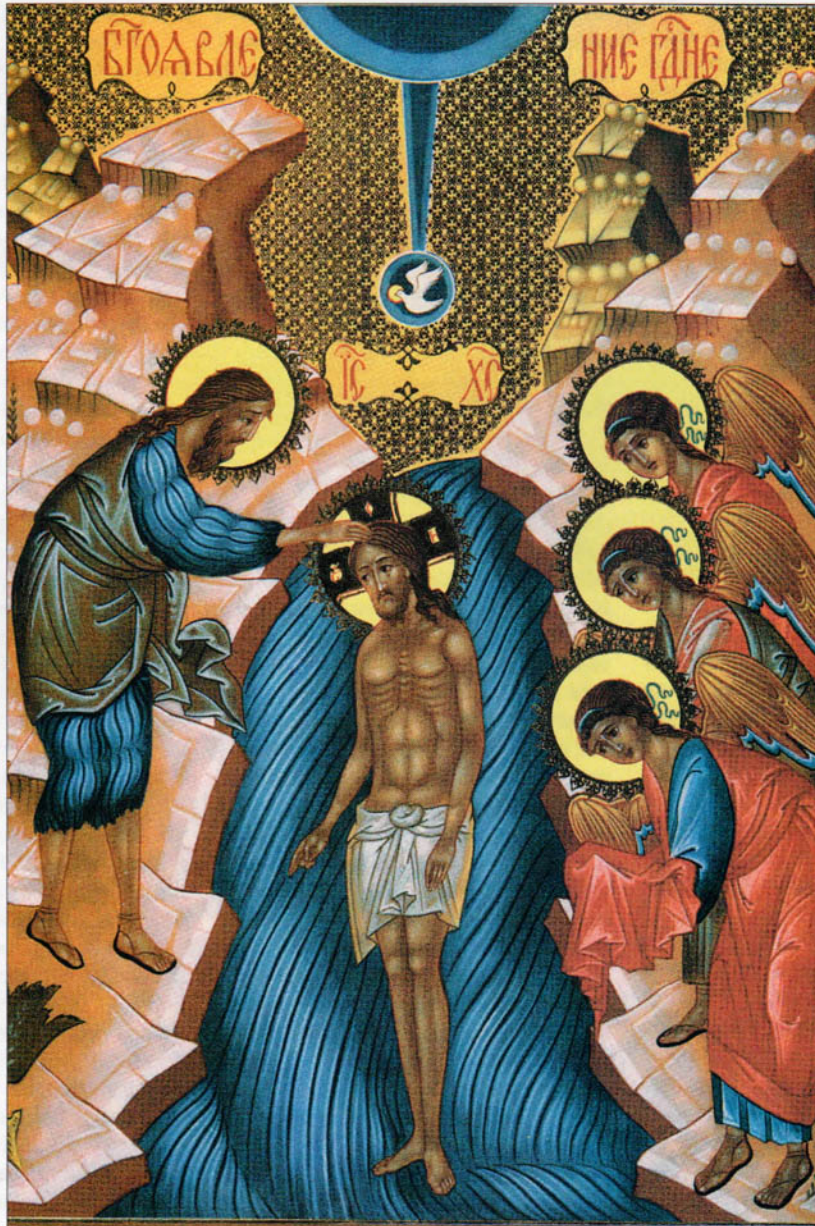


Archbishop presents gramota to David Donlick



Father Neal presents icons to honored guests

The Birth of the Creator and the Wonder of Creation



What shall we offer Thee, O Christ, who for our sakes hast appeared on earth as man? Every creature made by Thee offers Thee thanks. The angels offer Thee a hymn; the heavens, a star; the Magi, gifts; the shepherds, their wonder; the earth, its cave; the wilderness, the manger; and we offer Thee a Virgin Mother.¹

In their grateful offering to Christ described in this stikheron for Christmas Vespers, every creature has something concrete to give — something that cannot be replicated except symbolically

1. Vespers for the Nativity; *The Festal Menaion*, tr. Mother Mary and Kallistos Ware (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), 254.

when we ourselves celebrate the feast. Every creature, that is, except the shepherds, who have nothing to offer except their wonder — at the appearance of the angels upon earth, and at the Child they find according to the angels' word.

The two great feasts of God's com-

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The Birth of the Creator

Continued from page 25

ing into His world, Christmas and Theophany, can justly be seen as the starting point for our own offering of wonder — wonder not only at the divine love revealed in Christ, but also at His mercy shown in the entire creation, through which he nurtures us and leads us to Himself. With the coming of Christ, “creation is made new,” as we sing in the Akathistos Hymn (originally written for the Christmas season). Being ourselves part of this renewal, we are enabled to see the world with new eyes, in all its awesome beauty and transparency to the Creator.

Wonder can arise simply from our observation of the universe, of its immensity and complexity; and this may serve to lead us to the Creator. A Russian physicist who came to faith through Fr. Alexander Men’ recounts how he once told Fr. Alexander, “You know, what I see through a telescope or a microscope impresses me far more than anything I see in church.” “Why not?” replied the priest. “It is a temple not made with hands.”

Through our experience of the Church’s worship, however, we approach the wonder of creation from a different angle. The more we learn of God’s work of salvation, the more we recognize creation and salvation as part of the same plan, following similar patterns — bearing the signature of the same Craftsman.

If we are fortunate enough to attend a parish that celebrates the vespertal Liturgy on Christmas Eve, we will be aware that the Church begins the Old Testament readings for the feast with the creation story. We are reminded that the world is created good and beautiful. There is a relationship between God, man and the rest of creation. But man breaks this relationship: by eating of the one tree forbidden him, he uses the created world in an attempt to bypass God, to become God on his own terms. And the consequences fall not only on the man and woman and their descendants, but also on the earth which is “cursed because of [Adam].” The earth is degraded, destined to bring forth thorns and thistles (Gen. 3:17-18). And later on in the Old Testament, we encounter another sign of degradation: water, the source of life, is

feared as a lair of dragons, the natural stronghold of evil powers (cf. Ps. 73/74:13). The latter theme is prominent at Theophany, when Christ comes “to crush the heads of the dragons in the water.”

The results of man’s Fall, then, may be characterized as a sort of spiritual pollution. Pollution in the physical sense means that an element is in some way perverted from its natural function: earth and air and water, the essentials for our life, become instead sources of sickness or even death. And this is precisely what happens when our proper relationship with the material world and its Creator break down. Material creation, and the senses with which we interact with it, cease to nourish us as gifts of God’s love and care; instead of aiding us to grow towards God, they provoke greed, envy and all the other negative impulses known to Christian tradition as passions. They serve a purpose opposite to that for which they were created.

It is against this background that we speak of the Creator’s coming into the world as a renewal of all creation: “You come to give birth in a cave ineffably to Him who wills to make new in truth the whole creation, which formerly was corrupted by the transgression . . .”² The created world is brought back to its “first beauty,”³ the state in which “God saw that it was good.” The curse upon Eve is undone when the angel greets the Virgin saying, “Rejoice!” So similarly, it is a recognition that the curse upon the earth has been undone by “Christ on earth” when creation is repeatedly called on to rejoice and celebrate the coming of the Saviour and His manifestation: “Mountains, hills and every breath, rejoice . . .”⁴ And again, “Leap for joy now, earth and sea, mountains and hills and hearts of men, receiving the spiritual light.”⁵ As we join in rejoicing with the rest of creation, we can once more admire its goodness; for “Bethlehem has opened Eden.”⁶

Where the Nativity texts speak of Christ’s coming as “renewing” all creation, those of Theophany are more inclined to speak of the same event as “sanctifying”: “The earth was sanctified, O Word, at Thy holy birth, and the heav-

ens with a star declared Thy glory; and now the nature of waters is blessed by Thy baptism in the flesh, and mankind is restored to its former nobility.”⁷ This seems at first sight to be claiming for creation something more than “renewal.” But what does it actually mean for creation to be “sanctified”?

At Theophany, sanctification is certainly connected with the sacramental use of matter: “Thou hast accepted to be baptized . . . that having sanctified the nature of the waters, Thou mightest lead us to a new birth through water and the Spirit.”⁸ But it would be a mistake to think that “sanctifying water” is simply a poetic way of referring to the institution of baptism. Apart from anything else, there is the scope of the sanctification described: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness was heard . . . Be sanctified, all the sea, the springs and rivers, valleys and wooded glens, all that is under the sun.”⁹ While the various bodies of water have some connection with baptism or the blessing of waters, it is hard to see how “valleys and wooded glens” are directly involved with sacramental life. The truth underlying such texts is that sacramental use of matter can in no way be separated from the sanctification of material creation as a whole: it is grounded in the renewal of creation, and the blessing of one part of the material world transmits blessing to all the rest. As Proclus of Constantinople says of Theophany, “. . . today the sea is full of gladness. It is glad because through the Jordan, it partakes in the blessing of the sanctification [of water].”¹⁰

So this leads us to a new source of wonder — wonder at *creation as the sphere of God’s saving work, continued through the mysteries of the Church*. Sacramental use of matter is not a violation of the natural order or even an exception to it, but a return to the *truly* natural order — an expression of what creation is meant to be. It is where material things are opaque to God or even an impediment to holiness that we have an *unnatural* state. Evil does work through the material world, but only temporarily and by God’s concession: as the desert father said when demons demanded that he should leave a pagan temple which

2. 24 December, Compline, Canon Ode 9.1 (Greek usage).

3. 24 December, Matins Canon Ode 4.1.

4. Sunday of the Forefathers, Canon Ode 6.3.

5. 2 January, Vespers.

6. Christmas Matins, Oikos.

7. 5 January, Canon Ode 9.2.

8. Blessing of Waters: prayer, “O Lord Jesus Christ”. *Festal Menaion*, p. 353.

9. 2 January, Canon Ode 9.5.

10. Hom. 2, *On Holy Theophany*, PG 65:757C.

“belonged to them”: “No place belongs to you.”¹¹ Formerly, the “prince of this world was named king also of all that was in the waters”;¹² now, the “King of all creation”¹³ has appeared to claim His own. But that does not mean that it is left in a neutral state. It means the transformation of “the waters into healing,” so that “the whole creation is watered by mystical streams.”¹⁴

In the creation renewed and sanctified, we receive “the world as sacrament and gift of God’s love,” in the words of Fr. Dumitru Staniloae.¹⁵ This is not to reduce the mysteries of the Church to the level of the ordinary; it is to show that in God’s world there is nothing “ordinary.” Everything is, properly speaking, a miracle — a source of wonder. In the words of St. Ephrem, the great Syrian poet-theologian of the fourth century:

*We too should wonder and give thanks,
That from the dry stalk of wheat
there comes ample bread,
That from the vine stalk there
flows wine,
That from each tree, all kinds of
varied delights —
This too is a great wonder as
great as the miracle at Cana.*¹⁶

So the blessing of some material things, such as water at Theophany, will make us look with renewed wonder at all the “ordinary” things around us — the lake, the vine or fruit tree, the soil which grows wheat — through which the Creator sustains not only our physical existence, but our spiritual life as well.

We may be used to the idea that in the Church, Christ is “all in all.”

All the orders in the Church can be seen as embodied in Christ:¹⁷ He is the high priest; he is the “deacon,” inasmuch

as He is among us as “one who serves”; as the anointed one, He is *par excellence* the chrismated member of the laity. But it can also be said, on the basis of the Scriptures and liturgical texts, that Christ in a certain sense embodies all sacred matter. He is the Bread; He is the River of Joy, baptized in the stream;¹⁸ He is the Water of life made manifest to gladden



the desert of our nature;¹⁹ He is Myrrh poured out.²⁰ He who adorns the earth with flowers comes into the world as an unfading flower from the rod of Jesse;²¹ He is the divine fruit in the paradise of the Virgin’s womb.²² Now, of course this is not literal language: in the literal sense, Christ is a human being, and is not a river or a fruit. And yet, does it not show a real though mysterious affinity between the incarnate God and these elements of His creation? The very appropriateness of these metaphors can be seen to reveal creation as “God-friendly,” deliberately fashioned so as to contain the uncontainable in His Incarnation.²³

A certain affinity between God and

His creation is evident as soon as He appears on earth, from the very manner in which He is manifested: “The Sun, hidden in a bright cloud, comes to be born, and is revealed in a cave; for a brilliant star gathered together kings from Persia to worship Him.”²⁴

Appropriately, it is the star that recognizes the Sun: by lending its own brilliance as an image of His spiritual light, it leads the heavens in “telling the glory of God” — which is no doubt why that psalm verse is used at the Christmas Liturgy.

In the star, we see an image of creation as the primary witness to God. “If the whole of nature does not speak about God, who will believe Isaiah or St. Paul?” asks St. Nikolai of Zicha; and he continues, “‘Show us God,’ say many of our contemporaries, ‘and we will believe.’ . . . We must say to them: *Show us what is not God!*”²⁵

The texts that celebrate Christ’s coming frequently express the primacy of creation’s witness in very graphic terms. It is not only that the learned Magi had to be shown the way by a star; according to the canon for Theophany, we see John unwilling to go against the precedent set by the inanimate world in its reverence for the Creator: “Endowed

with an understanding soul and honored with the power of reason, I yet respect the things that have no soul. For if I baptize Thee, I shall have as my accusers the mountain that smoked with fire, the sea which fled on either side, and this same Jordan which turned back.”²⁶ Another Theophany text goes further: John performs the ministry required of him only after instruction from the River Jordan, which takes him to task for failing to recognize Christ’s purpose: “Why do you prevent the cleansing of many? He has sanctified all creation; let Him sanctify me also and the nature of waters, since for this He has been made manifest.”²⁷ Needless to say, the melodist is using a literary figure here, not purport-

11. *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (Alphabetical collection), *Elias 7*; tr. Benedicta Ward SLG (Oxford: Mowbrays and Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publ., 1975), p. 61.

12. 5 January, Compline Canon Ode 6.3.

13. 5 January, Lauds.

14. Blessing of Waters prayer, “O Trinity Supreme”. *Festal Menaion*, p. 354.

15. “The World as Gift and Sacrament of God’s Love,” *Sobornost* 5:9 (Summer 1969), 662-673.

16. Ephrem, *Hymns on the Table III*; tr. S.P. Brock, “World and Sacrament in the Writings of the Syrian Fathers,” *Sobornost* 6:10 (Winter 1974), p. 695.

17. Cf. John D. Zizioulas (Metropolitan of Pergamon), *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* (Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001), p. 60.

18. Cf. 5 January, Vespers Apostikha; *Festal Menaion*, p. 295.

19. 3 January, Canon Ode 3.1.

20. Song of Solomon 1:3.

21. Sunday of Forefathers, Canon Ode 4.1.

22. Troparion for the Forefathers.

23. Cf. Bishop Basil (Osborne) of Sergievo, “Towards the Millennium: The Transfiguration of the World and Humanity in Christ,” *Sourazh* 72 (May 1998), p. 32.

24. 23 December, Matins, First Canon Ode 6.2.

25. Bishop Nicolai (Velimirovic), quoted in M. Oleksa, *Orthodox Alaska* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1992), p. 39.

26. 1 Canon Ode 4.3.

27. 2 January, Vespers.

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The Birth of the Creator

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ing to add a little-known historical detail about Christ's Baptism. But we should not therefore conclude that such pieces are purely decorative. Rather, they point to a very real sense in which the natural world sets us an example. For, as St. Athanasius points out, "Nothing in creation had erred from the path of God's purpose for it, save only man. Sun, moon, heaven, stars, water, air, knowing the Word as their Maker and their King, remained as they were made."²⁸ Creation instructs us by its faithfulness to God, by the praise it offers simply by being true to its nature.

While there is a sense in which creation speaks for itself, there is also an obvious sense in which it does not. The heavens may "tell the glory of God;" but on the other hand "there is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard" (Ps. 18/19:3). "The wisdom contemplated in creation is a 'word', *albeit not articulated*," writes St. Gregory of Nyssa in explanation of this verse;²⁹ it is up to humanity to marvel at this wisdom and articulate this "word," so as to complete the creation's offering of praise. According to



"Nothing in creation had erred from the path of God's purpose for it, save only man. Sun, moon, heaven, stars, water, air, knowing the Word as their Maker and their King, remained as they were made."

St. Gregory the Theologian, God creates man specifically for this purpose: to "discern His wisdom," "delight in His works" and "sing of His mind and dispositions."³⁰ And in his Christmas sermon, St. Gregory connects this purpose with the task of "tending the garden" given to Adam: "This being God placed in paradise — whatever that paradise may have been . . . to till the immortal plants, by which is perhaps meant the divine conceptions . . ."³¹ So when creation is restored to its original beauty and goodness, this is the position to which we are restored: "The middle wall of partition of the ancient enmity is now laid low and

destroyed by Thy coming in the flesh, O Christ . . . And I partake in faith of the life-giving tree in Eden, becoming once again a husbandman of immortal plants."³²

There is no need to take this in an exclusively spiritual sense. The tending of immortal plants by no means precludes dirtying our hands with mortal ones. But it must mean that we touch the mortal and perishable things of creation with renewed awe, mindful of their faithful relationship to their — and our — Creator, and of the indispensable part they play in His work of salvation. An example of how to "tend immortal plants" in our attitude to the world around us is that magnificent hymn to

God's work in creation which is the blessing of waters prayer at Theophany. We reclaim our intended place in the renewed creation when we look around us and say, "Great art Thou, O Lord, and marvellous are Thy works: no words suffice to sing the praise of Thy wonders . . ."³³

—Elizabeth Theokritoff

28. *On the Incarnation* 43; tr. St. Athanasius *On the Incarnation* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press 1982), pp. 78-9.

29. *Hexaemeron*, PG 44:73C.

30. Dogmatic Poems 8, *On the Soul*, 59ff.; PG 37.451-2.

31. Hom. 38, *On Theophany, or the Nativity of Christ*, 12.

32. 24 December, Compline Canon, Ode 6.1.33.

Festal Menaion, pp. 356, 358

Be glad, you righteous; greatly rejoice, O heavens; leap for joy, O mountains. Christ is born, and the Virgin, imitating the Cherubim, sits holding in her bosom God the Word incarnate. Shepherds glorify Him who was born; Magi bring gifts to the Master; Angels sing praises, saying: O incomprehensible God, glory to you!

Let all the earth rejoice exceedingly; let heaven be glad; let the world leap for joy. Let the rivers clap their hands; let the springs and lakes and the ocean depths exult together. For Christ has come to cleanse and save Adam by divine baptism.

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

St. Nicholas' Church Marks 85th With Blessing of New Parish Hall

With great thanksgiving to Almighty God, the parish of St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church, Bethlehem, PA celebrated its 85th anniversary on October 6 and 7 of this year. The occasion also marked the completion of a four-year iconography project as the interior icons and new fellowship hall were blessed and dedicated. Leading the parish in the weekend anniversary celebration of these blessed events were His Beatitude Metropolitan THEODOSIUS, Archbishop of Washington, DC and Metropolitan of All America and Canada and His Eminence Archbishop HERMAN, Archbishop of Philadelphia and Eastern Pa. Assisting Father Eugene were Fr. Basil Karpelenia, a son of the parish, retired in Tampa, FL.; Fr. Nicholas Fedetz, pastor of Ss. Peter and Paul's in Bayonne, NJ, whose father-in-law, Fr. Theodot Shevchuk, served St. Nicholas parish from 1949-1957; Fr. James Mason, retired in Port St. Lucie, FL whose children and grandchildren are members of our parish; Fr. John Udics, dean of the Philadelphia Deanery; Fr. John Bruchok, pastor of Holy Trinity Church, Catasauqua, PA; Archdeacon Vsevelod Borzakovsky, St. Nicholas Cathedral, Washington, DC; Deacon Christopher Rowe, Holy Trinity Church, Catasauqua, and Readers Gregory Hatrak, Jason Vansuch and William Podlusk serving as subdeacons.

The founding of St. Nicholas Parish is an example of true mission work here in America, at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1899, in the nearby hamlet of Catasauqua, an Orthodox parish was established by St. Alexis, Confessor and Defender of Orthodoxy in America. It was not until 1903, that the Blessed Tikhon, later Patriarch of Moscow, but then Archbishop and Enlightener of America, consecrated the Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in Catasauqua. This was the first Orthodox parish in the Lehigh Valley and became known as the "mother church of Orthodoxy in the



Bishops read prayer for blessing of church

Lehigh Valley," serving immigrants from all traditional Orthodox lands. On the occasion of our 85th anniversary celebration we were blessed and honored to have one of our oldest parishioners, Mrs. Elizabeth Grigoruk, aged 91, present for the festivities. Elizabeth was baptized at Holy Trinity Church and has spent 85 of her 91 years as a communicant at St. Nicholas parish. She remains the only parishioner to have been with the parish for its entire 85-year history.

During the prosperous years of 1904-1917, large numbers of Russian and Eastern European immigrants came to the United States. With conditions in Eastern Europe being catastrophic, the hardships of the peasant class continued to be almost unbearable. One by one, individual family members responded to the glowing reports of life in America and the economic opportunities there. The newly arrived immigrants were settling in the large cities where there was a great demand for hands in factories and foundries. They were young, strong and willing to do any kind of labor and they found it easy to find work.

A number of them came to Bethlehem. They settled on the south side and

immediately found work in the Bethlehem Steel Company where they worked hard, providing a new life for their families. Those who came to South Bethlehem from 1910 to 1914 to work in industry, included a small number of Russian Orthodox believers, predominantly from the areas around Minsk, Grodno and Volhynia. Poorly educated, they knew no language but their own, had few friends and no resources. The big dream was to earn money, go back to the old country, buy a piece of ground there and settle down with a wife and children. But this was not to be: wars, famine, Bolshevik upheavals and the revolution, as well as the great depression kept most of them here.

From 1910-1914, spiritual needs were met either by attending Holy Trinity parish in Catasauqua (about 10 miles away), by the priest in Catasauqua journeying to Southside Bethlehem, or by visiting clergy. Early church records attest to baptisms being performed in 1914 and 1915. Seeing the need to establish a "mission on the Southside of Bethlehem," on April 29, 1914, the Holy Trinity parish in Catasauqua authorized the

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St. Nicholas' Church

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solicitation of the faithful in Bethlehem to raise funds to establish a "mission parish" to meet their spiritual needs.

Fundraising efforts continued for several years. This missionary activity was the first step that ultimately led to the formal founding of the parish. In January, 1915, a small group of ten fellow countrymen recognized the need for a church of their own. These young men submitted their names to the Russian Orthodox Mutual Aid Society of the USA and were officially organized as the St. Nicholas Brotherhood, South Bethlehem Branch No. 152. Since the basic premise for this organization was "the support and spread of the holy faith and church construction," the simultaneous organization of the Church also took place.

Initially, Divine Liturgy was celebrated in St. Joseph's Chapel of the Episcopal Church on the Southside; later that year, the facilities of a Reformed Church were used. In 1916, Mr. Heller, a local landholder and not a member of the Orthodox Church, donated five lots for the building of a church on East Sixth St., just two blocks from the Reformed Church site. In 1916, the work of construction was started through the efforts of the St. Nicholas Brotherhood, and in 1917 the church was consecrated by His Grace, Bishop Alexander.

The church on Sixth St. served as the center of life for the parishioners of St. Nicholas until the expansion of the Bethlehem Steel Corp. displaced a large number of parishioners who lived near the church. With the congregation growing and its members relocating, the present church building was no longer

in the geographical center of its members, and its size was inadequate to meet all the needs of the parish community.

In 1966, nearly 8 acres of farmland was purchased in Hanover Township for a new church facility. For the next decade, the parish worked diligently to raise money and to prepare plans and designs for an enlarged church. On May 15, 1977, groundbreaking took place for the new church and six months later, excavation was begun for the project. On October 21, 1979, the church was consecrated and the move from the Southside to Hanover Township was complete.

Over the next twenty years, the St. Nicholas parish community continued sowing the seeds of faith and foresight that had been planted by our founders. Increased spiritual activity, an explosive growth of member participation in parish organizations, and an atmosphere of great vitality marked this period. With the needs of a changing parish, and ever-present and growing maintenance needs, the faithful — like the generations before them — charged headlong into campaigns of hard work to raise funds for maintaining and beautifying the temple.

With the unprecedented growth in the spiritual and social aspects of the parish there again came a time to examine the adequacy of our facilities. Beginning in 1992, a planning committee investigated the feasibility of an expanded fellowship hall and education center. The parish was polled to ascertain its needs and wants, and a financial strategy to fund the expansion initiative was developed. And the parish gave a mandate for a larger fellowship hall, expanded educational and kitchen facilities, and a further beautification of the church with iconogra-

phy.

The writing and installing of the interior icons, was begun in 1997 by renowned Ohio iconographer Dennis Bell. In the meantime, the expansion program moved forward, and a plan was approved for a larger fellowship hall with kitchen, offices and other facilities, and renovated classrooms. The parish broke ground on May 7, 2000, for the new facility, culminating eight years of prayer, hope, planning, designing, and fundraising.

On Saturday and Sunday, October 6-7, 2001, the faithful of St. Nicholas gathered to commemorate 85 years of Orthodoxy in Bethlehem and to bless the newly-installed interior icons and to bless and dedicate the new facilities. It was a real blessing for the parish to have His Beatitude and His Eminence leading the weekend festivities, just as they did 21 years ago when the church was consecrated.

The anniversary festivities began Saturday morning with a panihida served by the pastor, Archpriest Eugene Vansuch, in which we remembered the parish's founders, pastors, presidents, and all deceased members. Next, a moleben was served for continued good health of all parishioners. Special prayers were offered for those who are 85 years or older and couples married 50 years or more. These birthday jubilarians who were acknowledged and given a special icon of St. Nicholas on this blessed occasion were: Hedvik Chaikowsky, Theodore Grason, Elizabeth Grigoruk, Sergei Juszcuk, Anna Keretz, Peter Keretz, Sadie Oravec, Helen Perlow, Mary Petrovich, Anna Sherbechuk, Stephen Sherbechuk, and Violet Tomolovski. At the same time, these couples celebrating wedding anniversa-



Blessing of church hall



Tonsuring of readers

ries of 50 years or more and were acknowledged and presented with a special triptych icon: Angelo and Helen Butch, Theodore and Elizabeth Fedora, John and Olga Frimenko, Charles and Stella Guditus, Sergei and Olga Juszczuk, Donald and Helen Haney, John and Anna Holotyak, Rt. Rev. Mitred Archpriest Basil and Matushka Loretta Karpelenia, Samuel and Pauline Kasick, Albert and Esther Kiechel, Peter and Anna Keretz, and Stephen and Anna Sherbechuk. The St. Nicholas Sr. "O" Club hosted a special luncheon in the new fellowship hall honoring the birthday and anniversary jubilarians.

That afternoon, our pastor, Fr. Eugene, served great vespers. After vespers, a procession, led by our hierarchs, and with the choir and faithful following, was made from the church to the fellowship hall for the blessing of the new hall, kitchen, offices and expansion facility. After the service of blessing, Mrs. Sarah Jubinski, parish council president, made a special presentation on behalf of the parish community:

"The parish family of St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church acknowledges, with deep appreciation, the generous Christian stewardship of Mr. Paul Chernay. In grateful recognition of his generosity in memory of his beloved wife, Elizabeth Betty Jo Chernay, we are honored to dedicate The Paul and Betty Jo Chernay Parish Fellowship Hall."

The parish council passed the above resolution at a monthly council meeting and determined that a plaque bearing the above inscription be placed in an appropriate setting in the lobby of the new hall. An oil portrait of Paul and Betty Jo Chernay, painted by parishioner Donna Haney, was unveiled and will be perma-

nently located in the main entrance to the hall that bears their name. Following the blessing and dedication services, a fellowship hour was held in honor of our hierarchs, clergy, parishioners and Mr. Paul Chernay.

Sunday, the anniversary festivities continued as our hierarchs made their entrance to the church, being escorted from the new fellowship hall in a procession led by parish children bearing icons, the cross and banners. At the church entrance they were greeted and welcomed by church school children presenting bouquets of flowers. Mrs. Sarah Jubinski, parish council president, offered the traditional bread and salt, and Fr. Eugene presented the cross and asked the episcopal blessing upon the parish.

After the hours and the vesting, the 60 or so interior icons were solemnly blessed by both hierarchs. The icon beautification project was underwritten by the generous donations of parishioners and parish organizations, which donated icons in memory or honor of relatives and loved ones. The anniversary year brought several firsts in the history of the parish. This past summer, Timothy Hasencz, a native son and graduate of St. Tikhon's Seminary, was ordained to the Holy Deaconate at St. Tikhon's Monastery Church and assigned to our parish to serve as a deacon. At the end of August, Deacon Timothy was ordained to the holy priesthood by Archbishop HERMAN at St. Nicholas parish.

Before the hierarchical Divine Liturgy, two parishioners, Mr. Andrew Fartuch and Mr. Jeffrey Bartholomew Lovell, were tonsured as Readers for the parish. Another first for the parish: both of the new readers are parish council members and also serve as senior altar

servers throughout the year, assist Fr. Eugene.

The hierarchical Divine Liturgy, celebrated with solemnity and pious splendor, was a beautiful liturgical and spiritual experience. The responses of the choir, directed by Nicholas Lezinsky and the children's choir, directed by Mrs. Maxine Marsh, added to the prayerful joy of the morning. His Beatitude bestowed special recognition and honor on several parishioners who have dedicated years of service to the parish and the Church. He presented special gramotas and bestowed the Order of St. Innocent, Bronze Medal to Michael and Mary Dorosh, Reader Nicholas Lezinsky, and Mrs. Sarah Jubinski. Recognizing the generosity and varied contributions of Mr. Paul Chernay to his parish, diocese and national church, His Beatitude awarded Mr. Chernay the Order of St. Innocent, Silver Medal and presented him with a special synodal proclamation. His Beatitude paid special tribute to our pastor Fr. Eugene and Matushka Paraskeva on the occasion of their 35th wedding anniversary. For their service to the Orthodox Church in America on the national and diocesan level, as well as their service to St. Nicholas parish for the past 15 years, he presented Father Eugene with the Order of St. Innocent, Silver Medal and Matushka Paraskeva with the Order of St. Innocent, Bronze Medal.

Upon recommendation of the parish council, His Eminence presented diocesan gramotas to these worthy parishioners in recognition of their outstanding and devoted service to the parish: Peter and Sarah Jubinski; our choir director, Reader Nicholas Lezinsky; Theodore

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Holy Communion



Award recipients with the hierarchs

St. Nicholas' Church

Continued from page 31

and Sue Grason; Theodore and Elizabeth Fedora; Vasil and Helen Telepchak; John Frimenko; Elizabeth Grigoruk; and Mr. John Smakula. May God grant all honorees and parishioners, Many Years!

A festive banquet was served to 305 guests in the Paul and Betty Jo Chernay Parish Fellowship Hall. The main speakers were Metropolitan Theodosius and Archbishop Herman, who offered their individual congratulations to the faithful and complimented the parish for its recent accomplishments. In their own personal messages to the faithful they urged all to rededicate their lives to the building up of Christ's Holy Church, so that we may faithfully pass on that which has been entrusted to us. Both hierarchs commented on the growth of the parish that they have watched, beginning from 21 years ago when they came to Bethlehem to consecrate the church, again at the 75th anniversary celebration ten years ago, and being with us again to share our joy at the present day. Remarks were offered by building committee co-chairmen Dr. Gregory Radio and Dr. Gregory Brusko, Sarah Jubinski, and Matushka Glykeria Fedetz, whose father, Archpriest Theodot Shevchuk, faithfully served our parish in former years. Matushka recalled with great fondness the love her parents had for the parish of St. Nicholas and the love they received in turn from the parishioners. Our pastor, Fr. Eugene Vansuch, also spoke, recalling that in every generation the faithful of the parish have risen to the challenge before them. Today's generation is called upon to do likewise, and just as our forefathers' faith and resolve never wavered,

neither must this generation's faith and resolve waver. The faithful of St. Nicholas have always found ways to accomplish the parish's mission of service to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and as we move ahead we will serve and provide our children the ways to continue this mission with faith and vision. Ms. Patricia Felix, former parish council member and an anniversary committee chairwoman served as the mistress of ceremonies.

A number of clergy were present from the Lehigh Valley Brotherhood of Orthodox Clergy and the Philadelphia Deanery. In addition to the usual souvenir book, whose cover depicts the new building and narthex expansion, everyone received a cupola shaped, hand-painted box, made in Russia especially for our celebration. His Beatitude and His Eminence were presented with special, hand-painted wooden eggs depicting St. Nicholas with our church buildings and background scenes of Bethlehem, Pa.

At the banquet, several gifts were made to the parish. Reader Jason Vansuch presented a large icon of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, showing scenes in his life, to be placed with his relics which the parish received earlier from His Beatitude. Mrs. Dorothy Stafiniak, president of the ladies altar society, presented the church with a check in the amount of \$10,000 as their donation to the mortgage fund. In grateful thanksgiving for all the blessings the Lord has bestowed upon him and his family, Mr. Paul Chernay presented the church a donation of \$100,000. Once again, we have seen the loving spirit of faith and stewardship shown by our faithful.

So that the parishioners would be able to enjoy the banquet and not have to worry about any of the food preparations, our dear friends from Campbell, OH, Linda Livosky and her crew of cooks, waiters and waitresses journeyed to Bethlehem and spent the anniversary weekend taking care of our catering needs. They did the setup, cooking, serving and cleanup, enabling the parishioners the pleasure of a wonderful and enjoyable anniversary dinner.

A friend of the parish, Taras Pypiuk offered a 20-minute slide presentation with musical accompaniment. The slides highlighted the history of the parish as depicted in old photos, newspaper articles, parish books, and the like, provided by the parishioners. What a memorable way close to the dinner and anniversary celebration! All in all, it was a most glorious anniversary weekend, which the parishioners set aside as an offering of love to its patron saint and to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Through its history of deep commitment to the Lord and loving stewardship, St. Nicholas has established itself as a model in the Orthodox Church in America and in the religious community of the Lehigh Valley.

In closing, I quote from our 85th anniversary album: "As we celebrate our 85th anniversary, we have literally opened the doors to the future of our church, and we reflect on the abundant blessings we have received from God . . . In our joy and thanksgiving, let us entreat of Christ to 'visit this vine which thou hast planted with thy right hand, and establish it.'" To Him be glory, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

—Archpriest Eugene Vansuch



Unveiling portrait of Paul and Betty Jo Chernay



Father Eugene and Matushka Fran



For the Hours of Pain

Part VIII (Conclusion)

The conclusion of Archimandrite Seraphim's book in which he considers the meaning of suffering and death and the proper Orthodox Christian response to them. Archimandrite Seraphim (Papakostas), who lived from 1892 to 1954, wrote the book under wartime conditions in Axis-occupied Greece. It was translated into English by Leslie Newville (the future Archimandrite Jerome).

3.4 The Benefit of Memorial Services

Orthodox teaching gives a rather general answer to this question. Memorial services benefit those who depart in faith. They benefit those Christians who are not guilty of deadly sins, as well as those who did not completely repent and are open to divine mercy: "*Those worthy of holy prayers, those who bear stains due to human weakness,*" as we read in the books attributed to St. Dionysios, the Pseudo-Areopagite. Just who is open to divine grace, however, and who is worthy of prayers, is not clearly defined, because only God knows, and those who pray for souls must have full confidence in His judgment.

Nevertheless, we include the following opinion of St. John of Damascus, who also represents the opinions of other Fathers. Every man, he says, who gained a leaven of virtues and wanted to make it into bread, and yet did not succeed, either because of laziness or neglect or unmanliness, or because of putting it off from day to day — such a person, when he is suddenly snatched away by death

... will not be forgotten by the just Judge and Master. But, after his death, the Lord will influence his family and relatives to make up for his shortcomings.

What then, is the benefit which our prayers bring to these people? What is the meaning and the power of our prayers for them? Let us hear the answers of the Fathers.

Offerings of the Divine Liturgy for the departed, says St. John Chrysostom, are not purposeless and matter of chance, nor are the petitions and works of mercy — the Spirit has ordered all of them. "Do not think that the departed are not benefited," he adds. "It is not only the deacon who cries out: 'For those who have fallen asleep in Christ and for those who celebrate their memory.' It is not the deacon . . . but the Holy Spirit . . . Knowing these things we devise as many *consolations* for the departed as we are able — rather than tears and lamentations and memorials, acts of charity, and prayer, and offerings." In one of his other sermons he repeats that, during the performance of the holy mysteries, we do not commemorate the departed without purpose and in vain. We also offer the sacrifice for them "beseeching of the Lamb . . . who takes away the sins of the world, that some consolation for them may from here arise." And again, "Let us give aid to them, works of charity I say and offerings and the thing will bring them much help and great will be the gain and the profit)" (Homily on Acts 21 § 4 and 41 on I Cor.). Many times, the holy

Chrysostom, in speaking about the subject, expresses this conviction of the ancient Church. St. Cyril of Jerusalem says that during the sacrifice of the Divine Eucharist our prayers will greatly benefit those who have fallen asleep before us.

It is noteworthy, then, that the Fathers give a general answer to the question of benefits. They speak about "the good," "the comfort," "the great profit," "the great benefit," which the souls of the departed receive from our prayers. In other words, they speak with indefinite phrases and refuse to say whether or not sins are forgiven there and what the pardonable sins are, and whether or not penalties are lessened, or souls perfected, or whether there is a cleansing fire. Of course, human curiosity tries to understand such things, but we know that many times this only leads to foolhardy and fantastic ideas. What happens beyond the grave belongs entirely to God; He has told us as much as we need to know; the rest is covered with a veil of mystery, which man's curiosity is incapable of piercing. The Faithful have committed themselves and each other to God for the duration of their earthly lives. Now, it is well and good for them to commit their departed loved ones to the mercy of God, through prayer, for they have the assurance that God in the riches of His mercy also has ways to help them.

So let no one doubt the power of prayers for the dead. We know that prayers which we direct to the all pow-

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For the Hours of Pain

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erful and all good Lord for men who live on earth, have power. Likewise prayers for the souls of the dead have power. God frequently grants the requests of the pious, who pray for other men on earth. He assures us of this in many ways in Holy Scripture. Moses prayed for the Israelites who worshipped the golden calf, and God forgave them. So too with Samuel and with Elijah (Ex. 32:31 and Deut. 9:18,19; I Kings 12:20,23; I Chron. 18:42-45). Many times Paul prayed for Christians in various places. The Divine James recommends prayer for others as a most certain reality: "Pray one for another that you may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (5:17). Yet we can't understand how God, governing the world in accordance with certain laws, interrupts the course of nature and of human affairs, because of man's prayers. (But really He does intervene. He withheld rain for three years and later He sent rain because of Elijah's prayer, etc.). Likewise we can't understand how our prayers to the Lord for the souls of the dead do any good, and yet, they can do good, because God is not limited by anything. Just as we pray for the living who don't differ from the dead (because of their sinful life), so it is also possible to pray for the dead, says Chrysostom.

3.5 Mutual Benefits

Prayers, then, offered during the Divine Liturgy for Christians who have already passed over to the life beyond the tomb, are beneficial. It suffices if their souls are susceptible to divine grace; they must not have left this life burdened with fatal sins, or unrepentant or entirely uncorrected. This matter has already been discussed. On the other hand, those who pray for them by celebrating the memorial services have to fulfill certain conditions. The reader should now turn his attention to these conditions.

Of course, there can't be any discussion of benefits for souls when the people who perform the memorial services have no relationship with God. If they don't believe in God, or at least if they don't have a clear idea of what they believe; if they don't accept the truths of the Orthodox faith, if they don't believe that

souls are benefited through the prayers of the Church; if they don't live lives in accordance with the law of the Gospel; if they haven't repented and have no fellowship with God, how will they have fellowship with Him during the hour of the memorial service? If they don't pray for themselves, how can they pray for others? The proof of this is that actually they don't pray during the Liturgy. During the hour of the Divine Liturgy, when they should be praying and begging God to also accept the sacrifice for the soul of their loved one, they are no where to be seen. They come at the end of the Liturgy, when the memorial is about to start. They stand around the dish of wheat without participating spiritually in prayer.

But then why do they have the memorial service? The reader can tell us. They do it formally, as an obligation which society imposes. The friends of the family also come formally at the appointed hour — no earlier lest they should have to follow the Liturgy. Many times these friends never set foot inside the church and never pray. But if we men, who have lost the substance and live with forms, can satisfy ourselves with these formalities, God is not obligated to accept them. Do you really and truly pray to God for the soul of your beloved dead, with faith and piety? If not, don't expect to do him any good. Don't fool yourself and don't waste your time.

So much then for the benefit of souls through our prayers. Another noteworthy fact, however, must be added. It will further clarify the worth and usefulness of memorial services and prayers for souls. We mean the good which the participants get when they take part in the service.

We know that our prayers for the living who are afflicted or in need, are not always answered for reasons known only to God. Likewise, all of the departed whom we pray for are not benefited. In both cases, however, prayers which are offered, publicly or privately, can benefit those who are doing the praying — just so they haven't severed every connection with Christ. Many times the love for the departed is so active and the attraction for him so strong, and the wound caused by death so deep, that they are forced to turn to God, to Him who has power over the living and the dead. Un-

til the present they were far from God, but now they are compelled to seek His fellowship. Pain forces them to tear themselves away from the world and its falseness and its vanity; it forces them to turn their thoughts to things beyond and to the reality of their loved one's death. Pain forces them to return to the Church, and by it, to communicate with the soul of their loved one — to accept the divine word in their hearts, which have been softened by pain — to repent — to enter into a new spiritual atmosphere and life. We needn't go on, however. Both from history and everyday experience we learn about people who return to God because of such circumstances.

The celebration of memorial services is also a splendid opportunity for developing the faith and piety of the faithful and for strengthening their hope in divine mercy; it makes us more cautious and diligent in getting ready for that journey, which will unite us, the living, with the departed; it counteracts the bitterness and jealousies which often exist among relatives, who now, because of the memorial service for the departed relative, are united in common prayer, which helps to develop brotherly love, as we learn from the following quotations from the Fathers. "Offerings for the departed are not in vain, nor are petitions, nor works of mercy: for the Spirit has ordered them all, and it is His will that we should be mutually benefited," says the Holy Chrysostom. St. John of Damascus adds that "God wants all of us, the living and the dead, to do good for one another . . . for he who works for his neighbor's salvation first benefits himself, then his neighbor."

3.6 Full Assurance

From the preceding chapters regarding our relationship with the souls of departed loved ones, we draw this conclusion: great and certain benefit is brought about through our prayers, through special offerings of the Divine Liturgy and works of mercy — either for them, or for us. To have complete and indisputable safety, however, we must run and struggle in this present life. The present life is the only stadium for the fight for salvation, for the Christian's moral development, and for the winning of the "crown of righteousness," which

is completely guaranteed by the promises of God and given to those “who have fought a good fight, who have finished the course, who have kept the faith.” When the crown of righteousness has been won, circumstances are entirely different. Then, during every Divine Liturgy and memorial prayer, complete certainty reigns in the souls of those who are praying for the righteous departed; and holy love will join him (now a member of the Church Triumphant) with those members of the Church Militant who are praying for him.

Someday we too will pass over to the life beyond the tomb. Our loved ones who remain behind, however, will fulfill a holy obligation, an obligation of Christian love, if they pray for us, if they remember us in their prayers during the Divine Liturgy, if they do works of mercy for us. On the other hand, we will fulfill an even greater obligation of love — more natural and holy and true and pricelessly more effective for ourselves — if we get ready for the future now.

The Lord has prepared individual joy and glory and satisfaction for those who will be found at His right hand on the day of judgment — for those who hear the blessed invitation, “Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.” Everybody, by himself, will enjoy it. He can’t get it from somebody else, nor can he enjoy it at somebody else’s expense. So here too, the work for the kingdom must be an individual matter. Everybody, by himself, must toil and struggle. He himself must gain virtues, and taste them and esteem them, and here on earth, glorify God with them; and then, for him, God will fulfill His promise: “Those who honor me, I will honor” (I Sam. 2:30).

3.7 Anti-Christian Attempts to Communicate with the Dead

Actually, there is no way to communicate with the souls of our loved ones, except through the Christian religion and the Church. We have already noted this. Any other way is either imaginary or fraudulent and dangerous.

We certainly consider dreams as an unreal way to communicate with the dead. Christian teaching has never considered dreams as a source of information about the world beyond. Of course, there were some special circumstances,

when God used dreams to announce certain unusual and important events. These circumstances, however, were rare in the course of the ages, and are clearly recorded in Holy Scripture. They do not justify every dream probe and interpretation. They do not give a man the right to solve the problems of his life, to prophesy, to learn all about what is going on in the other life, to investigate things which “eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man,” to speak about that “which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” Even science has not succeeded in giving a clear explanation of dreams. So they remain the products of fantasy and sleep. It follows that the Christian who wants to communicate with loved ones beyond the grave, through dreams, is wasting his time. There is also a danger that he will be drawn into those errors which St. Gregory of Nyssa writes about: “Hence the dreamers who make the deceptions of dreams more credible than the teachings of the Gospel.” Moreover the Holy Scriptures make it plain that it is possible for a person to arrive at idolatry, trying to interpret dreams. Therefore, a severe penalty is imposed: “And that . . . dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death” (Deut. 13:5).

Some Christians do not believe or are not satisfied with what God, through the teaching of the Church, has revealed about those souls who are now in His absolute jurisdiction. Such unbelief leads inevitably to error. Later, quite naturally, the error gives its victim imaginary rights to create other means of communication with the dead, and thus he enters God’s jurisdiction, and goes against His will. There, perhaps, he encounters souls, he submits them to interrogation, he makes them satisfy his sickly curiosity, he makes them “talk.” But the end result is fraud, guile, a lie from the source of lies, “from him who was a liar from the beginning,” as the Lord characterized the Devil.

There are other ways to communicate with souls which are fraudulent and dangerous. They are known as “spiritualism” or “hypnotism” or by other names which describe the same actions and phenomena used for communication with the dead. In ancient times they were called divination, necromancy, interpellation of the dead, and so forth. The fact that the

former pythoness is now called a medium, isn’t important. Nor is it a great change that the former oracles tend to appear with an up-to-date scientific cloak, and shock us with “scientific” revelations. Sooner or later the futility of it all, as well as the basic error, is revealed, and once again the voice of God triumphs. The Bible has always called these methods fraudulent and harmful and it points out that they all proceed from the same source of untruth: “For wizards shall not be found among you, interrogating the dead,” God commands. By wizards are meant mediums. “Every man that does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God,” He adds. Men who are “deceivers and deceived,” as the Apostle Paul calls them, still urge people (as they did in the time of Isaiah) to “Seek among those who have familiar spirits, and among wizards that peep, and that mutter,” or, as they say today, “Go to the medium.” In the same passage Isaiah asks the victims of this deception, “Why do you seek understanding of the living from the dead? He has given a law to help” (Is. 8:19,20). God gave us a perfect law, the law of the Gospel, the teaching of the Church. It is possible for you to receive every help — sufficient and safe help — for all the problems of your life, and especially for your pain, and for communication with the souls of your loved ones. So why then, dear Christian, do you leave the refreshing fountain of truth and get lost in the dirty, muddy swamps of error?

Believe His proclamation: “I am the resurrection and the life. I am the way and the truth and the life.” You will never be sorry for your faith.

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Nanticoke Parish Marks 90th Year



Vesting of Archbishop

St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church in Nanticoke, Pa. celebrated the 90th year of its founding on November 3-4, 2001. During the event a hierarchical divine liturgy was celebrated, officiated by His Eminence, Archbishop Herman, our pastor Archpriest Stephen Karaffa, and area clergy. Over 200 people were in attendance at the service. Responses were sung by St. John's Orthodox Church Choir and the Wyoming Valley Orthodox Choir. Certificates of appreciation were presented afterwards to parish members by Archbishop Herman in recognition of years of diligent service to St. John's.

Following the service, the parish hosted an anniversary banquet at the Genetti Hotel and Convention Center in Wilkes-Barre. Dinner was preceded by

an invocation offered by our diocesan archpastor, and a toast from 90th anniversary committee chairman Joseph Paprota. Following the dinner, toastmaster and parish council president Peter Truszkowski presided over a program that included a special presentation from the mayor of Nanticoke, Mr. John Toole, and remarks offered by the V. Rev. Vladimir Fetchko, Dean of the Wilkes-Barre Deanery, Archbishop Herman, and Father Stephen.

Parish leadership spoke of the inspiration of the event, and expressed gratitude to the many who worked to prepare for the day. Committee chairman Joseph Paprota said he felt "an indescribable warmth and peace that assured me that the Spirit of God was truly present with all of us."

Peter Truszkowski, parish council president, said, "I'm thankful for the opportunity to work with our parishioners and for the extra effort they put into making church a faithful beacon of the light of the Lord."

Father Stephen summed up the event in these words: "The response to all events this week was most gratifying; we could feel the presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst. The celebration was truly most inspiring."

May God continue to bless and increase the flock of Orthodox Christians as we begin the final decade of our first century in the Hanover section of Nanticoke, Pa.

—Michael Wolfkiel



The faithful receive the Holy Gifts



Michelle Maskalis receives Peter the Aleut award



Concelebrating clergy and altar servers



Presentation of gramota



Grand banquet toast

St. Cyril of Alexandria's Teaching on the Priesthood

Part IV (conclusion)



Protopresbyter George Dion Dragas

The Levites and their witness to the mystery of Christ

In Book 13 of his great treatise *On Worship in Spirit and in Truth*, St. Cyril turns to an examination of the OT stipulations for the Levites, which he had left out in his earlier examination of Aaron the High Priest and his sons, the priests. He cites the relevant text from Numbers (18:25-32) and embarks on his profound spiritual exposition. Briefly stated, this text stipulates that the Levites are to take a tithe (one tenth) from the people for their services at the Tabernacle and they, in turn, should offer a tithe of their portion to the Lord. It is further stipulated that this tithe, comprising wheat and wine, was to be offered to God through Aaron the High Priest and that it would be taken from the first-fruits, that is, from the best portion.

For St. Cyril these stipulations reveal the mystery of Christ! He finds the hint for this understanding in St. Paul the Apostle. St. Paul, he says, tells us, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, *He who receives tithes has to give tithes himself* (Heb. 7:9). At the time of the Apostle, St. Cyril notes, this statement referred to Melchizedek, whereas at the time of Moses it referred to Aaron. Both of these references, however, are — according to St. Cyril — types of the Priest of Priests, the Leader of the Tabernacle which is the Church, the Holy One of the Saints, the God of gods to whom we owe all fruit-bearing. It is to Him that all gifts are offered (Ps. 75:11). The stipulations of Moses reveal this truth through the types, but now the types no longer apply, be-

cause the true guardians of the evangelical institutions (the Christian priests) please their Savior with spiritual fruit bearing.

The Levites and the distinction of clergy and laity

St. Cyril turns next to the fact that the Levitical generation (tribe) is selected (*apolekton genos*) and separated (*exeremenon*) from all others. This becomes obvious in the stipulations concerning the census (*apographe*) of the tribes of Israel, which, incidentally, was indicative of God's care for every particular human being and symbolized their being recorded in the Book of Life. According to these stipulations a distinction was to be made between the ordinary lay people (*to demotikon genos*) and the Levites (*to leuitikon genos*), the latter being selected and sacred. The verse Num. 1:49 is the exact text of this stipulation, which St. Cyril cites. St. Cyril proceeds to explain that the above distinction was introduced because the lot (*kleros*) of the saints is exceptionally high and the honor that belongs to them exceeds all others. Thus, the Levites were recorded in a separate Book. This is why, St. Cyril continues, Daniel speaks of "Books" in connection with the last judgment (Dan. 7:10).

According to St. Cyril, the distinction between clergy (the Levites) and laity (the ordinary people) was functional, because it had to do with the "sacred services" (*tas theias hierourgias*), which made the former a "distinct" (*eknemethen*) and "superior"

(*anakeimenon*) gender. But what exactly were these sacred services, for which the Levites were set apart from the rest of the people? To answer this, St. Cyril digs further into the rich and involved text of the book of Numbers and especially to the passage 3:6-10, which he cites and expounds. These sacred services, he says, were assisting services to Aaron the High Priest, and his sons, the priests. They were also services of guardianship and care of the Tabernacle of Witness, since this Tabernacle was under the jurisdiction (responsibility) of Aaron and his sons.

The distinction of priests and Levites and the Church's order

St. Cyril observes in the Book of Numbers a clear distinction between the services of the Levites and those of the High Priest and his sons. Indeed, according to Num. 3:10, the priests were to exercise their priestly services and whatever else they had to do at the altar and inside the veil (*ta esotera tou katapetasmatos*); that is to say, they had to do what was "top secret" (*aporreton*) and "more mystical" (*mystikoteron*) in character and was according to custom left to those who presided in the services of the divine altar. All this, St. Cyril notes, primarily refers to Christ, because he is the One that God placed over the whole House; but it also refers to us, human beings, because we too are God's household.

It is not difficult to see, St. Cyril notes, that the priests who escorted Aaron in the liturgy denote the sacred and mar-

velous chorus of the Holy Apostles who collaborated and concelebrated, as it were, with Christ! The Apostles were indeed God's "collaborators" (*theou synergoi*, I Cor. 3:9), "treasurers" (*tamiai*) and "stewards" (*oikonomoi*) of the mysteries of God (I Cor. 4:1) and, certainly, "ministers" (*diakonoi*) of the Word through whom we have believed. It is clear, St. Cyril contends, that a detailed examination of "church order" (*tes ekklesias ten taxin*) would easily discover its exact prefiguration (*proanatyposin*) in the Law. To the bishops (high priests), then as leaders, and of course to those of the lesser order, the presbyters (priests), God entrusted the altar and the inner area of the veil (our present day *iconostasion*), where the sacred, priestly liturgy is executed. To the deacons, however, God granted the guardianship of the Tabernacle, of all its vessels and all else that the people ought to supply. The deacons are those who give orders in the Church, concerning the hymns people should offer, or silence in prayer, or the bloodless sacrifice, at which they bring forth the *prospophora* and supply all the necessary vessels.

The priests were the true leaders of the ancient liturgy and the Levites were their assistants according to the letter of the Law. The laity, however, was strictly prohibited from engaging in anything that is priestly or belongs to the honor of the priests. Indeed, it is stipulated that if anyone comes forth on his own (*automolos*) to the priestly service without the divine election (*psephon*) he should be put to death.

The enrollment of the Levites and the clergy/laity distinction

There are other important details concerning the enrollment of the Levites, which St. Cyril finds in the Book of Numbers and which are indicative of truths that are important to Christians. The first one is the method of enrollment according to patriarchal families and other tribal and family subdivisions. The long text of Numbers 3:14-20, which St. Cyril cites, gives details about this. The most important detail that attracts St. Cyril's attention is the differentiation in the age of enrollment for ordinary lay people and for Levites. Ordinary people were enrolled at the age of 20 and over. Levites, however, were enrolled at the

age of one month and above.

The first case, St. Cyril notes, indicates that the severity of the Law did not deem worthy of enrollment in God's Book of Life any immature person, that is, any person that lacked in physical strength. According to St. Cyril, this physical provision points typologically to a spiritual one: the saints who were worthy to have themselves enrolled in God's service had to be spiritually mature.

The case of the Levites points to something else: that the Lord equally accepts those who are babes in Christ (*ten en Christo nepioteta*) and those who are mindful (*to emphron*). Levites had to have both "prudence" (*synesin*) and "generosity" (*aploteta*). This twofold standard, St. Cyril says, is exactly what the divine Apostle expects of the Christians. *Brethren, do not be like children in your thinking; be babes in evil, but in thinking be perfect* (I Cor. 14:20). Similarly, Christ himself said, *Be wise as serpents and meek as doves* (Matt. 10:16). The simplicity of faith, then, or the simple believer, is acceptable to the Lord.

Finally, the divisions and subdivisions of the enrollment according to each person, group and gender, indicates how particular and exact is God's care for his people. This is, St. Cyril says, like that saying of the Savior to his holy Apostles, ". . . you are of more value than many sparrows" (Matt. 10:31).

Another important detail, underlined by St. Cyril in this context, is the second enrollment, which the Law ordered for the Levites. This enrollment had to do with the liturgical function that was specified for each Levite. The relevant and highly elaborate text, cited here, is Numbers 4:2-15. In contrast to the first enrollment which was at the age of one month, this one was at the age of twenty-five and over, up to fifty. The first, St. Cyril says, points to the "innocence" (*akakia*) of the saints, which is both most pleasing (*andanousa*) and most acceptable (*euparadektos*) to God. The latter points to the maturity of mindfulness (*to emphron*) and strength (*to eusthenes*), which are required for the best (*exairetoi*) and blameless (*adiabletos echousan*) liturgical service to God. No one, St. Cyril notes, who is unwise (*asophos*) and powerless (*analkis*) can offer liturgical service to God that is blameless, because it

is proven that virtuous achievements presuppose works of strength and perfection of mind.

The spiritual meaning of the covers of the holy vessels

Recalling the secondary place of the Levites in comparison with that of the priests, and the good order established by God, St. Cyril further discusses the meaning of the covers, which the Law specifies for the holy vessels, which are entrusted to the care of the Levites, sons of Caath.

The azure blue color or hyacinth (*hyakinthynos*) of the covers of the ark of the covenant and of the golden thurible, as well as the seven-branched lamp and of the rest of the liturgical vessels denotes what is above and heavenly, like the blue sky that lies above us and encompasses the immense span of the heavens. The vessels are the types of Christ, who came from above, as already stated.

The other color, which is specified for the covers, which the Levites care for, is the red or royal purple (*holoporphylon*), which is laid upon the table of the oblations (*thysiasterion karpomaton*), the altar of the holocaust and the fountain (*louter*). The table, St. Cyril notes, points to the bloodless sacrifice, with which we are blessed by eating the heavenly Bread, that is Christ, who took up our form, but was and is even in this form, God coming from above from the Father and above all king and Lord of the universe. The spreading of the royal purple color over the table of oblations is a concealed mystery of the kingdom of Christ! The purple red cover of the altar is clearly a type of the Blood of Christ, since it is Christ who was sacrificed for our sake and ascended to the divine altar like a Lamb and as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God the Father (Eph. 5:2). Finally, the purple red cover of the fountain is a prefiguration of the holy baptism, which washes us with sanctified waters for our putting off of sin and our transposition into the kingdom of heaven.

The spiritual meaning of the distinctions among Levites

Another detail that St. Cyril notices has to do with the way the different

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groups of the Levites carried out their specific duties in connection with the vessels and the entire fabric of the tabernacle of witness. The Caathites carried the vessels and their covers on foot, whereas the Gedsonites and Merarites carried the covers of the tabernacle and the pillars and other structural items of the tabernacle on carriages, as it is explained in Numbers 7:2-9.

Clearly, the Caathites had a much more difficult and laborious task. But this, says St. Cyril, was not without reason. It is always the case that those who go ahead and perform the primary and more sacred task, have to shed more sweat, to labor and even to suffer more than the others. These are not equal with the others, inasmuch as they have to be more holy and to stand closer to God.

St. Cyril believes that this provision is a type of a mystery. This mystery has to do with the Israelites and the Christians. The Caathites who carried the essential vessels signify those who have been by faith confirmed in the faith of Christ. The others, Gedsonites and Merarites, who had to carry the additional (secondary) items of the tabernacle, signify the people of the Law, the Israelites. Indeed, the Caathites carried those primary vessels, which denoted Christ in different ways (the ark, the altar, the golden lamp and the golden thurible), since, although he is simple in his nature as God, he performs different functions that are made known in various ways. The *living and active Word of the Father* (Heb. 4:12) is indeed life and light and aroma of spiritual fragrance.

Thus, according to St. Cyril those who are near God, through Moses' commandments, are in possession of the external or secondary (*ta perissa*) items of the tabernacle and, as such, they bear witness to the fact that the Law is of no use if it is not understood in a spiritual way. On the other hand, those who undertook with courage the service of the holies of the holies (*ta hagia ton hagion*), are themselves holy by the grace of Christ and possess nothing that is external or secondary, since in a certain manner they carry on them Emmanuel himself! The Caathites had no carriages, but carried the holies of the holies on their shoulders.

St. Cyril further observes that the externals of the Law were transported on carriages because they were heavy. That the Law in general was heavy, he says, is clearly stated in Acts 15:10, which presents the position of the divine apostles on the status of the Law for the Christians. They saw the Law as a heavy yoke, which should not be loaded on the meek Christians, since even the fathers of the Jews had found it heavy and impossible to bear. On the contrary, Christ's yoke, as Christ himself stated (Matt. 11:30) is easy and his burden light.

Another interesting detail that draws St. Cyril's attention here is the difference between the first enrollment and the second enrollment of the Levites. In the first one the order was Gedsonites (4 fatherhoods), Caathites (2 fatherhoods) and Merarites (2 fatherhoods). In the second enrollment, however, which started at 25 years of age, the Caathites were placed first. This exchange of places, says St. Cyril, is again a symbol of the exchange of places between Israelites and the hordes of the nations which occurred in the Christian economy, when the first came last and the last, first, according to the word of the Savior. Indeed, even the numbers were reversed, and this occurred according to the prediction of Exod. 32:10, which foretells the destruction of the synagogue and the rise of a new Israel, greater and larger than the first.

The divine calling as basis of the sacred ministry, and the sin of opposing a divinely appointed leader.

Returning to the Book of Numbers, St. Cyril observes that the entire tribe of the Levites was called to the sacred ministry, but the order of this ministry (*hohoros tes hierourgias*), that is, how each Levite family was to serve, was strictly specified by God and no one was allowed to disregard it without suffering severe consequences. This is clearly demonstrated in the case of Korah, which is described in Numbers 16. St. Cyril cites and expounds the first ten verses, which describe the distress of Moses over the claims of Korah.

Korah had claimed that the whole synagogue of the people was holy and that the Lord dwelt in all of them, and consequently all should have the right to become priests. These claims, St. Cyril

notes, brought dishonor to the measure (*to eknemethen metron*) that had been ordered by the Lord and stood in direct contradiction to the election of the divine legislator. In spite of Moses' attempts to pacify Korah and his sons by indicating to them their God-given privileges (Numbers 16:9), they insisted on their claims and consequently suffered a terrible loss. *They went down to Hell alive* as Ps. 54(55):16 puts it.

The lesson from this, as St. Cyril states, is that any rebellion against the leader who has been ordained by the Lord, or any trespassing of the measure that has been divinely set, is extremely dangerous, because it can incur the supreme punishment of death. Thus, St. Cyril admonishes that we should not strive to gain what has not been given to us, thinking that what is determined only from above and by divine fiat is common and accessible to all. There is an order (*taxis*) free from confusion that pertains to the sacred ministry, says St. Cyril, which cannot be ignored.

The privileges and "remuneration" of the Levites

The divinely instituted order of the sacred ministry distinguishes the roles of priests and Levites from the rest of the people — we might say, clergy from laity. They all enjoy God's blessings, but their offerings to the Lord (their tithes) and the corresponding services and privileges are ordered differently.

St. Cyril cites Numbers 18:20-23 and Deut. 18:1-5, which respectively specify the tithes ordered for Levites and for the Lord. The important point here, says St. Cyril, is that the sacred race (the clergy) is separated from the rest of the people. This separation is related not only to the services they offer but also to the future they hope for. As St. Cyril explains, all this has to do with the holy and blameless life, or the "eternal life," which entails: a) observance of God's commandments (*Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, etc.*); b) distribution of one's possessions to the poor in order to follow the Lord (Matt. 19:19-21); and finally c) total disengagement from earthly things and total attachment to the Lord as Ps. 36:4-5 specifies (*Make the Lord your delight, put all your hope on him and he will satisfy your needs*).

It is because of this kind of separa-

tion, or dedication, or labor of service, says St. Cyril, that Levites receive tithes. Indeed, the labor of the saints, he says, is not without reward. They enjoy both, exceptional honor and bright trophies. This is why the Savior said, *Do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat, or about your body, what you shall put on . . . but seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you* (Matt. 6:25,33).

Furthermore, the Levites are to eat from the offerings (sacrifices) which are made for sin, and which again are types of Christ, who was sacrificed for us, and in order to abolish the sins of the world. Indeed, only the separated and pure persons can partake of the holy Body of Christ. To them, according to St. Cyril, the statement of 1 Peter 2:9 primarily applies, *You are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a people to be cared for*. The Law specified that Levites were to eat the front leg, the jaws and the stomach, because, as St. Cyril explains, they symbolize respectively ability to act, to speak out and to bear fruit. Are not these abilities, he asks, the true characteristics of those truly known to God?

The particular commitments of the Levites

St. Cyril observes that in general the Levites were separated from the rest of the people in two ways: a) as having no earthly lot (possessions) and b) as having the Lord himself as their lot (possession)!

Nevertheless, the Levites were not completely deprived of earthly possessions. The Lord gave them enough for their needs. Sufficiency (*eparkeia*) was to be their earthly lot. St. Cyril explained this on the basis of Lev. 35:1-6, which specifies land and six cities for the Levites.

The saints, says St. Cyril, need to have sufficient resources for their lives in this world and for the needs of the body. 1 Tim. 6:8 expresses the same point. *Having food and covers (raiment), let us be content with them*. Indeed, to go beyond this is not without harm, St. Cyril observes. Indeed, to acquire more than you need would easily lead to comfort and avarice (*tryphe*), just as to have less than you need easily leads to discomfort and spite.

In the case of the Levites the Lord, says St. Cyril, made sufficiency (*aurarkeia*) commensurate with the need (*chreia*). The reason for this is that Levites are to be a measure, a type and a living example to the others, who are given to or driven by bodily passions. Indeed, Levites are to care for the others as "prisoners" according to Hebrews 13:3 — *Remember those that are prisoners, as if you were prisoners with them, who suffer adversity, since you too are in the body*.

The secure property of the Levites and its deeper meaning

St. Cyril cites next Lev. 25:8-13 and 25:29-34, which deal with "sabbatical rest" of the land (*sabbatismos*), the "Day of Atonement" (*hemera hilasmou*) and the "fiftieth year of emancipation and deliverance" (*etos or eniautos aphaseos*). According to Lev. 25, Levite city and country property was to enjoy full protection. It could not be sold forever, like other properties, but reverted to their owner on the fiftieth year of emancipation. Such a provision, St. Cyril notes, denotes the assurance of the hope of the saints and the perseverance of what has been allotted to them.

St. Cyril goes even deeper into the spiritual meaning of these stipulations of the Law for buying and selling property. Thus, he says, that the distinction between country and city property implies two types of people, those who are weak in defending themselves from the invasions of their enemy and those who are able to fight wisely and valiantly for their salvation. The former can be easily forgiven for their mistakes, but the latter not so, if they sold their property unwisely and carelessly.

St. Cyril sees those with country property as a type of the nations and those with city property as a type of the elect people of God, because according to Zach. 2:9, *the Lord is like a city wall around the holy city and besides, the people of the city have a God-given law for their protection and know what is pleasing to God* (Baruch 4:4). On this basis St. Cyril says that the Nations [Gentiles] can be forgiven by God's mercy for their weakness, but the indolent Jews, who sold the gift allotted to them, will not be restored on the Day of Atonement when the Savior brings de-

liverance. Is. 50:1 explicitly states the case of the Jews: *Behold, for your iniquities you have sold yourselves, and for your transgressions your mother (Zion) is put away*. Col. 2:13-14 states the case of the Nations who were delivered on the Day of Deliverance, when Christ appeared and granted to all believers the great mercy. *And you who were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, having cancelled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross*.

The Levites then, being exempted among the Jews in the sense that they had their property secure, were the type of the saints, who did not transgress against the Lord, and did not sell their rights to the enemy. An example of this is Mary of whom Christ said, *she chose the good part which shall not be taken away from her* (Luke 10:43). To all such people, priestly or lay, redemption and assurance of hope are granted through Christ. Put in other words, says St. Cyril, the Israelites did not discern the Day of Redemption and sold their property, whereas the Nations retained their hope and regained the natural goods through Christ.

The property of the sons and the property of the servants

St. Cyril turns to Ezek. 46:16-18 to elaborate further his interpretation. This text refers to the property which is given by a Master to his son and which in turn passes to the son's sons and to his servants. Such a given property will not be taken away from the sons, but on the Day of Deliverance the servants will return it to the Master. In contrast to the property of the servants that of the sons will be retained and even augmented by inheriting later on the Master's property.

The Master's son here is for St. Cyril the high priest and the sons of the Master's son are the priests. The point made, then, is that property that belongs to priests will never be lost, but what was given to their servants will revert to them on the Day of Atonement. It is also said, however, St. Cyril adds, that the Master will not take away any of the property of the people, but he will keep what is his forever. The point here is that what

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is given from father to children is permanent, but what is given to servants is not so, for it is ultimately lost.

All of us Christians, says St. Cyril, who have been saved by faith, have Christ as our Master. He is the Son who has the inheritance of God his Father but we too are sons instead of servants through him. Thus he said: *All that are mine are yours, and what are yours are mine, and I have been glorified in them* (John 17:10). The Psalmist put it like this: *He ascended on high and captured captivity and gave gifts to men* (Ps. 67:19). The Apostle added: *He gave some to the Church to be first as Apostles, then as Prophets, and third as Teachers* (I Cor. 12:28); and elsewhere, *To one he gives a charisma to speak with wisdom, to another to speak with divine knowledge* (I Cor. 12:8). Christ, then, fills the souls of those who love him with goods that are theirs forever.

Thus, St. Cyril concludes, all that has been given to priests and freemen is secure. To those, however, that have a servile spirit and are descendants, as it were, of the Israelites who did not accept the faith that delivers us, but remained yoked to abominable sin and lost the grace that was given to them through Moses, namely, the exact knowledge of the Law which leads to Christ, no allotment with the saints will be secured nor will they partake of Christ. As Matt. 13:12 puts it, *To him who has more, will be given, and to him who does not, even what he thinks he has will be taken away*. Also, the Lord himself has confirmed that Israel lost her inheritance because she did not believe and did not regain her freedom: *Amen, amen, I say to you, he who commits sin, is a servant of sin, and a servant does not remain in the house for ever. He who remains (in the house) for ever is the Son. If then, the Son delivers you, you will be truly free* (John 8:34-36). The inheritance, then, befits those who are free, and not those who carry the yoke of slavery. The sons, and not the servants, remain in the house.

The inheritance of the saints: the heavenly Jerusalem

St. Cyril also explains another detail in Ezekiel's statement: *The Master will not take from the inheritance of his*

people to give it as an inheritance to his sons (Ezek. 46:18). This, he says, refers to Christ, our Master, who will never give to the saints what is not theirs. Indeed those who gave their life completely to God will not inherit a different lot than the fullness of the glory of Christ.

The point here, says St. Cyril, is that the saints would not ask or expect to receive from Christ what befits the people of the world and those who do not pursue the holy life. The Lord's Prayer, which he gave to his Apostles, tells us what the saints would ask for. To those who ask beyond these, it can only be said, *You ask and do not receive, because you ask in an evil way* (James 4:3). The Psalmist too is absolutely right in saying, *You will give to each one according to his works* (Ps. 61:13). We cannot receive beyond what we deserve in return for our works. In any case, says St. Cyril, it makes no sense if those who have been sanctified desire what belongs to those in the world, namely, things that are temporary and of the flesh, things that pass away like shadows.

The inheritance of the Levites is the special gift that God bestows on his servants, which is common to them all and identical with the one and renowned Jerusalem. The text Deut. 18:6-8, which St. Cyril cites, shows how all Levites enjoy an equal reward due to their office and service. The same applies, St. Cyril says, to the priests of the Christian Churches of his day. Each priest has a specific parish and when he visits another parish or land he enjoys equal hospitality with the other priests.

There is, however, something deeper and more "mystical" here, says St. Cyril. There are many priests all over the world in the many parishes and lands who offer "the acceptable sacrifices to God" (Heb. 13:16). Although they are many they all look to and run towards the heavenly Jerusalem as to a common mother, the Church of the firstborn, the good city that is above (Heb. 12:22-23), the true Tabernacle, which the Lord established and not a man. It is there, in the heavenly Jerusalem, says St. Cyril, that we shall offer our service more pure, when sin will be completely removed from us, when the roaring lion and the dragon and the snake will cease to pester us. As Isaiah puts it, *The road will be pure and*

it will be called a holy road. No lion will be found there, nor any evil beast will ever ascend there (Is. 35:8-9). There too, as the Psalmist says, *you will enjoy the fruit of your labors* (Ps. 127:2), because we all will receive plentiful reward for our deeds through the Lord's generosity and according to his greater measure. As Luke 6:38 states, *His gift will be given to you into your bosom with a measure that is full and compressed and well-fitted and it will be overflowing*.

The necessity and the unity of the priesthood in the One Church

Another final point that St. Cyril discusses are the stipulations of the Law which ordered that all sacrifices and services were to be offered only by Levites and only in the one Tabernacle as opposed to the cities of the Levites (Lev. 17:8-9 and 12:17-18). The first stipulation that without Levites no offerings could be made, indicates, according to St. Cyril, the need of a mediator in man's approach to God, and this in turn, points to Christ, of whom the Levites were imitators. The second stipulation, that only in the one Tabernacle the offerings of the Levites could be made, points to the other mystery of Christ and the Church which is indeed One. In the words of St. Cyril, "The Church is One, and the mystery of Christ is One and there is no sacrifice that is lawful, worthy not to be rejected and well-pleasing to God, unless it is offered in the One Tabernacle which is the Church.

The importance of these points is seen in another provision which Deut. 14:22-27 made and which St. Cyril cites and expounds. Those in faraway cities who had to travel long distances to come to Jerusalem to offer their tithes were allowed to sell their tithes for money and they would purchase new ones in Jerusalem which would serve their desires and needs. It is clear then, that the Law would not allow any offering to be made in any other way except in the way already specified. The need of the services of Levites was absolutely universal (*katholikoate*), says St. Cyril in answering Palladios his interlocutor.

The necessity of the Law at this point, St. Cyril goes on to explain, rests on the fact that "a priest was a type (*typos*) and impression (*ekmageion*) of Christ." Scripture, St. Cyril continues, has clearly

announced that Emmanuel is the mediator between God and human beings, the apostle and high priest of our confession (I Tim. 2:5 and Heb. 3:1), who entered into the Holies of the Holies not with the blood of rams and bulls but his own, and not many times, but once for all, accomplishing our eternal redemption. Indeed, it was with the one sacrifice that he offered that, according to the Scriptures (Heb. 9:12-13), he made eternally perfect those whom he sanctified. That Christ is the crowned priestly celebrant (*hierourgos*), says St. Cyril, is also confirmed by Christ's own words: *The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father* (John 5:22-23). The following holy utterance confirms the same: *There is one lawgiver and judge* (James 4:12) and David also sings, *And God is the judge* (Ps. 49:6).

The divine authority, greatness and glory of the priesthood

St. Cyril also cites here Deut. 17:8-13 which shows how the priests in Israel served as absolute judges, whose judgment had to be sought and could not be discarded without the most severe

punishment. The reason for this priestly authority, says St. Cyril, rested not on the priests themselves, but on the lawgiver. Indeed, as Malachi put it, *a priest's lips had to keep knowledge and people should seek the Law from his mouth, because he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty* (Mal. 2:7). A priest does not produce his own law, but he is bound by duty to lead others to the right application of the law that is God's.

St. Cyril stresses here the greatness of the priesthood, which consists in the priests standing before God (*parastasis*) and offering service to him (*leitourgia*). Thus, he finds the opportunity also to emphasize the duty of the people to listen to and obey the priests. Indeed, the Lord himself asked for this in speaking about the scribes and the Pharisees in spite of the unworthiness of their works. *The scribes and the Pharisees sat on Moses' seat; so practice and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do; for they preach but do not practice* (Matt. 23:2-3). No one then, says St. Cyril, should judge a priest, even if the latter seems to be careless and indolent in his life concerning the law. One, however, should obey a priest when he interprets the law. In other words, the divine

institutions are one thing and human inadequacies, another.

Finally St. Cyril emphasizes the glory of the priesthood. The priesthood, he says, is like a lamp that has been lighted up with divine light and has been placed in a prominent place, just as the Savior said: *No one after lighting up a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a bushel, but on a stand, that those who enter may see the light*. Similarly, St. Cyril speaks of priests as bearers of glad tidings from mountaintops, following Isaiah: *O you who brings glad tidings to Zion* (Is. 40:9). As for the OT types of the glory of the priesthood he recalls Aaron's death, which occurred on Mount Or, according to the Lord's commandment, where Aaron passed on his high priestly garments to his son and successor Eleazar (Num. 20:23-29). Mount Or, St. Cyril says, is high and is seen by all, and denotes the conspicuous glory (*to en doxe periphanes*) of the priesthood. And so, St. Cyril concludes, "Let it be said then, to everyone who has been brought to the priesthood (*hierourgia*), *You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden* (Matt. 5:14).

—Protopresbyter George Dion. Dragas



Board of Trustees meets at St. Tikhon's Seminary

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

Part IX

Continuing his refutation of the doctrine of the preexistence of souls which he began in the last installment, St. Cyril now offers 24 arguments against this false teaching. He then resumes his commentary on John's gospel, beginning with verse 1:10b.¹

Thoughts or reflections of a complex and syllogistic sort

1. If the soul of man has existence prior to the formation of the body, and, declining to evil in accordance with the surmises of some, has for punishment of its transgression a descent into flesh, tell me, how does the Evangelist say that it is enlightened on coming *into the world*? For I suppose this is honor and the addition of fair gifts. But one is not punished by being honored, neither is one chastised by being made recipient of the divine good things, but by meeting with what is of the wrath of the punisher. But since man on his coming into *the world* is not in this condition, but on the contrary is even *enlightened*, it is I suppose clear that he who is honored with flesh does not have his embodiment as a punishment.

2. *Another*. If, before the body, the soul was a mind still pure, living in bliss, and by turning aside towards what is trifling fell, and therefore came to be in flesh, how is it *enlightened* on its entry *into the world*? For one would have to say that it was destitute of light before it came; if so, how was that mind pure then,

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

which had the beginning of enlightenment when it came *into the world*, and not without flesh?²

3. *Another*. If the soul of man existed before the body, and because of this the mind existed, still pure, attached more properly to the desire for good things; but because of turning aside to the worse is sent into earthly body, and, while existing in it, no longer rejects the will to transgress — how is it not wronged, not [then] specially entrusted with the doing of this, when it existed with a greater aptness for virtue,³ not as yet in bondage to the vices that proceed from the body — but then out of season compelled to do this when it had come into the turbid waters of sin? But the Deity will not miss the suitable time, nor will he to whose nature doing injury does not belong, injure. In season then and rightly, we refuse sin when in the flesh, having only this time of existence, when we come *into the world* with a body, leaving the former nonexistence a sort of place, and passing from it into a beginning of being.

4. *Another*. What reason is there, I would delight to ask them, in the soul that sinned prior to the body being sent into the body, that it might learn by ex-

2. St. Cyril seems to reason: if the soul truly preexisted, and begins to be enlightened when it comes into the world, it must have existed in darkness beforehand, but this contradicts the notion of its purity in the preexistence.

3. Cyril's point seems to be: if the soul fell from greater virtue into the existence in a body, and in this state is less inclined to reject the choice of sinning — would it not make more sense that this challenge and task of rejecting evil should have been entrusted to the soul when it was in the former, higher state of virtue, rather than after it fell from that state into bodily existence? But the truth is, he concludes that we have only the existence in the body, and it is then that we rightly refuse sin.

perience the disgrace of its own lusts? For they are not ashamed to propose this too. And indeed it ought to have been withdrawn from the very imagination of its vices, rather than thrust down to the very depth of base pleasures. For this rather than the other would have been a means of healing. If then it has the embodiment [as] an increase of diseases in order that it may revel in the pleasures of the body, one would not praise the Corrector who injures the sick by the very means whereby he thought to make it well. But if it has it in order that it may cease from its passions, how is it possible that after falling into the very depth of lust it should arise, and not rather have spurned the very beginning of the disease, while it was free from that which dragged it down into sin?⁴

5. *Another*. If the soul in preexistence transgressed and was for this reason entangled with flesh and blood, receiving this as a kind of punishment, how is it not the duty of those who believe in Christ and who by this received the remission of sin, to go out of their bodies at once, and throw aside that which is put about them as a punishment? Tell me, how does the soul of man have perfect remission⁵ while still bearing about it the method of its punishment? But we see that those who believe are so far from wishing to be freed from their bodies, that together with their confessions in

4. If the soul, having fallen into the depths of evil by becoming embodied, would then reject sins, why would it not reject the very beginnings of sin all the more while it was free from the embodiment which dragged it down into sin? Therefore, it is illogical to think that the soul fell from a pure state into bodily existence.

5. remission: i.e., of sins; forgiveness.

Christ they proclaim the resurrection of the flesh. So that which is honored even with the confession of the faith, cannot be a method of punishment, as it witnesses, through its return back to life, to the divine power of the Savior's ability to do all things easily.

6. *Another.* If the (according to them) preexisting soul sinned and was for this reason entangled with flesh, why does the Law order the graver offenses to be honored with death, and allow the one who has committed no crime to live? For I suppose that it would rather have been right to let those who are guilty of the basest vice linger long in their bodies, that they might be the more heavily punished, and to let those who had committed no crime free from their bodies, if the embodiment ranks as a punishment. But on the contrary, the murderer is punished with death, the righteous man suffers nothing in his body. The embodiment does not therefore belong to punishment.

7. *Another.* If souls were embodied for previous sins, and the nature of the body were invented as a sort of punishment for them, how did the Savior profit us by abolishing death? How rather was not decay [corruption] merciful, destroying that which punished us, and putting an end to the wrath against us? So one might rather say that it would be more appropriate to give thanks to decay than on the contrary to him who laid on us endless infliction through the resurrection of the dead. And yet we give thanks as freed from death and decay through Christ. Hence embodiment is not of the nature of punishment to the soul of man.

8. *Another from the same idea.* If the souls of men were entangled with earthly bodies in satisfaction of earlier transgressions, tell me what thanks shall we acknowledge to God who promises us the Resurrection? For this is clearly a renewal of punishment and a building up of what hurts us, if a long punishment is clearly bitter to every one. It is then grievous that bodies should rise which have a duty of punishment to their wretched souls. And yet nature has from Christ the resurrection as a gift renewing it for joy. The embodiment is not therefore of the nature of punishment

9. *Another.* The prophetic word appears as publishing to us some great and thrice-desired feast. For it says, *The dead*

shall arise, and those who are in the tombs shall be raised (Isa. 26:19). But if the embodiment is indeed of the nature of punishment to the wretched souls of human beings, how would the prophet not rather grieve when proclaiming these things as from God? How would that proclamation in any way be good which brings us the continuance of what vexes us? For, if he wished to gladden those who had received bodies by reason of sin, he should rather have said "The dead shall not arise, and the nature of the flesh shall perish." But on the contrary he rejoices them saying that there shall be a resurrection of bodies by the will of God. Therefore, how can the body, in which both we ourselves rejoice and God is well pleased, be (in accordance with the unadvice of some) of the nature of a punishment?

10. *Another.* God, in blessing the blessed Abraham promised that his seed should be as the innumerable multitude of the stars. If it were true that the soul, sinning in advance of the body, is sent down to earth and flesh to be punished, God promised to the righteous man an ignoble multitude of condemned ones, running away from good, and not a seed that is a participant of blessing. But God says this as a blessing to Abraham; therefore the origin of bodies is freed from all accusation.

11. *Another.* The race of the Israelites spread forth into a great and numberless multitude. And indeed, justifiably marveling at this very greatly, the hierophant Moses prays, saying to them, *And behold you are today as the stars of heaven for multitude: the Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times more than you are* (Deut. 1:10-11). But if it were punishment to the souls of men to be in the world with bodies, and they are required to be so, and not naked of them, Moses' saying will be found to be in truth a curse, not a blessing. But it is not so, it was made as a blessing; the embodiment therefore is not of the nature of punishment.

12. *Another.* To those who attempt to ask wrongly, God does not bear to give. And an unlying witness to us will be the disciple of the Savior, saying, *You ask and receive not, because you ask wrongly* (James 4:5). Therefore, if it were a punishment to a soul to be embodied, how would not one with reason say that

Hannah the wife of Elkanah missed widely of what was fitting when she so extended her prayer up to God and asked for the offspring of a man (1 Sam. 1:10-20). For she was asking for the downfall of a soul and its descent into a body. How then did God come to give her the holy Samuel as her son, if it were entirely necessary that a soul should sin, in order that thus, being entangled with a body, it might fulfill the woman's request. And yet God, to whom it is inherent to give only good things, gave; and, by readily assenting to her, he frees her request from all blame. Therefore, embodiment is not a result of sin, nor yet of the nature of punishment as some say.

13. *Another.* If the body has been given as a punishment to the soul of man, what induced Hezekiah the king of Jerusalem, although good and wise, to deprecate, not without bitter tears, the death of the body, and to shrink from putting off the instrument of his punishment, and to entreat that he might be honored with an increase of years, although if he were really good, he surely ought not to have deprecated death, but to have thought it a burden to be entangled with a body and to have acknowledged this rather than the other as a favor. And how did God promise him as favor saying, *Behold I will add unto your days fifteen years* (2 Ki. 20:1-6) even though the promise was an addition of punishment, not a form of kindness, if these set forth the truth? Yet the promise from above was a gift and the addition a kindness. Therefore the embodiment is not a punishment to souls.

14. *Another.* If the body is given to the soul of man in the light of punishment, what favor did God repay to the eunuch who brought up Jeremiah out of the dungeon, saying, *I will give you life for a prize and will save you from the Chaldeans?* (Jer. 45:5). For he should rather have let him die that he might also honor him, releasing him from the prison and punishment. Tell me, what did he give to the young men of Israel, in delivering them from the flame and from the cruelty of the Babylonians? Why did he rescue the wise Daniel from the cruelty of the lions? (Dan. 3:1ff) But truly he does these things in kindness and is glorified because of them. To dwell in the flesh therefore is not of the nature of

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St. Cyril on John's Gospel

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punishment, so that honor and punishment at God's hands may not be one and the same.

15. *Another.* When Paul teaches us that there shall be in due time an investigation of each of those who have lived before the divine judgment seat, he says, *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad* (2 Cor. 5:10). But if it is only for the things done in the body that someone is punished, or rather is deserving of a suitable compensation, and no mention is made of prior sins, and no charge previous to his birth is gone into, how did the soul have any preexistence, or how was it humbled in consequence of sin, as some say, since only its time with flesh is marked out, in that only the things that were done in it are investigated?

16. *Another.* If souls were embodied on account of previous sins, how does Paul write to us saying, *Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God?* (Rom. 12:1). For if they were given to our wretched souls in the nature of punishment, how should we present then for an odor of a sweet fragrance to God? How could that through which we received our sentence, be acceptable? Or what kind of virtue at all will that admit of, whose nature is punishment, and [whose] root [is] sin?

17. *Another.* Showing that corruption is extended against the whole of nature of mankind because of the transgression in Adam, Paul says, *Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam* (Rom. 5:14). How then does he say that death reigned *even over those who had not sinned* if the mortal body were given us as the consequence of former sins? For where, at all, are those who have not sinned, if the embodiment is the punishment of faults, and our being in this life, with our body, is a preexisting charge against us?⁶ Uninstructed, then, is the proposition of our opponents.

6. St. Paul speaks of those who had not sinned; but, who could this be, if everyone who is in this life in the body, is so as a consequence of sins committed earlier by the soul in its preexistent state.

18. *Another.* The disciples once made inquiry of our Savior concerning one born blind, and said, *Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?* (John 9:2). For since it is written about God in the prophetic scriptures that *He visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children* (Exod. 34:7), the disciples began to imagine that such was the case with this man. What then does Christ say to this? Assuredly I say to you, *neither this man sinned nor his parents, but that the works of God should be revealed in him* (John 9:3). How then does he exempt them from sin, although not free from blame as to their lives? For being men, they were surely liable also to faults. But it is manifest and clear that the discourse pertains to the period prior to birth, during which they did not yet exist, nor had sinned, that Christ may be true.⁷

19. *Another.* The blessed prophet Isaiah explaining the reason the earth was made, says, *He did not create it in vain; he formed it to be inhabited* (Isa. 45:18). But it was entirely right that the earth should be inhabited, not filled with bare spirits, nor with fleshless and unclad souls, but with bodies suitable to it. Was it then divine counsel that wrought that souls should sin, in order that the nature of bodies should also come into being, and thus at length the earth be shown to have been created not in vain? But this is absurd; the other therefore has the better.⁸

20. *Another.* Wisdom the artificer of all things says about herself in the book of Proverbs, *I was she in whom he, the creator of all things, rejoiced; and I daily rejoiced always before him when he rejoiced in having consummated the world and took delight in the sons of men* (Prov. 8:30-31, LXX). Therefore, when on his completion of the world, God rejoices exceedingly in fashioning man, how is he who subjects the soul to previous sins and says that it was therefore embodied, and was punished in this manner, not be bereft of all sense? For would not God [then] be the maker of a prison rather

7. Cyril's point: Christ says the man and his parents had not sinned, when we know that everyone (in this life) has sins. So, the Lord must be referring to the pre-birth period, when they had neither existence nor sins.

8. God created the world not without a reason, but to be inhabited. This must mean with bodies, not mere souls. (Presumably souls would not have need of a material world to inhabit, whereas bodies would.) The idea that God that planned that the souls should sin, so that they would receive bodies, so that the earth's creation would not be in vain, is absurd.

than a world?⁹ Would he not be delighting contrary to reason in those who are undergoing punishment? And how would he be good who delights in things so absurd? But truly he is good and therefore the maker of things good; the embodiment will not therefore be of the nature of punishment.

21. *Another.* If the soul of man pays the penalty for transgressions prior to its birth in the world, by its entanglement with flesh, and the body occupies the position of a punishment to it, why was the flood brought in upon *the world of the ungodly*, and Noah being upright was preserved and has this recompense of his faith from God? For ought not rather those who had sinned exceedingly to have lingered a longer time in the body that they might also be punished more severely, and the good to have been set free from their bonds of flesh and received the release from the body as the recompense of their piety toward God? But I suppose that the Creator of all things, being just, lays on each rank the sentence due to it. Since then he being righteous punishes the ungodly with the death of the body, he again gladdens the righteous with life together with the body; bodies are no punishment to the souls of men, so God is not unrighteous, punishing the ungodly with favor, again honoring the righteous with punishment.

22. *Another.* If the soul has descended into flesh and body to pay the penalty of previous offenses, how did the Savior love Lazarus, raising him, and compelling him who was once set free from his bands to return to them again? But Christ did it helping him, and he honored him as a friend by raising him from the dead. Pointless therefore is the opponents' proposition.

23. *Another.* If, as they in their nonsense say, the body was given to the soul as an order of punishment, devised on account of its former sins, it was sin that brought in the nature of human bodies. But again also *death entered by sin* (Rom. 5:12); so sin clearly appears arming itself against itself, undoing the beginning by what follows; and Satan is therefore divided against himself; *how then shall his kingdom stand* (Matt. 12:26)? as our Savior says. But truly to think in this way is incredible; therefore

9. Since God rejoiced in his creation, and said that it was very good (Gen 1:31), would not this be absurd if he had created it as a prison for souls that had sinned?

the contrary is true.

24. *Another.* God created all things in incorruptibility and *He made not death* (Wis. 1:15), but *death came into the world through the devil's envy* (Wis. 2:24). But if it is true that the body was given to the soul of the human as a arrangement for punishment, why should we accuse the devil's envy of bringing us the termination of wretchedness and destroying the body which is our punishment?¹⁰ And for what in the world do we offer thanks to the Savior for having again bound us to the flesh through the resurrection? Yet we do indeed give thanks, and the envy of the devil has troubled our nature, procuring corruption to our bodies. The body then is no form of punishment, nor is it the wages of our former sin either.

And the world was made through him. (John 1:10b)

With these words the evangelist indicates, as he must, that the world was made through *the true light*, that is, the Only-Begotten. For although at the beginning, after most clearly calling him Word [*Logos*], he affirmed that *all things were made through him* and that *without him nothing* was brought into being — by this showing that he was their maker and creator — yet it was now necessary to take this up again anew, most particularly, so that no room for error and destruction might be left to those whose custom is to pervert the uprightness of the divine dogmas. For when he said of *the light* that it was *in the world*, in order that no one might twist this saying towards senseless ideas, making *the light* to be counted with the visible portions of the universe (as, for example, the sun and moon and stars are in the world, but as parts of the universe, and as limbs of one body), the evangelist profitably and necessarily introduces the Only-Begotten as creator and fashioner of all the world, and thereby fully establishes us again and leads us into an unerring and right apprehension of the truth. For who would be so silly or have such great folly in his mind, as not to conceive that he through whom the universe is said to have been made, is wholly other than it, and to assign the creature to its own portion, but, in reasoning, to sever off the

Creator and conceive that his nature is divine? For that which is made must, necessarily, be other than the maker in nature, that maker and made not appear to be the same.

For if they were conceived of as the same, without any inherent distinction as to mode of being, that which is made will rise up to the nature of the maker, and the Creator descend to that of the creature, and no longer have the sole power of bringing into being; but this will be found also to exist potentially in things that are made, if nothing at all separates them from consubstantiality with God; and so, from thenceforth, the creature will be its own creator and the evangelist will be endowing the Only-Begotten with merely an honorary title when he says that *He was in the world, and the world was made through him*. But he knows that the fashioner of all things is unique according to nature. Made and maker, God and creature, therefore, will not be conceived of as the same by those who know how to believe rightly, but the one will be subject as a servant, acknowledging the limit of its own nature; over it will reign the Son, having, with the Father, the sole power both to call *those things which do not exist as though they did* (Rom. 4:17) and, by his ineffable power, to bring into being that which is not yet.

But that the Son is wholly other than the creature, being by nature God, we will say nothing more of here, having already sufficiently covered this in the *Discourse about the Holy Trinity*. But we will add this for profit, that in saying that *the world was made through him*, he¹¹ brings us up to the thought of the Father, and with the “through whom” introduces also the “from whom.” For all things are from the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit.

And the world did not know him. (John 1:10c)

The bearer of the Spirit is watchful and hastens to prevent the sophistry of some; and you may again be amazed at the reasoning in his thoughts. He named the Son *true light*, and affirmed that he *enlightens every human being coming into the world*, and besides says that *he was in the world and the world was made through Him*.

But one of our opponents might

immediately say, “Sirs, if the Word were light, and if it enlightens the heart of every human being towards divine knowledge, that is, even to the understanding suitable for humankind, and if it were always in the world and were himself its maker, how is it that he came to be unknown even during such long periods? Therefore, he did not enlighten, nor was he *the Light* at all, either.”

The Theologian meets these things with some eagerness, saying, *The world did not know him*. It was not on account of himself that he was not known, he says; but let the world blame its own weakness. For the Son *enlightens*, the creature blunts the grace. It had imparted to it¹² sight to conceive of him who is God by nature, and it squandered the gift, it made created things the limit of its contemplation, it shrank from going further, it buried the illumination under its negligence, it *neglected the gift*, which [error], that it might not befall his disciple, Paul commands him to *be watchful*.¹³ Therefore, the fault of those who have been enlightened is not towards the light. For as the sun's light rises, but the blind is profited nothing, yet we do not therefore reasonably blame the sun's ray, but rather find fault with the disease of the sight (for the one was enlightening, the other did not receive the illumination); it is thus, I think, we ought to conceive of the Only-Begotten also, that he is *true light*. But the *god of this world*, as Paul also says, *has blinded the minds of those who do not believe, lest the light of the knowledge of God should shine among them* (2 Cor. 4:4). We say then that the man was subjected to blindness in this: not that he reached a total deprivation of light (for the God-given understanding is surely preserved in his nature) but that he was quenching it with his more foolish manner of life, and that by turning aside to the worse he was wasting and letting the measure of the grace melt away. For this reason the most wise Psalmist, too, when representing to us the character of such a person, then indeed, and rightly, begs to be enlightened, saying to God, *Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things out of your law* (Psa. 118:18). For *he gave them the law to be their help*, which rekindled in us

10. If the body was given to the human soul as a punishment, how could the devil feel envious of something that is a wretched state of punishment?

11. The holy evangelist, John.

12. It had imparted to it: i.e., Grace had imparted to the creature.

13. Cf. 1 Tim. 4:14, 2 Tim 4:5.

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the divine light and washed away from the eyes of the heart, like some rheum, the darkness which came upon them from the ancient unlearning.

The world then is under indictment both for ingratitude and insensibility in this matter, both as ignorant of its own Creator, and as exhibiting no good result from being enlightened, so that what was sung by prophet's voice of the children of Israel may plainly be true of it again: *I expected it to bring forth a cluster of grapes, but it brought forth thorns* (Isa. 5:2). For the result of being enlightened is indeed the genuine grasping of the Only-Begotten, like a kind of cluster hanging from the vine-branch of man's understanding, I am saying, and not on the contrary the uncounsel that drags one to delusion, making rise within us the trial of a bitter thorn that by its deceits wounds our mind to death.

He came to his own and his own did not receive him. (John 1:11)

The evangelist pursues his plea, that the world did not know not its illuminator — that is, the Only-Begotten — and from the greater sin of the children of Israel, he hastens to clinch the charges against the gentiles [nations, heathen] and shows the disease of ignorance and unbelief which alike lay upon the whole world. With a very firm foundation, he presses onward to discourse about the incarnation, and from speaking of pure theology, he comes down by degrees to the exposition of the economy with taking of flesh, which the Son made for our sakes.¹⁴

For it would be no cause of wonder, he says, if the world did not know the Only-Begotten, since it had left the understanding that is proper to man, and was ignorant that it is and was made *in honor*; and is compared to *the beasts that perish* (Psa. 48:12), as the divine Psalm-

ist also said; when the very people who, more than all, were supposed to belong to him shook him off when he was present with the flesh, and would not receive him when he came among them for salvation to all, giving the kingdom of heaven as a reward for faith. But observe how firm his language is about these things. For he accuses the world



"He came to his own, and his own did not receive him"

of not knowing, at all, him who enlightens it, working out a pardon for it so to speak just on this account, and preparing beforehand reasonable causes for the grace given to it. But with regard to those of Israel, who were reckoned among those specially belonging to him, he says they *did not receive him*. For it would not have been true to say, *did not know him*, when the older law proclaimed him, and the prophets who followed after it led them by the hand to the apprehension of the truth. Therefore the sentence of severity upon them was just, as also his mildness toward the gentiles. For the world, or the gentiles, having lost their intimacy with God through their downfall into evil, lost besides the knowledge

of him who enlightens them; but the others, who were rich in knowledge through the law and were called to a way of life pleasing to God, afterwards tripped up, not receiving the Word of God who was already known to them and who came among them as to his own. For the whole world is God's own, in accordance with the word that made it, and its being brought into being from him and through him; but Israel will more properly be called his own, and will gain the glory of this, both on account of the election of the holy fathers and because he was named the beginning and the first-born of God's children. For *Israel is my son, my first-born* (Ex. 4:22) says God somewhere to Moses; whom¹⁵ again setting apart as unique and chosen for himself, he was accustomed to call his own people, saying to Pharaoh king of Egypt, *Let my people go* (Ex. 8:1). Proof from the books of Moses also shows Israel's special relation to God. For *when*, it says, *the Most High was dividing the nations, when he was separating the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the nations according to the number of the angels of God, and his people Jacob became the Lord's portion, Israel the lot of his inheritance* (Deut. 32:8,9). Among them he also walked, as in his own lot and special portion, saying, *I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel* (Matt.

15:24).

But since he was not received, he transfers the grace to the nations [gentiles, heathens], and the *world* which *did not know him* at the beginning is enlightened through repentance and faith, and Israel returns to the darkness whence he had come out. For this reason the Savior also says, *For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.*

To be continued.

Based on the Pusey-Randell translation, with revisions. Footnotes added by the editor.

14. "Theology" refers to the doctrine of God in himself; "economy" refers to the doctrine of God's dealings with his creation.

15. whom: that is, Israel.

An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith

by St. John of Damascus

Part XII

Concluding Book 3, St. John discusses the concepts of suffering, death, innocent passions, fear, ignorance, growth, prayer, and descent to hades as they pertain to Christ's two wills, energies, and natures.

3.18 More about volitions and free-wills: minds, too, and knowledges and wisdoms.

When we say that Christ is perfect God and perfect man, we assuredly attribute to him all the properties natural to both the Father and mother. For he became man in order that that which was overcome might overcome. For he who was omnipotent did not in his omnipotent authority and might lack the power to rescue man out of the hands of the tyrant. But the tyrant would have had a ground of complaint if, after he had overcome man, God should have used force against him. Wherefore God in his pity and love for man wished to reveal fallen man himself as conqueror, and became man to restore like with like.

But that man is a rational and intelligent animal, no one will deny. How, then, could he have become man if he took on himself flesh without soul, or soul without mind? For that is not man. Again, what benefit would his becoming man have been to us if he who suffered first was not saved, nor renewed and strengthened by the union with divinity? For that which is not assumed is not remedied. He, therefore, assumed the whole man, even the fairest part of him, which had become diseased, in order that he might bestow salvation on the whole. And, in-

deed, there could never exist a mind that had not wisdom and was destitute of knowledge. For if it has not energy or motion, it is utterly reduced to nothingness.

Therefore, God the Word, wishing to restore that which was in his own image, became man. But what is that which was in his own image, unless mind? So he gave up the better and assumed the worse. For mind is in the borderland between God and flesh, for it dwells indeed in fellowship with the flesh, and is, moreover, the image of God. Mind, then, mingles with mind, and mind holds a place midway between the pureness of God and the denseness of flesh. For if the Lord assumed a soul without mind, he assumed the soul of an irrational animal.

But if the Evangelist said that *the Word was made flesh*,¹ note that in the holy Scripture sometimes a man is spoken of as a soul, as, for example, *with seventy-five souls came Jacob into Egypt*;² and sometimes a man is spoken of as flesh, as, for example, *All flesh shall see the salvation of God*.³ And accordingly the Lord did not become flesh without soul or mind, but man. He says, indeed, himself, *Why do you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth?*⁴ He, therefore, assumed flesh animated with the spirit of reason and mind, a spirit that holds sway over the flesh but is itself under the dominion of the divinity of the Word.

So, then, he had by nature, both as God

1. John 1:14.

2. Cf. Gen. 46:27; Acts 7:14.

3. Is. 40:5; Lk. 3:6

4. Jn. 8:40.

and as man, the power of will. But his human will was obedient anti subordinate to his divine will, not being guided by its own inclination, but willing those things which the divine will willed. For it was with the permission of the divine will that he suffered by nature what was proper to him. For when he prayed that he might escape the death, it was with his divine will naturally willing and permitting it that he did so pray and agonize and fear, and again when his divine will willed that his human will should choose the death, the passion became voluntary to him. For it was not as God only, but also as man, that he voluntarily surrendered himself to the death. And thus he bestowed on us also courage in the face of death. In this way, indeed, he said before his saving passion, *Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me*,⁵ showing plainly he was to drink the cup as man, and not as God. It was as man, then, that he wished the cup to pass from him: but these are the words of natural timidity. *Nevertheless*, he said, *not my will, that is to say, not in so far as I am of a different essence from you, but your will be done*,⁶ that is to say, My will and your will, insofar as I am of the same essence as you. Now these are words of courage. For since he truly became man in his good pleasure, the Lord's soul, on first testing its natural weakness was sensible of the natural fellow-suffering involved in its separation from the body, but being strengthened by the divine will

5. Mt. 26:39; Lk. 22:22.

6. Ibid.

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it again grew bold in the face of death. For since he was himself wholly God although also man, and wholly man although also God, he himself as man subjected in himself and by himself his human nature to God and the Father, and became obedient to the Father, thus making himself the most excellent type and example for us.

Of his own free-will, moreover, he exercised his divine and human will. For free-will is assuredly implanted in every rational nature; for what would be the purpose of its possessing reason, if it could not reason at its own free-will? For the Creator has implanted even in the unreasoning brutes natural appetite to compel them to sustain their own nature. For devoid of reason, as they are, they cannot guide their natural appetite but are guided by it. And so, as soon as the appetite for anything has sprung up, at once arises also the impulse for action. And thus they do not win praise or happiness for pursuing virtue, nor punishment for doing evil. But the rational nature, although it does possess a natural appetite, can guide and train it by reason wherever the laws of nature are observed. For the advantage of reason consists in this, the free-will by which we mean natural activity in a rational subject. Therefore in pursuing virtue it wins praise and happiness, and in pursuing vice it wins punishment.

Therefore the soul of the Lord, being moved of its own free-will willed, but willed of its free-will those things which his divine will willed it to will. For the flesh was not moved at a sign from the Word, as Moses and all the holy men were moved at a sign from heaven. But he himself, who was one and yet both God and man, willed according to both his divine and his human will. So it was not in choosing, but rather in their natural power that the two wills of the Lord differed from one another. For his divine will was without beginning and all-effecting, as having power that kept pace with it, and free from passion; while his human will had a beginning in time, and itself endured the natural and innocent passions, and was not naturally omnipotent [all-powerful]. But yet it was omnipotent because it truly and naturally had its origin in the God-Word.

3.19 *Concerning the theandric [divine-human] energy [activity].*

When he says that Christ exhibited to us a certain unprecedented divine-human [theandric] activity [energy], the blessed Dionysius does not do away with the natural energies by saying that one energy resulted from the union of the divine with the human energy; for we could, in the same way, speak of one new nature resulting from the union of the divine with the human nature. For, according to the holy Fathers, things that have one energy have also one essence. But he wished to indicate the new and ineffable manner in which the natural energies of Christ manifest themselves, a manner which matches well the ineffable manner in which Christ's natures mutually permeate one another, and further how strange and wonderful and, in the nature of things, unknown was his life as man, and finally the manner of the mutual interchange arising from the ineffable union. For we hold that the energies are not divided and that the natures do not energize separately, but that each conjointly in complete community with the other energizes with its own proper energy. For the human part did not energize merely in a human manner, for he was not mere man; nor did the divine part energize only after the manner of God, for he was not simply God, but he was at once God and man. For just as in the case of natures we recognize both their union and their natural difference, so is it also with the natural wills and energies.

Note, therefore, that in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ, we speak sometimes of his two natures and sometimes of his one person; and the one or the other is referred to one thought; for the two natures are one Christ, and the one Christ is two natures. So it is all the same whether we say "Christ acts [operates, energizes] according to either of his natures," or "either nature acts [operates, energizes] in Christ in communion with the other." The divine nature, then, has communion with the flesh in its operation [energizing, acting], because it is by the good pleasure of the divine will that the flesh is permitted to suffer and do the things proper to itself, and because the activity [energy] of the flesh is altogether saving, and this is an attribute not

of human activity [energy] but of divine. On the other hand the flesh has communion with the Word's deity [divinity] as [the latter] acts [operates], because the divine activities [energies] are performed, so to speak, through the organ of the body, and because he who acts as God and man together, is one and the same.

Note too that his holy mind also performs its natural activities [energies], thinking and knowing that it is God's mind and that it is worshipped by all creation, and remembering the times he spent on earth and all he suffered, but it has communion with the Word's divinity as it acts and orders and governs the universe, thinking and knowing and ordering not as the mere mind of man, but as united in subsistence [hypostasis] with God and acting as God's mind.

This, then, the divine-human activity [theandric energy] makes plain, that when God became man, that is when he became incarnate, both his human energy [activity] was divine, that is deified, and not without part in his divine energy [activity], and his divine energy was not without part in his human energy, but either was observed in conjunction with the other. Now this manner of speaking is called a periphrasis, when we take in two things in one statement. For just as in the case of the flaming sword we speak of the cut burn as one, and the burnt cut as one, but still hold that the cut and the burn have different actions [energies] and different natures, the burn having the nature of fire and the cut the nature of steel, in the same way also when we speak of one divine human activity [theandric energy] of Christ, we understand two distinct energies [activities] of his two natures, a divine energy [activity] belonging to his divinity, and a human energy [activity] belonging to his humanity.

3.20 *Concerning the natural and innocent passions [sensibilities].*

We confess, then, that he assumed all the natural and innocent passions of man. For he assumed the whole man and all man's attributes save sin. For that is not natural, nor is it implanted in us by the Creator, but arises voluntarily in our mode of life as the result of a further implantation by the devil, though it cannot prevail over us by force. For the natu-

ral and innocent passions are those which are not in our power, but which have entered into the life of man owing to the condemnation by reason of the transgression; such as hunger, thirst, weariness, labor, the tears, the corruption, the shrinking from death, the fear, the agony with the bloody sweat, the being assisted by the hands of angels because of the weakness of the nature, and other passions of this kind, which belong by nature to every human being.

He assumed, then, all that he might sanctify all. He was tried and overcame in order that he might prepare victory for us and give to nature power to overcome its antagonist, in order that nature which had been overcome of old might overcome its former conqueror by the very weapons with which it had itself been overcome.

The wicked one, then, made his assault from without, not by thoughts prompted inwardly; just as it was with Adam. For it was not by inward thoughts but by the serpent that Adam was assailed. But the Lord repulsed the assault and dispelled it like vapor, in order that the passions which assailed him and were overcome, might be easily subdued by us, and that the new Adam should save the old.

Truly, our natural passions were in harmony with nature and above nature in Christ. For they were stirred in him after a natural manner when he permitted the flesh to suffer what was proper to it; but they were above nature because that which was natural did not in the Lord assume command over the will. For no compulsion is contemplated in him but all is voluntary. For it was with his will that he hungered and thirsted and feared and died.

3.21 *Concerning ignorance and servitude.*

It is to be noted that he assumed the ignorant and servile nature. For it is man's nature to be the servant of God, his Creator, and he does not possess knowledge of the future. If, then, as Gregory the Theologian holds, you are to separate the realm of sight from the realm of thought, the flesh is to be spoken of as both servile and ignorant; but on account of the identity of personality [subsistence, person, *hypostasis*] and the inseparable union, the soul of the Lord was enriched with the knowledge of the future as also

with the other miraculous powers. For just as the flesh of men is not in its own nature life-giving, while the flesh of our Lord which was united in hypostasis [subsistence, person] with God the Word himself — although it was not exempt from the mortality of its nature, yet it became life-giving through its union in subsistence [hypostasis] with the Word, and we may not say that it was not and is not for ever life-giving. In a similar manner, his human nature does not in essence possess the knowledge of the future, but the soul of the Lord through its union with God the Word himself and its hypostatic identity [identity in hypostasis] was, as I said, enriched with the knowledge of the future as well as with the other miraculous powers.

And note that we may not speak of him as servant. For the words servitude and mastership are not marks of nature but indicate relationship to something, such as that of fatherhood and sonship; for these do not signify essence but relation. It is, then, just as we said in connection with ignorance. For if you separate with subtle thoughts, that is, with fine imaginings, the created from the uncreated, the flesh is a servant, if it were not united with God the Word. But when it is once united in subsistence [hypostasis], how can it be a servant? For since Christ is one, he cannot be his own servant and Lord. For these are not simple predications but relative. Whose servant, then could he be? His Father's? The Son, then, would not have all the Father's attributes, if he is the Father's servant and yet in no respect his own. Besides, how could the apostle say concerning us who were adopted by him, *So that you are no longer a servant but a son*,⁷ if indeed he is himself a servant? The word servant, then, is used merely as a title, though not in the strict meaning; but for our sakes he assumed the form of a servant and is called a servant among us. For although he is without passion, yet for our sake he was the servant of passion and became the minister of our salvation. Those, then, who say that he is a servant divide the one Christ into two, just as Nestorius did. But we declare him to be Master and Lord of all creation, the one Christ, at once God and man, and all-knowing. *For in him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, the hidden treasures.*⁸

3.22 *Concerning his growth.*

He is, moreover, said to grow in wisdom and age and grace,⁹ increasing in age indeed and through the increase in age manifesting the wisdom that is in him; yes, further, making men's progress in wisdom and grace, and the fulfillment of the Father's goodwill, that is to say, men's knowledge of God and men's salvation, his own increase, and everywhere taking as his own that which is ours. But those who hold that he progressed in wisdom and grace in the sense of receiving some addition to these attributes, do not say that the union took place at the first origin of the flesh, nor yet do they give precedence to the union according to hypostasis, but giving heed to the foolish Nestorius they imagine some strange relative union and mere indwelling, understanding neither what they say nor whereof they affirm. For if in truth the flesh was united with God the Word from its first origin, or rather if it existed in him and possessed hypostatic [personal] identity with him, how was it that it was not endowed completely with all wisdom and grace? Not that it might itself participate in the grace, nor by grace share in what belonged to the Word, but rather by reason of the union in hypostasis, things human and things divine both belonging to the one Christ, since he was himself at once God and man, pouring forth like a fountain over the universe his grace and wisdom and plenitude of every blessing.

3.23 *Concerning his fear.*

The word "fear" has a double meaning. For fear is natural when the soul is unwilling to be separated from the body, on account of the natural sympathy and close relationship planted in it in the beginning by the Creator, which makes it fear and struggle against death and pray for an escape from it. It may be defined thus: natural fear is the force by which we cling to being with shrinking. For if all things were brought out of nothing into being by the Creator, they all by nature have a longing for existence, and not for nonexistence. Moreover the inclination towards those things that support existence is a natural property of them. Hence God the Word, when he became man, had this longing — mani-

7. Gal. 4:7.

8. Col. 2:3.

9. Lk. 2:52.

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festing, on the one hand, in those things that support existence, the inclination of his nature in desiring food and drink and sleep, and having in a natural manner made proof of these things; while on the other hand displaying in those things that bring corruption his natural disinclination in voluntarily shrinking in the hour of his passion before the face of death. For although what happened did so according to the laws of nature, yet it was not, as in our case, a matter of necessity. For he willingly and spontaneously accepted that which was natural. So that fear itself and terror and agony belong to the natural and innocent passions and are not under the dominion of sin.

Again, there is a fear which arises from treachery of reasoning and want of faith, and ignorance of the hour of death, as when we are at night affected by fear at some chance noise. This is unnatural fear, and may be thus defined: unnatural fear is an unexpected shrinking. This our Lord did not assume. Hence he never felt fear except in the hour of his passion, although he often experienced a feeling of shrinking in accordance with the dispensation; for he was not ignorant of the appointed time.

But holy Athanasius in his discourse against Apollinarius says that he did actually feel fear. "Therefore the Lord said: *Now is my soul troubled.*¹⁰ The 'now' indeed means just 'when he willed,' but yet points to what actually was. For he did not speak of what was not, as though it were present, as if the things that were said only apparently happened. For all things happened naturally and actually." And again, after some other things, he says, "His divinity does not in any way admit passion apart from a suffering body, nor yet does it manifest trouble and pain apart from a pained and troubled soul, nor does it suffer anguish and offer up prayer apart from a mind that suffered anguish and offered up prayer. For, although these occurrences were not due to any overthrow of nature, yet they took place to manifest his real being." The words "these occurrences were not due to any overthrow of his nature," prove that it was not involuntarily [unwillingly] that he endured these things.

3.24 Concerning our Lord's praying.

10. Jn. 12:27.

Prayer is an uprising of the mind to God or a petitioning of God for what is fitting. How then did it happen that our Lord offered up prayer in the case of Lazarus, and at the hour of his passion? For his holy mind was in no need either of any uprising towards God, since it had been once and for all united in subsistence with God the Word, neither [had it any need] of any petitioning of God; for



Christ is one. But it was because he appropriated to himself our personality and took our impress on himself, and became an example for us, and taught us to ask of God and to reach up towards him, and he guided us through his own holy mind in the way that leads up to God. For just as he endured the passion, achieving for our sakes a triumph over it, so also he offered up prayer, guiding us, as I said, in the way that leads up to God, and *fulfilling all righteousness*¹¹ on our behalf, as he said to John, and reconciling his Father to us, and honoring him as the beginning and cause, and proving that he is no enemy of God. For when he said in connection with Lazarus, *Father, I thank you that you have heard me. And I know that you hear me always, but because of the people that stand by I said it, that they may believe that you have*

11. Mt. 3:15.

*sent me,*¹² is it not most plain to all that he said this in honor of his Father as the cause even of himself, and to show that he was no enemy of God?

Again, when he said, *Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will,*¹³ is it not clear to all that he said this as a lesson to us to ask help only in our trials from God, and to prefer God's will to our own, and as a proof that he did actually appropriate to himself the attributes of our nature, and that he did in truth possess two wills indeed, natural and corresponding with his natures but yet not in any way opposed to one another? "Father" implies that he is of the same essence, but "if it be possible" does not mean that he was in ignorance (for what is impossible to God?), but serves to teach us to prefer God's will to our own. For only that which is against God's will and permission, is impossible. "But not as I will but as you will," for inasmuch as he is God, he is identical with the Father, while inasmuch as he is man, he manifests the natural will of mankind; for it is this that naturally seeks escape from death.

Now the words *My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?*¹⁴ he said as making our personality his own. For God, who is his Father, would not be regarded so in the case of us, unless one makes a subtle mental distinction between what is and what appears; nor was he ever forsaken by his divinity: nay, it was we who were forsaken and disregarded. So that it was as appropriating our personality that he offered these prayers.¹⁵

3.25 Concerning the Appropriation.

It is to be observed that there are two appropriations: one that is natural and essential [according to essence], and one that is personal and relative. The natural and essential one is that by which our Lord in his love for man took on himself our nature and all our natural attributes, becoming in nature and truth man, and making trial of [experiencing] that which is natural; but the personal and relative appropriation is when any one assumes

12. Jn. 11:42.

13. Mt. 26:39.

14. Mt. 27:46; cf. Ps. 22(23):1.

15. To Jesus, God is not God the same way that God is God to us; to Jesus, God is Father. Similarly, God did not leave Jesus to his fate, but us. For Jesus is himself God! Thus, in uttering these words, Jesus is appropriating to himself our condition, our predicament. (In John 20:17, Jesus also calls his Father "my God," and for the same reason — except at that point, God has also become our Father, and so he says also "my Father and your Father.")

the person of another relatively, for instance, out of pity or love, and in his place utters words concerning him that have no connection with himself. And it was in this way that our Lord appropriated both our curse and our desertion, and such other things as are not natural; not that he himself was or became such, but that he took upon himself our personality and ranked himself as one of us. Such is the meaning in which this phrase is to be taken: *Being made a curse for our sakes.*¹⁶

3.26 *Concerning the passion [suffering] of our Lord's body, and the impassibility of his divinity.*

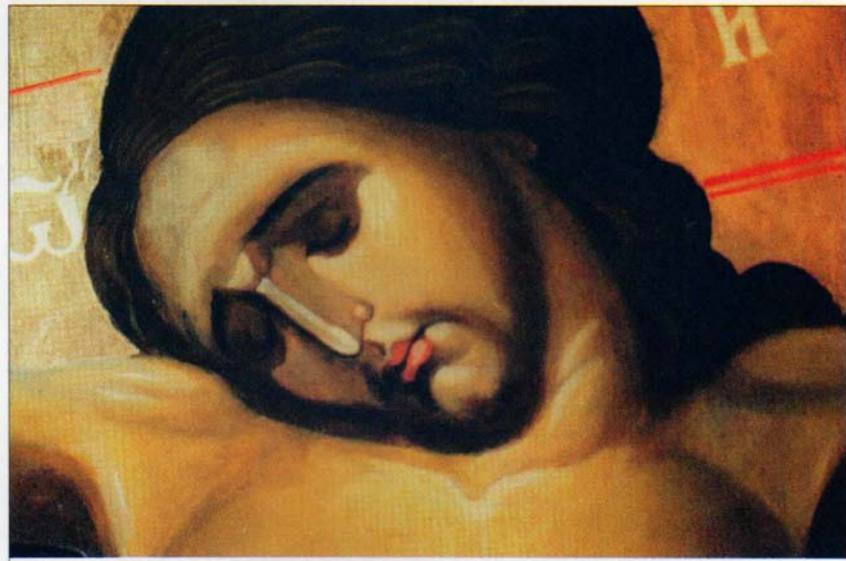
The Word of God then itself endured all in the flesh, while his divine nature which alone was passionless remained void of passion. For since the one Christ, who is a compound of divinity and humanity, and exists in divinity and humanity, truly suffered, that part which is capable of passion suffered as it was natural it should, but that part which was void of passion did not share in the suffering. For the soul, indeed, since it is capable of passion shares in the pain and suffering of a bodily cut, though it is not cut itself but only the body; but the divine part which is void of passion does not share in the suffering of the body.

And note that we say that God suffered in the flesh, but never that his divinity suffered in the flesh, or that God suffered through the flesh. For if, when the sun is shining on a tree, an axe should cleave the tree, and the sun nevertheless remains uncut and void of passion [suffering], much more will the passionless divinity of the Word, united in subsistence [hypostasis] to the flesh, remain void of passion when the body undergoes passion. And should any one pour water over flaming steel, it is that -- I mean the fire, which is quenched -- that naturally suffers; but the steel remains untouched (for it is not the nature of steel to be destroyed by water). Much more, then, when the flesh suffered did his divinity, which alone is passionless, escape all passion [suffering] although remaining inseparable from it.¹⁷ For one must not take the examples too absolutely and strictly; indeed, in the examples, one must consider both what is like and what is unlike, otherwise it would not be an example. For,

if they were like in all respects they would be identities, and not examples, and all the more so in dealing with divine matters. For one cannot find an example that is like in all respects whether we are dealing with theology or the dispensation.¹⁸

3.27 *Concerning the fact that the divinity of the Word remained inseparable from the soul and the body, even at our Lord's death, and that his hypostasis [person] continued one.*

Since our Lord Jesus Christ was without



sin (for he committed no sin, he who took away the sin of the world, nor was there any deceit found in his mouth)¹⁹ He was not subject to death, since death came into the world through sin.²⁰ He dies, therefore, because he took on himself death on our behalf, and he makes himself an offering to the Father for our sakes. For we had sinned against him, and it was fit that he should receive the ransom for us, and that we should thus be delivered from the condemnation. For it could not be that the blood of the Lord should be offered to the tyrant. Therefore death approaches, and swallowing up the body as a bait is transfixed on the hook of divinity, and after tasting of a sinless and life-giving body, he perishes, and brings up again all whom of old he swallowed up. For just as darkness dis-

appears on the introduction of light, so is death repulsed before the assault of life, and brings life to all, but death to the destroyer.

So, although he died as man and his holy soul was severed from his immaculate body, yet his divinity remained inseparable from both, I mean, from his soul and his body, and thus his one hypostasis [person] was not divided into two hypostases. For body and soul received simultaneously in the beginning their being in the subsistence [hypostasis, existence, person] of the Word, and al-

though they were severed from one another by death, yet they continued, each of them, having the one subsistence [hypostasis] of the Word, so that the one subsistence [hypostasis] of the Word is alike the subsistence of the Word, and of soul and body. For at no time did either soul or body have a separate subsistence of their own, different from that of the Word; and the subsistence of the Word is forever one, and at no time two; so that the subsistence of Christ is always one. For, although the soul was separated from the body with regard to place, yet with regard to hypostasis they were united through the Word.

3.28 *Concerning corruption and destruction.*

The word "corruption"²¹ has two meanings. For it signifies all the human sufferings, such as hunger, thirst, weariness, the piercing with nails, death, that is, the

16. Gal. 3:13.

17. I.e., from the flesh.

18. In the examples, the sun is not united with the tree, but only affects it incidentally, and so with the fire and the steel; but Christ's two natures are united perfectly, while remaining distinct. Also, sun and tree, etc., are different essences from divinity and humanity.

19. Is. 53:9; Jn. 1:29.

20. Rom. 5:12.

21. Gr. *phthora*.

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separation of soul and body, and so forth. In this sense we say that our Lord's body was subject to corruption. For he voluntarily accepted all these things. But corruption means also the complete resolution of the body into its constituent elements, and its utter disappearance, which is spoken of by many preferably as destruction.²² The body of our Lord did not experience this form of corruption, as the prophet David says, *For you will not leave my soul in hell, neither will you suffer your holy one to see corruption.*²³ Therefore to say, with that foolish Julian and Gaian, that our Lord's body was incorruptible in the first sense of the word before his resurrection, is impious. For if it were incorruptible it was not really, but only apparently, of the same essence as ours, and what the gospel tells us happened, namely the hunger, the thirst, the nails, the wound in his side, the death, did not actually occur. But if they only apparently happened, then the mystery of the dispensation is an imposture and

22. Gr. *diaphthora*.
23. Ps. 15(16):10.

a sham, and he became man only in appearance, and not in actual fact, and we are saved only in appearance, and not in actual fact. But away with this, and may those who so say have no part in the salvation. But we have obtained and shall obtain the true salvation. But in the second meaning of the word corruption, we confess that our Lord's body is incorruptible, that is, indestructible, for such is the tradition of the inspired Fathers. Indeed, after the resurrection of our Savior from the dead, we say that our Lord's body is incorruptible even in the first sense of the word. For our Lord by his own body bestowed the gifts both of resurrection and of subsequent incorruption even on our own body, he himself having become to us the firstfruits both of resurrection and incorruption, and of passionlessness [dispassion].²⁴ For as the divine Apostle says, *This corruptible must put an incorruption.*²⁵

3.29 Concerning the descent to hades.

The soul when it was deified descended into hades, in order that, just as the sun

24. 1 Cor. 15:20.
25. *Ibid.* 53.

*of righteousness*²⁶ rose for those upon the earth, so likewise he might bring light to those who sit under the earth in darkness and shadow of death;²⁷ in order that just as he brought to those upon the earth the message of peace, and of release to the prisoners, and of sight to the blind,²⁸ and became to those who believed the author of everlasting salvation and to those who did not believe a reproach of their unbelief,²⁹ so he might become the same to those in hades:³⁰ *That every knee should bow to him, of things in heaven, and things in earth and things under the earth.*³¹ And thus after he had freed those who had been bound for ages, he immediately rose again from the dead, showing us the way of resurrection.

To be continued.

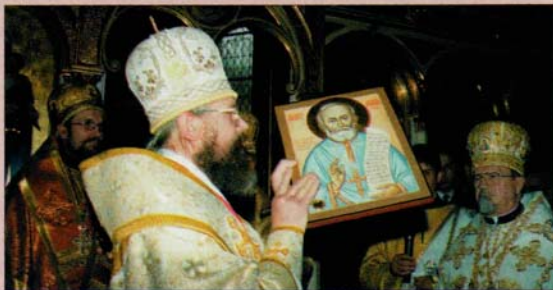
26. Mal. 4:2.
27. Is. 9:2.
28. Is. 61:1, Lk. 4:19.
29. 1 Pet. 3:19.

30. Hades: this Greek word — often referred to in English by the word "hell" — is used to translate the Hebrew word *sheol*. But what is often meant by "hell" in English is not identical with what the Jews meant by *sheol* or by what the Greeks meant by *hades*.

31. Phil. 2:10.



Metropolitan Theodosius and Archbishop Herman with orphans in Moscow, Russia



Archbishop Herman presents icon of St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre, Confessor and Defender of Orthodoxy in America, to Archbishop Augustine of the Lviv diocese in Ukraine

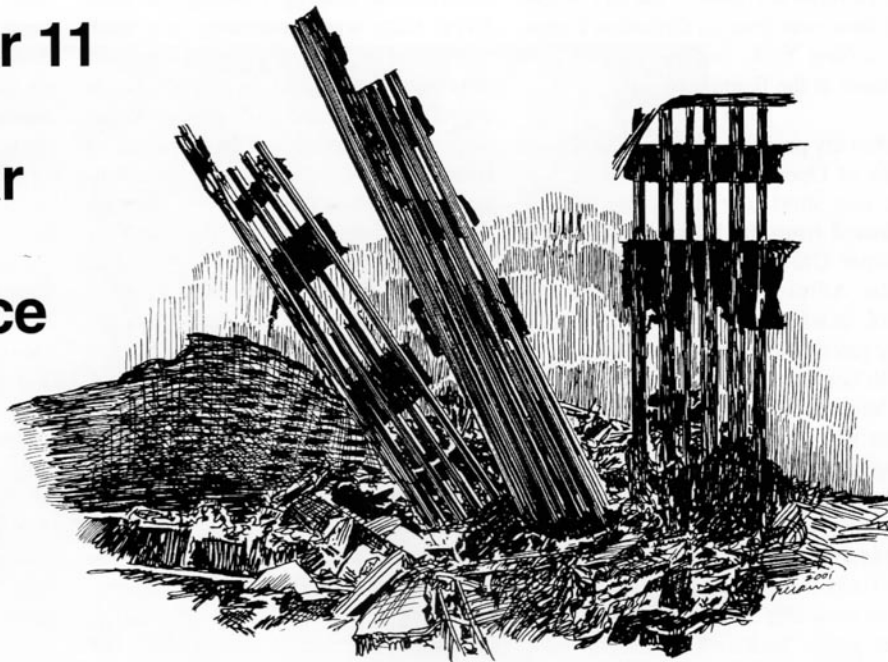


Our Metropolitan and Archbishop concelebrate at St. Catherine's, the OCA representation church in Moscow



Archbishop Herman represents Metropolitan Theodosius at centennial of St. George's Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Lviv, Ukraine

September 11 Survivors Tell of Fear and Deliverance



There are many thousands of survivor stories from September 11. Thank God for that! Each is unique, each harrowing, fascinating, and sobering. Why? Because we can all identify with these tales: "It could've been me." Because they make us think — about the blessings we have, the brevity of life, what lies beyond it, and how we should use the time we have — both to have the best life we can on earth, and to prepare for what follows.

Those of us who were not there can identify — because we're all survivors. Not only of these disasters, from which we were spared, by God's grace, though we could have been there — but from whatever accidents, wars, tyrannies, or diseases we may have survived, that brought us in some way closer to the face of death.

Beyond that, even if we've never been in one of those situations, the reality is that we're face to face with death all the time. Our life could end at any time, and we know that — but too often we do anything we can to avoid thinking about it; we become very good at avoiding thinking about it.

And this is a mistake. The saints teach

us that it is nothing other than the continual "remembrance of death" that brings into our life peace, order, repentance, strength, a proper ordering of priorities, disregard for the passing things of this world (in that they are passing), a love for the eternal things, love for God and for all people; in sum, happiness. It brings these things because it brings about preparation for death — by bringing into our present time and space, our present moment — Christ, the remembrance of him, the knowledge and love of him, and the reorientation of life that these bring.

Obedying the Lord's command, we pray that the Father will "lead us not into temptation" and that he will "deliver us from the evil one" (the holy fathers say that is the correct translation). Yet when God, in his providence, allows the evil one to gain a foothold, and to do his wicked work, the Christian can nonetheless benefit from it — for "all things work together for good, to those who love God," as St. Paul wrote; any kind of trial or grief can be utilized by the believer to gain much benefit, to reap much fruit. We gain spiritual riches by accepting our cross, our grief, and learn-

ing from them not to place our trust in the things of this world, but in the age to come.

We have been given the freedom to shun this lesson, reject the cross, run from the remembrance of death — but if we do, we pay a price when the house of our soul, built on sand, collapses as the waves of life beat on it. But by the application of courage and faith, aided by God's grace, our house becomes as strong as the cross of Christ, which is to say, invincible.

This is the lesson of September — to every one of us, to our nation, and to all nations. For just three days after the attacks came the feast of the Cross, and we heard proclaimed the remedy for all ills: "Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks, but to those who are called, Jews and Greeks alike, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

The tragic losses and the miraculous survivals alike are reminders that the remaining pages of our life may contain surprises. Of the many who can testify to this, one is a young Trade Center survivor, a Georgian national and former

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September 11 Survivors

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communicant of our diocese who had descended to the lobby when first plane struck, and so escaped the disaster.

Two other accounts of the day of terror follow: one from an Orthodox Christian in New York, and one from a catechumen at the Pentagon.

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I started my position at Mayor Giuliani's Office of Operations at the end of August, just short of two months after I graduated from the Maxwell School at Syracuse University with a Masters in Public Administration. In graduate school, in addition to my MPA degree, I completed a certificate program in Health Services Management and Policy, and hence was interested in finding a career that related to health policy. I thought that working in NYC would be an exciting and stimulating place to start my career. I heard about the opening at the Mayor's Office and it sounded like what I was looking for, as well as a great way to establish a foundation for future career goals. So here I am, about three months into my career at the City of New York Mayor's Office of Operations as a Health and Human Services Policy Analyst.

On the morning of September 11, a day that started out as a beautiful, sunny September morning and ended as one of the most horrifying days in the history of the world, I made my way to downtown Manhattan unaware of the events about to unfold. It is still very difficult to assimilate the horrific events of this day and attempt to articulate them.

I exited the subway at my usual stop, Chambers St., World Trade Center. As I walked up the stairs from the subway station to Church St., I noticed a crowd of people staring up in disbelief. I joined the crowd just as one woman informed me that an American Airlines airplane had just struck the WTC. At this point I was about 3 blocks from the towers. Papers and debris filled the air and as I stared up at the tower I could see bodies plunging out the windows of the top floors. There was no indication at this time that this was anything more than a freak accident, so as I watched, I slowly made my way toward my building, catty-corner to WTC. When I was about a block away from my building, there was

a load noise and a huge explosion — the second plane had hit the south tower.

The best way I can describe the scene that followed is to relate it to something you see in the movies. People just turned around and starting running for their lives. Cars were smashing into each other, and a general sense of fear just emanated throughout the streets. I was very frightened and just wanted to get out of Manhattan and back home to Brooklyn. After a while I stopped running and jumped into a cab. The cab driver was listening to the radio and together we learned the reality of the situation. All bridges and tunnels were closed and therefore the cab could not get me home. The driver left me off at a subway station with a train heading back to Brooklyn. Eager to get home, I got on the train. In retrospect, this is not the wisest decision I could have made, but I assure you no one was thinking with a clear head at this moment.

A few moments after leaving the station, the train had stopped. The conductor announced that due to a situation ahead of us we could not proceed. The car starting filling up with smoke and the conductor was forced to shut down the train to avoid the risk of the air system pulling in any more smoke. I was sitting next to a young woman about my age, holding hands with her. A man on our car had just announced to us that the Pentagon had also been hit. We had no idea what was actually occurring at this point, and naturally we were all assuming the worst and thinking that perhaps there was a bomb in the subway line. As it turns out, the towers were collapsing above us.

Unaware of what was happening or what was about to happen, my first instinct was to look to God and pray for his guidance. As I sat on the train and held the hand of the girl next me, I help my cross with my other hand. And as I cried and thought "this can't be happening to me. I can't die this way — I am surrounded by strangers and not with my family," I prayed to God to get me out of the train and back home safely. And although I cannot speak for the other passengers on the train, judging from the fear in their eyes and the expressions on their face, I am fairly certain that I wasn't the only one turning to their faith and looking to God for help.

The conductor attempted to evacuate us from the train, but with the realization that the situation was worse outside of the train than it was inside, he decided against it. After about 45 minutes, the conductor put the train in reverse, lay on the horn, and got us back to the station we had just left from. We all cheered and cried when the doors opened and we made our way up the stairs to street level.

What we had entered was a ghost town. The air was white, the streets were filled with emergency vehicles, fire fighters, and policemen. As we turned around we could not believe our eyes to see only black smoke where the WTC once stood. The girl that I met on the train insisted that I return to her apartment in Little Italy with her and call my parents and let them know that I was okay since I could not get back to Brooklyn. At her apartment, I phoned my parents and we watched on television what we had just personally experienced. We sat there, cried, and stared in disbelief at what was occurring.

After a few hours, the news informed me that there was a train running from Manhattan to Brooklyn, so despite my reluctance, I attempted to take the train back home. Not being very familiar with the neighborhood, I came across a couple and I asked for directions. They were headed in that direction so invited me to walk with them. Once at the station, they walked me downstairs, talked to the station attendant to be certain that the train was running, hugged me, and after a heartfelt "God Bless You," sent me on my way. I waited on the platform for a train to come, but every one that approached was so full with people wanting to get out of Manhattan that they didn't even stop. I stood there for about 20 minutes yearning to get home, and shaking and crying from everything I had just experienced, when a young man come up to me to see if I was okay. We talked while we waited for a train to come and after about another 20 minutes he told me he was going to just walk the Manhattan Bridge back to Brooklyn and if I would like to join him he would keep me company and see that I got home safely once we were back in Brooklyn.

So I walked the bridge and arrived back in Brooklyn about 5 p.m. My new friend insisted on buying me something

to eat because neither of us had eaten anything all day and afterward he put me in a cab and I was finally home!!

Once home I realized that I could not be alone and so I packed an over night bag and went and stayed at my friend's apartment in Queens. For most of the night we just sat there in silence watching the news being thankful that we had each other and didn't have to be alone. Then we went to sleep in fear of what the morning might bring . . .

All too often we go about our lives thinking that we are indestructible and that something tragic is never going to happen to us or our loved ones. Well, September 11th assured me that I will never again walk around with that mindset. In the days following the attack I would constantly be thinking, Why me? or more so, Why *not* me? I think of the people that I saw jumping from the tower and think that they are just like me, they were someone's daughter or son, someone's mother or father, sister or brother and just as I sat on the train thinking "This can't be happening to me, I can't die this way," I am sure the same exact thoughts went through their heads — but it *did* happen to them and they *did* die that way.

Coping with the emotions raised by these events and searching for answers to so many questions has proven very difficult for me in the week following September 11. During times like this, when you feel so vulnerable and helpless you need something to turn to, something to give you hope. For me, to find this hope I turned to my faith in God and that is what continues to get me through these times. It has not supplied me with any answers as to why these horrible events occurred, why so many innocent lives were lost or why mine wasn't. And it doesn't make me understand how people who claim to believe so strongly in their religion and worship God could commit such horrible acts against their fellow man. But it gives me the strength to move on, the strength not to live my life in fear. It gives me hope to look around at all the wonderful, caring, selfless people all over the world who united in a time of need. And it gives me the faith to believe that better days are ahead.

In the two weeks following the attack I worked at The Family Assistance Center set up for the victims' families to

file missing persons reports, receive counseling, support and information. Every day I would have to walk past a wall full of photos of the victims, writings from their family and friends, flowers, cards from people all over the country, teddy bears sent by people in Oklahoma City, and posters and drawings from school children thanking the firefighters and policemen — our heroes. From reading the wall and seeing family members writing a message to their missing loved ones, it was evident that the only comfort they have right now is believing that their loved ones are in a better place and being watched over. Just

I am much more aware and appreciative of so many things in my life following my experiences that day. The things and people in my life that I took for granted on a day-to-day basis, I no longer do. I realize that tomorrow is not a guarantee.

Often, struggling between being an independent young woman and my parents' "little girl," I could not help but get a little annoyed with my parents' constant worrying . . . Today, I tend to see their constant worry and concern about my well being as less of a nag and more as a gift that I will forever treasure.

Although I look back with fear, hor-

But despite the horrible events of that day and the inconceivable amount of lost lives, September 11th brought out the best in America and I can't help but think that I was changed for the better. It would be hard for me not to look to my faith in God when I think of the innumerable acts of selfless courage, of kindness, and of love that I have experienced that day and the days since September 11.

as I found, their faith in God is the only comfort they have right now, the only thing that can get them through this horrible time in their in life . . .

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It has made me much more conscious of the delicate nature of human life. Every day now, I breath a sigh of relief when I arrive home safely. Each night, I no longer just pray for just my family and friends. I pray for the victims of this horrible crime, their families, I pray for the rescue workers who refused to give up hope, I pray for all the selfless people who are giving so diligently of their time and/or resources. I pray for the men and women who are fighting back for us. I pray for America. I pray for the whole peace-loving world.

ror, and disbelief, I cannot help but think of all the wonderful people I came across that day. I feel like they were my guardian angels and I cannot imagine that day had I not met them. I still keep in touch with the friend I made walking back to Brooklyn and I plan to get together with the girl I met on the train. But I am certain that no matter where life takes us, we are bonded for life by the experiences of that day.

With my office being located so close to the WTC, we have not yet been able to return to our building. Parts of the planes were found on the roof, many windows were blown out, and soot covers most of the floors and desks. In the days immediately following the attack I had to report to the Armory and the Family Assistance Center . . . it is very difficult to be face to face with family members bringing in photos and just looking so hopeful that their loved ones will be found.

Still today, after over two months you can still smell the horror in the air. People wear face-masks walking down the

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streets. Since that day I can't help but jump when I hear a loud noise and cringe and hold my breath when I hear an airplane. I think it will be like this for a very long time. I know that the images from that day will remain etched in my brain for the rest of my life. And as much as I don't want to remember September 11th, I know that it is a day I will never forget.

—Tamara Sorokanich

• • •

On that Tuesday, an old veteran in my office had a radio on and heard about the World Trade Centers, passed the word along. This was only 5 minutes before our attack. I shut down my computer . . . always keep my purse and other things in my backpack. We felt a jolt, like a small earthquake. I was stationed in Japan where small earthquakes occurred every few days . . . sometimes they knocked us off our feet on the floor . . . so I got used to that.

I ran out at about 9:55 a.m. from the first floor (underground); headed for the Metro Entrance; one escalator blocked for maintenance; reached a parking area.

No fire alarms went off, not even in my area which was two sides away. Most of us old-timers are used to running out of the Pentagon for our lives — it's happened about ten times (for various reasons) in the last two decades.

Underground is a death trap anyhow. We only had two stairways to go up, one where the walls are crumbling, stairway is in bad shape, goes up to the roof. The roof is a death trap too. Most of the people in my office ran towards the courtyard. I always yell, Don't go towards the courtyard, it's a death trap, but they do it anyhow. Even if you get out to the courtyard alive your chances of getting back through five rings to the outside of the building is slim. I always run out of the Pentagon on the south side, facing Alexandria about 10 miles away.

Continuous explosions, ground shaking, sky was black, debris falling on us. I had my sun hat and sunglasses on, good protection. I really wasn't scared, felt calm. I was really scared trying to get away from the fire and smoke that occurred underground when an incident had happened about a month earlier. Something about being outside of a building always makes me feel safer.

When I got outside and above ground I stopped and prayed for a minute. I knew that it was my duty and I wanted to run to that other side and try to help. By then we knew that a terrorist plane had crashed into the Pentagon. I started running towards the explosions, but soon stopped. Half of the 23,000 people here are military and half of the rest of us are veterans. Only about a fourth are non-military. We are not cowards, we are not afraid of going into a fire, bad smoke or any disaster area trying to save others.

My several spinal injuries have now handicapped me to the point that I am no longer able to drag a person over 100 pounds out of a fire. There were hundreds of young, strong men and strong women around me who could physically do that. Many were running towards the explosions. That was one of the hardest decisions I ever had to make — turning away from the dying inside of our Pentagon. That still bothers me.

The petroleum fire was already making me cough (a little). Many others were coughing too. Then thousands of people realized what our Desert Storm military and civilians lived through and why so many are sick even today. Our eyes were watering and smarting. I developed asthma (so the doctors say) working at the Washington Navy Yard three years ago and knew I would not last but one trip in and out of a fire.

We didn't know it until later but no ambulances, rescue squads, or other arrived for over a half hour. It was up to the Pentagon employees (military and civilians) to try to save as many as possible. Besides, only we employees know the layout and the ins and outs of this building. The rescue people who arrived later had to be briefed on how to get around inside.

I was half running trying to get as far away as possible, under the #395 interstate and way into Crystal City. That's about one mile. I paced myself, at 60 years old, so I could run for as long as necessary.

Most cell phones were dead, I don't have one anyhow. Hundreds of people were yelling for a cell phone, even ganging up on the few people who did have a working one. Many young women and men in their twenties were standing there under the falling debris, panicking, coughing and getting sick, trying to make

a dead cell phone work, trying to reach their kids' school or their spouses at work. Many young men and women formed little groups and panicked even more.

Everyone 30 or over seemed to be very calm; no one was screaming or crying or running around.

Many of us old-timers stopped and yelled to these groups of younger people to get away from the building, save yourself first, your kids' school principal is not going to answer the phone and get your kids out of class to come and talk with you anyhow. Get out of here, think about how to get home (since most employees spend one and a half to three hours commuting each way), use your home phone, get your car and then go search for your children or spouses. No one is going to get over here to help any of us, we are on our own. No public transportation is running, start walking in the direction you live in. You are no good dead to your family, you are getting sick standing here, pray and God will protect them, save yourself now.

All around northern VA phone lines were jammed, the few pay phones had lines a mile long, businesses were closed, all streets were jammed, bridges jammed, thousands of people walking on the roads, sidewalks headed south or east. The river is to the west of the Pentagon; to the north were the jammed-up bridges into D.C. At Crystal City (high-rise rented government buildings) 10,000 people were let off and were pouring out into the streets, plus the 23,000+ Pentagon people.

All streets and bridges were jammed or closed; most stoplights not working. No subways or buses working. At least 80% of the Pentagon and Crystal City (other Federal agencies) government workers have to use public transportation (no parking spaces available). Thousands began walking; can't go north over the bridges into DC; new subway construction fences and debris block another side; river on the other side; I can swim but never will have time to get over there.

I knew that if I walked far enough I would find a taxi or bus still running to somewhere going south. The hand of God . . . I saw a taxi driver (a survivor of Pol Pot's massacre of millions). Two other C City employees and I got in. We dropped off the other two women going

south; one was hoping to catch a bus going out 10 miles. The young girl had only \$8 with her, so I ended up paying the taxi bill of \$26.

The taxi driver turned and headed west for me; we made it to a nearby community college two miles from my apartment. Thirty thousand day students evacuating and running for their lives; no public transportation for them anywhere. I paid the driver; started walking home; stoplights out; all streets jammed; all intersections, all ramps to the Interstate 95 jammed, most traffic not moving at all. The big intersection (thank God) had a woman traffic cop standing in the middle trying to direct traffic. She saw me so I could run across. I got home and turned on the TV to find out what really happened.

The hand of God again — I got back to my apartment in less than 3 hours; most people spent six to ten hours trying to get home on September 11.

I stayed home all week; couldn't cry for three days; started crying on day four and will probably continue to do so. I did not know about any of the special services at St. Nicholas. I was not at work to get St. Nicholas' usual distribution of e-mail messages from the church.

On Sunday the St. Nicholas Cathedral Choir sang the liturgy (in English) partly as a memorial service. I sat in a chair next to a window where a large American flag was hanging half mast from their bell tower. I had taken three hand-size towels with me and I cried until all three towels were soaked. The music is loud enough and continuous enough to cover up weeping.

One priest preached the scriptural sermon and after liturgy preached another sermon warning against hatred of Arabs or anyone else. I felt a realization that our government and our military have the responsibility to not only protect the rest of you but to face Satan head on just like America had to do after the attack on Pearl Harbor, and a sense of the need for justice to be done; not retaliation, not revenge.

A week after the attack I am trying to check our dead/missing lists to see who didn't make it out. Bodies are still in the building; many still missing; smell of smoke is everywhere; a third of building is ruin, little fires still burning inside; more cracks in the foundation all round;

one more hit and most of the Pentagon will collapse; my underground area is in bad shape but we are not afraid.

Unfortunately, the hundreds of people (military and civilian) who did survive all were dragged out, led out, a few walked out during the first 35 minutes. No survivors after the first 35 minutes.

Every badly injured survivor that has

One military man ran into that burning hole and rescued one person at a time, twenty in all. He said one Army man inside stood up, spoke coherently, both hands severed clean off at the wrists, not bleeding. He said, "I can get out by myself, go find the others" — no one left in that office. All military and civilians who ran in and out to rescue the living have been honored with a new congressional



Remembering with love the victims of the Pentagon attack

told his/her story has found out that he/she is the *only* person in their office to make it out alive. Only one person in each office made it out alive. That's the hand of God, when only one person lives to tell about seeing everyone else blown up in the room except them.

Stacks of bodies, piled five to ten deep on top of each other, were found later in many areas, some only 25 feet from an opening. It's pitch black inside the Pentagon when lights go off. I know that from going through all kinds of little disasters up there. Water came in on us, ceilings caved in, power went off. Only 1% of the rooms have an outside window.

Hundreds who did survive now have lung damage, all cut up, infections from wounds, broken bones, and burns on the arms, hands, fingers, feet, legs. Many will never be able to return to work — they have fingers gone or burned, faces hideously burned, feet and legs burned or gone. You have to be able to use a computer keyboard at the Pentagon if you want an office job!

heroism medal.

Seven badly burned people are still alive with 35%-85% burns; two died. One woman was charred to her chair according to the lone survivor of that office. They're still looking for parts of bodies 3 1/2 weeks later. Seven people never found, not a trace, completely disintegrated. Families are still having trouble with the insurance companies and others have to have a death certificate; you can't get one if there is no body.

The fourth and fifth floors of our Pentagon still smell like fire smoke, and this is December.

The terrorists knew exactly where they wanted to go and succeeded completely in their mission.

As a catechumen, even without receiving Holy Communion, I received the peace of God that passes all understanding and the beginning of the healing process that everyone who was present in New York and at the Pentagon has to go through.

—Gale Morris

Celebrating 110 Years of Orthodoxy St. Michael's Orthodox Church, Old Forge Celebrates Anniversary

On November 11, the parish of St. Michael's in Old Forge observed a very special event. On that day they marked their unique place in the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, as the oldest parish in the diocese. His Eminence Archbishop Herman, led the festivities both in prayer and in spirit by presiding at the hierarchical Divine Liturgy and the banquet that followed.

The day began with His Eminence being greeted by each of the children of the church school under the tutelage of Mrs. Beverly Elko. All received a blessing. Our children are the youngest, but we placing them first we recognize their importance for the future of the parish. After the traditional greeting with bread and a salt by the starosta, Mr. Bernard Elko, our rector, Father David Mahaffey, and the other clergy — all sons of the parish, including Archpriests Dimitri Oselinsky and Theodore Orzolek, and Protodeacon Stephen Howanetz — greeted the Archbishop in advance of the Divine Liturgy.

After the hours were read by Daniel Jones, Archbishop Herman blessed the recent additions to the church, including new icons that completed the beautification of the lower walls of the nave. Serving as first priest for the liturgy was Archpriest Dimitri Oselinsky, whose parents are at present the oldest members of our parish (Fr. Dimitri's father, George, is 99); they are also the couple married the longest — 76 years. The choir sang in heavenly tones under the direction of Matushka Karen Mahaffey. Many parishioners and their extended families were on hand to participate in this festive day, filling the church to overflowing.

Following the gospel, His Eminence



gave an inspiring homily. He spoke of the effort we all must put into our faith to make it become a living reality, reminding us that it is not enough to remember the deeds of the past, but that

The day began with His Eminence being greeted by each of the children of the church school under the tutelage of Mrs. Beverly Elko.

those efforts must be constantly renewed through our own prayer and dedication. Among the prayers intoned by the protodeacon were those for those in the Armed Forces and the victims and fami-

lies of the terrorist attacks of September 11. This being Veterans Day, we were especially mindful of those serving in the armed forces.

As the moment came for holy communion, a large number of the faithful came forward to receive the precious Body and Blood of our Lord. Following the liturgy, *Many Years* was intoned for the various organizations and groups that toil for the good of the parish.

A grand banquet followed the liturgy at the St. George's Carpatho-Russian Social Center. After a procession to the dais and the opening prayers, the Starosta Bernard Elko offered a toast for the continued blessing of God upon our parish and all of its members, expressing the hope that we might all continue to work for the glory of Christ's holy Church in Old Forge. Dr. Eli Stavisky, toastmaster, was introduced by parish vice-presi-



Blessing of new icons



Dr. Eli Stavitsky



Altar servers receive appreciation awards



Priest David Mahaffy

dent Mr. Walter Ermolovich.

During the banquet His Eminence again spoke of the good work done by the faithful of St. Michael's, and encouraged them to build up God's Holy Church by maintaining that faith they had inherited from their ancestors.

Michael & Margaret Jadick of the parish icon committee handed out certificates of appreciation to all of those who have given so generously to make possible the completion of this phase of the project. Our local state representative, James Wansacz, also a son of the parish, was on hand to present an official citation from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, which Father David and Starosta Bernard Elko accepted on behalf of the parishioners.

The banquet ended with everyone enjoying a beautiful day and going home with their memories enlivened and spirits renewed. A commemorative cup was also given to all who attended as a keepsake for the day.

In the future as he has until this time, may almighty God, by the intercessions of the holy Archangel Michael, continue to glorify the name of the All-Holy Trinity at St. Michael's parish in Old Forge.

—Archpriest David Mahaffey

Syrian Christianity

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hood) and became archbishop of Tyre later that same year. Other famous alumni were Stephen Evodius (1707-1782), the nephew of Joseph Simonius who assisted him in cataloging the manuscripts of the Vatican Library and editor of several important collections on his own; Joseph Aloysius (1710-1782), professor of Syriac and Liturgics at the Sapienza in Rome and editor of the *Codex Liturgicus Ecclesias Universae* (one of the most important collections for the study of Eastern liturgies) as well as author of a history of the Chaldean and Nestorian patriarchs; and Simon (1752-1821), professor of Arabic and Near Eastern languages at the University of Padua and author of numerous works on Arabic literature, religion, and culture.

It is clear that the Maronites enjoyed important advantages over their Christian and Muslim rivals: numerical superiority in Lebanon, relatively well-educated clergy, and the advocacy of their interests by the papacy and western powers such as the Venetians and the French. During the nineteenth century the Maronites suffered harsh treatment from the Turks and the Druzes, probably in retaliation for the increasing interest that the French were showing in Lebanon. Nevertheless, they remained the largest single religious body in Lebanon and became even more powerful during the French protectorate (1918-1943). After Lebanon became an independent country in 1943 the Maronites naturally assumed leadership; indeed, the constitution of Lebanon requires that the president be a Maronite Catholic. Nevertheless, the delicate numerical balance between Christians and Muslims in Lebanon led to a potentially explosive situation that was intensified by the low socioeconomic status of the Muslims and the destabilizing presence of Palestinian refugees in southern Lebanon. In 1975 open civil warfare broke out, followed by Syrian intervention and an Israeli invasion in 1982. The Lebanese civil war lasted about fifteen years and came close to destroying Lebanon as an independent state (Syria's role in Lebanon is still immense, casting doubts on exactly how independent is Lebanon's government). The civil war caused inestimable suffer-

ing for practically all of Lebanon's population, but was probably hardest felt by the formerly affluent Maronites, who had more to lose than anyone else. Today the Maronites number over 1 million and comprise nearly half of Lebanon's population, though some also live in Syria, Palestine, Cyprus, Egypt, and America. The Maronite hierarchy consists of a patriarch (whose see is the town of Bkerbe, Lebanon), ten bishops, an apostolic exarch in the USA, an auxiliary bishop in Brazil, and three titular bishops.

The Eastern Orthodox Church of Antioch³ suffered less at the hands of Tamerlane for the simple reason that most of its members did not live in territories under his rule. Although a fair number was to be found east of the Euphrates, the majority lived in Syria and Lebanon. Nevertheless, until 1517 they did live under the oppressive rule of the Egyptian Mamelukes, whose autocratic governance levied higher taxes and imposed new legal restrictions (especially with regard to education) on non-Muslims. The Mamelukes were also responsible for the destruction of numerous churches and monasteries. Ottoman rule, paradoxically, brought some relief to the sufferings of the Eastern Orthodox of Syria. The still predominantly urbanized Eastern Orthodox were still well represented in the professional and mercantile classes, making them among the chief taxpaying segments of Ottoman Syria and thus too valuable to be relentlessly persecuted. Moreover, the ethnic Greek elite that formed the core of the Eastern Orthodox community was highly prized by the Ottoman government as mid-level civil administrators. However, there was a darker side to their experience of Ottoman rule. The patriarchal elections were largely a sham: after election by an episcopal conclave, the name of the new Patriarch of Antioch would be submitted to the Patriarch of Constantinople for confirmation. In actuality this meant that the patriarchs of Antioch were more or less chosen by the Ottoman sultan, under whose watchful eye the patriarchs of Constantinople functioned as the "governor" of the *Rum millet* ("Roman nation," as all Eastern Orthodox Christians throughout the Ottoman Empire were designated). As the sole legal authority over all Eastern Or-

thodox in the Ottoman Empire, the Patriarch of Constantinople held considerable power over the ancient Greek patriarchates of Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem, despite their technically autocephalous status. The Eastern Orthodox Church of Antioch, furthermore, was a predominantly Syrian church, yet the ethnic Greek minority held a position of almost total domination — no Syrian churchman could aspire to particularly high office regardless of talent. The *millet* system also effectively turned bishops into government officials who were so involved in worldly affairs that they became vulnerable to ambition and greed. Consequently, the Church's higher administration became increasingly afflicted by corruption and simony, with all of its ill effects.

Ottoman rule paradoxically had two opposite effects on the intellectual life of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Antioch: it became extremely conservative while also undergoing some degree of westernization. The principal aim of all Christians under Turkish rule was mere survival, thus they were usually content to repeat accepted formulae — to entrench themselves in their inheritance from the glorious days of the past. Yet at the same time there was a constant infiltration of western theology because it was difficult for the Eastern Orthodox under Ottoman rule to maintain a high level of scholarship. Therefore, anyone who desired higher education was forced to travel to Italy and be trained under Roman Catholic masters. Accustomed to using both terminology and forms of argument common to the West, there was a genuine danger that they might lose their Orthodox mentality. However, the extent of this westernization must not be unduly exaggerated, for the substance of thought of the great majority remained fundamentally Orthodox despite its outwardly western presentation. Even so, in 1684 a substantial number of Eastern Orthodox in Syria entered union with Rome, forming the Melkite Catholic Church. This may have been partly due to the dominance of the Greek elite in the church hierarchy (until 1899 the patriarchs and most of the bishops were Greeks), against which Syrian clergymen might have felt that they could get treated more fairly by the Roman Church. It is less likely that the

union was a direct consequence of westernized theology.

The increased interest of the Russian government in the plight of the Ottoman Empire's Christian population in the nineteenth century was a notable catalyst for change in the Eastern Orthodox Church of Antioch. In part owing to Russian influence exerted through the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society, in 1899 an Arab was elected Patriarch of Antioch. The power of the Greek elite quickly diminished while the laity assumed a greater role in both patriarchal and episcopal elections. Before the Second World War the Eastern Orthodox Church of Antioch had relatively few educated clergy, but since then there has been a remarkable revival of education largely engendered by the Orthodox Youth Movement. This educational revival eventually culminated in the establishment of new theological schools in Damascus and Balamand, Lebanon.

Although seriously affected by the Lebanese civil war, the Eastern Orthodox Church of Antioch never openly took sides and has been one of the leading distributors of humanitarian aid during the civil war. Since the end of the civil war, it has also taken an active role in the reconstruction of Lebanese society. The Church also remains fairly well respected in Syria and has been very active in theological dialogues with the Jacobites and the Muslims. It has also maintained historically friendly relations with the Anglicans, though its reception into its communion of formerly Episcopalian and evangelical communities, with the right to celebrate the liturgy according to Western rites, has occasionally been cause for strained relations with the Anglican Church.

Today the Eastern Orthodox Church of Antioch counts about 800,000 members (450,000 in Syria and Lebanon; 250,000 in Iraq, and 100,000 in the Americas). It has nineteen dioceses worldwide and its patriarch resides in Damascus. The Melkite Catholic Church has about 400,000 adherents (mostly in Syria and Lebanon), and its Patriarch of Antioch also resides in Damascus. There are also Melkite patriarchs of Alexandria and Jerusalem, with a negligible number of local adherents.

In conclusion, today there are approximately 3.3 million Syrian Chris-

tians left, with over 90% still living in the Near East. 53% are Eastern Rite Catholics belonging to churches loyal to the Pope of Rome; 24% are Eastern Orthodox under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Antioch; 15% are Nestorians belonging to the Assyrian Church of the East; and 8% are Monophysites (i.e., Jacobites) belonging to the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch. Small communities of Roman Catholics (i.e., Latin Rite), Armenian Christians, and Protestants (mostly Presbyterians) can be found among the Syrian Christians as well. Today Christians comprise about 50% of Lebanon's population, 12% of Syria's, and 6% of Iraq's. Smaller numbers can be found in Iran and Turkey (in both the majority of Christians are Armenians).

The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

The Eastern Orthodox Church of Antioch has a notably strong presence in North America.

Individual Syrian and Lebanese immigrants, who arrived in the late nineteenth century, originally tended to join existing Russian and Greek congregations. The first Syrian parish was started in 1895 and in 1904 a new Syro-Arabic auxiliary bishopric was established under the jurisdiction of the Russian archdiocese. Its new bishop, Saint Raphael Hawaweeny, spoke Greek, Russian, and English fluently and was the first Orthodox bishop of any nationality to be consecrated in the USA. By his death in 1915 the Syro-Arabic mission already numbered 23 parishes. Bishop Raphael was succeeded by Bishop Eftimios Ofiesh, who was elevated to the rank of archbishop in 1923. In 1927 an auxiliary bishop for Canada, Emmanuel Abo-Hatab, was consecrated. Because of the Syro-Arabic mission's prescient activity in promoting the usage of English in liturgy and its active missionary drive, Archbishop Eftimios was given the responsibility of heading a new "American Orthodox" English-language mission in 1927. It soon became apparent that Archbishop Eftimios overstepped his authority *vis-a-vis* the Russian hierarchy in America and quickly lost its support. In 1931 Bishop Emmanuel was named bishop of Brooklyn and given charge of the Syro-Arabic diocese, while Arch-

bishop Eftimios eventually ended up being deposed in 1933 following his civil marriage.

Meanwhile, in 1924 an independent Syrian jurisdiction was started under the patriarchate of Antioch head by Bishop Victor Abu-Assaly, who attempted without much success to entice parishes away from Bishop Emmanuel. Following the deaths of Bishops Emmanuel (1933) and Victor (1934), the two missions merged and elected Archimandrite Anthony Bashir as bishop, who was consecrated on April 19, 1936 by Metropolitan Theodosius of Tyre and Sidon, the personal representative of the patriarch of Antioch, and Bishop Vitaly Maximenko. The same day, however, three Russian bishops (acting without authorization from the patriarchate of Antioch or the permission of the Russian Metropolia in America) also consecrated Archimandrite Samuel David as the Syro-Arabic bishop of Toledo. Relations between the two groups were very tense for some time, but in 1941 the Holy Synod of Antioch granted canonical recognition to Bishop Samuel David; however, communion between the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of New York and the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of Toledo was not fully restored until 1953. After Metropolitan Samuel's death in 1958 attempts were made to merge the two jurisdictions, and with this aim Bishop Michael Shaheen was consecrated as "auxiliary bishop of Toledo" by the Patriarch and other bishops of the Holy Synod in 1961. However, within six months Bishop Michael turned against Archbishop Anthony; after some deliberation the Holy Synod of Antioch decided to elevate Bishop Michael, notwithstanding Archbishop Anthony's strong objections, as archbishop of Toledo and Dependencies. Despite his difficulties in promoting unity amongst the Antiochian Orthodox in America, Archbishop Anthony Bashir was a tireless advocate for the cause of Orthodox unity in America, and was instrumental in the formation of the Federation of the Primary Jurisdictions of the Orthodox Greek Catholic Churches in America in 1942, as well as in its reorganization into the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America in 1960. Archbishop Anthony

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Syrian Christianity

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served as vice-chairman of SCOBA and eventually reposed in 1966. After Archbishop Anthony's death, it was hoped that a reconciliation might be effected between Archbishop Anthony's successor, Metropolitan Philip Saliba, and Archbishop Michael. Although there were several meetings between the two hierarchs, no agreement was reached. It was not until 1975 that the Holy Synod of Antioch was able to fully merge the two archdioceses into a single Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, with Metropolitan Philip Saliba as the primate.

Despite the ignominious downfall of Archbishop Eftimios Ofiesh, the Antiochian Archdiocese has retained a vigorous tradition of missionary activity. In 1961 Archbishop Anthony accepted the non-canonical "American Orthodox Church" into his archdiocese, which became a Western Rite Vicariate. English-speaking priests of the new vicariate were permitted to continue using texts of the western rite "purified of their heterodox elements" and to wear the traditional western liturgical vestments. In 1967 Maurice Francis Parkin, head of the "Old Catholic Church of the West," and three of his priests were received into the Antiochian archdiocese's Western Rite Vicariate. Probably the largest reception of a previously non-canonical group was that of the former "Evangelical Orthodox Church" in 1987. Metropolitan Philip's reception of this fairly large group (which follows the Byzantine Rite in English) into the Antiochian archdiocese was cause for some controversy, as the ecclesiastical authorities in Damascus allowed him to perform a mass ordination of the clergy of the formerly non-canonical group, which may be in contravention of Orthodox canon law. Nevertheless, with time the Orthodox world at large evidently accepted the newly ordained clergy as canonical and they were more or less seamlessly incorporated into the archdiocese. The Antiochian archdiocese has been very active in educational publications: including not only its official organ, *Kalimat* (now published in English as *The Word*), but also other affiliated periodicals such as the *Orthodox Catholic*

Review (now defunct) and *Again Magazine*. More recently a liberal arts college in Aiken, South Carolina called Rose Hill College was established under the auspices of the Antiochian archdiocese, but after a few years in operation it was forced to close because of insufficient enrollment. In conclusion, the Antiochian archdiocese has been renowned for its thriving church life and vigorous preaching of Orthodoxy in America.

Conclusion: Why the decline of Syrian Christianity?

Why did Syrian Christianity come so near to extinction just as Western Christianity was about to spread throughout the entire world? What was the difference between them — was it the nature of their faith, the structure of their churches, or the social and political environment that led to such contrary consequences between Asian and European Christianity? The turbulence of Syrian church history, with the theological divisions of the fifth century, may be partly to blame.

But Western Christianity was equally divided in the sixteenth century — just as it was about to span the globe. Furthermore, the occasional suggestion that the theologians of the Syrian Church were intellectually inferior to those of the West is debatable. There is certainly a hint of Western bias in the charge of theological mediocrity brought against the Syrian Christians.

Isolation was probably a greater factor in the Syrian Church's decline, as Asia's very geography contributed immensely to isolation. For example, it is a mere one thousand miles from Rome to London, but the distance between Baghdad and China is over five thousand miles!

When Pope Gregory I wrote to his missionary bishop in Canterbury in 600, he expected a reply. But when the first known Nestorian missionary reached by Chinese capital of Ch'ang-an in 635, there is no evidence that his catholicos was ever aware that he had a missionary in China! The difficulties in communication across such vast distances inhibited the formation of a cohesive continental community. Numerical weakness was also a serious factor: Christians were a much smaller ratio of the population

of Asia (especially after 1000) than they were in Europe. With the exception of the Mediterranean coastline, there was never a "critical mass" of Christians in any Asian national culture sufficient to effect substantial changes in the course of world history. In fact, it is certainly the case that after the year 1000 the number of Christians was declining, not increasing. Many believe that it was persecution that led to the decline of the Syrian Church.

Persian persecution in the fourth century and Muslim persecution after the seventh century may have had a paralyzing effect on Syrian Christianity. While it is unlikely that sharp persecution had any real effect, the continuous social and political repression over centuries stifled the spirit of the Syrian Church until Tamerlane delivered a nearly fatal blow.

Furthermore, an important difference between Asia and Europe was that paganism was already crumbling when Christianity entered Europe, while in Asia Christianity had to confront some of the strongest religions that the world has ever known: Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and especially Islam. Not surprisingly, they resisted and all, with the exception of Confucianism, at one time or another persecuted Christians. Clearly the foreign-sounding and politically powerless Christian missionaries were at a distinct disadvantage. Unfortunately for the Syrian Church, Asia never produced a Constantine. Had even one of Queen Sorghaghtani's three imperial sons followed her into Christian faith, history might have changed. Instead, the various communities of Syrian Christians were forced to rely on the variable tolerance of non-Christian rulers whose power over life and death was absolute.

The *millet* system, having in origins in Sassanid Persia, further contributed to decline. Religious minorities that were insulated from society, and usually socially and financially crippled, ended up being stamped as ethnic and foreign to most of Asia's peoples. For example, in China the earliest name given to Christianity was "the Syrian religion," and in India Christians were called Syrians and became a segregated caste-like community. Even in Syria and Mesopotamia, where Christianity was strongest, the

millet system separated Christians as “nations” distinct from their Muslim neighbors — and as each Christian group became a separate *millet*, Christians even came to be segregated from each other! The overall consequence was a gradual quelling of the Church’s evangelistic spirit for the sake of survival. It might be tempting to question the culpability of the Roman papacy in regard to the decline of the Syrian Church. It is undeniable that precisely in the era when Syrian Christians were weakest that the Roman Church introduced new divisions into every single community by enticing segments into union with Rome. On the other hand, the formation of Eastern Rite Catholic groups did bring the attention and the resources of the West to the hapless Christians of Asia. It is possible that had the West totally ignored the Syrian Christian communities that their overall numbers might have declined even more precipitously.

Yet we need not end this evaluation on such a depressing note. The century-long history of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America reveals a Syrian Christian community that is flourishing. Yet many of the same factors responsible for the decline of Syrian Christianity described above were in some ways also present in America. The Syrian Christians arriving in America found themselves a small, foreign community in a predominantly Western “Anglo-Saxon” culture. Certainly their numbers were, and still are, far too small to develop a “critical mass” likely of affecting the course of history. Isolation could also have become a problem because of the vast size of the North American continent, although admittedly means of transportation and communication have greatly improved over the last century! One important difference between Asia and America is the political freedom and religious pluralism that exists in America. However, two great temptations have confronted the Syrian Christian community in America that could have prevented any successful establishment of a thriving religious life.

The temptation to voluntarily “replacate” the *millet* system in America — a system that would have seemed “natural” to the new immigrants — would have been very strong. The Syro-Arab mission could easily have developed into a self-contained socio-religious minority community steeped in its own identity and culture. The other temptation, that of assimilation into the dominant



His Beatitude Ignatius IV, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, current primate of the Church of Antioch

culture, would also have been difficult to resist. New immigrants arriving from the Near East might have simply joined Roman Catholic and Protestant congregations, and thereby gradually lose their Orthodox identity. Such a temptation would have been intensified through intermarriage with non-Orthodox, a social phenomenon that has increased as each generation of Syrian Christians becomes more acculturated in American social life.

The significant feature of the history of the Antiochian Orthodox archdiocese is that it has resisted these temptations — precisely because it successfully rekindled the Christian evangelistic spirit that is essential to church growth. Rather than segregating itself from mainstream American society, the Antiochian Orthodox archdiocese reached beyond its own

ethnic confines through its early lead in English-language missions and openness to receiving non-Arabic people into its communion. Moreover, despite its own internal divisions in the middle of the twentieth century, the Antiochian Orthodox archdiocese has been one of the leading voices for the cause of Orthodox unity in America. What the history of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America proves it that given conditions of freedom, or at least the absence of persecution, the Syrian Christian tradition can thrive and even grow. Perhaps the crucial factor in America was the prescient leadership of the archdiocese’s first bishop, St. Raphael (Hawaweeny). The evangelistic spirit that has characterized the Antiochian Orthodox archdiocese was implanted by the policies of St. Raphael, and nurtured by Archbishops Eftimios Ofiesh and Anthony Bashir. Raphael and his successors resisted the temptation to enclose the Syro-Arabic mission into a comfortable, but isolated, religious ghetto. And thus the full fruits of Bishop Raphael’s commitment to Orthodox evangelism can be seen in the strong, ethnically diverse archdiocese that Metropolitan Philip Saliba heads today. However, the same story of evangelism cannot be told of the other communities of Syrian Christians in America (i.e., the Eastern-Rite Catholics, Nestorians, and Jacobites), who have yet to learn the lesson being taught by Antiochian Orthodox archdiocese. These other Syro-Arabic communities have remained mostly self-contained *millets* in America.

—Priest Sophrony Royer

3. I have used the designation “Eastern Orthodox Church of Antioch” for those Syrian Christians who accepted the christological formula of the Council of Chalcedon and who were in full communion with the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople. This is to distinguish them from the “Oriental Orthodox Church of Antioch,” also known as the “Jacobites,” which held a Monophysite christology and whose primate also claimed to be patriarch of Antioch.



Pasonick Team Wins Tournament



Eighty-three golfers enjoyed a beautiful fall Saturday with a round of golf and good fellowship in the Fourth Annual St. Tikhon's Golf tournament. The event was held at Mt. Laurel Golf Course in White Haven, Pa. The awards banquet which followed was enjoyed with good food and fellowship.

Winner of the championship flight was the team of Michael Pasonick Jr., Joe Tomasura, Bernie Girman, and Mark Jarolen. Winner of the first flight was the Altier group. Winners of the second flight was the Monsignor Marra group. Closest to the pins were awarded on all par threes along with the longest drive and straightest drive contests.

The golf committee thanks all who participated and hopes to see all return again next year.

—Berny Golubiewski





Benefit Pasta Dinner Overwhelming Success

A benefit pasta and meatball dinner was held on Monday, November 19, 2001, at the Italian Villa Restaurant in Peckville, PA, with proceeds going to St. Tikhon's Seminary. This event was brought about by the generous offer and efforts of Drs. Eli Stavisky, Stephen Rebar and Albert Giallorenzi co-owners of the restaurant. Dr. Stavisky is a member of the Seminary's board of trustees.

The dinner was held on November 19, 2001 with two seatings at 5:00 and 7:00 p.m. It was an overwhelming success! An impressive gathering of peoples came and demonstrated their love and support for St. Tikhon's Seminary and its initiatives and have a good meal. Father Michael Dahulich, Administrative Dean of St. Tikhon's Seminary, together with our generous hosts, greeted all the patrons of this event while they enjoyed their meals. The evening was even more successful thanks to the restaurant staff, seminarians, and others who volunteered their time and talents to cook, serve and host the event. Our thanks to everyone who helped make this benefit a success, and especially to Drs. Stavisky, Rebar and Giallorenzi for their support for our Seminary.

With the help of clergy and interested people plans were made for the event. The committee included Archbishop Herman, Drs. Stavisky, Rebar and Giallorenzi; Archpriests Daniel Donlick, Joseph Martin, Vladimir Fetcho, John Kowalczyk, David Shewczyk, and Michael Slovesko, Priests Leo Poore, David Mahaffey and Nicholas Wyslutzky; Matushka Dorothy Sulich and Mr. Martin Paluch.



Christ is Born!

Holy Resurrection Church

Alden Station, PA

V. Rev. Vladimir & Matushka Petorak
 Peter & Paula Holoviak
 Josephine Bevilacqua
 Basil & Molly Pisch
 Michael & Faith Kardash
 John Keblish
 Mr. & Mrs. Stanley Kluger
 Dr. & Mrs. Donald Reese & family
 Alecia & Beth Petroski
 Josephine Meholic
 Leonard Cholewa
 Leonard Cholewa Jr.
 Joseph J. Hitzner
 Julia Czeck
 Kathy & Tom Krushka
 Deborah, Pete, Peter Recek Jr.
 Memory Of William & Anita Rinehamer
 Elizabeth Julia
 Dorothy Stout
 Vera, Caitlin, Christopher Thompson
 Don, Kathy, Kim & Joe
 Marie Hudock

Holy Annunciation Church

Berwick, PA

Rev. Fr. James & Matushka Lisa Weremedic
 James, Jr. & Victoria Weremedic
 Tamara, Jordan, & Zachary Beckley
 Mary & Alex Berbeck
 Mary K. Burns
 Jean & Ernie Drum
 Mr. & Mrs. Roy Ervin & family
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Harrison
 Sue Holoviak & family
 Paul & Jean Husak
 Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Jurbala
 Mrs. Anna Jurbala
 Mrs. Mary Jurbala
 Joan Kost & Michael
 Dr. John Husak
 Diane, Alyssa & Tom Macri
 Mary Maholic
 Mr. & Mrs. Andy Mihaly & family
 Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Mihaly Sr.
 Mr. & Mrs. John Parker
 Ann Marie & Roy Peckham
 Helen & Frank Petak
 Michael Petak
 Lisa & Tom Popko & Gabriella
 Mr. & Mrs. Todd Sponenberg

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 & Matushka Fran Vansuch
 Reader Andrew Fatuch & family
 Reader & Mrs. Jeffrey C. Lovell
 Reader & Mrs. William Podlusk & Fam.
 Reader Jason Vansuch
 Gary & Marie Angstadt & Sons
 Martha Billy
 Mr. & Mrs. Gerard Bobal & family
 Mrs. Patricia Brandstetter
 Dr. & Mrs. Gregory Brusko
 G. Damian Brusko
 Cameron Nicholas Bruoko
 Helen Butch
 Theresa Kasmer Butler & family
 Joseph & Jean Butrymowicz
 Nicole Campbell
 Paul Chernay

Greg & Cindy Chernay
 Mrs. Johanna Chomko
 Basil & Helen Choman
 Mrs. Rose Chromiak
 Dennis Chrush
 Lynn Chrush
 Alyssa Chrush
 Ruth Condit
 Lisa Curry
 Mrs. Natalia Danczenko
 Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Danko & family
 Michael & Mary Dorosh
 Marina M. Dorosh
 Michael J. & Toni Dorosh
 Damian A. Drasher
 Mr. & Mrs. Donald Fair
 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 & family
 Elizabeth Hahalis
 Mary Ann Hanas
 Helen Haney
 Andrew Hasenecz
 Charles Hasenecz
 Elizabeth Hasenecz
 Nadine & Elias Hasenecz
 Doctors Julius & Anna Herz
 Mr. & Mrs. Peter Holoviak
 Mary Holva
 Mary Howell & Sons
 Mary Hudak
 Ann Marie Hutz
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Isbansky
 Dr. & Mrs. Gary Jenkins
 Peter Jubinski
 Sarah Jubinski
 Dr. Daniel Jubinski
 George & Rose Mary Jubinski
 Mrs. Mary Jurta
 Mrs. Helen Karel
 Mrs. Mazy Kasander
 Eric Kasander
 Jeffrey J. Kasander, D.M.D.
 Jim, Nadia Kelly & family
 Jessica Kelly
 Mr. & Mrs. Peter Kerez
 Bill & Sandi Keysock & family
 Vera Kiak
 Albert & Esther Kiechel
 Gary Kiechel
 Mr. & Mrs. Jesse Kiefer & family
 Mr. & Mrs. Peter Kohudic
 Selar & Jo Ann Konsevitch
 Mr. & Mrs. Gregory Konsevitch & family
 Mrs. Donald Koretski
 John Koretski
 Mary Koretski
 Stephanie Koretski
 Joanne Kuhns
 Ann Krill
 Michael H. Kuchka
 Dr. Michael R. Kuchka
 Mr. & Mrs. Austin Kurisico
 Vladimir B. Laury
 Nicholas & Judy Lezinsky
 Kyra, Matthew, & Peter Lezinsky
 Lichtenwalner family

A Friend
 Mary Madensky
 Mr. & Mrs. Randall Marsh & family
 Eugenia Jane Meilinger
 Mrs. Helen Mohr
 Mrs. Irene Momrock
 Mr. & Mrs. John Monarek & family
 Mr. & Mrs. Scott Morgan & family
 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 & family
 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 & family
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Senick, Jr.
 Joseph Senick III
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Slivka, Eric & Peter
 John Smakula
 Laura Smakula
 Margaret Smakula
 Wasley Smakula
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Stafiniak
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Stafiniak
 Michele Stafiniak
 Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Stafiniak
 Boris & Vera Stoiancheff
 Julia Strohl
 Olga Sviatko
 Anastasia Symanovich
 Ola Tatusko
 Wash & Helen Telepchak
 Rachel Toroney
 Damian, Stacey & Gabriel Vansuch
 Basil & Kate Vansuch & Isabelle Claire
 Martha Wagner
 Mr. & Mrs. James Weida
 Dr. & Mrs. Thomas J. Weida & family
 Catherine Witko
 Rosemary Ziegenfus

Holy Trinity Church

Catasauqua, PA

V. Rev. John Bruchok, Jr.
 Mary Bruchok
 Tanya Bruchok
 Vernon Riley
 Michael, Doris & Mark Bruchok,
 Fr. Dn. Chris & Mat. Mary Ann Rowe,
 Katherine & Samuel
 Reader Michael & Vincentine Brusko
 David, Danielle & Sidney Bachert
 Edward & Pauline Bachert
 Edward, Jr. & Holly Bachert
 Zachary, Nathaniel & Isaac Bachert

Glorify Him!

Nina, Chris, Halle, Andrew Bagshaw
 Richard & Mary Baker
 Mildred Bowski
 Andy & Patricia Brusko
 Suezanne Baker Cressman
 David & Janice Cudlic, Laura & David
 Helen Fritzing
 Richard & Jean Garrison
 Charles & Helen Gaston
 Michael Gaston, Lucas & Michael
 Susan Greitzer
 Helen Haas
 Mary & Joseph Horoschak
 John Karpeuk
 Anna Katchur
 Christina, William, Stephanie & Billy Reynolds
 Rebecca Romanchik
 Dr. Serges & Fay Salivonchik
 Helen Suda
 Mary Yuhus
 Mary Zbur

St. Mary's Church

Coaldale

Rev. Andrew & Mat Suzanna Diehl
 Matushka Irene Borick
 St. Mary's Altar Boys
 St. Mary's Jr. O Club
 George Barrett
 Gloria Bench & family
 Helen Berezniak
 Harry Bialis
 William Bybel
 Stephanie Chmel
 Analisha & Vanessa Christman
 Melanie & David Christman
 Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Danchak
 Olga Hebda
 Catherine Hedes
 Olga Kash
 John King
 Wash & Helen King
 Ann Kononchuk
 Rose Lisella
 Michael Lorchak
 Ted & Pauline Lorchak
 Mary Lutash
 Helen & Nicholas Maholick
 Pauline Maholick
 Paul & Kay Maliniak
 Petrina Poko
 Irene & John Puschak
 Otis & Claire Remington & family
 Douglas & Mary Ellen Rudenko
 Nichalos & Julia Rudenko
 Nancy Ruggeri
 Paul & Helen Sheers
 Althea Shillock
 John & Eleanor Sidoriak
 John & Barbara Sidoriak & children
 Olga Sidoriak
 Ted & Susan Sidorkiak & children
 Anna Slanta
 Simon & Martha Stafiniak
 MarthaD Teno
 Martha & Nick Teno
 Elizabeth Pick Warcholak
 Olga Weiss
 Harry Wyshosky, Jr.
 Mary K Zemanik

St. Nicholas Church

Coatsville, PA

Rev. George & Presvytera Mary Giannalis
 Altar Boys
 Church Choir
 Sunday School

George Babich
 Samuel Babich
 Karin Campbell
 Mary Collier
 Sandy & Val Dzwonczyk
 Sakis Evangelou
 James & Valerie Fox
 Alex Griskevich
 Nanette Hare
 Vera Hatcher
 Pope Kousisis
 Eugenia Papst
 Nina Petro & Son John
 Nicholas & Ann Ruczhak
 Charles Sarosi
 Michael Sarosi
 Peter & Georgette Sarosi
 Martha & Ted Skiadas
 Maria Toth
 Ann Wilson
 John Zatyczyc

St. John the Baptist Church

Dundaff, PA

V. Rev. Dionysius & Matushka Marion Swencki
 Mary Allen
 Mr. & Mrs. Peter Anderline & family
 Congdon family
 Catherine Conick
 Louise & Henry Gosh
 Anne Janusz
 Peter Kowalsky
 In mem. of Mary & Thomas Mikolaichik
 Ed & Kay Owens
 Mr. & Mrs. George Sheypuk & daughters
 Joseph Shipsky
 Mary Steponaitis
 Elizabeth Wargo
 Stephen Wargo
 Janice Witko
 Ann & Ronald Wolfe
 Mary Woytowich

St. John the Baptist Church

Edwardsville, PA

Very Rev. Protopyesbyter Michael and
 Matushka Ann Marie Slovesko
 Theresa Slovesko
 Christine Adamski
 Karen Adamski
 Anna Billek
 Lorraine Brader
 Helen C. Conner
 Helen Deletconich
 William Deletconich
 Anna B. Dutko
 Elizabeth Dutko
 Elizabeth Ervin
 Michael & Mary Lou Fedorko
 Michael, Sean, Briana Fedorko
 Christine Ferenchick
 Tyler & Megan Ferenchick
 Mr. & Mrs. Aric Gingo & Sons
 Eugene & Shirley Gingo
 Martha Gingo
 Matthew Gingo
 Aaron Gingo
 Kathy Harmanos
 Kyra Harmanos
 Margaret Hoidra
 Helen Kobusky
 Eva Kopko
 Mary Kosciuszko
 Mr & Mrs Stephen Kosierowski & daughters
 Florence Kotch
 Beatrice Kowalskie

Michael, Sandy & Hannah Lukatchik
 Lydia & James Lynch
 Lynch children James & Mary Catherine
 Marie Martin
 Peter & Florence Mazur
 Helen Medar
 Shirley, Sandi & Sheri Medivick
 Olga Merowsky
 Helen Moncovich
 Olga Morgan
 Tillie Panco
 Anna Pengrin
 Mary Pengrin-Sal
 George & Helen Piskorik
 Shawn Reilly
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Rilko
 Brandyn & Madison Robbins
 Mary Rock
 Julia Roschak
 Donna & Darlene Rybka
 Henry & Dr. Angela Sal
 Carol & John Sitar
 Julia Sitar
 Peter & Marie Souchick
 Paul Stevens
 Evelyn & John Swetts
 Eva Turaj
 Mr. & Mrs. Edward Van Camp
 Wanda Wanko
 Elizabeth Wozniak
 Joe Wozniak, Jr.
 Helen Yakowec

Holy Ascension Church

Frackville, PA

V. Rev Paul & Matushka Ropitsky
 Matushka Helen Kuchta & Christina
 Michael Ropitsky
 Anna Andrusichien
 Theresa Basara
 Julie Beltrami
 Ed & Eva Boniscavage
 Sonya & Joshua Bosock
 Buchanan family
 Mr. & Mrs. Donald Bricker
 Helen Chrin
 Olga Chrush
 Mr. & Mrs. Serguis Chrush
 Olga Chuma
 Dr. & Mrs. Richard Chwastiak
 Nicole & Richard Chwastiak
 Michael & Carol Cuttic
 Mary Diffenderfer
 Anna Dudash
 Michael Dyszel
 Anna, Valerie, Renee Eippert
 Barbara Eximitas
 Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Fletcher
 Jean & Frank Holowaty
 Larissa Holowaty
 Olga & John Hreshko
 Mr. & Mrs. Shawn Kane & family
 Michael Kasmer
 David, Gregory & Daniel Keysock
 William & Mary Keysock
 Pat & Vera Kleman
 Mary Krutz
 John & Nancy Malinchok
 Paul & Martha Malinchok
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Martin
 Mel Martin
 Paul Martin
 Paul Medvetz
 Sandra Morrash
 Eva Mucha
 Margaret & John Nester
 Michael Onuskanich

Christ is Born!

Sophie Osenbach
 Midge & Mike Paulonis
 Peter & Barbara Pelak
 John & Sophie Pellock
 Helen Polanchyck
 Peter Rachko
 Reeds, Peleschaks, & Pasqualis
 Carole Sagan
 John & Julie Semanchick
 Andrew Smarkanic
 Greg, Rita & Gregory Tatusko
 Gregory Tatusko
 Nicholas Tatusko
 Vera M. Timko
 Mary Torick
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Trynosky
 Christine Varanka
 Michael, Roseann & Michael Weremedic
 Peter & Marie Weremedic
 Peter Weremedic Jr.
 Liz & John Wittig
 Olga Williams
 Elizabeth Yust

St. Herman's Church Gradyville, PA

V Rev John J. & Matushka Eugenia Perich
 V Rev & Matushka Nicholas S. Yuschak
 Taisia & Alexandra Perich
 Sonya Perich
 Matushka Mary Fedoronko
 Reader Gregory, Sharon, Katya & Alexander Hubiak
 Dan Babiak & family
 The Bitsko family
 Tom, Debbie & Emily Bradley
 Claire & Maryellen Brown
 The Chobany family
 Frank & Judy DiMaggio
 Marta & Kevin Grewell & children
 The Guzewski family
 The Hammerer family
 Al & Peg Hendrick
 Eugenia & Leroy Hughes
 Anastasia Jabkowski
 Ann & Martin Kelley & children
 Doris K. Koveal
 George & Christel Krugovoy
 Don & LuAnn Motel
 Danielle & George Pahomov
 Larissa Pahomov
 Susan & Chrysa Pasqualone
 Nancy & Alan Pcsolyar & children
 Francis Plasha
 George & Anastasia Plisko
 John, Dina, Amanda & Alexander Prokop
 Anne Rindfleisch
 Nita Harris Siciliano & family
 John & Mollie Smarsh
 Bill & Jeanne Sokurenko
 Stephen M. Sissons
 Serge & Svetlana Tapytkoff
 John W. Weaver
 Paul, Juliann, Paul & Alexandra Whittington

Christ the Saviour Church Harrisburg

V. Rev. & Mrs. Daniel Ressetar
 V. Rev. Dr. & Mrs. Michael Kovach
 Sbdn. & Mrs. Richard Hathaway
 Mr. & Mrs. Roy Ambartsumian
 Mr. Sebatu Andemichael
 Mr. James Antonio Jr.
 Mr. Grigory Arakelov
 Mr. & Mrs. Igor Arakelova
 Mr. & Mrs. Akram Ayoub
 Mr. & Mrs. Haitham Ayoub
 Ms. Margaret Balog

Mrs. Sylvester Barbu
 Mr. John R. Barns
 Drs. John & Judy Blebea
 Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Bretz
 Mrs. Deborah Bricker
 Mrs. Patricia Bromley
 Mr. Daniel Buddwalk
 Mr. & Mrs. John Buddwalk
 Mrs. Monica Burgett
 Mr. John Caba Jr.
 Mrs. Marina Cameron
 Mrs. B. Challenger
 Mr. & Mrs. Bodan Ciocirlan
 Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Cole
 Mr. & Mrs. John Costas
 Mr. George Cvijic
 Mr. Steven Danko
 Miss Susan Demchak
 Mr. Zekerias Dermas
 Mrs. Lorie DiClemente
 Mr. Joshua DiFlorio
 Mrs. Anna K Doray
 Mr. & Mrs. John Dotsey
 Mrs. Mary Dotsey
 Mr. Paul Dotsey
 Ms Susan Dotsey
 Mrs. Paul Drebort
 Mr. & Mrs. Paul Drebort
 Mr. Terry Drebort
 Mr. Thomas Drebort
 Mr. Robert Drozd
 Mr. David Dugan
 Mrs. Marianne English
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Essis
 Mr. & Mrs. Salem Essis
 Mrs. John Essock
 Mr. & Mrs. John Farrow
 Mr. Joseph Fatula
 Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Fedetz
 Mr. Timothy Fedetz
 Mr. Brian Fetsko
 Mr. Jeffrey Fetsko
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Fetsko
 Mr. & Mrs. Milton Gaither
 Mr. & Mrs. H Gebreselassie
 Mr. Amanuel Ghebremichael
 Mr. & Mrs. Kidane Ghebremichael
 Mr. & Mrs. Paul Hadginske
 Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Hair
 Miss Bethann Hancher
 Mr. Ronald Hancher Jr
 Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Hancher Sr
 Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Hanratty
 Mrs. Christine Hardenstine
 Mrs. Maria W. Hebda
 Mr. & Mrs. James Henry
 Mr. & Mrs. Carl Hisiro
 Mrs. Mary Hornack
 Mrs. Elizabeth Howe
 Mrs. Marie Intrieri
 Mr. & Mrs. Symeon Jekel
 Mrs. Jayne Johnson
 Mrs. Kathleen Kalina
 Mr. & Mrs. William Kantor
 Mr. & Mrs. George Kaznowsky
 Mr. & Mrs. Alex Kazupas
 Mr. & Mrs. Jacob Keecherill
 Mrs. Cathi Kemp
 Mrs. Ludmilla Kern
 Mrs. George Klipa
 Mr. Gary Kneiss
 Mr. & Mrs. George Krempasky
 Mr. James Krut
 Mr. & Mrs. Basil Kuchta
 Mrs. Tessie Kuchta
 Miss Katherine Kuchwara
 Att'y & Mrs. John S. Kundrat

Mrs. Helen Kurylo
 Mr. & Mrs. Alex Kuzupas
 Mr. & Mrs. Harry Linsinbigler
 Mrs. Stephen Macut
 Mr. & Mrs. Paul Makosky
 Mrs. Gloria Maliniak
 Mr. Adam Mallick
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Mallick
 Mrs. Lydia Mantle
 Mr. David Martin
 Mr. & Mrs. John Matangos
 Mrs. Maryann Mawhinney
 Mr. Joseph Mazurek
 Mrs. Deborah McGinnes
 Mr. Douglas McGinnes
 Miss Meghan McGinnes
 Mrs. Angela McGreevy
 Mrs. Myra McInnis
 Mrs. Christine McKeown
 Mr. Timothy McMahan
 Mrs. Thomas Middlesworth
 Mr. John Midlick
 Mrs. Sonya Miele
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Mihalaki Sr.
 Dr. Paul G. Miller
 Mrs. Ellen Miller
 Mr. Eugene Minarich
 Mr. Jonathan Minarich
 Mr. Eli Mioff
 Ms. Elizabeth Motz
 Mr. Ted Motz Jr.
 Mr. & Mrs. David Nesko
 Dr. John D. Nester
 Mr. & Mrs. David Newhouse
 Dr. & Mrs. Joseph Norato
 Mrs. Evelyn Onufer
 Mr. & Mrs. Walter Onufrak
 Mr. Walter Onufrak Jr.
 Mr. & Mrs. John Osuch
 Mrs. Katherine Pankiw
 Mrs. Rita Papach
 Mr. Stephen Pawlak
 Dr. David Pawlusch
 Mr. Michael G. Pawlusch
 Mr. & Mrs. Paul Pellegrini
 Mr. William Perbetsky Jr.
 Mr. Nicholas Pestrock
 Mr. Donald Pidich
 Mr. Carl Polansky
 Mrs. Christine Priggins
 Mr. John Pylypciw
 Mr. Louis J. Reardon
 Mr. Alexander Ressetar
 Mr. Gregory Ressetar
 Mr. Nicholas Ressetar
 Mrs. Agnes Risser
 Mr. Mark Rodak
 Mr. Joseph Russian
 Mr. & Mrs. Russell Sass
 Mr. John Schilling Jr.
 Mr. & Mrs. John Schilling Sr.
 Mr. Michael Schubert
 Miss Larissa Shuga
 Miss Basima Shunnara
 Mr. & Mrs. J. Shunnara
 Mr. & Mrs. Saliba Shunnara
 Miss Salwa Shunnara
 Mr. & Mrs. Frank Skirpan
 Mr. Lawrence Smith
 Mr. Nicholas Somple
 Mr. Andrew Spaseff
 Mrs. Effie Spaseff
 Mr. & Mrs. John Spaseff
 Mrs. Marie Spaseff
 Mr. & Mrs. Basil Suple
 Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Sutovich Jr.
 Mr. & Mrs. Harry Sysak

Glorify Him!

Miss Ruth Sysak
Mr. & Mrs. Maksym Szewczyk
Mr. J. Milton Taleff
Mr. Jamie Taleff
Mrs. June Taleff
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Taleff Jr.
Mrs. Helen Tatusko
Mrs. Natalie Treece
Mrs. Anne D. Trunk
Mrs. Jane A. Volscko
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Washburn
Mr. & Mrs. Leo Washburn Sr.
Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Webb
Mrs. Joanne Wevodau
Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Wickard
Mrs. Mildred Wolfe
Ms. Susan Wolfe
Miss Marianne Wood
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Wood
Mr. Stephen Wood
Mrs. Helen Yannone
Mr. Robert Yanosky
Mrs. Mary Young
Mrs. Michael Zart
Mr. Lawrence D. Zedlovich
Mr. & Mrs. Aghesom T. Zerezgi
Mr. & Mrs. Teklai Zerezgi
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Zuro

St. Michael's Church Jermyn

Father John & Mat. Kathy Kowalczyk,
Sophia & Nicky
Father Gabriel & Matushka Petorak
Subdeacon Vasili & Alexandra Gardecki
Debby & Barry Bernosky & family
Wendy & Serge Bochnovich & family
Eileen & Ed Brzuchalski
Dave & Ann Butler
Sandy, Kevin, Morgan & Megan Carney
Sandy & Jeff Cavanaugh & Sons
Sharon & Randy Cleary & family
Eileen & Bob Dance
Eva Demchak
Marie Derkasch
Stephen & Chris Derkasch
Dr. & Mrs. William Derkasch
Dolores Dreater
Kaye Fedirko
Donald & Rosalie Fives
Tammy, Bill & Shelby Lynn Fives
Annabelle Franchak
Peter & Dolores Frenchko
Joseph Getzie
Nicholas Getzie
Peter Getzie
Tom & Helen Grancey
Dorothy & Andy Hanchak
Joan & Bill Hanchak
Julia Hanchak
Jon, Debby & Jonathan Jaye
Olga Jaye
John and Mary Kay Hockin
John A. Hockin, Esq.
Elizabeth Hockin
Dorothy Keklak
Rose Kelechawa
Julia Kitchura
Henry II & Jeremi Korpusik
Mary & Henry Korpusik
Eva Krenitsky
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Krenitsky
Irene Kupinski
Maria & Nicholas Landi
Daria Leahman
Cindy & Mike Mancini
Sam & JoAnn Mattise
Scott & Paula Melesky & Mark

Tom Meredith
Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Michalczyk
Sam and Mary Ann Mosley
John & Barbara Nayduch
Roxanne & Miles Neutts
Justine Orlando
Andy & Margaret Petriiak
Stephanie & Rob Pliska & family
Martha Pollock
Willard Puzza
Al & Barbara Radtke
Mary Joan Rusiniak
Susan & Dave Schlasta & family
Adam & Mary Ann Serafini
Delores Sernak
John Sernak
Mary Sernak
Ron & Lorraine Sernak & Ann
Delores Serniak
Steven Serniak
Gloria & Tom Shaw
Anastasia Sloat
John Susko
Irene Swirdovich
Chap. Col. (R) Peter & Martha Telencio
Damian & Stephen Telencio
Bob & Millie Telep
Rebecca Telep
John & Yvonne Wargo & family
Mary Wyziak
JoAnne Yurchak
Julia Zaccone
Peter D. Zaccone
Mary Zielinski
Betty Zrowka
Joe & Dorothy Zrowka

Holy Ascension Church Lykens

V. Rev. John & Matushka Daria Mason
V. Rev. Michael & Matushka Sonya Evans
Margaret Carl
Olga Hrinda
Michael Leshko
Ann Mahoney
John Mehalko
Dr. & Mrs. Alexander Pianovich
Dr. & Mrs. Paul A. Pianovich
Alex Pianovich
Stephen Pianovich
William & Susan Pinkerton
Nadia Sass
Catherine Siemons
Anna Sovich
Nicholas Sovich
John N. Sweikert
George Tiazkun
Helen Timko
Patricia & Joseph Welsh
Kathleen Welsh

Holy Trinity Church McAdoo, PA

The Rev. Timothy Hasenecz
Helen Cortez
Anna Lee Davidovich
Pearl Elko
Anna Fanelli
Rosella Gardecki
Mary Ann Graino
Michael & Michelle Klesh
Daniel Kurtz
Greg & Cathy Kurtz & family
Joseph & Linda Kurtz & Sons
Anna Kurtz
Michael & Jan Kurtz, Jr. & Son

Danny Oneschuck
Helen Osuch
Cindy Polli
Lonnie Polli
Sophie & Clark Shuman
Paul Smerkanich
Mary Stronko
Irene Yaworsky
Michael Zabitchuck

S. Peter & Paul Church Minersville

Fr. Michael & Matushka Hatrak
Natalie Hatrak
James & Anna Antonio
Mr. & Mrs. John Barnetsky
JoAnn Brinich
Russ, Michele, Noah & Alexis Charowsky
Ralph & Kathy Brinich, Jenn & Adam
Susie Frew
Elsie Herman
Rick & Lynda, Ricky & Lauren Hutton
Olga Kirkauskas
Kathy & Bret Maley
Lydia, John & Johnny Malusky
Mr. & Mrs. Harry Oakill & family
Mr. & Mrs. Luke Oakill
Anna Olexa
Michael & Lisa, Christian & Sofia Pascuzzo
Mike, Barb, & Cassandra Rogers
Stablum family
Mr. & Mrs. David Studlack
Anna Wyslutsky
Sandra Wyslutsky

St. Michael's Church Mount Carmel

V. Rev. Michael & Matushka Sonia Evans
Michael Evans
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas P. Alekseyko
Julia Barnes
Anastasia Beckus
Dorothy Beckus
Olga Berkoski
George Bortnichak
Florence Bubernak
Chris Buchkarik
Julia Bushick
Mr. & Mrs. Charlie Chidovich
Deanna Ciocco
Marie Cuff
Anna Gondal
Catherine Hardnock
Maryann & Ermie Hill
Mr. & Mrs. Peter J. Horoschak
Bob & Marie Kuchta
Olga Leon
Daniel Leon
Adam Leschinsky
Bernie & Tanya Malkoski
Leon Markovich
Jean & Chris Mathias
Costy Melnick
Mary Moroz
Margaret Olaf
Olga Paduhovich
Anna Panikarchuck
Geroge Panikarcheck
Jasmine & Peter Paskell
Stephanie Peek
Theresa Pohekailo
Catherine Shaffchick
MM Walter Sebasovich
Eveann Shamus
Helen Sorocka
Ann Tanney
Helen Timpko

Christ is Born!

Joseph & Sandy Tosca
Mildred & Ben Trefsgar
Pearl Winnick
Anna Wislock
Delores Wislock
Paul Wislock
Valentina & Victoria Wood
Peter Yastishak
Mr. & Mrs. Stan Zbicki

St. John the Baptist Church Nanticoke, PA

Father & Matushka Stephen Karaffa
Peter & Elizabeth Hetman
Mary Hunchan
Mary Humchan-Zaletas
Craig & Deborah Kachmar
John & Theresa Klos
Mary Kupmonas
Jillian Paprota
Joe & Mary Paprota
Joseph P. Paprota
Joseph R. Paprota
John Pihanich
Jay & Marge Sokol
Dan & Lori Stillarty
Paul & Olga Sulewski
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Truskowski & family
Warho family
Kathy Zaleta, R.N.
Mary Zupko
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Zupko

St. Michael's Church Old Forge

Father David & Matushka 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 Jadick
Al & Mary Krenitsky
Tina Ludwig
Joseph & Ann Marie Macijowsky
Helen Percy
Lovie & Ann Peregrin
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 Wyslutsky
Joachim, Simeon & Gabriella Wyslutsky
Brian & Ruth Marie Brown & Matthew
Helen Bryer
David & Mary Brzuchalski
Nicholas & Alexis Brzuchalski
Stephana Butchko
Elizabeth Generotti
Mary Jane & Tanya Gilbert
Irene Glowatz
Nicholas & Marie Holowatch
Justine Horhut
Natalie Hoyniak
Harry & Elizabeth Hunyak
Ken & Stacey Kashuba
Stephanie, Kaitlyn & Zachary Kashuba
Anna Klemko
Eleanor Krushinski
Michael & Amelia Kuzmiak
Joseph & Anastasia Mazur
Claudia Mikulak
Frances Meholic
Dr. Gregory Meholic
Mary & Maria Oles
Olga & Vera Paulishak
George & Betty Perechinsky
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Prestys
Barbara Puhalla
Ashley Puthorosky
Mr. & Mrs. John Puthorosky
Marguerite Puthorosky
Peter & Joni Rezanka
Joseph & Helen Semon & family
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Schlasta
James & Donna Specht
Kyra, Chelsea & Ian Specht
Dan & Susan Stafursky
Ken Stafursky
Mary Stafursky
Samantha & Stephanie Stafursky
Steve & Pat Stafursky
Linda Stuchlak
Michael Stuchlak Sr
Julia Voloshen
Mary Wasilchak

St. Nicholas Church Olyphant

Fr. Vladimir Fetcho
Matushka Marianne Fetcho
Alexandra Butchko
Richard & Julie Cesari
James & Jonathan Cesari
Ellen Cherry
Lisa Cherry
John & Josephine Chichilla
Jerry, Carol & Niki Dreater
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Dreater, Sr.
Capt. & Mrs. Paul Dreater Jr.
Dorothy Fetchina
Joseph Fetchina
Marie Grabania
Michael Grabania
Mr. & Mrs. David B. Hughes
George Kopestonsky
Olga Kuzmick
Kyra Nightingale
John Nightingale
Vera & Tom Price
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Rebar
Dr. & Mrs. Larry R Sherman
Ann Thomashefsky
Helen Thomashefsky
James Thomashefsky
John W. Turko, Jr.
Mary Youshock

St. Stephen's Cathedral Philadelphia

Fr. Daniel & Matushka Mary Geeza
Matushka Mary Fedoronko
Mary Ann Alfimow
Barbara & Karen Belsito
Mr. & Mrs. Igor Bergners
Mary D. Birkenbach
Ron & Kathy Bisaga
Sonia, Dan, Stephen & Christine Bondira
Gregory, Carolyn & Grace Borichevsky
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 & family
Ray, Michelle, Matthew & Natalie Decker
Willis & Lubie Dietrich
Reader Daniel & Taissa Drobish
David Drobish
Dr. George & Pauline Englesson
Margret Englesson
Paul, Diane, Laura & John Fedoronko
Dr. Jack, Irene, Alexander, Halina,
Kyra & Sophia Forest
Nina, Bill, Michael & Matthew Gavula
Kathie Gavula
Olga & John Gazak
Elisabeth Gentieu
Ekaterina Gorbachevski
Jelena Grabania
Lester Grabania & Paul
Mary Gressen
Michael & Jenny Harb
Anna M. Fedryck-Hargrave
William & Nina Hartwell
Agnes & John Herbut
Helene & Mike Hopkins
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
Lorraine & Harold Kane & Mikeal, Alyssa & Sarah
Alice Karpiak
Elaine Kasmer & Joe Clark
Nadia Kolesnik
Mr. & Mrs. John Kolesnik & family
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Kolesnik & family
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Kolesnik & family
Annette Kopistansky
John Kozlowski
Bill Kraftician
Alex & Valentina Kuzman
Greg, Lydia & Kira Kuzmanchuk
Nicole Lamprieck
Peter & Martha Linski
Sonia, Larissa & Michael Jr. Mariani
Mr. & Mrs. Merdiuszew
Anna Miller
Walter & Mary Mokriski
Adele & Lev Mozhaev
Martha Murianka & family
Janice Nass
Christine Nass
Phil & Irene O'Brien & Dasha
Jahn O'Brick
Joseph O'Brick & Kerri Irene
Olga Oprausack

Glorify Him!

Catherine Paulasack
Helen Plunkett
Heinz & Tamara Poessel
Stephan & Marge Pron
Larissa & Stephan Pron
Mary Radick
Tom, Nina, Nicholas, Deanna & Victoria Rapak
Valentina & Jonathan Rhoades
Sarah & Alexa Rhoades
John, Denise, Sonia & Michael Rowe
Al Silveira Jr.
Anna D. Simpson
Joseph C. Simpson
Martha, Jack, Megan, Adam, Jacob & Amelia Sisko
Larry, Connie, Jon & Chris Skvir
Anna Smith
Basil, Eva, Anthony & Anna Smith
Joseph & Catherine Stearne
Walter & Carolyn Stephan-Stephanowich
Tatiana Stephan & Kristin LaMacchia
John & Helen Szulak
Robert Gregory Tallick
Dr. Michael, Amelia, Michael & Natalie
Taptykoff
Lydia P. Tichy
Alice Victor
Eva & Bill Wasser
Mr. & Mrs. Andrew J. Yencha
Andrew, Megan, Stephen & Matthew Yencha
Maura Ann Yencha
Diane, Vincent, Nicholas & Kristina Zanghi
Irene Zaroff
Margarite & George Zlatkowski
John, Anna & John Zwick

Holy Trinity Church Pottstown

Fr Stephen & Mat Jessica Evanina & Jacob
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Bendyk & family
Anna Marie & Jon Black
Sara Black
John & Helen Boretsky
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Brilla & family
James & Christina Crawford
Mr. Ken Chrusch
Cyril & Albena Diener
Nettie Hart
Christina Hutnyan
Mr. & Mrs. James Hutnyan & family
Rebecca Hutnyan
Mrs. Helen Kline
Mr. & Mrs. Dan & Marina Long
Mary Monarek
Helen Pershinsky
Mary & Angie Rappchinski
Effie Romanik
Mr. & Mrs. Ken Sekellick & family
Ms. Julie Zewan

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church St. Clair

Fr. Michael & Matushka Hatrak
Natalie Hatrak
Leah Chrusch
Olga DeMarkis
Tusha Dernbach
Peggy Dimoff
Jim & Ruthann Kerick
George Papinchak
Vera Papinchak
Steve & Justyna Pelak
Ted & Jeanette Sagan
Mr. & Mrs. Sam Wisnosky

St. Herman Of Alaska Orthodox Church Shillington

Very Rev. & Mrs. John A. Onofrey

The Parish Council
The Sunday School teachers & students
The Our Lady of Kazan Sisterhood
The Parish Choir
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Anderson & family
Mrs. Vera Bortniak
Ms. Louise Coleman
Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Dougherty & family
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Drenchko
Marie & John Drosdak
Christopher, Stephanie, Mark & Joshua
Mr. William M. Dudash
Mrs. Gloria Duty & sons
Nicholas & Kathy Ermolovich
Ms. Nancy Ghantous
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 & family
Mr. & Mrs. John Lorchak
Michael & Vera Losk
Mrs. Irene Lupco
John, Dana & Raymond MacKoul
Michael & Janice Mallick
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Matsick & family
Mr. & Mrs. John Melniczek
Mr. & Mrs. Karl Osterburg
Mr. Joseph Paterno
Mrs. Alexandra Prawlocki & family
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Reba & family
Matushka Margaret Ressetar
Mrs. Ruth K. Ruth
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Savage
Mr. Walter Sebastian
Mr. & Mrs. John Seman & family
Ms. Sandra Semion
Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Sichak & family
Ms. Gloria Spitko & Kyra
Mrs. Catherine & Sonja Terenchin
Ms. Cheryl Terenchin
Kyle & Daria Teter
Mr. & Mrs. Steve Vlasak & sons
Mr. & Mrs. Eugene Wanenchak & family
Mr. & Mrs. Chip Weaver & family
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
Ron & Lubov Klimer
Stephen & Ester Kowalsky
Thomas & Elaine Kravetsky
Laurie, Lynn & Kimberly Kravetsky
Helen Kutch
Michael & Theresa Luczkovich
Julia Mazza
Anastasia Mikulak

Micahel 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 Somple

St. Tikhon's Monastery Church South Canaan

His Eminence, Archbishop HERMAN
V. Rev. Michael Dahulich
V. Rev. Daniel K. & Mat. Dolores Donlick
V. Rev. Alexander, Mat. Elena & Alex Golubov
V. Rev. Michael Lepa
Protodeacon Keith S. Russin
Reader Thomas Donlick
Reader Gregory Hatrak
Reader Gregory Sulich
Matushka Elizabeth Geeza
Matushka Dorothy Sulich
Galina Abolins
Mary Andreychik
Marge Barna
Alice Boga
Emma S. Collins
Betty Figura
Drs. David & Mary Ford & Emmelia
Daisy Geeza
Julia Jacewicz
Bill & Anna Kuchta
Mr. & Mrs. John Paluch
Martin Paluch
Ken & Margaret Paulic
Ann Sernak
Stephanie Sklarsky
Paul Wozniak

Holy Trinity Church Stroudsburg

Fr. & Matushka Neal J. Carrigan
Reader David Mastroberte
David & Doreen Donlick
Russ & Nancy Futchko
Carl & Jane Hodel
Tom & Helen Kessler
Peter & Helen Stavisky

Saints Peter & Paul Church Union Dale, PA

Rev. Hieromonk Alexander (Mayba)
Joseph Bendyk
Donald & Ann Bock
Vladimir & Betty Demianovich
Martha Dorosh
Peter Jubinsky
Peter & Linda Jubinsky & family
Rose Kennedy
Lubov & Ronald Kilmer
Lovesy Klym
Antonette Terry
Walter & Lorraine Terry & family

Holy Resurrection Cathedral Wilkes-Barre

Archpriest Joseph & Mat. Gloria Martin
Marina & Elena Martin
Protodeacon Keith Russin
Mr. & Mrs. Judd Good
Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Good & family
Dr. & Mrs. John Haber & family
Reader David & Kathryn Kessler
David, Tatiana & Hannah Kessler
Andrew Buleza
Mary Onufer

Christ is Born!

Helen Humko
John & Doris Zoranski
Kyra Zoranski
Edward & Evelyn Wysocki
Evelyn Wysocki
Olga Layton
Agnes Timchak
John & Anna Dulsky
Sandy, Julieann & Nicholas Kapelan
Charles & Irene Urban
Walter & Zora Narkoff
John & Irene Zimich
Andy Skordinski
Mrs. William Kozey & Son
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Hutz & Son
Sandy King
Marion Thoman
Lovey Drahus
Audrey Coslett
Mrs. Mary Krill
Michael & Nancy Pieck
Marguerite & Tom Czekalski
Vera & Ray Kraynanski
Manusky family
Mr. & Mrs. Sam Ostopick
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Romanuski & family
Margaret Anthony
Bernard & Esther Dancheck
Eva Berlozan

Holy Trinity Church Wilkes-Barre

V Rev David & Mat. Sharon Shewczyk
Timothy & Nicholas Shewczyk
Matushka Pawlush
Helen & Peter Welgo
Helen & Edward Gudaitis
Michael & Vera Lisko
Nan Zula
Mary Bankos
Sue Bawn
Bob & Elaine Benczkowski
Mr. & Mrs Stanley Kozmiski
Stephen & Mary Krill
Jeremy & Marianne Haugh
William & Mary Gurka
Lydia Homick
Helen Zavada
Mrs. Robert T. Rhodes
Nettie Kompinski
Michael & Leona Stchur
Stephen Lukachik
Dolores & Paul Gozick
Mildred L. Mayher
Andrew Dennis
Mr. & Mrs. David C. Mills
John Pawlak
Mary Piznar
Anna Bromuko
Anna & Stanley Bishop
Melanie & Nicolas Bishop
Eleanor & Ted Sovyrda
Anna Goobic
Marion & Eve Sowyrda
Mr. & Mrs. John Gurka
Pearl Tutko
Anastasia & Bernard Golubiewski
Mr. & Mrs. Vladimir Dutko
Peter & Theresa Pawlak
Dr. & Mrs. Clement Valletta & family
William Talpash, Jr.
Walter Mason
June Chilcott & family
Olga Shewczyk
Barbara King

Holy Cross Church Williamsport

Fr Dan & Myra Kovalak
Nalalia Kovalak
Sem Barnabas & Dana Fravel
Paul, Judith, Paul & Tatiana Beard
Yvonne & Nathan Bohlander
Ann Chabal
Matt & Evelyn Chabal
Dr & Mrs Mines Lliras
Eileen Juran
John & Judy
Phil Kundis
Elsie Skvir Nierle
John Raptis, Stephanie & Michael
John Sam Jr & family
Mr & Mrs Lew Shatto (Suggins)
Sinatra family
Michael & Julia Stefanick
Anonymous

St. Michael's Church Wilmington, DE

Priest Andrew & Mat. Karen Anderson
St. Michael's Altar Boys
Reader Timothy Hojnicky
Anonymous
Sergey Baldytchev
Christopher & Nona Carey & family
James Carpenter
Paul, Vera, Matt Chalfant
Ciach family
Conover family
Bill & Alice Dryden
Rashid & Mona Elia
John & Tracy Fedak & family
Paula Flynn
Yelena Fox & family
George Kruse & Gail Sherwood
Sophia Golbiw
Maria Gregors
Ellen Gundersen
Mary Guretsky
Nabih & Georgia Harb
William & Marie Herrman & family
Debra Hines & children
Ed & Karen Hojnicky & family
Stephanie & Ed Hojnicky
Lee & Georgia Hojnicky & family
Helen Kansak
Dolores E. Karawulan
Marie Karawulan
Christina Kraiter
George Kruse & Gail Sherwood
Harry & Evelyn Kutch
Olga Maloney & family
Helen McNally
Peter & Elizabeth Melnik
Nedwin & Pearl Minnich
Michael Mizgala
Nihmat & Alice Morjana
Edward & Nadezhda Torvik
Paul, Marianne, Barbara & Julianna Newmeyer
Vasily Obertyschew
Basil & Emmelia Peck & family
Frazier & Julie Phillips
Sofia Puit
(Joe) Aziz Qandah
Jim & Anne Riley & family
Jim Riley Sr. & family
David & Christine Roberts & family
Olga Rybachak
Saliba & Inshira Shaer & family
Theophan & Perpetua Shatley
Michael & Vera Sinovich
Sacha Stoyanova

Thomas & Lynn Sulpizi
Edward & Nadezhda Torvik
Hon. Merrill & Mary Trader
James & Frances Wilson
Joseph & Susan Wojciechowski
Emily Wujcik
Ed & Cheryl Zabowski
Dorothy & Onufry Zabinko
Robert & Jean Zapora

St. Mark's Church Wrightstown

Archpriest Theodore Heckman & Justin
Fr. Dn. Gregory & Martha Moser
Marina, Larissa & Katerina Moser
Reader George Nakonetschny
Janet M. Kalenish
Badri & Leila Ergemlidze & Family
Sergei, Connie, & Zachary Borichsvsky
James & Monia Pitra
Dee Marmaluk & family
Betsy Werner
Doug Yates & Sharon Burkett & family
Lucy Znak
Jeanette Ruano
Kevin, Mary Ann, & Greg Swan
Peter, Sandy, & Stephanie Bohlander
Jack & Barbara Malriat
Cynthia & Anatole Bredikin
Samuel Mervis
The Martiaks
Peter, Dana & Chris Toma
Stephanie & Valerie Ristvey
Irene & Sergei Arhipov
Boris & Joanne Borichevsky
John & Elizabeth Sherbin
Gil & Helen Harvey
The Mitchells
Sonja (Stavisky) Lengel
Julia Petrov
Charles, Judi & Joe Rybny
John Wanko
Eric Lund
Nicholas Moser & Danielle Fourier

*We, the staff of
Your Diocese
Alive in Christ,
greet our readers
on this holy feast
and we pray that
God grant you
every blessing
in the New Year.
Christ is Born!
Glorify Him!*

All in the Diocesan Family

Berwick

Holy Annunciation Church

The annual parish picnic was held August 19 at a new location, St. Mary's Grove, and was much enjoyed by all who attended.

Fr. James began a busy year of Christian education. Church school classes began Sunday, October 21 with an enrollment of 15 children. A bus trip to Sight and Sound Theater to see their production of "Noah" was also sponsored by the church school.

A new women's organization has been formed in the parish. Over thirty women of the parish attended the initial meeting.



Fr. James Weremedic and faithful from Berwick visit Sight and Sound Theater

Bethlehem

St. Nicholas Church

Paul Chernay was awarded a synodal gramota by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius, for his continued love and support of St. Nicholas Church in Bethlehem, St. Tikhon's Seminary, and the Orthodox Church in America.

Coaldale

St. Mary's Church

St. Mary's held its sixteenth annual Homecoming / Patron Saint Dinner-dance on September 9 with an archpastoral visit by His Eminence Archbishop Herman. On that day several of the parishioners were recognized for the many years of stewardship to St. Mary's. The bronze medal of the Order of St. Innocent was conferred on parish sexton Harry Wyshosky, Jr., and Michael Polansky and Kay Maliniak received gramotas. Michael Hollar was tonsured a reader.

The youth of St. Mary's and their Junior "O" Club held various events this year, including a trip to Camel Back Beach water park in August and Christmas Stocking Project fund-raiser in October. For the stocking project they gave a soup and sandwich luncheon which raised \$400 to help brighten Christmas for the children of Russia.



Newly-tonsured Reader Michael and award recipients with Archbishop Herman

Gradyville

St. Herman of Alaska Church

The parish responded to the September



Winning softball team

11 tragedy by donating money for much needed items, such as batteries, Visine, etc. for the rescue workers. The church school made "God Bless America" signs for the entire church. On the weekend of November 9, the parish held its most successful Christmas Bazaar and Food Festival.

Wedding: Alex Godun and Stephanie Smith on October 27.

**Harrisburg
Christ the Savior Church**

During the past few months, much-needed capital improvements were completed. The church roof was replaced, the interior of the church given a fresh coat of paint, and the gravel parking lot paved and lined to provide 25 spaces. The one-acre property and house adjacent to the parish were purchased; after necessary repairs and painting, it will become the rectory.

The men's softball team, managed by Carl Hisiro, enjoyed its best season ever, taking first place in its division. The team also won the league championships.

Baptisms: Rachel Prudence, Aidan Courage and Susanna Temperance, children of Milton Josiah and Elizabeth Ann (Sawyer) Gaither, August 5; Salina Muzey, daughter of Kidane and Freweini (Tewolde) Ghebremichael, October 30; DeAndre Matthew, son of Andre and Judith (Ghebremichael) Hernandez, November 17; Xenia Elizabeth, daughter of Paul and Alexandra (Melnik) Makosky, November 24.

Chrismations: Milton Josiah Gaither and Elizabeth Ann (Sawyer) Gaither, August 5.

**Jermyn
St. Michael's Church**



Reader Vasili Gardecki ordained to the subdiaconate by Archbishop Herman



Two trophies presented to the parish softball team



Baptism and chrismation of the Gaither family



The blessing of the new icons in the narthex of the Church

**Mt. Carmel
St. Michael's Church**

Family and friends of parishioner Olga Leon gathered at the Watson Inn on September 22, 2001 to celebrate her 80th birthday. Olga has been a lifelong member of St. Michael's.



Olga Leon with Fr. Michael

**Pottstown
Holy Trinity church**

Holy Trinity held its annual Ethnic Fall Bazaar on October 6. The annual event featuring food and craft items was a great success.

Marriage: Mr. & Mrs. Michael Holloway, July 21.

Received into the Orthodox faith: Cyril Diener, August 12; Kenneth Michael Chrusch, November 25.



Fr. Stephen with newlyweds Mr. & Mrs. Michael Holloway



The donors of the new icons with Archbishop Herman. (Not pictured: Joseph and Theresa Krenitsky)

**Philadelphia
St. Stephen's Cathedral**



A new bell tower was recently blessed by Archbishop Herman at St. Stephen's Cathedral



Fr. Stephen receives Cyril Diener into holy Orthodoxy



Kenneth Michael Chrusch received into the Orthodox Church

Shillington

St. Herman of Alaska Church

To support our Church's Christmas Stockings for Russia project, the children and teachers of St. Herman's Church School sponsored the fourth annual scrambled egg & sausage breakfast. Through this undertaking the church school raised \$500 for the project.

The annual parish covered dish dinner was held November 15, with over



Marge and Steve Pron receive gramota for their continued love and support of the cathedral

South Canaan

St. Tikhon's Monastery Church



Blessing of new icon of the Theotokos and two Saints Tikhon



Annual founder's day dinner

80 people filling the hall to enjoy good food and fellowship.

Baptism: Matthew David, son of Michael & Rebecca Drenchko, September 28.

Simpson

St. Basil's Church

Baptism: John Richard V, son of John & Elizabeth Opecka Martin, September 22.

Williamsport

Holy Cross Church

On Monday, October 22, the Holy Cross parish building project was a featured segment of the "On the Pennsylvania Road" series by reporter Mike Stevens of WNEP-TV, Channel 16. The new building, a parish fellowship center being built entirely through the labors of priest and parishioners, is hoped to be completed early next year in time for our 25th anniversary celebration.

Marriage: John Kovich and Judith Schramm, October 21.



Work continues on new fellowship hall at Williamsport

Wilmington

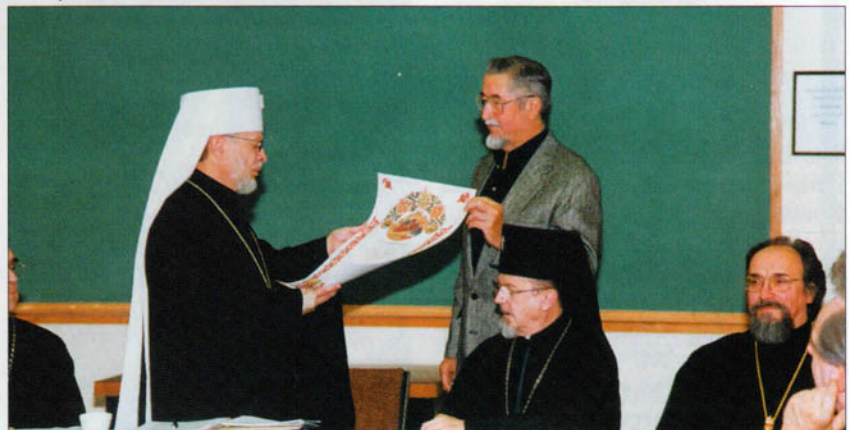
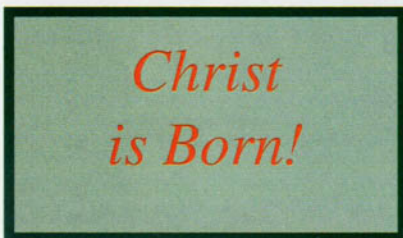
St. Michael the Archangel Church



Three guest clergy joined us for our patronal feast celebration. l-r: Fr. Jerry Ozlanski (Ukrainian), Fr. James Dougherty (Antiochian), Fr. George Giannaris (Greek), and host priest, Fr. Andrew Anderson



Father Dan with newly wedded John & Judith Kovich



Paul Chernay was awarded a synodal gramota by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius

Graduates *(continued from last issue)*



Peter Daniel Jubinski
University of Virginia
St. Nicholas Church
Bethlehem



Kyra Lezinsky
Liberty High School
St. Nicholas Church
Bethlehem



Eric Slivka
Freedom High School
St. Nicholas Church
Bethlehem



Elizabeth Gaynor
De Sales University
St. Nicholas Church
Bethlehem

Not pictured:

Peter Zabowski
University of Delaware
St. Michael the Archangel
Church
Wilmington, DE

Megan Cook
Wheaton College
St. Nicholas Church
Bethlehem

Michael Kriebel
Northampton Community
College
St. Nicholas Church
Bethlehem

Rebecca Kriebel
Northampton Community
College
St. Nicholas Church
Bethlehem

Correction:
Jason James Kutch
Princeton University
St. Michael Church
Wilmington, DE

Bicentennial Choir

The Bicentennial Choir has been reformed under the direction of Fr. Daniel Kovalak. The choir is composed of approximately two dozen singers: clergy, choir directors, St. Tikhon's seminarians, and laymen. The choir has sung benefit concerts at Holy Resurrection Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre, All Saints Church, Olyphant and St. Nicholas Church, Bethlehem for the Emergency Relief Fund. About \$4,000 has been raised from the concerts.



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



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EIGHTH ANNUAL
**St. Tikhon's Century Association
Winter Festival**

For The Benefit of St. Tikhon's Seminary

Sunday, February 17, 2002

Holiday Inn, Scranton-East
I-81 & I-380
200 Tique Street
Dunmore, PA 18512

Special Rates: \$65.00 for single or double, plus tax

Call 1-570-343-4771

MASLENITSA:

A PRE-LENTEN CELEBRATION

Time: 4-5 p.m. Cocktails

5 p.m. Banquet and Dancing

JOE STANKY & HIS CADETS

Reservations should be before February 10, 2002

Please make checks payable to:

St. Tikhon's Century Association

Mail to St. Tikhon's Century Association

P.O. Box 130

South Canaan, Pa 18459

Banquet: Adult \$35.00, Child \$15.00

Reservations can be made for tables of ten!