

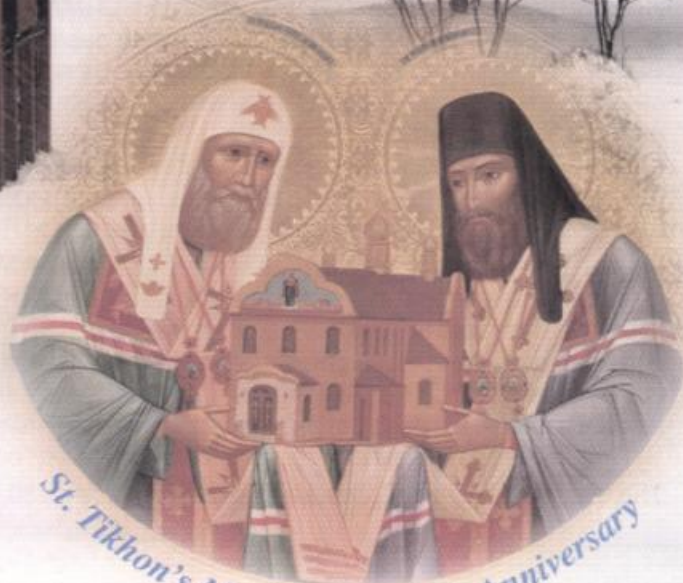
Your Diocese

# *Alive in Christ*

The Magazine of the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, Orthodox Church in America Volume xx, No. 3 Winter, 2004

Christ  
is  
Born!

Glorify Him!



*St. Tikhon's Monastery—100th Anniversary*

## **Saints Peter & Paul Orthodox Church**

### **5th Edition of *Heart & Home Cookbook* Available for Purchase**

The editors of *Recipes Bless the Heart and Home Cookbook* announce that their cookbook will again be for sale during the holiday season. After extensive testing and tasting, the 700 page, 2,000 recipe spiral bound cookbook with 25 sections is filled with a delightful variety of delicious recipes to please every palate, collected from four generations.

With today's hectic schedules, the editors knew how difficult it could be to prepare nutritious meals. Therefore, most of the recipes are not too fussy or labor intensive and call for ingredients commonly found in most homes. The book offers a wide variety of appetizing and flavorful appetizers, beverages, salads, main dishes, breads, desserts, recipes for kids, quick and easy recipes and 75 pages of vegetable recipes, from asparagus to zucchini.

But there's much more here than just the food. Sprinkled throughout the cookbook is folksy wisdom, interspersed with biblical messages, cooking hints, quotes, humor, original art work and illustrations on every page contributed by Anne Anthony, an 80-year-old parishioner.

The book is filled with great and festive recipes for Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter and many homemade gifts from the kitchen, and during the past two years, many letters of praise have been received including these:

"Cookbook is a treasure! It's like a Bible and belongs on the coffee table of every home!" "I'm reading it the way you read a book and enjoying every minute of it!" "Beautiful compilation that goes far beyond cooking. As a collector of cookbooks, this one is the best -- everything in one book." "Quite a collection of cookbooks from everywhere, but yours surpasses all of them!"

Mail orders are \$25.00 including postage and handling. Send to Saints Peter & Paul Orthodox Church, Attn: Cookbook, 305 Main Road, East Herkimer, NY, 13350. Make checks payable to Saints Peter & Paul Orthodox Church.

## **Seminarians Publish By The Waters**

This academic year has been a busy one for the students at St. Tikhon's Seminary. Besides classes, research papers and examinations, there is the full schedule of liturgical services and community events. In addition, this year there was a celebration marking the granting of full accreditation to the seminary by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada and festivities commemorating the 40th anniversary of the ordination of His Beatitude, Metropolitan HERMAN to the holy priesthood.

Nonetheless, the seminarians found time to publish the third edition of their student journal, *By The Waters*, an anthology of the "best" of their research projects of the past academic year, as recommended by the members of the faculty. The publication has won high praise from a number of hierarchs, clergy and laypersons from throughout the country.

Among the diverse articles published in this issue are: "Holy Tradition and 'The Traditions of Men'" by Fr. Ambrose Arrington; "The Godly Work Ethic of the Apostle Paul" by Paul Sidebottom; "Truth and Conversation: A Fictional Meeting between St. Paul and Mohammed" by Fr. John Oliver; "Choosing Salvation" by Christopher Morris; "The Eucharist in the Early Church" by Matthew Jackson; "St. Nicholas Cabasilas: A Saint for Our Times" by Basil Henry; "Towards a Unified 'American' Orthodox Church" by Nicholas Carr; and "Heaven and Hell: An Orthodox Perspective" by Fr. Sergius (Bowyer).

Overseeing the publication was the dean of the seminary, Very Rev. Michael G. Dahulich, Ph.D. Serving as faculty editor of the journal was Dr. David C. Ford, and working as student editor of the issue was Reader Andrew Jacobs, with Reader Alexander Vallens as student layout designer.

The journal is available for purchase for \$6.00 per copy (including postage and handling) by writing to: *By The Waters*, St. Tikhon's Seminary, Post Office Box 130, South Canaan, PA 18459.



***Christ is born!***

***Glorify Him!***

To the Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful of  
the Orthodox Church in America!

Dearly Beloved in the Lord:

*God is with us! Understand this, O nations, and submit yourselves, for God is with us!*

As we celebrate the wondrous birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is fitting for us to reflect on His mission as the long-awaited Messiah, the only-begotten Son of God, and the Savior of the world.

We often hear discussions in the public forum about faith and values. Many voices have called for a return to a vision of life based on principles that, for centuries, have been at the very heart of our society. While these principles offer hope in a world filled with uncertainty, the question must be asked: "what faith" and "whose values" are we called to appropriate into our lives as Orthodox Christians?

The good news that Christ proclaimed was indeed a call to faith — not in a "concept" or an "ideology," but in a person, in the One Whom Saint Peter professed to be "the Son of the Living God." And the values He embodied, summarized in His challenge to love God above all else and to love our neighbor as ourselves, are neither "theory" nor "humanitarian causes" to be championed by people of faith-based principles. Rather, they are the fruits of a life lived in faith in Jesus Christ as the Lord and Master of our lives.

The period of history into which our Lord was born was, like our own, filled with uncertainty. While the Roman Empire had proclaimed that peace had descended upon the world, it was an uncertain peace at best, one rooted not in divine faith and values, but in legal decrees and pronouncements. Into this seemingly tranquil yet highly charged setting the Prince of Peace entered, silently and in all humility. As we sing in the Nativity hymns, He made the cave His palace, the manger His throne. The simple shepherds and the dumb beasts worshipped Him, while the angels glorified Him in song. Yet the rulers of the world came to fear Him, because He revealed that mankind's faith was to be focused on Him alone, and that the values, the way of life of which He was the supreme example, was rooted in a Kingdom that was "not of this world."

Today, as perhaps never before in our lifetimes, we are challenged to put our faith in the newborn Divine Child of Bethlehem into action, to live as our Lord taught us — not for ourselves, but for those around us, especially the "least of the brethren." Confessing Him as the One Who grants the gift of faith, as well as the One in Whom our faith is fulfilled, we are challenged to bring forth the fruits of faith, not by debating vague and often undefined values, but by loving others, even our enemies, as He loves us — unconditionally. And finally, we are challenged to proclaim our faith and Christ-centered lives in word and in deed, so that those who sit in darkness will have yet another opportunity to rejoice in His divine Light.

On this glorious and radiant feast, it is my heartfelt prayer that the newborn Savior of the world will strengthen the faith that He has given you as a most precious gift — a gift that I pray you will value and honor every moment of your lives, with every breath you take! May this gift serve as the guide, as well as the goal, for proclaiming the wondrous news of the Incarnation of the Son of God now and throughout the coming year!

With love in the newborn Lord,

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Herman". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "H" and a trailing flourish.

+HERMAN, Archbishop of Washington  
Metropolitan of All America and Canada

*Locum Tenens* of the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania

Your Diocese

# Alive in Christ

Volume XX Number 3 Winter 2004  
The Official Magazine of the  
Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania  
Orthodox Church in America

## In This Issue

Christmas Message .....	1
Metropolitan Celebrates 40 Years of Priesthood .....	3
Metropolitan Herman's Pastoral Teaching .....	5
We Believe: Symbol of the Faith -- <i>Part IV</i> .....	13
41st Annual Diocesan Assembly .....	15
The Founding of St. Tikhon's Monastery - <i>Part III</i> .....	19
How Bishop Raphael Was Made a Saint .....	24
My Road to the Priesthood .....	31
Seminary Holds Celebration Banquet .....	40
Sermon on Repentance by St. Nicholai of Zicha .....	42
Living as an Orthodox Man Today .....	43
St. Basil's, Simpson, Attains Centennial .....	46
Joyous Celebration in Edwardsville .....	49
Spiritual Father and Vision of Christ in St Symeon.....	52
St. Mark's Church Celebrates 30th Year .....	55
Climate of Fear or Climate of Grace? - <i>Part III</i> .....	59
St. Tikhon's Seminary Convocation .....	62
St. Cyril's Commentary on John's Gospel - <i>Part XVIII</i> ..	64

## Departments

Daily Devotions .....	61
Christmas Listings .....	66
Education Bulletin .....	13
Official .....	30



41st Diocesan Assembly - page 15



Banquet in New York - page 40

## You Diocese Alive in Christ

Produced by the Publications Department of the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, Orthodox Church in America (Diocesan Center, South Canaan, Pennsylvania 18459 570-937-4686), under the direction of His Beatitude, Metropolitan HERMAN. Editor ..... Fr. John Kowalczyk  
Photography..... Martin Paluch  
Staff ..... Fr. David Mahaffey  
Circulation ..... Fr. Leo Poore

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

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

Deadline for the next issue of *Your Diocese Alive in Christ* is April 2, 2005. Please submit all articles (typed), pictures, parish news, etc., on disc to *Alive in Christ*, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, Box 130, South Canaan, PA 18459, or e-mail to [library@stots.edu](mailto:library@stots.edu)



# Metropolitan Herman Marks Fortieth Year of Ordination to the Priesthood



On Tuesday, October 19, 2004 our primate, the most blessed Metropolitan HERMAN, completed forty years since his ordination to the holy priesthood. On this anniversary date members of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America and guest hierarchs joined with His Beatitude in celebrating the Divine Liturgy at St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery Church, South Canaan, Pa.

Among the concelebrating hierarchs were His Eminence, Archbishop Kyrill; His Eminence, Archbishop Peter; His Eminence, Archbishop Dmitri; His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel; His Eminence, Archbishop Job; and His Eminence, Archbishop Nikolozi of Georgia. Also concelebrating were His Grace, Bishop Seraphim; His Grace, Bishop Tikhon of San Francisco; His Grace, Bishop

Nikolai; His Grace, Bishop Nikon; His Grace, Bishop Mercurius; His Grace, Bishop Ireneu; His Grace, Bishop Tikhon of South Canaan; and His Grace, Bishop Benjamin.

Attending the anniversary celebrations were Bishop Basil Losten of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Stamford; Bishop Vicken Aykazian of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church; and the Rev. Gerald Harke.

Among the concelebrating clergy were the Priestmonk Joseph of the Moscow Patriarchate; the V. Rev. David Brum, Secretary to the Metropolitan; the V. Rev. Paul Lazor, Dean of Students, St. Vladimir Seminary; and Protopresbyter Robert S. Kondratich, OCA Chancellor. Also concelebrating were V. Rev. Michael Dahulich, Dean of St. Tikhon Seminary; V. Rev. Constantine White, Dean of

St. Nicholas Cathedral, Washington, DC; and Igumen Juvenaly of St. Tikhon Monastery.

On behalf of the Holy Synod of Bishops, His Grace, Bishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada, presented His Beatitude the Order of St. Innocent, Gold Class. His Grace, Bishop Mercurius of Zaisk, Administrator of the Patriarchal Parishes in the USA, greeted Metropolitan Herman on behalf of His Holiness, Patriarch Aleksy II of Moscow and All Russia and presented him with an icon of the Mother of God.

The V. Rev. Daniel Donlick, coordinator for the 40th anniversary jubilee committee, welcomed hierarchs, clergy, and guests, and Archimandrite Zachaeus, rector of the OCA's Representation Church of St. Catherine the Great Martyr,

*Continued on the next page*



## Metropolitan Herman

*Continued from page 3*

Moscow, Russia, presented our primate with a bouquet of 40 roses.

After the liturgy, a service of thanksgiving was celebrated, followed by an anniversary luncheon. Later, over 500 hierarchs, clergy, and faithful joined Metropolitan Herman for an evening banquet at the Genetti Best Western Hotel and Conference Center to celebrate this milestone in his service to our Lord and his holy Church.

At the banquet, Archbishop Kyrill of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania delivered a moving address in which he traced Metropolitan Herman's legacy and invoked God's blessing upon his ongoing ministry to God's people. Bishop Mercurius offered words of congratulations on behalf of Patriarch Aleksy, while His Grace, Bishop Antoun, representing His Eminence, Metropolitan Philip of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, applauded Metropolitan Herman for championing Orthodox unity in North America. The Very Rev. Andrei Sommer congratulated Metropolitan Herman on behalf of His Eminence, Metropolitan Laurus of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia.

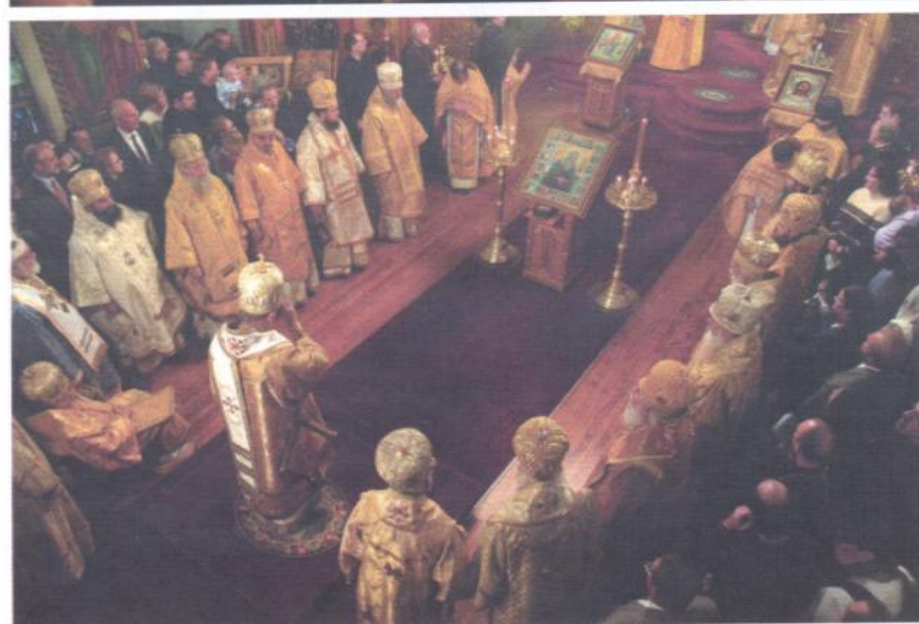
Metropolitan Herman was presented with a number of gifts marking the occasion. The Very Rev. Daniel Donlick, retired dean of St. Tikhon's Seminary, delivered a moving address recounting the Metropolitan's years of service to the Church. Fr. Daniel also served as general chairman for the occasion, while Protopresbyter Robert S. Kondratyck, OCA chancellor, acted as toastmaster.

Members of Metropolitan Herman's family were also present.

In his closing remarks, His Beatitude thanked everyone for the love and support they have offered during his four decades of ministry and shared his hopes for the ongoing growth of the Orthodox Church in America.

May God grant our beloved archpastor and primate, His Beatitude, Metropolitan HERMAN, many more years of fruitful labor in the vineyard of our Lord.

—based on reportage at the OCA website





## Metropolitan Herman's Pastoral Teaching

### The Time for Self-Examination: Are We Doing Our Share in Building Up Christ's Holy Church?

*His Beatitude's life of service to the Church is recounted in the pages of the October-November, 2004 issue of The Orthodox Church. As a complement to that history and as a tribute to our archpastor's pastoral sagacity, we present here an example of his teaching. The following lecture was one of a series leading up the new millennium; yet it continues to be timely and edifying, and we feel it shows the love of our primate for all of us his flock. It addresses the issue facing each of us daily: how we should live as Orthodox Christians.*

Glory be to Jesus Christ! You will hear nothing new this evening. All of us, including myself, will be reminded of our obligations as Christians, as followers of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: things that we have known, truly, for all of our life, and yet things that perhaps we have ignored and not followed to the best of our ability.

We know that over the last five or six or ten years we have heard much concerning the condition of the Church — the short-age of hierarchs; shortage of priests; the shortage of deacons, choir di-

rectors, church school teachers; the decrease in the number of people that belong to our Church; and also that so many of our people — even though they are members of our Church, members of the parish, for one reason or another choose not to attend church, not to actively participate in church. We want to blame all kinds of people. We want to blame the secular world; we want to blame the society that we live in; we want to blame the devil; we even want to — there are even so many people that actually blame the Lord. They blame God for the condition that they are in. Sometimes they hesitate to give Him credit for all the good things that He has given to them; but just as soon as things don't go right, just as soon as they have given in to temptations of the devil, it is then that they want to blame none other than God.

Sadly, we hear children say, "I hate my parents — they are terrible!" Sadly, we also hear parents say "I hate my children — why did the Lord give me such children to take care of?" and we go through life and want to blame absolutely everyone else — but ourselves. They feel that everyone else is wrong; we are



the only ones that have the answers, and we are the only ones who are suffering. Many times because of this feeling, we want to abandon the teachings of Christ, sometimes we even stop going to church, and we even choose to stay in that fallen state, thinking that we are having some form of enjoyment but we only add to our own misery.

Fortunately, for each and every one of us, as one of God's children, regardless of who we may feel has abandoned us, whether we feel that it's our mother or father, brother or sister, some friend that we met along the way — we know that there is one who doesn't abandon us, and that is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He remains loving, merciful and compassionate; perhaps disappointed in seeing that we as his children are not being obedient to his commandments, to his teachings; but he remains there, with the very same love that he had right from the very beginning and will always have, in order that his one desire will be fulfilled, and that is that not one of his children will perish, but instead that they will gain eternal life.

We know that God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to come down upon earth, to live as true God and true man, to take upon himself the sins of man; to die on the Cross; to resurrect, to ascend into heaven and even there he didn't stop, and he sent the Holy Spirit that indeed the Church would be guided, that we would be protected by the Holy Spirit. He has done all of this only because he wants to make sure that we as his children



Bishop Mercury presents icon from Patriarch Aleksy

*Continued on the next page*



## Metropolitan Herman

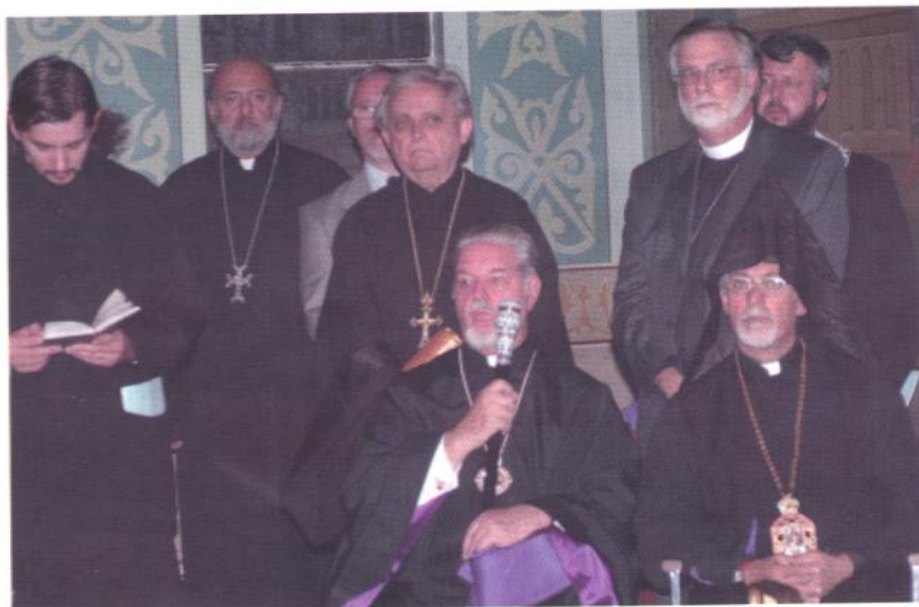
*Continued from page 5*

would be obedient to his commandments and obedient to his teachings. He established the Church and it is to this Church that we all belong.

For the time being, our concern is going to be about the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania — it's the area that I know the best because it's my own clergy, my own spiritual children that I have had the opportunity to watch and to guide, to see some fall and to see some gain. And we know that five years ago all of us were invited — clergy and laity alike — to go on a spiritual journey, a spiritual journey that should in the end, if we are obedient to that which we set before ourselves, make a change within our life, transform our life, and actually transform our communities and lead all to God's heavenly kingdom.

We know that the first year we dedicated to spiritual growth; we said that spiritually, individually, would do whatever we possibly could personally, gain in that spiritual life that perhaps we have lost or perhaps become weakened. The next year we decided to strengthen our commitment. We decided to strengthen the Lord's presence in the midst of His people. And that could be done quite simply, if only we walk in the midst of his people also and they can see nothing other than our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ — after all, we were created in his likeness and image — in the words that we utter, the deeds that we perform. They also will be able to feel Christ himself.

The following year we decided to dedicate to renewed devotion: that we would choose to pray more fervently in our own homes, that we would add to the prayer life that we already had; that we would participate not only as a family in our home, pray together, share the Lord's love with one another, but especially that we would carry that even into our parishes, into the churches to which we belong; and that we would participate in as many divine services as we possibly could; that if we weren't attending vespers we would start attending; if our church didn't have vespers, we would see to it that we would speak to our priest and say that we must begin, we need to have the service, because we want to grow spiritually; that



Ecumenical guests



Luncheon at the seminary following the Divine Liturgy

we would attend the akathist, we would attend whatever service was held. If there was a mission service that was being held, especially during Great Lent, we would make sure that we would put it into our calendar, that we would participate, that we would be a part of all of that.

We also agreed the following year that we would become involved in continued education, that we ourselves would do whatever we possibly could, perhaps read the scriptures more daily at home; that we would attend whatever lectures, retreats, were offered, whether it was within the parish, within the deanery, the diocese, the church here at South Canaan, or what have you. We agreed also that we would put that on our schedule, that that would be so important, more important than anything else that we would attempt to do, because we were concerned about growing spiritually, about transforming

our life.

Last but not least, we said that we would have that evangelistic outreach: that through our own good life people would see the Christ that we love, the Christ that we imitate, and they would choose to follow us, and that we would be so kind as to even offer an invitation for them to come into our church, and to participate, and to witness the services there. We asked parishes perhaps to share choirs, and we're grateful that there are some churches within our diocese that have done just that. And I'm sure that by having those concerts that many people not only came into the church but they became interested in the church, that in the end it would also make a change within their life.

As we entered into that spiritual pilgrimage we also said that we would begin in Bethlehem, and we would end in





Presentation of icon "Christ the Teacher"

Bethlehem. Not only would we begin with the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ but throughout that entire journey that we would travel to only one place, and that is to be with Him; and that it would remain with us for the rest of our life. Now we have that opportunity to make that examination for ourselves. We can only remind ourselves of that which we said we were going to undertake, and then grade ourselves as to just what we did.

Spiritual growth is not ours merely for the asking. First of all, we need to be convinced ourselves that we want to grow spiritually. If we are fair with ourselves, we'll see that most of the times we choose not to go in that direction. We choose to go in another area, something that is going to give us some peace and comfort and joy temporarily, rather than to sacrifice whatever is necessary in order to grow spiritually, in order to walk away from any sinfulness that may have taken hold of us.

Do we blame others for our lack of growth spiritually? Do we blame those within our own household, within our community? Do we blame the church, the parish that we belong to? Do we blame it on the priest? Do we even come to the conclusion that he is not doing enough as our spiritual father? We need to ask our-

selves, What measures have we taken in order to make that change within our life — personally, what have we done? Any growth that we may have witnessed with-

**Do we merely proclaim ourselves to be Christians and to be members of the Church, or is it visible by the things that we do, the things that we say? This examination we must give to ourselves daily**

in ourselves — is it visible to others, or is it just a matter of pride on our part that we feel that we decide to go to church, say, tomorrow, and is that considered our spiritual growth? We need to examine ourselves: was there any spiritual growth within our home? Did we make that spiritual growth come about, or did we just ignore it and do nothing about it? We need to ask ourselves, Did we strengthen the Lord's presence in the midst of His people?

We know that there is no perfect

household. There is no perfect marriage. All children are not perfect. We know that there will always be disagreements for one reason or another. But have we done anything within our daily lives to make sure that in that household, even if there were arguments, if there were disagreements, that rather than bringing about separation, rather than bringing about hatred, that we really turned to none other than the Lord and allowed his law to be the rule within the house, when it comes to the conclusion about what we really need to do?

We know that indeed if all of us would do that, we wouldn't have the suffering, the unhappiness, the broken homes, the children who feel that they've been totally abandoned by their loved ones, beginning with their parents. Have we had a positive effect on the lives of those people we come in contact with? Do we merely proclaim ourselves to be Christians and to be members of the Church, or is it visible by the things that we do, the things that we say? This examination we must give to ourselves daily. We know that indeed we need to renew our devotion, and we need to ask ourselves: Do we pray more today, even if it's only for a minute longer, than we did five years ago when we started? Do we attend more divine services today than we did when we started? Have we encouraged, even in our own families, that there would be a prayer life, that we would take time out even though it's difficult?

We know that many times, often because both parents work, they may work different shifts, and sometimes it's difficult to get the family together for a meal. But was an effort made, that whether it be for breakfast or whether it be for lunch or somewhere during the day, that we were able to fit as a family, and to really reveal our love unto the Lord, our love for one another? Did this change come about, and did it lead us to go more frequently to the sacrament of holy confession, and to the sacrament of holy communion? And to do that with much meaning and to do it with one intention in mind, that our life would change. Not to merely get in line, whether it be for confession or holy communion, just because someone else is do-

*Continued on the next page*



## Metropolitan Herman

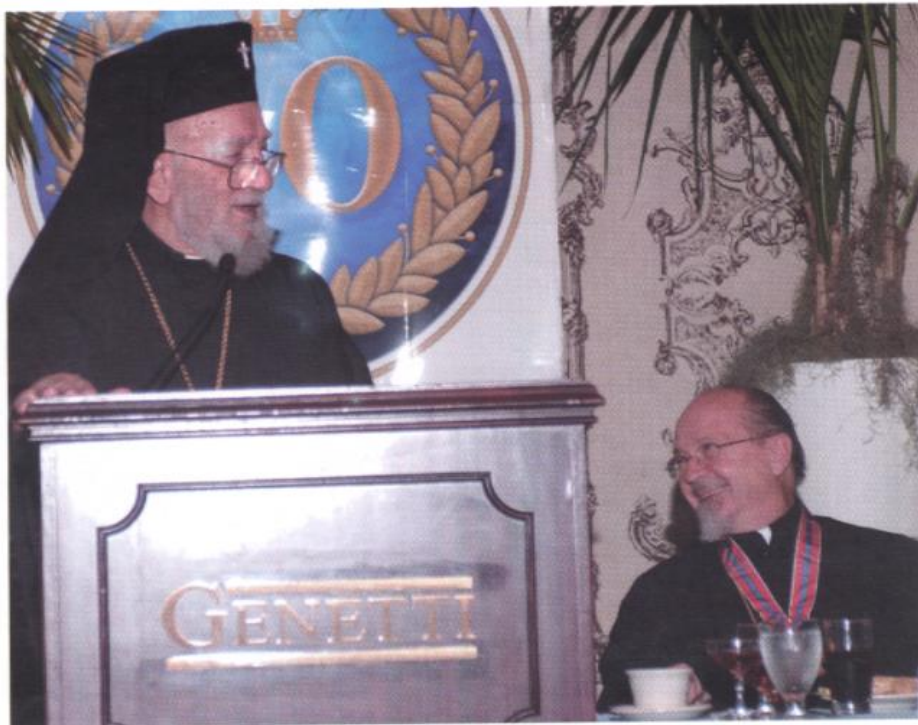
*Continued from page 7*

ing it, but especially that there would be a change within our life. That answer can be determined by ourselves, by whether it has made a permanent change within our lives. If it has caused us to walk away from all that is evil, then we know that absolutely we have made, the right change, and we are going in the direction of our Lord.

We need to answer for ourselves, what have we done in support of continuing education, both for ourselves as well as for others? Was our presence there in order to support those who also were coming to learn about the Lord, to gain more knowledge about his Church, and more knowledge about salvation? We need to ask ourselves, what did we really do to reach out to others?

And naturally we need to start with those who are nearest and dearest to us. Whether we have a mother or a father, brother or sister or a relative or friend, who for some reason or another has gone astray, away from the teachings of Christ, has become spiritually lazy, have we done anything to reach out to that person? Have we done anything to reach out to those people who are also searching for the true Church, those people that are searching for salvation? Have our actions caused them to at least begin to investigate, to see what can be done within their own life, in order to not only bring others in, but in the process to strengthen themselves?

We can see from all of this that there are two areas that must be very, very important in our life. The family, first of all. We know that every man or woman united in the sacrament of holy matrimony, if they take it seriously that they should immediately establish a little church within their home. The establishment of that church means that, absolutely, they will be obedient to God's commandments, to his teachings, and they will fulfill the responsibility of being good parents, leading and guiding their children in only one direction, and that is the heavenly kingdom. It doesn't mean that they will never have an unkind word to say for one another, the parents, or the parents to the children, but that even through all that pro-



Archbishop Kyrill delivers main address

cess in the end they would realize that the Church and Christ are far more important than anything else, and they have an obligation. If only each time there was an argument, rather than speak immediately of separation, of divorce . . . we know the number of times that that takes place, and we need to examine why is it that it took place. If we were not able to sit and discuss those things ourselves, we know that we were united in the sacrament of holy matrimony, not by ourselves, and not by some stranger, but we were united by a priest, a priest who became our spiritual father. Yet were we willing to turn to him each time there was a problem between husband and wife, parent and children, or did we actually let it go, keep it to ourselves, and then it was too late to call upon the priest, and sometimes even to wrongfully put the blame on the Church and on the priest, that they didn't do enough in order to help the situation?

We need to make sure that within the homes, the conduct of the parents is always of the kind that is becoming for a Christian, one that is becoming for a husband and wife and parent to their children. As difficult as it may be, it must be a condition that is there. If for some reason or another one or the other has fallen,

we cannot let the day end without making peace with each other, and most importantly, making peace with none other than the Lord, because we have not been faithful to His commandments, His teaching. We need to make sure that we approach these problems in a manner that is going to be rewarding for all concerned — not selfishly for ourself, but for husband and wife and for children, for the entire family. We need to be willing to have an open discussion. There is no reason for parents to try to hide something from the children, because when parents get excited and are mad at each other, regardless of what part of the house they are in, it is heard by the child. The child will suffer much more if you try to keep in secret, and they will probably suffer later in life as much as then, at that particular moment while they are growing. Later in life they will think back to what really took place in their household. It is better that immediately the child be brought in the midst of even the argument, and perhaps it's there that that love will turn to the child, and the problem will be resolved much more easily.

Marriages are broken for very foolish reasons. In the last ten that have come before me, you almost want to laugh at the





Bishop Antoun

reasons why they no longer can get along together. If they were speaking the truth, not one of those reasons are valid reasons for separation — but even then, they already came to my desk after they had already filed for a civil divorce. So all action was already taken; it was almost impossible to attempt to reconcile, and they didn't go to their pastor, nor did they come to the bishop — but came to the bishop only because all of a sudden they decided they wanted to get married again, and in order to get married they have to submit all those papers. It would be much

ally offers, of salvation? If we don't discuss it there, we can't expect that child or even the adults in that household to learn about God, to make a change within their life. It's not going to happen.

We can't have two standards: there cannot be one standard for the parent, another standard for the child. And there will never be, so long as we accept the commandments of God and the teachings of the Church. The teachings remain the same for mother, father, son and daughter — they are no different. No parent can go and say that "because I am old enough,

**We need to make sure that with all problems that ever arise, we will try to resolve them based on the teachings of Christ and his Church, not on anything else**

better if all these things were done as they are happening, and many of those things could be resolved, and suffering would be avoided for all concerned, the children as well as the parents.

Everyone needs to have an opportunity within the household for free expression of their thoughts, their feelings. Everyone must be willing to listen — when we are willing to listen to each other, it means that there is a possibility that there can be a decent dialogue and that we can resolve whatever problems are there. We need to ask the question: how often, in our household, do we talk about God, about his Church, and the gift that he re-

I can even commit sin; you cannot" and expect that child to be obedient to that. We are only leading them in the wrong direction; we confuse their mind. At one moment we are telling them they must be obedient to God, to his teachings, the teachings of the Church, then we are leading them in a different direction. We need to examine ourselves, to ask, When there was really a serious problem, were we willing to call in the spiritual father, who was the spiritual father to mother, father, son and daughter, perhaps even grandparents? There's no reason why we should ever be ashamed to discuss those things with our spiritual father. There's no rea-

son we should ever hesitate to bring the spiritual father in and let him sit at the same table, or let him sit in the same living room, in order that he'll be able to discuss these things and to discuss them openly, so that he could see the actions of all concerned, parents as well as children. When we do that, we know there is an opportunity for someone, and especially for the spiritual father, to lead us in the right direction.

Too often we see one person out of the family. If five are in church sometimes only one goes to the sacrament of confession and communion. If it's good for one, it should be good for all. All should prepare themselves to receive the sacrament. All should prepare themselves to repent of their sinful actions, and to be accepted once again by Christ. We need to ask ourselves every day at the end of the day, were we good imitators of Christ? What was our relationship with those nearest and dearest to us, those within our own household — and then, anyone that we may have come in contact with throughout the day itself?

If we see that for some reason we have not done the right thing, it is there that we have that opportunity to make amends, to make the changes in order that all will gain spiritually and be able to change their life. We need to make sure that with all problems that ever arise, we will try to resolve them based on the teachings of Christ and his Church, not on anything else. If we try to do it on the basis of anything else it will never happen.

We need to make sure, as we go through our family life, that we live as that family, mother and father, son and daughter, and anyone else that we may invite to come into the household. That is where the change must begin — in that little church that was established when two people were united in the holy sacrament. But it doesn't end there — it doesn't end there at all. It's only a beginning, a foundation for the other spiritual family that we belong to, that is to our parish.

We leave our home, and we must be connected actively to our parish. We need to ask of ourselves: Are we active members of the parish, or are we spectators? Do we merely go to church for vespers

*Continued on the next page*



## Metropolitan Herman

*Continued from page 9*

occasionally, for liturgy, perhaps maybe every Sunday, every feast day? And do we merely go and find that seat that is ours, and participate in nothing else in the parish? That is not the manner in which we must be members of the parish family. We need to actively participate in all that is offered by the parish. We need to volunteer our services wherever they are needed.

If we merely go in as spectators there will be too much temptation, too much temptation about looking at the wrong thing, thinking about the wrong thing. We may not like the way someone is dressed. We may not like the way they sit, or the way they stand, or perhaps that they kneel and we don't. We may not like that their children in church are making noise. We may not like that this person came into church after being away for five or six or ten years, and finally came to their senses, and wanted to return to the church, and only to find that we are passing condemnation on them, rather than rejoicing that they have entered into the church. That is not our purpose — and no church was consecrated for the purpose of turning people away. The church was consecrated in order to invite people in — invite people in who would learn about the Church, people who would participate in sacraments, people who would prepare themselves as well as others for that eternal gift of salvation.

As I go through the parishes many times I see that a lot of the children do not participate in church school. We cannot blame the infants, we cannot blame those who are between the ages of five and fourteen. Somewhere the teaching is improper from the parents. I can understand the serious situation that parents go through when the child gets a little older. There are many parents who are sorrowful because, as much as they preach, the child wants to go in the opposite direction. However, everyone has an obligation, the parents have an obligation to bring their child up in the Orthodox faith. That's one of the promises they made; that's exactly why they got married, in order to do that.

It's terrible, many times when I go



Bishop Seraphim of Ottawa

to a parish, and sometimes even visit in a church, and a child is dropped off ten minutes late, and the child doesn't go to liturgy, but instead the same parent that dropped the child off is back in twenty minutes and is waiting outside for the child to get into the car to leave. We cannot blame that on the child. I believe the parent needs to make the examination, to see that somewhere they are doing the right thing.

To me, if the Lord has given us a talent, we must ask whether we have offered to become an instructor, or to assist an instructor, or to assist the priest in teaching the children? It has become a very serious problem in parishes. We find we must beg people to teach. And if we don't have these people to teach, then naturally who suffers? The children suffer, because there's no one there to give them the instruction. The priest cannot be taking care of the celebration of the services, the liturgy, and at the same time be teaching. On the other hand, the parents want to bring their child. So once again, who suffers? The children. They are the ones who are building up the Church, and they are the ones we need to keep within the Church.

When adult classes are instituted within a parish, we need to ask ourselves, do we participate? Or do we stay behind and discourage the priest because only one or two people have shown up? And some-

times it discourages him enough that he doesn't have the classes for instruction.

A very serious problem within our parishes, and getting more serious every day: the choir. Many times, I walk into parish, and I can hear many, many good voices in the pews singing at times, following after the choir. If the Lord has given you a voice, you need to try to use that voice and offer it to the Lord, that the services will be beautiful, that they will be pleasant for all that are within the church.

Another very serious problem is membership on parish council. Sometimes the parishes have two or three annual meetings called within a church three times, in order to get members to serve on the parish council. There is no reason why anyone should refuse if they are asked, if they are Christians in good standing. We had a discussion about that today during our diocesan council, that there are some people in parishes that are saying that rather than causing the priest, and rather than causing a handful of people to go through this trouble every year, that let's make it a rule that there will be a parish meeting once every two or three years, and we will elect the council to serve for that period of time and only the parish council will hold their meetings during the rest of the time. We have one parish where the priest is not only the pastor, he had to accept two offices on the parish council. And he accepted only so the parish itself will con-





Fr. Robert Kondratyck, co-chair and toastmaster

tinue as an lively parish.

Do we support the priest and his family? Do we support the spiritual work of the parish? Do we find fault with the priest, with others in the Church?

And it's possible that sometimes we will find fault. And there's no problem with that. However, rather than taking that and turning it into gossip, it is much better to go, to approach the priest, to approach the individual who may be concerned, to see what we can possibly do to bring about a change.

Are we really loving to all people within the parish? Sometimes people fall away for one reason or another, and they stay away for a long period of time. And it's not that they even have abandoned the church — they might not be attending that particular church, or they might not even be going to church anywhere. And then all of a sudden they want to come back, and the parish tells them that "you must pay \$1,500 in order to come back." I believe somewhere we need to be loving and merciful, and compassionate, no different than the Lord. We know what happened even with the prodigal son, and that means that we too must be loving to try to bring these people back.

One thing we definitely need to do is this: as we walk through life, we invest in many, many material things in life. We need to invest in our spiritual life. We must be a moving force in that investment; we must have that desire that we absolutely want to be able to grow spiritually, and that we want to invest in the greatest gift that is offered to us — there



Fr. Daniel Donlick, co-chair of anniversary celebration

is no greater gift: eternal salvation. It is not ours for the asking, but instead this means that we have to work for it. We must invest ourselves by saying that we are willing to carry any form of cross, in order not to give in always to any temptation that comes along, but instead to be willing to sacrifice in order to be obedient to the Church, to be obedient to the teachings of Christ.

We need to examine ourselves to see,

**One thing we definitely need to do is this: as we walk through life, we invest in many, many material things in life. We need to invest in our spiritual life**

Are we really willing to invest in the parish that we belong to? We know that always, if the roof is leaking, even if they may have to call for a special meeting to be held, even if it's going to be \$50,000, the money will be raised, it will be done.

We need also to invest in the Church, that it will grow spiritually. We need to make sure that the priest and his family are taken care of. We need to make sure that there will be services; we need to make sure that we will take care of all of the children that belong to that particular parish. If we don't, we know that, absolutely, it's not going to grow — it will go in the opposite direction.

We need to make sure that we are doing everything within our power to really be worthy of the name Christian, followers of Christ. That's exactly what we are, because we've been baptized and confirmed into his army.

As we said today, it's really the day of examination — the examination to see just what we have done. We know that we gave serious consideration to spiritual growth; we gave consideration to vocations; we gave serious consideration to possible unity of the Orthodox Church in America. We also can think about and give serious consideration to our private union with none other than our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

There are people everywhere that want to serve the Church. If we all do our share, there will never be a shortage of hierarchs, or priests, or choir directors, or church school teachers. There will be many candidates to go and to work for the Church.

Anyone who has personally, individually, gone through the process of attempting to make a change in their life, knows the reward that is there. They saw the transformation of their life, and what they did in their own particular life. And it was witnessed also by the people in that

household, by the people in that community.

It is no different with a church. Many times what can happen is people begin to think the wrong way as to what the Church really is. And you know, we fall prey to it, when see that there is unhappiness, when there is division, all of a sudden, it's not that we turn against Christ or his Church, but we become inactive, we just sit back, we do nothing.

We go to that parish, where there has been a change made, you'll see it — and recently I had the opportunity of being in a parish — a parish where I had to make many visits, and sometimes unhappy visits. Thanks be to God, the last visit was a beautiful visit, And you could feel it the moment that you walked into the Church. You could feel that these were people of God that absolutely were no longer the

*Continued on the next page*



## Metropolitan Herman

*Continued from page 11*

same people — their life had been transformed. And it was visible to everyone who was there — not only to me, absolutely not. It is such a great feeling when that happens.

In that very same parish, two young men came up to me, and the one said, "I think I'm interested in being a priest." He is going to school right now. He said, "I don't think right now, but I do want to prepare myself." There was another young man that came, and he said, "Do you think I could be a priest?" And he said, "You know, people make fun of me. They say that I'm slow." And I told him, "Of course you can. As long as you prepare yourself, the Lord will never turn you away." He left and came back five minutes later. He said, "I have one more question." I said, "Yes?" He said, "Is it true I have to give up hunting?" And I said "Yes. Do you think you could do that?" He said, "Of course."

Those two people are no different than people we have everywhere. And I pray that in that parish, the pastor as well as the people continue to nurture those two young men; and that they come, whether it is next year or five years down the road. And there are people everywhere, and in every parish, that love the Lord, they want to be with the Lord. What we take for granted, is something very, very serious with others.

Just recently I met a man who was

*And the Angel said to them, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy . . . For this day is born to you in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."*



searching — searching for the true Church. And in searching, he also became afflicted, very seriously afflicted. And probably for most people, especially when you're told that your days may be numbered, you feel that you want to do everything else but draw yourself close to the Lord, close to the Church. This individual is doing the opposite. He is making sure that not only he, but his family will embrace the Holy Orthodox faith. He said, "I have read, I have studied; and the holy fathers have shown me that it is the true Church." That gives him the strength to endure all treatments, to be able to continue to lead a decent life with his wife and his two young children, because he knows that there is something far greater in life than what we have here on this earth — that is that eternal life. What greater reward could he have than to go there and stand before the Lord and say, "I heard about you, I know who you are, and I have led myself and my family to you." And there are so many people like that — so many people who are looking for someone to say, "Yes. I know that you're searching, I know that you are looking — please come in and be a part of us."

That man is with us today. Please remember him in your prayers — Steven.<sup>1</sup>

There is so much for us to do. We said that we started in Bethlehem, and we end in Bethlehem. Actually when we started — the first encyclical that I gave — I really was hoping that we could end all of this



Diocesan presentation of panagia

with a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. That didn't work out; we even asked for people to make a pilgrimage, whether it be to St. Tikhon's or to any other holy place, for their own spiritual growth. We know the problems that are in the Holy Land at the present time, and so there are some that will be going. And it's very possible, the Lord is making it possible — for me to be there, where at least I will be able to offer prayers on behalf of our entire diocese, on behalf of our Church, and at the same time, to have an opportunity to be able to have the Orthodox Church in America presented to the Patriarchate in Jerusalem.

We have to continue to pray. We say we want to receive. And you see the doors are being opened. We have been invited to come and, in the last week I learned that I will probably be making three other journeys to patriarchates. We don't know what can happen, what will happen.

However, if we transform our lives, if we show the Lord that we believe in Him and that we are with him and that we support His Holy Church that we are indeed dedicated laborers in his vineyard, He is going to answer our prayers. Let us all examine ourselves — bishop, priests, laypersons. Let us grade ourselves honestly. Let us not be ashamed if we have done poorly — there is no problem with that. We have the opportunity to change all of that. So long as we are still breathing we have an opportunity to make a change within our life, and to go with the Lord. May He look favorably upon all of us, that we will transform our life, and through the transformation of our life, that we will assist in transforming the world.

1. Steven and his family did become Orthodox. Steven was chrismated in the hospital and departed this life Oct. 27, 2000, just 24 days after this lecture was given. He was buried at St. Tikhon's Monastery on Nov. 2, 2000.—Ed.



**W**ho for us men and for our salvation came down from the heavens and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and Mary the Virgin and became man.

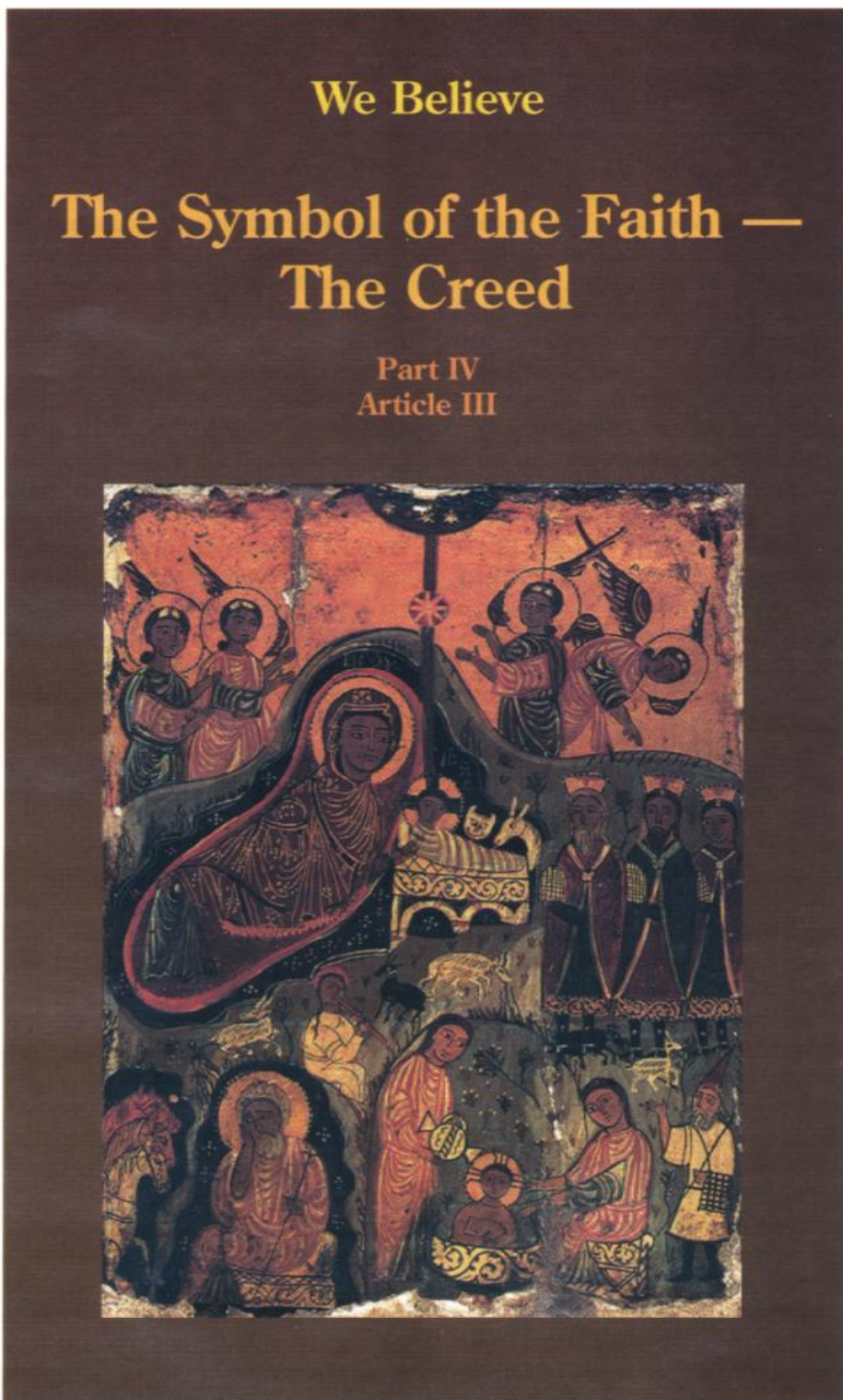
In the second article of the Symbol of the Faith we confess Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, and is truly God. In the third article we confess that Jesus Christ is true God and at the same time is true Man. This is a great mystery which we can never fully comprehend. It is a matter of faith. We believe it to be so. By faith we know that our Lord, the Son of God, because of His love for us and to save us, came down from heaven into the world, took on our human nature and became Man. Thus Jesus Christ has two natures. He is both divine and human. In His divine nature He was born of God the Father before all ages, before time began. He is the Son of God. In His human nature He was born as one of the human race almost two thousand years ago from the Virgin Mary. He is also the Son of Man. This miracle and mystery of the appearance of God's Son on earth is continuously witnessed, confessed, and proclaimed by the Church. During Matins the priest proclaims, "God is the Lord and has revealed Himself unto us . . ."

Jesus Christ was like all other men, but in one thing He was different. He was without sin, for He was born of the Holy Spirit and of Mary the Virgin and He had no human father.

Man had been waiting for the coming of our Savior for many years. In the Old Testament it was known that He would be born of a virgin ("Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). It was known that He would be born in Bethlehem. (See Micah 5:2 and Luke 2:6). It was not known, however, when He would be born and who would be worthy to become His mother.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was born about 2,000 years ago.<sup>1</sup> His mother's parents, Joachim and Anna, were descendants of

1. 1,960 years (in the original edition)—Ed.



King David. Mary, an only child, was dedicated by her parents to the service of God at the Temple of Jerusalem. She lived there until she came of age. At that time Mary promised to God never to marry. Joseph, a devout and righteous old man and a descendant of King David, was designated to be her guardian. One day the archangel Gabriel appeared to Mary. He

told her that a Son would be born to her. Hearing these words she was troubled and asked how this could be for she had no husband. The Archangel told her that the power of the Holy Spirit would descend upon her, and a Son would be born unto her, the Virgin Mary. This is what it means when we say that Jesus Christ was

*Continued on the next page*



## We Believe

*Continued from page 13*

born miraculously, "incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary." The Virgin Mary became truly the Mother of God and yet remained forever a virgin.

Jesus Christ came to earth to save men from all their sins. He came to reconcile men with God. He came to teach them how to live, how to believe, and how to pray. With His birth the Old Testament is completed, is fulfilled, and the New Testament begins. This is the meaning of the angels' announcement to the shepherds of Bethlehem, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy, which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2: 10-11).

Jesus Christ by His life and His teachings showed us the way of salvation. He showed us how we can, with God's help, conquer our sins and approach God. He revealed to us by His life and teaching that our lives too should reflect God's love that we might live in peace and harmony by the power of God.

The intimate unity between God and man was broken by the original sin of man, the sin of disobedience, of lack of love and trust. When God became Man in the person of Jesus Christ and took upon Himself all the trials of human existence, He re-established this unity through Himself. Jesus Christ, as a man, had no sins yet He bore the greatest suffering imaginable to pay for the punishment of human sin. Thus He freed all humanity from the power of sin. Now the road of individual salvation has been revealed to all men. His teachings are called, for this reason, I the Gospel, that is, the good news about salvation.

What does "salvation" mean? It means to deliver from something that causes one unhappiness, that holds one captive. Three evils held men captive. The first evil was sin; "everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin" (John 8:34). Sins hold a man so that he no longer does what he wants; he becomes their slave. Jesus Christ took upon Himself all human sins, and He suffered punishment for them for us. The second evil was the consequence of sin. Man was condemned by God's law, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day

that you eat of it you shall die" (Genesis 2:17). Sin caused evil. This evil served as punishment. The moment Adam and Eve listened to the seductive voice of the Evil One they became estranged, that is, they separated themselves from God and came under the power of the Evil One. They passed under judgment of God's law, and they were condemned. From that time on every member of the human race inherits the condemnation for the sin of the first man, Adam. Jesus Christ came to free the human race from this condemnation and willfully took condemnation for sin upon Himself. The Gospel likens sinful humanity to a lost sheep which our Savior put upon His shoulders in order to return it to His Heavenly Father (Luke 15:1-10). The third evil is death. There is a spiritual death and a bodily or physical death. In the state of spiritual death are found all those who, like the Prodigal Son, live in sin (Luke 15:11-32). Sin is spiritual death and, therefore, when our Savior saved us from sin He also saved us from spiritual death. Physical death is a result of sin and is a punishment for it. Jesus Christ saved us from sin, and He thus saved us from physical death. The Savior overcame death by His death. He arose from the dead Himself, and He promised that in the last day He will raise all men from the dead. This is summed up in the Easter song, "Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death and upon those in the tomb bestowing Life." For those who are with the Lord, physical death becomes a door to eternal life. But those who die without faith in God, without hope in Him, without repentance — through death they enter into eternal damnation which is really eternal death.

A person who believes in Jesus Christ with all his mind, heart, and spirit and who lives by God's will, feels joy, not fear, at the moment of his death. Such was the joy of Stephan, the first deacon, who became the first martyr. He was stoned to death by the Jews. His martyrdom is described in the Acts of the Apostles 7:56-60. "And he said, 'Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.' But they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed together upon him. Then they cast him out of the city, and stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their garments at

the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephan, he prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' And he knelt down, and cried with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not lay this sin against them.' And when he had said this, he fell asleep." If Jesus Christ had not saved us from the consequences of sin then all men would have suffered eternal damnation; that is, eternal separation from God, the source of all life. Thus, the Savior saved men from both spiritual and physical death. In other words, He delivered us from the curse of spiritual death and from the fear of physical death as well as from the torment of eternal damnation.

To save men, our Lord Jesus Christ came down on earth from heaven and became man. He taught in a simple, clear, human language. He gave us the examples of His own life. It is now we who are to learn, to believe, and to do that which the Savior has taught and shown us. Each one of us is free to follow or to reject the way of salvation. To reject is to be forever estranged from God, which is eternal death. To accept is to follow and to follow is to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven and to share eternal life with God, our Creator, the Source of our Life.

*I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ... who for us men and for our salvation came down from the heavens and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and Mary the Virgin and became man.*

### Questions for Article Three

1. Who is Jesus Christ?
2. Why did the Son of God become the Son of Man?
3. Why do we say that the Birth of Jesus Christ was a miraculous birth?
4. Was Jesus Christ truly Man? Was Jesus Christ truly God?
5. In what way did Jesus Christ differ from other men?
6. What was known about the Savior before He was born?
7. What was there about Mary the Virgin that was different?
8. What does "salvation" mean?
9. What three evils held men captive?
10. Why do we need not fear death?
11. What can we expect after death?

— Archpriest Vladimir Borichevsky,  
+1990.



# The 41st Annual Diocesan Assembly



**T**he 41st annual Diocesan Assembly of the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania was convened at St. Michael's Church in Old Forge on Saturday, November 13, 2004. The Assembly began with Divine Liturgy celebrated by His Beatitude Metropolitan Herman and His Grace Bishop Tikhon. Fr. Daniel Ressetar, Fr. Vladimir Fetcho, Fr. Joseph Martin, Fr. John Kowalczyk, Fr. Michael Lepa, Fr. David Mahaffey, Deacon Timothy Hojnicky, and Deacon Paul Fetsko concelebrated the liturgy with His Beatitude. Mr. David Kessler directed the choir.

Following a continental breakfast, the Assembly session opened in the nave of the church with prayer and the blessing of Metropolitan Herman at 11:10 a.m. The Assembly agenda was approved as presented. The credential committee headed by Fr. John Onufrey reported that the Assembly comprised His Beatitude Metropolitan Herman, His Grace Bishop Tikhon, 22 clergy delegates, 23 lay delegates, no alternates, 4 Diocesan Council mem-

bers, 1 auditor, and seven observers for a total of 59 participants. The next order of business was the election of the Assembly officers: Fr. Vladimir Fetcho, Clergy Vice Chairman, Fr. David Shewczyk, Clergy Secretary, Mr. John Zoransky, Lay Vice Chairman, and Mrs. Marie Proch, Lay Secretary.

Metropolitan Herman presented his detailed report on the life of the diocese and the Orthodox Church in Amer-

ica. Metropolitan Herman welcomed for the first time at the Diocesan Assembly Bishop Tikhon of South Canaan, who was consecrated bishop on February 13-14, 2004. Metropolitan Herman noted pastoral assignment changes within the diocese. Fr. John Russin is now assigned to St. John's Church in Nanticoke. Fr. Stephen Karaffa was released from duties at St. John's in Nanticoke to the Diocese of the Midwest, and Fr. Nicholas Wyslutsky was released from All Saints Church in Olyphant, also to the Diocese of the Midwest. Two deacons have been ordained, Deacon Timothy Hojnicky, currently enrolled at St. Tikhon's, and Deacon Paul Fetsko, a 2003 graduate of St. Tikhon's. Parish anniversaries were noted in St. Nicholas Church in Olyphant (100th), St. Basil's in Simpson (100th), St. Mary's in Coaldale (95th), St. Stephen's Cathedral in Philadelphia (30th), and St. Mark's in Wrightstown (30th). Also major renovations were completed at St. John's in Edwardsville and Holy Annunciation in Berwick. There is a new mission in the diocese, Holy Apostles in Mechanicsburg, and potentially another mission may be starting in Milford.

His Beatitude noted that this past Memorial Day celebration went very well thanks to the efforts of Fr. Joseph Martin and all those who helped. The lecture series this fall was noted for its very good

*Continued on the next page*





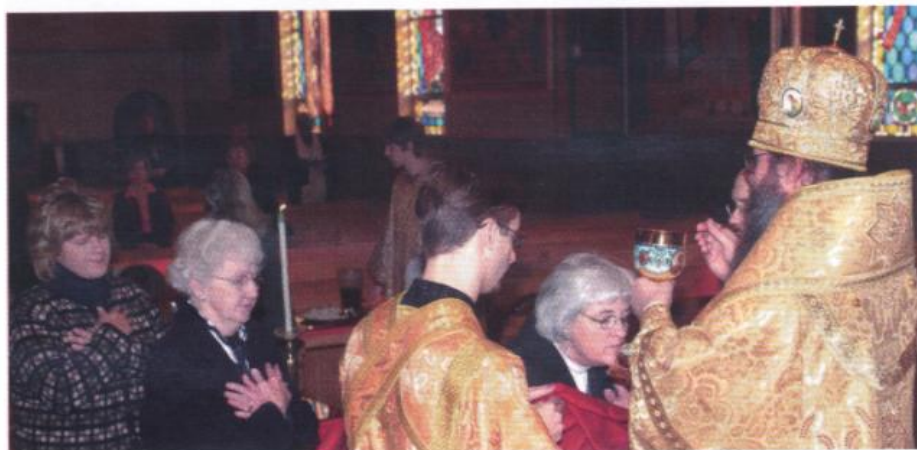
## Diocesan Assembly

*Continued from page 15*

speakers and attendance. Summer camp was again very successful due to the work of Mr. Martin Paluch and all the volunteers. The annual woman's retreat organized by Matushka Fran Vansuch, the men's retreat run by Fr. Michael Dahulich, and the altar boys retreat, again run by Fr. Michael Dahulich were all very successful this past year. Unfortunately, this past year the winter retreat for the teens was cancelled due to the weather, but they will plan it again for early next year. Also noted was a diocesan clergy retreat held during Great Lent.

Metropolitan Herman informed the delegates about the current state of the Orthodox Church in America. All three seminaries continue to see increases in enrollment, which is a cause for rejoicing. However, housing shortages are becoming a problem. Furthermore, most of our seminarians exist on charity. The OCA cannot as yet provide free tuition for its students, so they need the support of parishes. As part of the celebration of Metropolitan Herman's fortieth anniversary to the priesthood, the Loyal Christian Benefit Association donated \$2.5 million in life insurance coverage for all seminarians and their families in the OCA.

Metropolitan Herman stated that he has visited all the diocesan assemblies in the OCA and the major concern that he heard was lack of growth. Many of our older parishes are experiencing significant losses to due an aging population and death. The metropolitan urged the delegates to encourage new people in the parishes to get involved and to utilize everyone's talents. Furthermore, Fr. Joseph Fester, who is the current director of the Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards (FOS), will be resigning. Appeals to FOS have declined greatly. In other national news, Archbishop Peter of New York has announced his retirement and both Bishop Nicholai of Alaska and Bishop Seraphim of Canada have asked for auxiliary bishops. Information on travel arrangements to the 14th All-American Council in Toronto, Canada (July 17-22, 2005) will be forthcoming soon. The proposed statute revision that was planned for this Council will be delayed until the 15th All-American Council. In 2005, the OCA will



Opening molieben

celebrate a number of important anniversaries. It is the 100th anniversary of St. Tikhon's Monastery and the 35th anniversary of the granting of autocephaly to the OCA. It is the 210th anniversary of the arrival of St. Herman to America and the 35th anniversary of his canonization. His Beatitude encouraged all to participate in these historic celebrations and he reminded all that the Church is only as strong as its monastic life. Two commissions have been set up to investigate the possible canonizations of the late Metro-

politan Leonty and Archbishop Arseny.

There is talk in SCOBA (Standing Conference of Canonical Bishops in America) to hold another meeting of all the canonical bishops in America, but no plans have yet been finalized. Although the results yielded by SCOBA the last ten years have not been what many have hoped for, it is vitally important that the OCA continue to work within SCOBA and keep relations and communications open between the other Orthodox churches in this country. The Antiochian Archdiocese of Amer-





Registration



ica will create sees for three new bishops to be consecrated in Antioch some time soon.

His Beatitude also highlighted what is happening in worldwide Orthodoxy. He spoke of his trips to our sister churches in Russia, Constantinople, Ukraine, Poland, Georgia, and the Czech lands and Slovakia. He will be visiting Russia in December to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the OCA's representative church in Moscow, St. Catherine's. He will also be stopping to visit the Church of Finland. Archbishop Kyrill represented His Beatitude on a trip to Bulgaria for the Patriarch of Bulgaria's birthday. Bishop Seraphim visited Alexandria, Egypt to represent the

OCA at the installation of the new Patriarch of Alexandria, Theodoros II, following the untimely death of Patriarch Petros VII in a helicopter crash off the coast of Greece. The metropolitan has invitations to many other of our sister churches throughout the world. Although officially many of the Orthodox churches do not recognize our autocephaly, they all show the metropolitan and those traveling with him the utmost respect and hospitality. He stressed the importance of these trips to build Orthodox unity and that it helps the churches we are visiting, especially in the poorer countries. There is a possibility of some student and faculty exchanges with some of these churches. The metro-

politan noted the prevalence of our *Alive in Christ* magazine throughout the world, and its great popularity.

The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR) continues to talk with Moscow about possible reunification. Metropolitan Herman has spoken with both groups, and although relations are improving it may be some time before schism is completely healed. The OCA's relationship with ROCOR continues to improve as Metropolitan Herman and Metropolitan Laurus have met on occasion, and with Metropolitan Laurus sending a congratulatory letter to Metropolitan Herman on his 40th anniversary to the priesthood.

His Beatitude then thanked the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania and all those who made the celebration of his 40th anniversary a reality.

Metropolitan Herman then introduced His Grace Bishop Tikhon to speak. Bishop Tikhon expressed his joy in attending his first assembly, and he thanked His Beatitude for all his guidance and support both before and after his consecration. He also thanked the diocesan clergy for their support of him and the monastery. He asked for the delegates continued prayers. He has visited many parishes already and noted the strong spiritual life he saw present. He sees great potential in our parishes to share joy and peace to all those searching for it. He looks forward to continuing to visit parishes in the future.

Fr. Fetcho thanked His Beatitude for his report on the life of the Orthodox Church in America and the Orthodox Church throughout the world. He commended him for his tireless efforts in both the Orthodox Church in America and thanked him for his support and guidance in our diocese. He asked the delegates to continue to pray that Metropolitan Herman be granted the good health and the strength to continue in his work.

The reports of the diocesan council secretary, diocesan treasurer, and auditors were considered and approved. The proposed budget of 2005 of \$426,010 was presented for discussion by Peter Bohlender. He noted that the diocese spent less money than was brought in last year, resulting in a budget surplus. However, costs across the board continue to rise and

*Continued on the next page*



## Diocesan Assembly

Continued from page 17

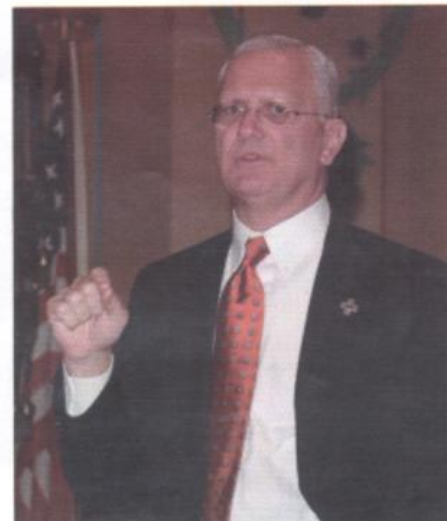
the diocesan council feels that there is a need to raise assessments. The proposal was to raise the assessment \$3.00 per person per year in each of the next three years for a total increase of \$9.00 per person over three years. Emphasis was given to growing the Church to help offset the membership losses due to deaths. The increase in assessments and the entire budget was passed as presented.

The assembly broke for lunch and reconvened at 2:10 p.m. The diocesan deanery and department reports were approved as presented. Fr. John Onufrey then gave the report of the Metropolitan Council. He congratulated His Beatitude and Fr. Robert Kondratyck for all their hard work, and noted the work of the entire chancery staff, who try to do so much with so few resources. He reinforced His Beatitude's statement about supporting the celebration of the 35th anniversary of the OCA's autocephaly. It is important that we keep our Church visible. He noted the decrease in support of FOS and stated that it would help if all parishes become members. In speaking of the All-American Council in Canada, he said that all who plan on attending should have a passport, especially when coming back into the United States. The Department of Church Growth and Evangelism are planning to address parishes that are declining and helping them to grow.

The rest of the afternoon was devoted to a presentation by Mr. Michael Herzak on sexual abuse and liability in our parishes. Mr. Herzak strongly emphasized the need for all of our parishes to come into compliance with the standards set forth by the Holy Synod of the OCA. Mr. Herzak noted the increase in litigation against parishes and priests/ministers in this country and that the OCA is not immune to this. This does not relate just to clergy but to all who oversee youth activities or interact with them in some official way. The guidelines are designed so that the parishes are prepared to defend themselves if an allegation occurs. He stressed that an actual incident does not even need to occur, but all that is needed is for an allegation to be made in public. He noted that there is a difference between sexual abuse and sexual harassment. Harassment



is between two adults. Abuse involves an adult and a child or an older child and a younger child. Mr. Herzak noted many things that parishes can do safeguard our children, which is the real goal. Furthermore, he noted that even if the parish has insurance that does not cover all expenses. The insurance only covers the legal penalties as prescribed by the law. It does not cover additional litigation. Any



Michael Herzak speaks on parish liability and insurance

parish that has not already received information on this can find the information on the OCA website ([www.oca.org](http://www.oca.org)).

The Diocesan Assembly adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

—Deacon Paul Fetsko

*Beloved, let us love one another. For love is of God, and everyone who loves is born of God, and knows God. He who loves not, knows not God; for God is love.*

—1 John 4:7-8





Current abbot prays before icon of monastery founder

# The Founding of St. Tikhon's Monastery In South Canaan, Pennsylvania, 1905-1906

## Part III

*Editor's note: In 2004, St. Tikhon's Monastery in South Canaan, Pa., the first Orthodox monastery in the western world, celebrated its 99th anniversary and its 100th annual pilgrimage, opening the centennial year of the monastery. In May 2005 we will mark the centennial celebration. It is hoped that the present series on the history of the monastery's founding will encourage and inspire our readers to join in remembering the blessed, historic events of a century ago.*

The first Divine Liturgy ever held on the site of the future monastery church, was celebrated July 31, 1905, in an open spot at the top a knoll where the monastery church stands today. The main celebrant was Bishop (St.) Raphael of Brooklyn; co-celebrants were Hieromonk (Priestmonk) Arseny,

the future Canadian bishop; Archpriest Alexander Hotovitsky, the future holy martyr; and other clergy. Before the liturgy, St. Raphael blessed the ground for the future monastery church. Earlier, the Orphan Home had been blessed. About 100 pilgrims made this first pilgrimage to St. Tikhon's Monastery, most of them arriving on foot from Mayfield, a walk of over ten miles. We now resume St. Alexander's account of the historic day, the first part of which appeared in the previous installment.<sup>1</sup>

+ + +

"What a pity!" said Fr. Arseny, pointing up at the sky, "that ceiling of our Church

1. *V Sviato-Tikhonovskoi Obiteli* ("At St. Tikhon's Monastery"), in *Amerikanski Pravoslavnyi Vestnik*, vol. 9:16, 15-28 August, 1905, 318-324. This portion translated by Sergei D. Arhipov.

is not decorated in blue for this day."

"Who knows, perhaps by the time the liturgy begins the skies may clear, and they may even be adorned with the golden rays of the sun."

"It's going to rain. No question about it, and we don't even have a canopy for protection. Are we really going to go ahead and serve here?"

"It's a risk, but we're going to go on," said Fr. Arseny firmly, "God will not put us to shame. Look!" he grabbed my arm, "There, you see that bright line moving down along the side of the mountain? Those are my parishioners from Mayfield and the surrounding area coming in procession for the celebration. The weather did not scare them off! They left their work and chores behind and are walking tens of miles together with their families

*Continued on the next page*



## St. Tikhon's Monastery

*Continued from page 19*

just to come here. Do you think we can fit all of them into that tiny little room? No, we will serve here!

"Bless, Master!" said Fr. Arseny, turning to Bishop Raphael. Vladyka gave his blessing and we all returned to the house no longer worrying about anything, but making sure, still, that we had some umbrellas ready to protect the Holy Altar and the Holy Gifts just in case it did rain.

After vesting in the house, the clergy, preceded by a cross and accompanied by banners and a choir of the faithful, left for the site of the future church singing hymns and prayers. There Bishop Raphael first erected the cross and blessed the ground for the new temple. Then the Divine Liturgy began.

How can I possibly describe to you my feelings during this service? Fr. Arseny correctly predicted that it would be impossible for me to do so.

Have you ever been a participant, a worshipper at a Divine Liturgy in an open air, where the ceiling of the temple is the canopy of the sky? Where its walls are the trees of the surrounding forest and the distant fields? Where the foundation itself is mother earth covered with green grass; where every living and breathing soul, as in the psalm, unites itself to the choir of mankind in praise of the Almighty? Our sacred prayers were not confined in any way by any boundaries as they arose to the Throne of Heaven; the eyes of our hearts saw clear to that Holy Place, far, far away beyond the clouds. Left behind were all the cares of the world, and all its sorrows.

And what does the celebrant feel at such a service, whose prayers are joined by the multitude of worshippers, and "in the heights, beholding God"?

And yes, this was our prayer — the prayer of a handful of Orthodox Russian people, abroad in a foreign land separated by oceans and continents from their homeland — witnessing the founding moments of the first monastic community of our Mission! A serene, quiet feeling took hold of our souls, a tranquil stillness penetrated our hearts. We believe, O God, that you will hearken to our feeble prayers and will make this newly planted tree of salvation to blossom and prosper



St. Alexander Hotovitsky

here!

This great feeling of joy was raised to an even higher plane by the sermon given by Fr. Arseny. At the very moment after the reading of the gospel, he turned toward the faithful and began to speak, "How shall I begin to lament?" Oh, what extraordinary words he chose to begin a sermon with on such a festive day! But these words were his personal cry of humility. In his sermon Fr. Arseny related to us not only the hardships he endured to establish this new monastic community

and orphanage, but he recounted the millions of tears shed by the Russian faithful and the sufferings they endured as they struggled in their supreme effort to establish the Orthodox Way here in America. Before the spiritual eyes of those present, there turned the pages of the history of the first Russian immigrants to come to these shores, their loneliness; the humiliations they endured as others laughed and scorned their beloved traditions; how they were often beaten, tormented. Gradually, their life improved. Gradually, the





The Orphan Home. St. Raphael stands in the doorway, surrounded by, probably, the orphans and their caretaker, the Nun Maria; in front of her is St. Alexander. The priest opposite him, in front of the orphans, is likely Fr. Arseny, based on resemblance to later photos. This view was probably taken the day the Home was blessed, July 31, 1905. (*Russian Orthodox American Messenger*, vol. 9, no. 16, 15-28 Aug., 1905)

Orthodox faith found its scattered children who were lost amidst the masses of other immigrants from the old country. Gradually, new churches, parishes and brotherhoods were established. But as in all things, every new task brought its own new hardship and pain! And so we arrived at the place where we had all gathered to celebrate the Holy Eucharist. A place that not long ago was barren, now will be the place for the cornerstone of that most needed by Russian America — a monastic community dedicated to the enlightenment and spiritual awakening of these lands; and an orphanage, a haven dedicated to comfort the deep sorrow of poor and homeless children. Truly a place of boundless joy! But what awaits this Holy Habitation in the future? Will we find the strength to finish that which have begun here? Will we not tire and weaken when we face our adversities? Will we not be crushed, and will not the hatred and the slander of the enemy destroy everything that we have accomplished so far?

"O, God forbid that any of this take place! And if I, to whom our gracious Archpastor has entrusted this great task — if I, who might appear to you to be in good health, but am in fact, under threat of a sudden and untimely death, should leave this life before my time — then you, my friends and brother, you, my dear parishioners must not allow this great task to also die an untimely death. You must

not allow this seedling to perish. Nurture it. Look after it. Save it. Do not let the sneers of those who hate us stop you from completing this good task. May the prayers of the generations to come that will find comfort, peace, love, welcome and safety here count to us as a blessing from God! Right over here is my place! When I die, bury me right there, by the door of the Holy Temple! And my soul shall be a witness and a participant in all her joys! And a little sparrow will chirp happily over my grave! And an orphan who had found a warm corner here shall say a simple child's prayer with a tear in his eye, beseeching God that he forget the failings and shortcomings of him, who may have failed, but at least tried with all his heart, to do some good for him and the other children left all alone! And the elderly monk who had found himself a corner in this holy habitation, will not forget me in his prayers as he passes by my grave! For so long as God suffers to bear our sins and transgression we will continue to courageously bear our own burdens and will earnestly and lovingly seek to accomplish the salvific task that has been set before us all."

This sermon was interrupted several times by weeping — both by those present listening and by the tears of Fr. Arseny himself. Being touched by his emotions and his fervent admonitions, everyone present made a solemn vow in their heart

not ever to forget his words. It was obvious to us all that Fr. Arseny had completely merged himself with this, his life's work. But oh, how much more needs to be done! How much more strength will this require! How many more trials will come our way! Oh, why are we all so poor that we cannot put this holy project on a solid footing right now? Why is it that we never have the resources we need? O Benefactors! O Patrons! Where are you? Help us! Help!

The Great Entrance was approaching momentarily, and truth be said, we had forgotten all about the weather when suddenly, the skies opened up and huge drops of rain began to fall. In the flash of an eye, we covered the antimins and the umbrellas popped up all around the altar and the table of oblation. The faithful, however, just stood where they were and no one even moved to get out from under the rain. Just as quickly as it began, the rain suddenly stopped and the skies above us cleared just as Vladyka was lifting up his hands during the Cherubic Hymn. And so, if even for a short while, the heavenly canopy that served as the roof of our outdoor temple was gilded with the golden rays of the shining sun!

Some of the faithful present had prepared themselves for communion on this most auspicious day, and after the liturgy, Archpriest A. Hotovitsky addressed

*Continued on the next page*



## St. Tikhon's Monastery

*Continued from page 21*

the faithful with warm words of welcome. After the molieben to St. Tikhon of Zadonsk and the Many Years, His Grace Bishop Raphael made the following arch-pastoral comments:

"My Beloved Brethren,

"Let us worthily give due glory, honor and thanksgiving to our Lord and God, Who found us worthy to consecrate this place and to elevate the cross upon it.

"And so, in this place, which was once wild and barren, where perhaps the Name of God was never, ever even spoken, we have called upon Him with all glory and honor, and from this time forth, in like fashion, His Name shall be glorified here both day and night, and the names of the founder of this holy habitation, His Eminence, our Archbishop Tikhon, and its builder, the most honorable Hieromonk Arseny will be remembered forever, together with all those who labor and serve this holy habitation and helped make this day to come to pass.

"This monastery, with its orphanage, is the first monastic community to be established within the boundaries of our Mission in the American land, and is worthy, I must say, of the attention and support of every truly faithful Christian, for it will serve not only as a refuge for our poor, unfortunate orphans, for the sick and for the infirm, but it will ever serve as the cradle of Orthodoxy, the fountain of virtue, and the garden of the angelic life.

"Why should any of this have ever happened? Who would have ever thought it possible, some would say, even necessary, to build such a community for the unfortunate, no, the most pitiable among us, the orphaned children under our present turbulent and unstable conditions?

"God willed for this to happen! It was pleasing to God that this holy habitation be established right here, right now!

"We have made a good start and have accomplished a good beginning here. But as we all know, a 'good beginning' is only the first half of the job. 'But we have no resources,' some will say. 'Look at the economy, what about the situation in the world?' . . . Others will say, Yes, all of this might seem true, but talking like this does not do anything to further our cause. Let us not forget the words of Scripture

that say, 'God's power is made perfect in weakness!' (2 Cor. 12:9). And let us not forget that whenever insurmountable hardships are overcome; whenever turmoil is replaced by tranquility; whenever persistent doubts are put to rest; whenever something comes to be out of nothing at all — there we can clearly discern the indiscernible Right Hand of God, we witness firsthand the unmistakable Will of God!

"Yes, God's will directs the establishment His holy monasteries — these gardens of faith and virtue — for wherever there is a monastic habitation, there God bestows His lovingkindness upon all who deserve His blessings and upon all those who do not. Beholding the glory of these habitations, even unbelievers discern God, and those who have forgotten

---

**History and experience have proven that wherever there is a holy monastery, there faith and virtue multiply throughout the land and holiness and charity firmly root and bring forth their fruit**

---

Him and have fallen away from their faith return to their senses and feel His very presence.

"History and experience have proven that wherever there is a holy monastery, there faith and virtue multiply throughout the land and holiness and charity firmly root and bring forth their fruit.

"So let us pray again to our Lord God, that through His grace and lovingkindness, He will confirm the establishment of this holy habitation, and grant health and salvation to all its founders and benefactors. Amen."

In responding to Vladyka's beautiful and inspiring words, Fr. Arseny, as the monastery's "builder," was moved to express his profound gratitude to His Grace for adorning this day by coming here at the request of His Eminence, our

Archbishop Tikhon, for serving the beautiful and inspiring hierarchical Divine Liturgy, and for adding his heartfelt and sincere joy to this mission-wide celebration. Fr. "Builder" also thanked the many individuals present who worked to make this celebration a reality.

Following this, the faithful returned, in a similar solemn procession, back to the house where Vladyka was introduced to several local resident farmers who supported the idea of establishing the monastery, and had through their good efforts, facilitated the purchase of the property for our new monastery and orphanage. In his remarks Vladyka expressed his most sincere thanks to them, stating that he hoped that in the future they continue to display their Christian spirit and work with their new neighbors for the benefit of all.

I could not resist the temptation of sampling the new monastery's apples. I left the house not paying much attention to the dampness and the slight drizzling rain that was falling and headed toward the orchard, where the trees were full of apples. I found a spot on a natural outcropping where I could sit and enjoy a beautiful view of the monastery and its bordering properties. Shortly thereafter, I was joined by both Fr. "Builder" and by Vladyka Raphael, who could not restrain his delight in the beauty of our surroundings, stating that he would like to build for himself a small cottage here, which would belong to the monastery, where he could come and spend two or three weeks during the summer every year. I know for a fact that many of us, too, would like to do the same if only we had the means to do so.

Fr. Arseny then took us on a tour of the property — the meadows, the stream which was to be diverted into a pond, the berry patch, and on to the ancient grove where Fr. Arseny planned to build a skete. Then we went on to the newly cleared fields, saw the farm machinery and the barn. We visited the new building where the cells of the monastery's first brotherhood were located, where men who felt the calling of the monastic vocation would live. Yes, there is much to do here and much is in need of both willing and able hands. It's a wonder how Fr. Arseny is able to handle everything here so competently while at the same time being





First Divine Liturgy on site of future St. Tikhon's Monastery Church - July 31, 1905

responsible for the large parish in Mayfield. Undoubtedly he owes a great deal of thanks to his able assistant and co-pastor at the parish, Fr Boguslavsky. Yes, it is a great undertaking to take upon yourself such an immense task, but like a true unmercenary, Fr Arseny devotes to it all of his resources and energy. But can he do this alone? Oh, benefactors, Where are you?

Our beloved Archpastor, His Grace Tikhon, already provides for the room and board of many students studying here in this country as well as back in Russia from his stipend as Bishop. From whatever he has left, he still finds the means to help support this holy place. The one thousand dollars he personally donated must have come at a very high cost to him, indeed!

Vespers concluded at 6 p.m. and the next morning, we celebrated the holy memory of the Venerable St. Seraphim of Sarov with a Divine Liturgy and a molieben. I was honored and spiritually uplifted to serve as the main priest at this service and shall never forget the portion of joy this was allotted to me.

After the liturgy, we said our farewells to our host, Fr "Builder" Arseny and made our way to Georgetown where we would take the train to Scranton. Having

been witness to the talents and accomplishments of our host, I decided that it was time for me to show off some of my own prowess and volunteered to drive His Grace Vladyka Raphael in the one-horse monastery buggy myself. The others followed along in the wagon driven by a hired hand. Vladyka at first seemed to enjoy this arrangement, but I fear that he grew tired of this very quickly. It must have the horse, American-bred, no doubt, who did not understand a single word of the commands and encouragements I was speaking to it in Russian. He just strolled along as slow as could be until someone in the wagon called to me and said: "Tell him to 'Giddy-up'!" I did, and we made

it to the train station with plenty of time to spare.

+ + +

On that morning, Aug. 1, 1905 (July 19 Old Style), SS. Raphael and Alexander rode from Georgetown (now Gravity) to Scranton on the Erie Railroad, thus returning the same way St. Alexander, and likely St. Raphael as well, had come. They briefly stopped to visit and admire and pray at the Orthodox Church in Scranton, where Fr. Elias Klopotovskiy was the rector. Then they departed for Old Forge, where the clergy were gathering for a church council to begin the next day.

*To be continued.*

A marvellous wonder has come to pass this day: nature is made new, and God becomes man. That which He was, He has remained; and that which He was not, He has taken on Himself while suffering neither confusion nor division.

How shall I speak of the great Mystery? He who is fleshless assumes flesh; the Logos becomes matter; the invisible is seen; He who cannot be touched, is handled, and the beginningless one has a beginning. The Son of God becomes a Son of man. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

--Synaxis of the Theotokos, December 26



## The Canonization of a Monastic: How Bishop Raphael Was Made a Saint

Lecture given by Archpriest Michael Dahulich,  
Dean of St. Tikhon's Seminary, on October 12, 2004

Let me just say that there is no one sorrier than I am that Bishop Basil is not here, for two reasons. First of all, because I wanted him here more than anyone else on the speaking program this year. I love him, I love what he has to say, and I love what he represents. And the message that he would have given would have been so timely and so important.

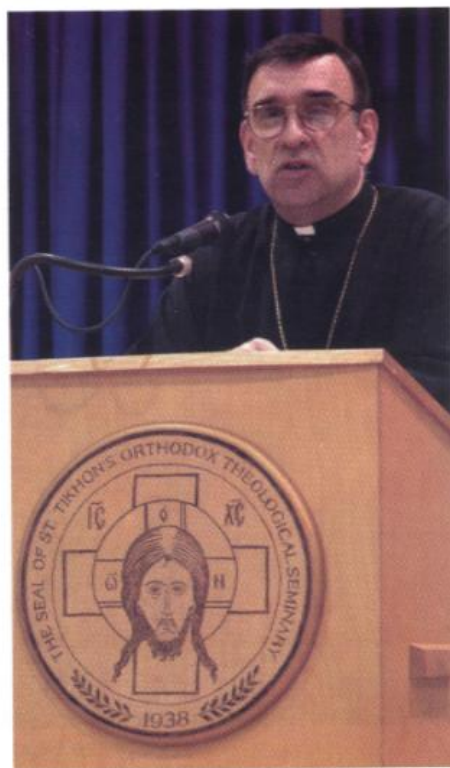
So with all of you, I share the fact that he cannot be here. We pray for his health and his recovery and we look forward to the time when he can come and speak to us in the very near future. The second reason is that you and I are stuck with each other.

I am not going to speak to the topic exactly because I can't. I will talk about the life of Bishop Raphael that led to his canonization. And talk about the insight that I have gleaned that was responsible for his canonization. I can't talk about the commission because I wasn't on it and Bishop Basil isn't well enough to tell me what their insights were. So I ask for your understanding and your patience and your forgiveness.

St. Raphael was born in Syria in 1860 to pious Orthodox parents, Michael Hawaweeny and his second wife Miriam, the daughter of a priest of Damascus. Tradition says that he was born on the feast of the Archangels, November the 20th on the old calendar of that year. And due to the violent persecution of Christians at that time, the family's parish priest, St. Joseph of Damascus and hundreds of others were martyred. Bishop Raphael family was forced to flee to Beirut for their safety. It was here that the future first saint first saw the light of Christ, not in the city of his parents. And indeed as this

child's life unfolded it was apparent that he would have no continuing city in this world. But as Saint Paul writes, "Seek the city which is to come." On the feast of Theophany of 1861, he was baptized with the name Raphael and later that spring his family returned to Damascus. The young child attended elementary school, where he succeeded very well; but in 1874 it was pretty clear that his father would no longer be able to afford his son's tuition. Fortunately help came from the Church. The Deacon Athanasius, who later became a metropolitan of the patriarch of Antioch, recommended to His Beatitude Patriarch Hierotheos of Antioch that Raphael be accepted as a student of the patriarchate in preparation for the priesthood. He was such a wonderful student that he was selected to be a substitute teaching assistant in 1877, and in the following year he was appointed a teacher of Arabic and Turkish. On March 28th of 1879, he was tonsured a monk by his bishop, Patriarch Hierotheos and served him as His Beatitude's personal attendant. Now since Balamand Seminary had been closed in 1840, Patriarch Joachim III of Constantinople invited the Patriarch of Antioch to send at least one deserving student to study on scholarship at the school at Halki — and St. Raphael was the one selected to go.

There is a beautiful story that they gave him a stipend of 18 ottoman lira each year. That's not a lot of money; it was for books and for personal needs. And he saved one lira for his father and one lira for his mother and made sure that they got that. One December 8, 1885 he was ordained to the diaconate at the school chapel. And in July of 1886 the young deacon received his certificate of theology. His thesis was holy tradition and authority.



Fr. Michael Dahulich

After graduation he returned to his homeland in the hope of serving the Church there. Patriarch Gerasimos of Antioch was impressed with deacon Raphael and often took him on his pastoral visitations of his parishes. And when his bishop could not be present, Deacon Raphael was asked to preach the word of God to the people. The good deacon was not satisfied with the extent of his knowledge and thirsted to learn even more. And so he asked the patriarch to permit him to do graduate studies at a school in Russia, promising to return and serve as the patriarchal secretary. The patriarch gave his blessing and Deacon Raphael was accepted as a student of the theological academy on Kiev, not yet being fluent in the Russian language.

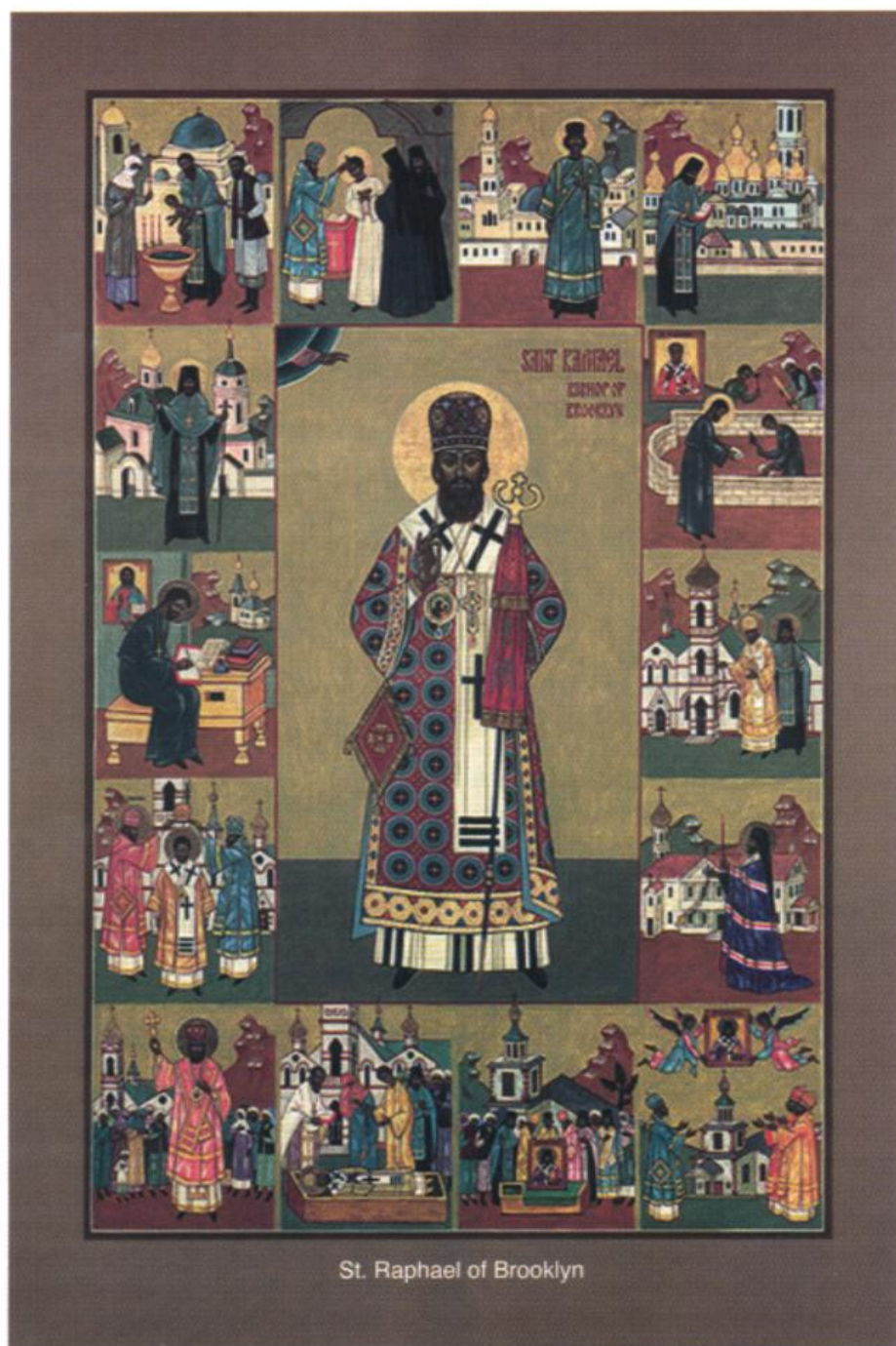
In 1889, Patriarch Gerasimos ordered that the young deacon take over as the head of the Antiochian representation church in Moscow. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Sylvester, the rector of the academy, at the request of Patriarch Gerasimos. A month later he was raised to the rank of archimandrite and was confirmed as the head of the Antiochian representation church. Within two years, Archimandrite Raphael reduced the rep-



resentation church's enormous debt. He also arranged for twenty-four Syrian students to come to Russia to further their education, hoping that they would return to Syria and teach others there. When Patriarch Gerasimos was reassigned to accept the see of Jerusalem, Archimandrite Raphael regarded this as an opportunity to free the church of Antioch from its domination by foreign hierarchs. This was a great concern of his because the church of Antioch had been under hellenization and he wanted to see native clergy and people restored to positions in the church. And so the Archimandrite began a campaign of writing letters to some Antiochian bishops and some influential laymen. He wrote articles in the Russian press, drawing attention to plight of the church of Antioch. I think this was a great occasion to understand his strength but also obedience. His courageous efforts did not meet with success. There was a price to pay for his outspoken criticism. In November of 1891, Metropolitan Spiridon, the Greek Cypriot, was elected as patriarch of Antioch. The archimandrite refused to commemorate the new patriarch during services at the representative church. As a result, he was suspended from his priestly functions by Patriarch Spiridon.

St. Raphael accepted his suspension but continued to write articles in Russian newspapers in defense of the Antiochian cause. The patriarchs of Antioch, Constantinople, and Jerusalem successfully petitioned the Tsar to forbid Russian newspapers to publish his articles. With this door closed to him, St. Raphael began to publish his writings in book form. Eventually, Patriarch Spiridon wrote to the assistant overprocurator of Russia, who was a friend of St. Raphael, asking him to persuade Fr. Raphael to ask for the patriarch's forgiveness. Mindful of the words of his friend from the gospel, Fr. Raphael did so and the suspension was lifted and St. Raphael was allowed to transfer from the jurisdiction of the Church of Antioch to the Church of Russia and to remain there.

He went to Kazan taking on the position of instructor in Arabic studies at the anti-Islamic institute of the theological academy. He remained there until 1895 when he was invited by the Syrian Orthodox Benevolent Society of New York to



St. Raphael of Brooklyn

come to that city to be the pastor of the Arab-Orthodox community. When St. Raphael heard of the needs of his countrymen who were scattered in such a strange land, like St. Paul who had a vision of a man entreating him to come to Macedonia to help them, Raphael crossed to the ocean to labor in yet another foreign country and embarked on the greatest of his missionary journeys. He arrived in New York on November 2, 1895 and was welcomed by a delegation of Arab-Orthodox Christians who were awaiting their new leader

from Russia. On Nov. 5, his first Sunday in America, he assisted Bishop Nicholai Ziorov in serving Divine Liturgy at the Russian Church in New York City. Less than two weeks later, Archimandrite Raphael found a suitable place in Lower Manhattan to set up a chapel. He furnished it with ecclesiastical items he had brought with him from Russia. Bishop Nicholas blessed the new chapel, which was dedicated to St. Nicholas of Myra. It would become the mother of all churches

*Continued on the next page*



## St. Raphael of Brooklyn

*Continued from page 25*  
for the Antiochian Archdiocese.

This zealous pastor remained in New York, teaching and preaching and celebrating divine services for his parishioners. It was not too long, however, before he learned of smaller communities of Arab Orthodox Christians scattered throughout the length and breadth of the North American continent. And since these Arab immigrants had no pastor to care for them, it was not surprising that some of them were already turning to other denominations or completely neglecting their religious responsibilities and faith. This was an ongoing concern for St. Raphael throughout the course of his ministry.

Although he was not opposed to dialogue with non-Orthodox Christians, nor to relationships based on shared beliefs, St. Raphael never lost sight of the clear line of distinction that exists between Orthodox tradition and that of non-Orthodox. He always insisted that any church unity be based on the teachings of the seven ecumenical councils of the undivided Church. The orthodoxy of St. Raphael's life and teachings was demonstrated over and over again by his words and his actions. He always upheld and defended this spotless faith which was "delivered to the saints," in the words of the Epistle of Jude, verse 3. Although he did not at first understand the teachings of the heterodox in America, he later discovered how far removed they were from Orthodox tradition. And when he realized this, he tried to protect his flock from harmful influences. He directed his people not to attend heterodox services lest they become confused by diverse strange doctrines. He believed it would be preferable for the head of the household to read the hours at home from the service book when it was not possible to attend an Orthodox church.

This was not enough. In the summer of 1896, St. Raphael undertook the first of several pastoral journeys across the continent. He visited 30 cities between New York and San Francisco, seeking out the Master's lost sheep in cities and towns and in isolated farms. He fed the spiritually hungry people with the word of God in each place where he stopped. He performed baptisms, heard confessions, cele-

brated liturgies, and performed marriages in the homes of faithful where there was no church building. In other words, he zealously fulfilled his ministries as a preacher of the gospel and during many hardships and afflictions. And obedient to the words of St. Paul to his beloved Timothy, he was watchful in all things concerning the care of his flock. In 1898 with the blessing of Bishop Nicholas, St. Raphael produced the first Arabic language service book in the New World, called *The Book of True Consolation in the Divine Prayers*. This book of liturgical services and prayers



was very useful to priests in celebrating the divine services and also to the people in their personal prayer life. The English version, which many priests are familiar with, was published by Archimandrite Seraphim Nassar. It was called the five pounder; it was a classic.

Between May and November of 1898 St. Raphael set out on his second pastoral tour and during this trip he became convinced of the need for Arabic-speaking priests to serve the new churches he had established. When he returned he made a report to Bishop Nicholas concerning these matters and expressing what he was concerned about. With Bishop Nicholas's blessing, St. Raphael was able to bring qualified priests from Syria. He sought out educated laymen who he could recommend for ordination. And both as an archimandrite and later as a bishop, St. Raphael would appoint pastors with the blessing of the first hierarch who headed the American mission. This was the normal state of affairs in America at the time. As the first ranking representative of the American Orthodox community,

Archimandrite Raphael welcomed the Bishop Tikhon when he replaced Bishop Nicholas as the ruling Bishop of America. On December 15, Saint Tikhon came to serve liturgy at the church of St. Nicholas in New York. Raphael told his people that their new archpastor was one who "has been sent here to tend to the flock of Christ — Russians, Slavs, Syro-Arabs, and Greeks — which are scattered across the North American continent."

At that time of course, there were no parallel jurisdictions based on nationality. The Church united those of diverse back-



grounds under the omophorion of one archbishop. This was the norm, of course, until the Russian Revolution. In March of 1899, St. Raphael received permission from Bishop Tikhon to begin collecting funds for a cemetery and for building a new church to replace the chapel that was located in an old building on a dirty street. In spite of those goals, in the spring of 1899 he left on yet another pastoral tour, this time of 43 cities and towns. Traveling by land and by sea and undeterred by the obstacles and difficulties before him, he spent seven months in the northern, eastern, southern and western regions. He visited fourteen states, New York and Georgia, the District of Columbia, Massachusetts, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Nebraska, Iowa, Kentucky, and Pennsylvania. St. Raphael ministered to Greeks and Russians as well as Arabs. Records indicate that he confessed and communed 650 souls, baptized 98 individuals, performed 73 marriages,



offered 45 liturgies and preached 45 sermons. Among the weddings were people who had been married by non-Orthodox clergy, and he, of course, chrismated some children who had been baptized by non-Orthodox priests. I want to share with you a commentary of recollection from someone who could testify to the closeness of this holy man to his people during that missionary tour. "On Tuesday, September 19, 1899, he arrived in Kearney, Nebraska at midnight, 8 1/2 hours later than scheduled. Nevertheless, nearly the entire Arab community was still gathered at the station to greet him. During the open coach ride to the home in which he was to stay, Raphael caught cold. But he still stayed up until 4 a.m. talking with the people. In the morning, he was too exhausted to serve liturgy, so he substituted the typica service. By evening he felt stronger and set out in the company of 15 strangers to reach an outlying ranch. They sang church hymns and folk songs the whole way and arrived at 1 a.m. The host kissed the ground in front of Raphael and then his feet and his hands. Raphael was greatly touched by this display. This man's wife was also very happy to have the opportunity finally to confess her sins and see her four children baptized. Raphael slept on their humble small couch, while the rest of their party spread out on chairs and floors. In the morning they celebrated orthros, and blessed water to sanctify the cabin and the rest of the property. And in the evening they returned to Kearney and the remaining ranchers gathered there to meet him.

For many years, I was stationed in Johnstown, Pa., a city that St. Raphael had visited. There was a divided ethnic Arab community and he reconciled the personal enmity that existed there. The people were already in civil court, unable to make peace. Raphael came and with the word of the Lord and his humble presence and his tears of entreaty, he restored calm and put an end to the bitter feud. It was almost as if this miracle answered a prayer because it was while he was in Johnstown he received a telegram informing him that Metropolitan Meletios had been elected Patriarch of Antioch. With great joy, St. Raphael told the people of Johnstown that for the first time in 168 years, a native Arab had been chosen as primate of the

Antiochian church. After the new primate had been installed as patriarch, Raphael was immediately proposed to succeed him as the Metropolitan of Latakia. The patriarch however stated that the Holy Synod could not elect Archimandrite Raphael because of his important work in America.

In 1901, Metropolitan Gabriel of Beirut wrote to Archimandrite Raphael asking him to become his auxiliary bishop but he declined saying that he could not leave his flock. First he wanted to build a permanent church and then to acquire a parish cemetery. The latter goal was achieved in August of 1901 when Fr. Raphael purchased a section of Mt. Olivet cemetery on Long Island.

In December of 1901, Archimandrite

IT WOULD BE ON THE  
THIRD SUNDAY OF  
LENT OF 1904 THAT  
ST. RAPHAEL BECAME  
THE FIRST ORTHODOX  
BISHOP CONSECRATED  
ON AMERICAN SOIL

Raphael was actually elected as Bishop of Zala. Patriarch Meletios sent a telegram congratulating him and asking him to come home. Fr. Raphael thanked the Patriarch but again declined the office. He said he wished to complete the project of building a temple for the Syrian community in New York. The following year he bought an existing church building on Pacific Street in Brooklyn and had it remodeled for Orthodox worship. Bishop Tikhon consecrated the church to the great joy of the faithful in attendance. Thus St. Raphael's second major project was finished.

Since the number of parishes in the diocese of the North American was greatly increasing, Bishop Tikhon found it impossible to visit all of them. The diocese had to be reorganized in order to administer to it more effectively. Therefore Bishop Tikhon submitted a plan to the Holy Synod of Russian Church to transfer the see from San Francisco to New York, because

most parishes and individuals were concentrated in the East. Since various ethnic groups required special attention and pastoral leadership, Bishop Tikhon proposed that Archimandrite Raphael be made his second vicar bishop, the bishop of Alaska being his first. In 1903, the Holy Synod of Russia unanimously elected Archimandrite Raphael to be the Bishop of Brooklyn while retaining him as the head of the Syro-Arab Orthodox mission in North America. The Holy Synod announced the election of Patriarch Meletios of Antioch who was pleased by the decision. Bishop Tikhon wrote to St. Raphael to inform him of his election and St. Raphael sent him a letter of acceptance. Meanwhile Father Innocent Pustinsky was consecrated as Bishop Tikhon's first auxiliary at St. Petersburg's Cathedral of Our Lady of Kazan. It would be on the third Sunday of Lent of 1904 that St. Raphael became the first Orthodox bishop consecrated on American soil.

Bishop Tikhon and Bishop Innocent performed the service at St. Nicholas cathedral in Brooklyn. The new Bishop's vestments were a gift from Tsar Nicholas II. Following his consecration, Bishop Raphael continued his pastoral labors, ordaining priests and assigning them to parishes and helping Bishop Tikhon in the administration of the North American diocese.

In 1904, Bishop Raphael announced his intentions to publish an Orthodox magazine, *The Word*, the official publication of the Syro-Arab mission. This would help to link the people in parishes of his diocese to work closely together. Bishop Raphael knew that he could not visit all the Orthodox Christians across North America in person but through the ministry of the printed word he could preach the word of salvation even to people he had never met. The content was to be spiritual, moral, and churchly so that the magazine would reinforce people in their faith. *The Word* would focus on five primary topics: dogmatic truths, ethical teaching, historical and contemporary ecclesiastical subjects, chronology of baptisms, weddings, etc. and official pronouncements.

The first issue was printed in January of 1905 and Saint Raphael considered this milestone as one equal in importance to

*Continued on the next page*



## St. Raphael of Brooklyn

*Continued from page 27*

the acquisition of St. Nicholas Cathedral and the parish cemetery. It was in July of 1905 that Bishop Tikhon consecrated the grounds of St. Tikhon's Monastery and blessed the orphanage at South Canaan, Pennsylvania. This is a description that we have from that occasion that took place on July 31. Two days before the pilgrimage festivities began, the recently consecrated Raphael, Bishop of Brooklyn arrived in Mayfield. He was met at the station by Father Arseny, pastor of St. John's parish in Mayfield, and local parishioners. The parish orchestra played stirring Russian music as Bishop Raphael's train pulled into the Mayfield station. Four brotherhoods in full parade dress, each one led by a captain wearing a dress uniform with a saber at his side, officially greeted the hierarch. Uniformed men lined both sides of the passage from the train to the carriage as an honor guard. The captains with sabers drawn stood by the carriage and escorted Bishop Raphael and Fr. Elias Klopotovskiy, who had accompanied the Bishop from Scranton. Raphael's carriage proceeded along Main Street from the train station to St. John's Church. Main Street was lined with Russians from both Mayfield and the rest of the Lackawanna Valley. Bishop Raphael gave his archpastoral blessing all the way up the road as the procession moved towards the church. The procession was finally met by the church school children in their Sunday best as parishioners, carrying banners and a cross, waited at the church entrance. It seemed the population of the entire valley had gathered at St. John's parish for an unprecedented festive occasion. The bishop was greeted by Fr. Alexander Boguslavsky, who was carrying a hand cross for a blessing.

Having been vested in his manta, Bishop Raphael entered the church, which was lavishly decorated and brightly illuminated by candles, sacred hymns being sung to the Theotokos. After venerating the icons, Bishop Raphael listened to the official greeting from the pastor which began, "Your grace, on this day we greet your arrival with joy from the bottom of our hearts. We have not yet recovered from our feeling of joy from your first visit together with Archbishop Tikhon.

And now the Lord has given us once again the opportunity to participate in the festal service of a hierarch. You have come to us as the ranking hierarch of the Syro-Arab church in America in order to share in the Russian people's joy in the establishment of our institution." Three days later he presided a conference of diocesan clergy at Old Forge, Pa. because Archbishop Tikhon was in San Francisco. Among the clergy in attendance at that sobor (council) were three that would be numbered among the saints, Fr. Alexis Toth, Fr. Alexander Hotovitsky, and Fr. John Kochurov.

For the next ten years, Bishop Raphael tended his growing flock. With the growth of his New York community came

HE NEVER NEGLECTED  
HIS FLOCK BUT  
TRAVELED THROUGH  
AMERICA, CANADA,  
AND EVEN MEXICO IN  
SEARCH OF THEM  
THAT HE MIGHT CARE  
FOR THEM. HE KEPT  
THEM FROM  
STRAYING INTO  
STRANGE PASTURES,  
PROTECTED THEM  
FROM SPIRITUAL  
HARM

an increase in the number of children, and he was concerned about their future. He wanted to establish an evening school to educate them in a Christian atmosphere, because the future of the Orthodox Church in this country depended upon instruction of the youth. Children who did not speak Arabic were already going to non-Orthodox churches where Sunday school was conducted in English. Bishop Raphael saw the absolute necessity of using English in worship in an education for the future progress for the Syro-Arab mission. Taking heed of St. Paul's words to pray in a language that people understood,

Bishop Raphael recommended the use of the Service Book of the Holy Orthodox Catholic Apostolic Church that had been translated by Isabel Hapgood, in all of his services.

In March of 1907, Saint Tikhon was recalled to Russia and was replaced by Archbishop Platon. Once again, Bishop Raphael was considered for episcopal office in Syria, being nominated to succeed Patriarch Gregory as Metropolitan of Tripoli in 1908. This was refused. The Sunday of Orthodoxy in 1911, Bishop Raphael was honored for his fifteen years of pastoral ministry in America. Archbishop Platon presented him with a silver-covered icon of Christ and praised him for his work. In his humility Bishop Raphael could not understand why he should be honored, merely for doing his duty. In the words of Luke 17:10, he considered himself an unworthy servant and yet he did perfectly good work that fell to him. Already toward the end of 1912, Bishop Raphael became ill while working in his office. Doctors diagnosed him with a heart ailment that would eventually cause his death. But after two weeks he felt strong enough to celebrate the liturgy in his cathedral. And in 1913 and 1914, this missionary bishop would continue to make visitations to various cities. He would visit 24 communities, 21 in the United States in (15 different states) and 3 in Canada. When he returned home, he fell ill again and spent two years at home bearing his illness with patience. At 12:40 a.m. on February 27, he rested once and for all from his labors. The attendants called him but he did not answer. They shook him but he was gone.

From his youth, Saint Raphael's greatest joy was to serve the church. When he came to America, he found his people scattered abroad and called them to unity. He never neglected his flock but traveled through America, Canada, and even Mexico in search of them that he might care for them. He kept them from straying into strange pastures, protected them from spiritual harm. During twenty years of faithful ministry, he nurtured them and helped them to grow. At the time of his death, the Syro-Arab mission had 30 parishes, with 25,000 faithful. Raphael was a scholar, the author of some 14 books. It's been counted that he wrote 354 articles

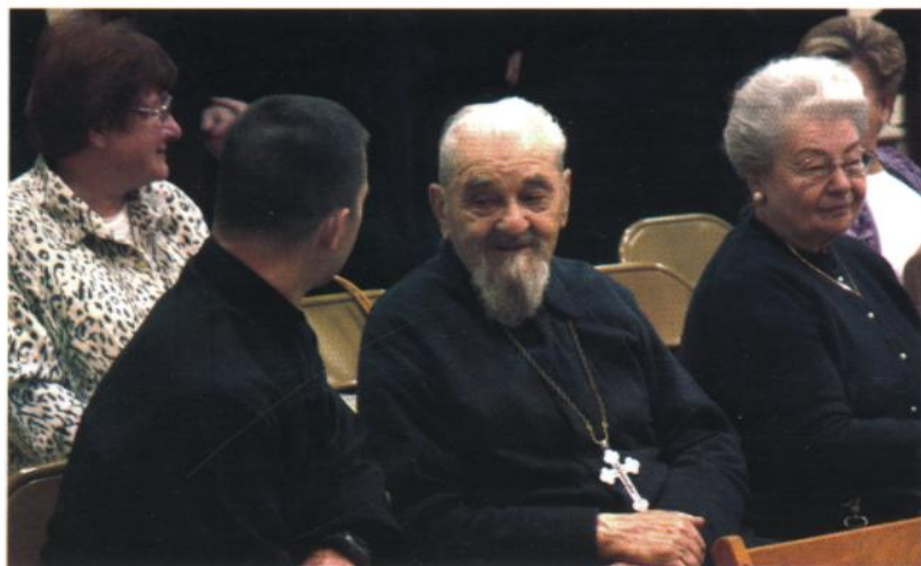


that appeared in *The Word*, most of the ones that had been printed. He served his own Arabic community but also reached out to Greeks and Russians, speaking to them in their own language. He became fluent in language and encouraged their use in church services and programs.

Saint Raphael came into contact with all kinds of people. He was a gentle father to them all. He gained their love and respect by first loving them and also through his charming personality and excellent character. He was always kind and merciful and condescending humbly to others but was strict with himself. No one

honor. He never vested it in garments of shame. He occupied it in majesty and splendor. He adorned it with chastity and perfection . . . Every plant he planted, he watered with his tears and his sweat. He nourished his sheep with the milk of care and love. In his pastoral journeys, he returned the sons of exile to the land of Israel. He led the people of the desert into the promised land and he gathered the dispersed nation under the banner of triumph."

On March 27-30 in year 2000, the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America, in close consultation with hi-



has portrayed him better than his archdeacon, Emmanuel Abuhatab, who writes, "Among the highborn he behaved with majesty and yet among the lowly he was lowly, showing the gentleness of a father. He was a fine companion, always smiling, never bored or idle, a refuge from both darkness and anguish. Offering direction and guidance, he never overlooked the call of conscience, never yielded to anyone. He was a man of good sense and sound judgment. He was a respected father, friend, and brother to all his followers. By love he gained their hearts and their respect, not because he wielded authority but because his personality and his excellent character fostered love for him. The young found in his presence the strength to be courageous. The mighty venerated him and turned from their haughtiness to humility."

Fr. Andrew Esau writes, "Raphael crowned his pastorate with glory and

erarchs of the Antiochian Archdiocese, proclaimed the canonization of Raphael of Brooklyn. That glorification took place on the Memorial Day weekend of the year 2000. Raphael was canonized for the holiness of his life and for the sacrifices that he made. He is in a very real sense the father of the Antiochian Archdiocese in America. Before he came here it was nothing. It would never be what it is today if it were not for him. And they aptly call him the "Good Shepherd of the Lost Sheep" in America.

Research indicates that almost immediately following his death, a cult of devotion began to surround Bishop Raphael. And by 1992, Metropolitan Philip had commissioned a group of priests that included the then Fr. Basil Essey, now Bishop Basil, to track and record this devotion. Devotion for him existed among two age groups, the very elderly who remembered him personally (most of them

were already gone of course), and the very young, the children, campers at Antiochian village where his relics reside.

There have been appearances recorded within the Archdiocese and outside the Archdiocese, most of them have been of people seeing him walking down the very campgrounds at Antiochian Village. A presbytera from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese recalls this experience that she had: walking through the grounds, she came upon a bishop who blessed her and told her that she was pregnant and would give birth to a healthy baby boy — a woman who had difficulty becoming pregnant. When she came back to the office, she asked who the bishop was that had been on-site. The camp director told her that there was no bishop on the premises. Later that day in the camp main building, she saw oil paintings of the all the hierarchs at the Antiochian Archdiocese. Immediately she identified Raphael as the bishop who had blessed her. When she went and showed the director where this had happened, he pointed out it was near the grave of Bishop Raphael. Obviously when a healthy boy was born, she named him Raphael.

The commission records that miracles attributed to St. Raphael have taken two forms. One has been of reconciliation and the other has been to aid women bearing children. There is a pattern of reconciliation to his intercession, not unlike the work that he did in that fiercely divided community. There are numerous instances of children being reconciled to their parents — cases that had involved serious abuse, disowning, or complete rejection. Women with difficult pregnancies who pray for his intercession name their children either Raphael or Raphaela. Bishop Basil told me that one Antiochian deacon's wife, who had attended the canonization of St. Raphael here at St. Tikhon's, has just filed on his desk a written report of the birth of her child a number of months later.

There was never any campaigning for his canonization. No articles or editorials in *The Word*. It was simply people, many of whom are my age who knew nothing of him, who had come to seek his intercession. He was originally buried by special permission of the city of New York in a crypt under the cathedral of St. Nicho-

*Continued on the next page*



## St. Raphael of Brooklyn

*Continued from page 29*

las in Brooklyn. When that property was sold and the church was moved to its current location, his body was exhumed and moved to Mt. Olivet Cemetery that he had purchased so many years before. Later his relics were transferred to Antiochian Village. Now when his body was buried in New York City, it is the tradition in that land-deprived state to bury one or two people on top of each other. And so when his body was exhumed, there was nothing left of the other coffins. His coffin was intact, his body was intact, as were his skin, his beard, and his hair. Fr. John Namie and Fr. George Quarry, both of whom I've known personally, saw this. His vestments were intact, they were green. Now whether they were the original color or were gold and later turned green is unknown, but they were green. There was damage to the miter, it was almost paper-mache like and it deteriorated except for the icons. And so when his body was exhumed, they removed and replaced the hand cross, the gospel book, the bells of the sakkos that had worn from use and threads that had fallen off. The icons on the miter and his cross were all replaced with new ones, and the ones from his casket are on display at Antiochian Village. Only one thing was detached from the knee down, one of his legs. And it is from that that the relics are taken.

I think that it's interesting to note that in celebrating his sainthood, we have two different texts of services one OCA, one Antiochian. The OCA celebrates his feast on the day of his repose, February 27. But since in our tradition, the presanctified liturgy is allowed to be served on the feast of saints, because it always falls during lent, and the Antiochian tradition does not allow for that, they celebrate the feast on the feast on the Saturday closest to that of the Archangels somewhere between November 1 and 7. There is no feast to compete with that that requires a vigil.

Although of Arabic descent, he lived in several places and worked among Greeks, and Russians and Americans of diverse backgrounds. While in America he was vicar bishop of the Orthodox diocese, assisting St. Tikhon and his successors in their visionary multi-ethnic organization of the North American Church.

He consecrated the ground of St. Tikhon's monastery knowing full well that it was not an Arab community. His cathedral in Brooklyn was consecrated by Bishop Tikhon — there were no Russians there. He ministered to Orthodox across the length and breadth of this country because he understood fully the simple formula that Orthodox is Orthodox.

Over the years we have overcome the language and calendar issues that once divided us. Antiochian seminarians are being educated at St. Tikhon's Seminary. OCA priests and deacons are studying for their doctorate of ministry degrees at Antiochian Village in conjunction with Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. We have done so much together, including coming together in the glorious canonization of St. Raphael of Brooklyn in the year 2000; and yet so much remains.

Every time that I go into the side room of the monastery church, where the icons and relics are kept, I pray before the relics of St. Raphael for a miracle. It is yet to happen but I ask for the miracle that

in this country, that bishops would work together as Raphael and Tikhon and Innocent did, to make the church grow. I pray that we would understand the formula that Raphael knew: Orthodox is Orthodox. That we would support each other's parishes and feast days and fund raisers. That we would send our children who move away to the closest Orthodox Church regardless of its ethnic origin. That we would be able to say as they did 100 years ago, that Metropolitan Herman is my bishop and Metropolitan Philip is my bishop, Bishop Tikhon is my bishop and Bishop Basil is my bishop. Orthodox is Orthodox.

St. Raphael understood when he prayed the Creed: "I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church." That "one" is first and foremost and presumed. He and Bishop Tikhon and Bishop Innocent had one Church, lived one Church in this country. Through their intercession may God make it so for us today. Thank you.

## Official

### New Mission Parishes

Holy Apostles Orthodox Mission Church -- Mechanicsburg, Pa.

Priest-in-charge -- V. Rev. Neal Carrigan

Exploratory Mission -- Milford, Pa.

Priest-in-charge -- V. Rev. Daniel Kovalak

### Ordination to the Diaconate

Subdeacon Timothy Hojnicky -- October 24

Subdeacon Paul Fetsko -- October 31

### Ordination to the Priesthood

Deacon Paul Fetsko -- December 18

### Parish Council Confirmations

All Saints Church -- Olyphant

St. John the Baptist Church -- Nanticoke

St. Michael's Church -- Wilmington

Holy Trinity Church -- Wilkes-Barre

St. Stephen's Cathedral -- Philadelphia

St. John the Baptist Church -- Edwardsville

Christ the Savior Church -- Harrisburg

Holy Annunciation Church -- Berwick

St. Nicholas Church -- Bethlehem



# My Road to the Priesthood of the Orthodox Church

## Part 1. My Road to Orthodoxy

I am the son of a Baptist minister, an American soldier, and an Orthodox Priest and as I place the cross of my priesthood around my neck before divine services, I continually get the feeling of inadequacy and disbelief that I could really be doing what I am doing. How does a pure, one hundred percent born and bred southern boy, reared on fishing, Tennessee football, momma's cornbread and "Amazing Grace," wind up standing in front of the Lord's altar during the Thrice Holy Hymn, in the very lineage of the Apostles? It is out of this very feeling of inadequacy and disbelief that I return often in my mind to study the history of my becoming an Orthodox priest.

I was the baby of the family and there were expectations. My older brothers were 6'2 and 6'4 and both played college basketball. I got cut from the 10th grade team, much to their chagrin. So I stuck with football and baseball, but neither of those sports impressed my brothers or my dad, who was All Saint Louis County in 1947, very much. Like a lot of little brothers, I was picked on and teased quite a bit, but I learned to live with it and I knew I wanted to do things in my life that would impress my parents and my brothers, but most of all myself.

Growing up a White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, I developed a deep sense of patriotism and I loved the stories of my uncle, an infantry soldier in WW II. I had another uncle who was a Marine in Vietnam, and yet another who was a Army soldier in Vietnam. They quickly became my heroes along with John Wayne in the movie, *The Green Berets*, and when my brother joined the Army in the late 1970s for a short stint, I thought he was the coolest thing ever. I knew that I was totally impressed with the military and I hoped that one day I would be good enough to join the ranks of those who defended our



country and our way of life.

At the end of my junior year in high school, I applied through my congressman and received an alternate nomination to the U.S. Naval Academy where I wanted to pursue a commission in the Marine Corps. However, I never got the nomination, which wasn't that important to me after my visit to The Citadel, in Charleston, S.C. I read *The Lords of Discipline*, a book by Pat Conroy, a 1967 Citadel graduate, who wrote of his Citadel experience, describing it in the second sentence of the book as "... the history of my becoming a man." After I visited the campus in the spring of 1986, I realized that this was the place for the mak-

ing of men, military leaders, and citizen soldiers. The Citadel promised to develop "The Whole Man" and would crown its achievement with a gold ring that would signify that this person was a Citadel man for life. Although terrified by the rigidity of the toughest fourth class system of all the military schools in the country (The Citadel and Virginia Military Institute were still the only all male military colleges in the country until 1993), I wanted to be a Citadel man and wear the ring, and then continue with a career as an Army officer, leading America's finest. This was indeed the toughest military school in the nation, physically and academically, but this is exactly what I needed. At this time in my life, having been in church almost every Sunday since nine months before I was born, Sunday School, Church choir and youth group, I didn't even know that such a thing as the Orthodox Church existed.

I remember the first day of "hell week" at The Citadel. All of us freshmen, known

*Continued on the next page*



## My Road to the Priesthood

*Continued from page 31*

as "knobs" because of our freshly shaved heads, were gathered in Mark Clark Hall for a briefing. The officer stood in front of the 638 of us and told us to look to our left and right, that the man on our left wouldn't make it through knob year and the man on our right wouldn't make it to graduation. He was very close to being correct. Of the 638 freshmen that started the Citadel on August 18, 1986, only about a third of those graduated with me on May 16, 1990, and about 120 quit during the first few days of hell week. I tried myself to quit several times, but before I started, I begged my parents to not let me quit, no matter what I said later, and while my mom wavered on her promise to me from time to time, my dad held firm.

I graduated from The Citadel in May of 1990 at 21 years of age, however, it was a bad time to get an active duty commission in the Army. The Berlin Wall had just come down the previous fall, and the Graham-Rudman Bill, the Senate budget crisis bill that cut government spending across the board, to include the military, had just gone into effect. In fact, I remember hearing rumors of contracted cadets losing their active duty contracts for showing up late to formation.

It was in the spring of my senior year at The Citadel when the Commandant of the Coast Guard made a visit. He was short on junior officers and was offering direct commissions to those Citadel graduates who met various qualifying standards. Although I had my heart set on being a combat leader, I needed a full time job. As these were the days of the hit television series, "Miami Vice" I knew that the Coast Guard was heavily involved in the federal counter narcotics mission and I thought that would be exciting, so I applied, interviewed, and was commissioned in the U.S. Coast Guard as an ensign in August, 1990. However, my excitement of working with Sonny and Crockett on "Miami Vice" came to a quick halt when the Coast Guard sent me to Galveston, Texas to be a Marine Environmental Protection officer, in charge of investigating oil pollutions. This, of course, was not what I had in mind when I joined and I was somewhat disappointed. However, after a year I was given the opportunity to command a law

enforcement detachment. After graduating from the Coast Guard's Maritime Law Enforcement School, I was put in charge of a small unit in Galveston. We deployed on Navy ships and conducted counter narcotics and intelligence work that the Navy could not perform because of their status under the Department of Defense, the Coast Guard being under the Department of Transportation at the time.

Having been raised in a family that were strong supporters of the Religious Right and Pat Robertson, my parents recommended I go to his Christian law school at Regent University, and it was there, ironically, that I found the Orthodox Church.

When Pamela and I arrived at Regent University in Virginia Beach, Virginia, we immediately found a small-scale example



Capt. Ruston Hill near Kabul, Afghanistan

My team and I also deployed to the later phase of Operation Desert Storm, to the North Red Sea to inspect vessels passing into the Gulf of Aqaba, to Aqaba, Jordan, ensuring they did not contain items prohibited by the United Nations embargo against Iraq. We did the same thing later in 1993 in the Adriatic Sea off the coast of the former Yugoslavia.

However, I had married my wife, Pamela, during my hitch in the Coast Guard, and my young bride and I were growing weary of long months apart, not to mention I was rather unfulfilled in the Coast Guard, so in August of 1993 I checked out the Army, and as Desert Storm was over, they really weren't looking for officers from outside West Point and ROTC. I talked at length with my young bride and my parents and for lack of anything better to do, I decided to go to law school.

of the American Religious experience. There were Protestants of every denomination, a few Roman Catholics, and there was even one Greek Orthodox woman in my class, all gathered to be Christian attorneys after Pat Robertson's vision of infiltrating our liberal society with Christian lawyers, judges, and politicians. However, it got interesting when some professors instituted daily student-led devotions before the first class of the morning. This inevitably became an opportunity for each student to give an apology for his faith group. The most interesting to me were the charismatic groups, in no short supply at Regent, who would emphatically state that if you did not speak in tongues and had not received the Baptism of the Spirit, you probably weren't saved. They would be countered by the Presbyterian's Reformed theology on the next day who



would claim that speaking in tongues was a gift that ceased and had nothing to do with salvation, and so on to the point that we ended up having discussions about theology more than the law. Intrigued by these discussions, I was nonetheless constantly questioning myself as to why there was only one infallible Scripture and so many different denominations, all claiming to be interpreting it correctly, yet none

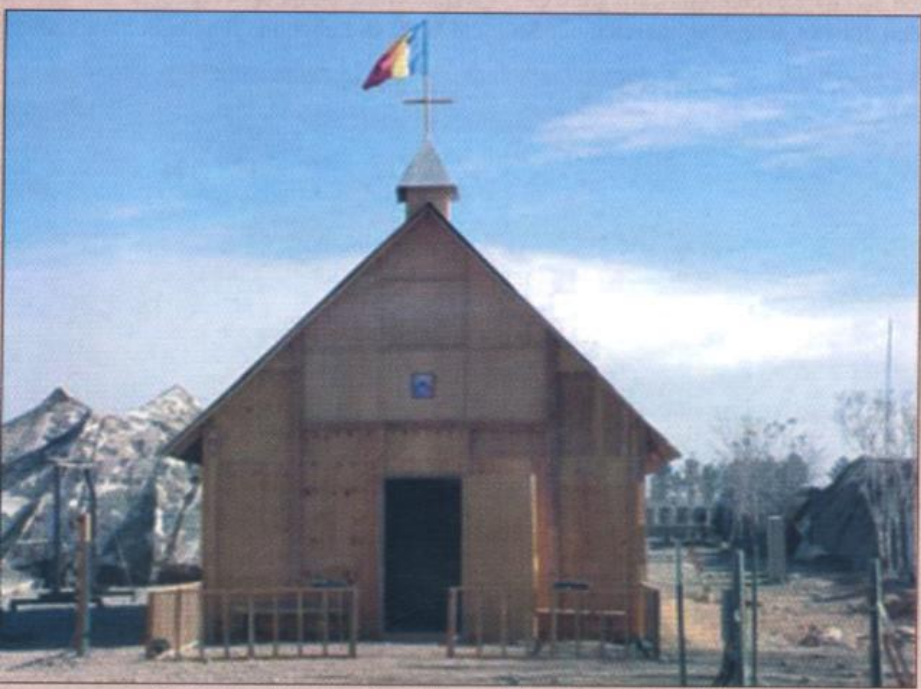
entire Protestant experience in general. Tom had a friend from his undergrad days at Temple University that had become Orthodox. At this point I had been to one Orthodox liturgy with a Greek friend in the Coast Guard in Galveston. The entire service was in Greek and all I remember from the service is that there was a man, whom I presumed to be the priest, with a long beard walking around swinging

heart as a child and I thought that's all I had to do. I had never considered this before. Especially disturbing was that at the end of the chapter, John tells us that Christ's message here was so disturbing that many of His disciples walked with Him no more. Well, I personally was determined that I was not going to walk with Him no more because of this and therefore I would have to make a major change in the way I viewed communion.

In my Evangelical Baptist rearing, I took communion often. Most Baptist churches offer it once per quarter, usually on Sunday evenings, and sometimes even on Sunday mornings. However, it means very little to the typical Baptist as compared to the Orthodox Christian. First of all, I had been taught from my youth that the grape juice and small unleavened, unsalted crackers that I was consuming were merely symbols, and symbols only, of the body and blood of Christ. I never questioned this growing up. Of course it was just a symbol. After all, if you put the grape juice under the microscope you won't find any hemoglobin. The sole purpose of this event, as far as I was taught, was obedience to Christ when He said, "This do in remembrance of me." This is exactly what every Baptist pastor would say at communion as He urged us to think about Christ's suffering on the cross for us. Interestingly, we were taught to make sure we were right with God before we took this grape juice and crackers, following Paul's admonition to the Corinthians. However, it was always reinforced that this was just a symbol, and not really Christ's body and blood.

I had never before heard of anyone believing that communion was the actual, literal body and blood of our Lord. The very idea seemed ludicrous to me. So I began to ask around, and fortunately for me, I was at a university that had a divinity school and I worked out in the gym with one of the divinity school professors. He affirmed for me that indeed there were Christians who believed this and that the idea that communion was not the actual body and blood of Christ did not come about until after the Protestant Reformation. Being of a conservative, traditionalist nature, I found this disturbing. Here entire Christendom had been expounding

*Continued on the next page*



Orthodox chapel at Kandahar built by Romanian soldiers

could agree on things as basic as salvation, baptism, communion, etc.

It is important for me to mention here that I was raised in a godly home and my parents taught me that to live for Christ was the key to happiness. I had been reared with Bible-based Sunday School my entire life and I had maintained that even after I left home. I had a good knowledge of the Scriptures and general Southern Baptist doctrine, but I had never heard the things that I was hearing here in morning devotions at law school.

I had a good friend in law school named Tom Diehl. He was from Carlisle, Pa. and he and his wife Dana attended First Baptist Church in Norfolk with Pamela and me regularly. We were in a Sunday School class with others Regent law students, and we began to question the Baptist Church in particular and the

this ornamented metal object from a gold chain around the church. I also remember that the people were very friendly to my friend Gus, but no one spoke to me. So I had no idea what the Orthodox Church had to offer to anyone.

Throughout this period of study and searching, however, I did become convinced of one thing I had never before considered: the last section of John's gospel, chapter 6, where Christ speaks directly to His disciples about the reality of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, became extremely profound to me, especially verse 53 in which Christ says, "unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you." Further He says in verse 55, "For my flesh is food indeed and my blood is drink indeed." This verse was very disturbing to me. I had asked Jesus in my



## My Road to the Priesthood

*Continued from page 33*

one idea since the beginning of Christianity and some real smart people in the 16th century finally figured out that everyone had been doing it wrong the whole time! That idea didn't sit too well with me so I decided to check out the father of all Protestants, Martin Luther. I went into the Divinity library, found a copy of his writings and in the table of contents of the book I was reading (I honestly cannot remember which it was) and found a short chapter on the Eucharist. I opened it up and read something along the lines of, "I will not believe that the wine and bread do not become the actual and literal body and blood of our Lord. Neither can I explain it. It is a holy mystery." At that I set the book down, went home, and prayed, "Lord, I will not be one of those disciples that rejected you because they could not understand this mystery. From now on, wherever I am, I will take your communion as your actual body and blood."

As it turned out, the very next Sunday at First Baptist Church in Norfolk, Va., Dr. Bob Record was going to have "The Lord's Supper." I became very excited about my new found faith and was determined to have a wonderful experience communing with God in this new way. For the first time in my life I was going to take these elements and actually believe that they were the body and blood of Christ. I remember sitting in the pew with Pamela, anxiously awaiting this service. The elements were passed out and Dr. Record stood in front of the enormous congregation, held up the wafer, and he said these words that I'll never forget: "Then our Lord said, 'This is just a symbol of my body . . .'" I was absolutely mortified. I was angered on one hand and horrified on the other that this man, in order to further a false teaching, was willing to go so far as to misquote Holy Scripture! I knew even as a Baptist that Christ never said anything about symbol at His last supper. I don't remember exactly what my response was, but I do remember Pamela telling me to be quiet, that people were looking at me. It was at that moment that I knew that next Sunday, we were going to a church that celebrated communion every Sunday, where it was taught that the communion elements were that actual

body and blood of Christ.

My cursory study of Church history led me to believe that if the crisis ever came, and I left the Protestant faith, I would be heading to either the Roman Catholic Church or the Orthodox Church and I began to lean heavily toward the Orthodox Church simply because of my historical understanding of the Great Schism of 1054. I did not believe that the pope was right in unilaterally changing the Nicene Creed and then excommunicating the Orthodox for not accepting the change. So

my goal of graduating from law school. I received my Doctorate of Jurisprudence, and my faculty recommendation to the Board of Law Examiners of the State of Tennessee to take the bar examination. That was my next goal. After all, being a goal-oriented person, I was always challenged with having something challenging to complete. I took the state bar review course and studied for six straight weeks, eight hours per day during the week, while Pamela worked at the local bank in Lebanon, Tennessee. We had



At the Orthodox chapel, Kandahar Air Base, Afghanistan

the next Saturday after my communal debacle at First Baptist Church in Norfolk, Pamela and I were standing tall at great vespers at Dormition Orthodox Church in Norfolk and looking around in ecclesiastical culture shock I remember thinking, "How am I ever going to get used to all of this?" I knew that there were going to be some hard pills to swallow, but I didn't care anymore. We were heading down this road and we weren't looking back.

After an 18 month catechumenate with my priest, Father Theodore Panchak (I managed to turn his hair completely white), Pamela and I were chrismated into the Orthodox Church in America during the feast of Dormition, 2005.

### Part II. My Journey to the Priesthood

The following December I completed

moved back to my hometown in middle Tennessee because my dad had lined me up with a job at Lee and Lee Attorneys, a small firm. At noon on Saturday I would close up the books and take the rest of the weekend off. At this point, Pamela was pregnant with our oldest child, Alexandra, I had a car payment and a mortgage to pay for, plus my student loans. I had a lot riding on that bar exam.

I took the Tennessee Bar Examination in February, 1996 and got my results in April. I had passed on my first try. I never called them to ask what I made, out of fear that they would take a closer look and realize that I hadn't actually passed! Nevertheless, I was licensed the same week and found myself in the courtroom representing a DUI client at the Lebanon Courthouse not even two weeks later.

There was really no defense to the case



against this man so I talked to him and pled him guilty. I remember him handing me five one hundred dollar bills, stuffing them in my pocket and thinking, "Wow, that was the easiest five hundred bucks I ever made," frowning at the fact that it all belonged to the firm. Just then, several of the more elderly Wilson County, Tennessee attorneys made their way to introduce themselves to the newest kid on the block. I ended up hanging out at the courtroom, particularly impressed with this one older gentleman who told me that he too had

del and now it seemed that was no longer in the realm of possibility. I was stuck in my job and this was it: a job I saw that was full of liars, politicians, backbiters, thieves, and just about every bad quality that I had grown to dislike since my Citadel education. I was instantly miserable. Sure there were good lawyers, but even the moral ones had to swim and feed with the sharks in a feeding pool of human beings.

It wasn't long after that that I decided I could be happy if I ran my own business; that is if I was able to take that \$500 and stick it in my own pocket instead of Mr. Lee's. In conjunction with that move, I began to consider how I could get back to my dream of leading combat troops. I finally decided that maybe I could join the Army National Guard and that would at least give me one weekend a month and two weeks per year commanding troops. I talked it over with Pamela and she encouraged me to check it out. The Army National Guard would not allow me to transfer my Coast Guard Commission because it was under the Department of Transportation, so I agreed to go to Basic Training and do it the old fashioned way.

That fall the Army, because of my education, allowed me to enlist in the Tennessee Army National Guard as an OCS option enlistee. I completed the 9 week Army Basic Training class at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., graduating number one in my class, company honor grad. The following spring I started Officer Candidate School, an incredibly grueling 8 weeks at Fort Carson, Colorado and Fort Benning, Georgia. Officer Candidate School is especially challenging. Here they take a fully qualified Army soldier and give every effort to stressing the soldier out with nonstop gut wrenching physical training, no sleep, and very little food, plus throwing college level Army doctrine and small unit combat tactics classes, no contact with family or loved ones, and just when the Army can pound no more stress into the soldier and cannot simulate a stronger combat environment, and just when the soldier thinks he can take no more, they put him in charge of his peers, who are images of the walking dead, to accomplish a seemingly impossible task. Many did not make it. Many a candidate was placed in charge of the platoon at the be-

ginning of the day, and at the end of the day we saw them wearing civilian clothes carrying a duffle bag, jumping in a taxi on the way to the airport.

However, I was running on pure emotional octane the entire time. I had gone through too much to turn back now. I took on every task with the enthusiasm that this was my calling and that the Lord created me to do just what I was doing. I never flinched. I was so ecstatic just to be there and I knew the drills like the back of my hand from four years of training at the Citadel that it was more fun to watch others stressing out. Before I knew it, the summer was over and I was an OCS grad. Although the capstone field training exercise at Fort Benning left me with a severe case of swollen, pink, dripping poison ivy on both legs from ankles to mid thigh, I was never happier when my wife Pamela pinned me with the gold bars of a U.S. Army 2nd Lieutenant. Master Sergeant Billy Lannom, the recruiter who had stood by me the entire time gave me my first salute as an Army officer and I returned a silver dollar to him, as is the tradition that has been handed down in the Army. He also gave me my first set of 2nd Lieutenant bars and my Armor branch insignia.

I was commissioned as an Armor officer and after completing the Armor Officer Basic Course I was assigned as a tank platoon leader at Company M, 3rd Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Tennessee Army National Guard, and I loved every minute of it.

I finally had my troops and my command and as I trained those fine men, and later moved on to lead a Cavalry Scout platoon and became a Cavalry Troop Executive Officer, it began to occur to me that it wasn't the combat training that was my favorite thing about the Army, it was that I was completely and totally in love with the American Soldier. In the Army we call typical soldiers, "Joe" after the fictitious hero G.I. Joe. These "Joes" after they realized that I genuinely cared about them would do anything for me. They demanded that I go to sleep on a night watch and they would take turns filling in for the "LT" so I could get some rest on a long field problem. I would say a prayer for them and their families before each deployment to annual training and I

*Continued on the next page*

**After an 18 month catechumenate with my priest, Father Theodore Panchak (I managed to turn his hair completely white), Pamela and I were chrismated into the Orthodox Church in America during the feast of Dormition, 2004**

tried his first case in this courtroom, 50 years ago. I remember being very attentive as he told me how much trial experience he had in fifty years and thought for a moment that I wanted to be like this man. However, when I got back to the office I realized something. I began to look around at the books on my shelf, and think about the case I had just settled and kept repeating in my mind, "50 years . . . 50 years . . . 50 years . . ." It was then that the stark reality of the last three years of law school hit me head on. Being so engulfed in my goal of completing law school, and then passing the bar exam, I had never really considered whether I really wanted to be an attorney. It was like hard punch in the gut. The answer was no. I didn't really want to be an attorney. I had never wanted to be an attorney. I wanted to be a leader of combat troops since I started The Cita-



## My Road to the Priesthood

*Continued from page 35*

would personally thank each of them for protecting my family in a way that I could never do on my own. I became brothers with these men and as I would shake each man's hand after a major training event, I would get chills up and down my spine and choke back tears as these young men, many of them only eighteen years old, would tell me that they would follow me to hell and back, and give their young lives for me if necessary.

I am still in love with the American soldier. I am convinced that there is no one finer in this country of ours. There is no one in our society who bears on his young back the weight of the responsibility of providing the blanket of freedom under which every one of us eats, sleeps, works, and worships in this great nation that provides us, the Orthodox minority, the freedom to worship in the way the Church directs us. We owe all that to God in heaven and the American Soldier on earth. The American soldier is 100% volunteer who gives up college, fraternities, video games, girls, and the pleasures of young life in exchange for a life of service, eating and sleeping in fragments, living in ditches of mud and water, experiencing miserable cold wet winters and scorching summers in all the nastiest places of the world, just because he loves his country. He does this, all the while realizing that most of his American citizenry will never fully appreciate what he goes through for them.

I understand that American soldier when I look into his eyes, and it wasn't until Christmas day, 2002, outside of Kandahar, Afghanistan when an eighteen year old kid from the 82nd Airborne, with whom members of our unit were on patrol, was shot through the head, protecting his friend, by a Taliban renegade, that I realized what these young men really do. Our creator says, "Greater love hath no man than to lay down his life for his friend." The entire gospel is a gospel of love. The Apostle John tells us, in his first epistle, chapter four verse 7, "Beloved, let us love one another. For love is of God and everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God." And what is the greatest love as the Creator of love defines it? It's exactly what that young man did. He

laid down his life for his friend whom he knew and those friends whom he doesn't, you and me, his fellow Americans.

I was serving then as the S-5, Civil Affairs Officer for 1st Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne) of the Alabama Army National Guard. We had been deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. I felt I had maxed out my time with the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment (incidentally, at the writing of this article, the 278th has been in Iraq for about a week in support

ecuting criminals in Chattanooga. I had made friends with lots of influential people and had semi-secret plans to run for judge in 2006. On the Army side of the house, I had finished the Armor Captains Career Course and Airborne School. I had done everything a lieutenant in my career path could do, and was busy preparing to make Captain and go to Special Forces training. Pamela and I were settled into a nice house we were renting and about to buy in the beautiful Chattanooga neighborhood of Signal Mountain, which sits



Pokrov parish community, Karshi-Khanabad, Uzbekistan

of Operation Iraqi Freedom) and wanted to move into something more challenging. Special Forces was the route for me, something I had considered since commissioning, and there was a whole battalion in the Alabama Army National Guard. I transferred down there in August, 2001, just in time to see the twin towers in New York City go down from the office of the District Attorney General, 11th Judicial District, Chattanooga, Tennessee where I had been working as a prosecutor for the last three years.

Before 9/11 my life was finally set. I was happy enjoying two successful careers, one as a prosecuting attorney, and the other as an officer on the fast track in the Army National Guard. I had left private practice, which I had hated from the beginning and been very satisfied pros-

literally on top of a 1200 foot mountain overlooking the Tennessee River Valley and the entire city of Chattanooga. Pamela was one semester away from finishing her bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. My oldest child was playing soccer and I was the coach. We had just started a new O.C.A. mission in Chattanooga, and life was grand.

Just before we started the O.C.A. mission (now St. Tikhon's mission in Chattanooga), the Greek Church we attended there did not have a permanent priest. A retired priest from Nashville would drive, under orders from the Bishop in Detroit, the two hour drive to Chattanooga every Sunday and return home. I became good friends with Father Nicholas, as I had with every priest that I spent any time



with at all. I had always had the utmost respect and admiration for the priesthood. They were the real soldiers of the Church who gave their lives for their sheep. I had always had an interest in the priesthood, but had been told that lawyers and soldiers can't be priests, and for good reason, I believed. I always thought, "Maybe someday when I retire, if the Lord leads, I'll attend seminary and see where it goes from there." I recall sitting down with the very charming and wise, but exhausted Father Nicholas, whom I and my wife

**I recall sitting down with the very charming and wise, but exhausted Father Nicholas, whom I and my wife adored, when he said to me, "You know, this parish needs a full time priest, somebody who has a love for the Church and the gospel, somebody like you, George"**

adored, when he said to me, "You know, this parish needs a full time priest, somebody who has a love for the Church and the gospel, somebody like you, George. You know, you could attend some late vocations work and get ordained and take over here. You'd do really well." Of course, that was the funniest thing Pamela and I had heard in a long time and we all had a good laugh. I politely told Father Nicholas that I was flattered at his compliment, but my life was well set now. I had a promising and moving career as an Assistant District Attorney in Chattanooga, and I was a National Guard Officer. I was planning on running for judge, and who knows, maybe for something bigger one day. The thought was nice. It was something I would enjoy doing maybe someday after I retire, but in order for me

to become a priest, life as I knew it would have to come to a complete stop. Besides, everyone who knows me, especially my wife, could tell you that I am most certainly not priest material. I'm obnoxious, impatient, demanding, perfectionist, and a type A personality, a perfect fit for the careers that I was enjoying. Father Nicholas smiled politely and with a twinkle in his old eyes he winked at Pamela and said, "The Lord's will be done, George." I remember driving home that night thinking about the absolute blessing of serving at the Lord's holy altar as a priest of His Church and then explaining to Pamela how I had other plans, we were settled and had roots down in another career, and how life as we knew it would have to stop for that to happen.

However, on September 11, 2001, that's exactly what happened. As I watched the twin towers go down in a gigantic cloud of dust and debris that covered the grandest city in the United States, I knew that nothing was going to stay the same. I knew that somehow, sometime, the 20th Special Forces Group was going to be involved and it was scarcely a few weeks after that when we got the word. 3rd battalion was mobilizing immediately for a period of 6 months, followed by a battalion from the 19th Special Forces Group, followed by us. Our mobilization period on active duty would be for one year. Like a good employee I notified my boss immediately and he was not pleased. He couldn't believe that I would be gone for an entire year. Who would he find to replace me for an entire year? I told him the mobilization was a good six months away, but there would be extended drills, schools, and periods of training in between. A few weeks later, he called me into the office and asked me to resign telling me that my job performance had weakened, and that I wasn't cut out for this kind of work, etc. I knew that I was about to become a victim of a USERRA violation.<sup>1</sup> The fact was, I could refuse to resign and he couldn't fire me. He was in a difficult position as a public figure and would never do that. However, he started putting pressure on me to resign almost

1. USERRA is the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act. It is a Federal Law that prohibits an employer from firing an employee who is about to be deployed for military duty or to not hire such an employee back at the end of that duty. However good the law sounds, it is very hard to enforce and has very little teeth.

weekly, through his executive assistant, who was extremely politically motivated. I began to realize that I could probably hang on to the job until I left, and force him to rehire me when I came back, but eventually, he was going to get rid of me. It had become a power struggle the moment I refused to resign. I had no future there.

My plans had come to a screeching halt. What was I going to do when I returned? I would have to go back into private practice, one thing that I swore to myself, and Pamela, after nearly starving us to death, that I would never do again. I remember praying, and begging God for an answer. We were now at our new mission, St. Tikhon's in Chattanooga, and just when things were looking so promising, this all happens. I was about to leave my wife and children for a full year, do service in the combat zone with a Special Forces unit, and come back jobless, having to start everything over again.

I didn't bother looking for another job. "Hey, will you hire me? I'm about to go fight the Taliban and I won't be back for a year, if ever, but I need some security for myself and my family when I get back. So will you hire me now?" That sounded incredibly stupid.

About that time I received orders from my battalion commander to report to the Civil Affairs Officer Advanced Course at Fort Bragg, N.C. The good news is that I would be promoted to Captain upon completion and moved onto the commander's staff as the Civil Affairs Officer. I was just happy to get away from the D.A.'s office and that constant harassment for a couple weeks.

I arrived at Fort Bragg and went through my own ritual of familiarizing myself with the post. I put on my running shorts and shoes and ran down Ardennes Ave., the stretch of road that cuts right through the heart of Fort Bragg, the very road on which the famed heroes of the 82nd Airborne Division have conducted their physical training for the last decades, whose barracks are on either side of the road for miles. As I ran past the Division Chapel I took a close look to see if there were any Orthodox services (usually there are not because of the extreme shortage of Orthodox priests in the Army). "Like

*Continued on the next page*



## My Road to the Priesthood

*Continued from page 37*

there's going to be an Orthodox priest at the 82nd Airborne, jumping out of airplanes and hanging around with combat infantry soldiers. Yeah, right!" I said to myself as I approached the chapel. However, to my extreme delight, there were Orthodox services scheduled for 0900 in the morning! I remember thinking to myself how life couldn't get much better than this. Here I was away from that dreadful D.A.'s office, doing PT (physical training) at Fort Bragg, running down the famed Ardennes through the heart of 82nd Airborne country, and I was even going to get to go to liturgy in the morning! I got back from my run and called Pamela and excitedly told her the good news.

The next morning I got dressed, said my pre-communion prayers and headed off to liturgy, "Divine Liturgy, right here on Ardennes, in the land of the 82nd Airborne at Fort Bragg!" I couldn't believe it. I walked in the door, early. I was the first one there and I found the priest already in his vestments and received his blessing. His name was Father Eugene Lahue and he was an O.C.A. priest, a graduate of St. Tikhon's in Pennsylvania. He was unlike any priest I had ever seen. He was about my age and I had never known a priest my age. He was down to earth and he spoke Army. We talked about the Joes and about soldiering. He was assigned to the support battalion at the 82nd Airborne Division and had logged more than 70 jumps with them. I chuckled to myself about the concept of an airborne priest, flying out of the C-130 at 130 miles per hour, feet and knees together, hands on his reserve chute with his cassock, pectoral cross and riassa flapping in the 130 mph wind, although I knew he jumped in regular combat gear like everyone else.

For the next two weeks I spent every spare moment with Father Eugene. I couldn't get enough of him. I watched him in his ministry to the soldiers and was totally impressed by this down-to-earth soldier/priest. I had found a new hero. When I went to confession with him he met me at the chapel. We were both wearing our Army uniform of the day. He slipped that stole right over the top of that Battle Dress Uniform and as my head was bowed covered by the stole I stared at his

combat jump boots and smiled, thinking to myself, "Any man wearing combat boots underneath his stole can hear my confession any day."

I had talked this over with my wife. Part of the reason I didn't want to be a priest was that every priest and priest family we had known was, . . . well . . . weird. It was a good weird, Pamela and I were quick to add, but nonetheless a weird that we, most certainly, were not, nor ever could be. They were always wearing those cassocks, which were essentially a black dress, and we wanted our priests to wear the cassock, but it was still

Sessions Court Division V once again trying to figure out what I was going to do after the coming deployment. We were on a break and I was thinking about an email I had received from a National Guard friend of mine who had told me he had just become Orthodox and was hoping to go to seminary and possibly become an Army chaplain. "That would be nice," I had said to myself as I read the email months before. We had a wireless internet connection in the courtroom to check criminal records and I found myself surfing the net to the Army Chaplains Homepage, and it was just then that I fig-

**When I went to confession with him he met me at the chapel. We were both wearing our Army uniform of the day. He slipped that stole right over the top of that Battle Dress Uniform and as my head was bowed covered by the stole I stared at his combat jump boots and smiled, thinking to myself, "Any man wearing combat boots underneath his stole can hear my confession any day"**

a black dress. The typical priest sort of came across wimpy to me. I loved them, but they just typically weren't the manly men that I was used to hanging around.

But Father Eugene was every inch the manly man. He was a prior 11B Infantryman when he was enlisted. After Airborne school I had secret fears about jumping and I tried to explain this to my other priests, but they never really got the picture. Father Eugene sure got the picture and told me to quit crying and do my job, which is exactly what I needed to hear. He was assigned to the most famous infantry division in the U.S. Army, perhaps in the world. He was totally down to earth and not weird at all. I met his wife and kids, and they were just like my wife and kids. Father Eugene it seemed, unlike any other priest I had met before, was just like me.

The next thing I knew, I was finished with the Civil Affairs course and was back in Chattanooga, sitting in General

ured out what the Lord had been gently telling me for the past two weeks. I began to see Father Eugene as doing what I wanted to do, what I was meant to do, what I was being called to do, and it all became clear in an instant. The Lord was kicking me out of the D.A.'s Office, out of the city of Chattanooga, and calling me to serve Him, just like Father Eugene, in the Army. After all, who loved the Army and soldiering more than me? Who loved the Church more than me? This was the perfect way to put them both together. Either way, I wasn't going to be able to stay at the D.A.'s Office, and I sure wasn't going back to private practice! This was the answer. It was clear.

Immediately, however, the demon of doubt, assigned to talk me out of being a priest, began to work, and he did his job well. I talked to my wife and for the next few months and into the next two years that demon worked overtime on both of



us and the excuses flowed effortlessly. "Who am I kidding?" I asked myself as I pictured the typical priest and family in my mind. "There is no way I can pull this off. I'm not like that. We are not like that. Our kids are not like that. I'm impatient, bold, insensitive, and I have a flaming type A personality." Then would come round two of the attack: "I have a career. We have plans. We have roots. I'm coaching my child's soccer team. How will we ever financially afford living on Pamela's paycheck only? How will we ever afford to move all of our things all the way up north to Pennsylvania?" That demon of doubt never rested and neither did Pamela and I while thinking seriously about this.

But there were also many encouraging words from the Lord. First of all the children loved the idea of daddy being a priest. Father Eugene was very encouraging as well as several of my former priests who told me that God uses all types of personalities and people and if it is His will that I attend seminary and become a chaplain, then He will take care of all those financial details.

I remember reading about Abraham, living with his family in total prosperity in Ur. He was certainly established in life, with land, cattle, and many servants, living in the land of his father. It was truly home. Yes, Abraham was living the good life, the life which he had earned since his youth and everything was going well for him until the Lord told him in Genesis 12:1 to pack his family and belongings and go "... to a place that I will show you." The Lord didn't even tell Abraham where he was going, when he would get there, or anything else about the plan. He basically just said to Abraham, "Start walking and I'll tell you when you get there." And what did Abraham do? He did just that.

After reading that passage and thinking on it for a while, I figured that if Abraham could take that step of faith then I could too. Pamela and I agreed that we would pursue this improbable course of action until the road ran out and we received confirmation from the Lord that this was something He didn't want us to do, and there were plenty of ways He could do that. All we did was say, yes. The Lord would have to work out all the details of work for Pamela (who had not

even graduated from nursing school), moving expenses, and all the other little details, any of which could be show stoppers.

I applied to St. Tikhon's Seminary after hearing such wonderful stories about it from Father Eugene, and prepared to depart with 1st Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group for Afghanistan, leaving these details up to the Lord. I was fortunate enough at the beginning of the deployment to remain as rear detachment commander but finally in December, just one week before Pamela's graduation from UT Chattanooga, my number was called. I said goodbye to Pamela and the kids at the Atlanta Airport and 24 hours later I was in another world.

I had been in many third world countries before, but I remember thinking to myself that Afghanistan had to be a fourth world country. The Air Force C-17 landed us at Kandahar Air Base in mid-December, 2002, in the middle of the Operation Enduring Freedom war zone. We arrived in the middle of the night and received a quick briefing on where the mines were around the runway and how to avoid them. When the sun came up the next morning, I new I wasn't in Tennessee anymore. Everything was brown, from the powdery dust we walked on to the jagged peaks around us. The land was truly dead. I could feel an eerie, ominous presence all around. This was an un-Christian, un-godly, immoral land. This was a land where you could be shot, lying in a pool of your own blood, and the people would just walk on by. I had never felt so far from home. In the plywood air terminal, just past the sign that said, "Clear All Weapons Before Entering Terminal," was a small board that read, "Schedule of Religious Services." It was Saturday and I looked closely and sure enough there was an Orthodox service! My heart jumped! It was at 0900 in the Romanian Sector of the base. The next morning I attended liturgy, right in the heart of Muslim controlled Afghanistan, with a group of Romanian infantrymen, and the Lord spoke confirmation in my heart. As a matter of fact, the priest's name was Father George.

I spent the months in Afghanistan and Uzbekistan in prayer and preparation to attend seminary. I even found spare time to finish my first seminary class via inter-

net extension. I built a small icon corner in my section of the tent in which I lived and spoke to my family on the telephone as often as I could.

While I was gone, those little details began to disappear. First of all, Pamela graduated from UT Chattanooga and passed her nursing licensing exam. She also made contact with Wayne Memorial Hospital in Honesdale, Pa. and by the time I returned home, they had given her a job and agreed to pay for our moving expenses as a relocation allowance in return for Pamela's employment for three years! What a confirmation that was!

With all doubts now removed, we headed up to Pennsylvania in the summer of 2003 and I began classes that fall. Since then, I have struggled with new doubts and frustrations, but the Lord has been faithful, holding my hand the entire way and gently assuring me as the gentle Shepherd that He is.

In close proximity to my ordination, I was sworn in as a chaplain candidate and assigned to 1st Battalion, 109th Infantry, Pennsylvania Army National Guard, and I served my first liturgy in the computer lab of the Scranton Armory, with this my new flock, my new Joes. I thanked God for His faithfulness in my life, and during the liturgy, as I elevated the gifts with my combat boots underneath my vestments, that feeling of inadequacy and disbelief seemed for a brief moment to become one of peace, wonder and thanksgiving, that our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ had chosen me to minister, not only to the Orthodox faithful at large, but to best of the best in our country, the American Soldier.

— Priest George Hill

Our Savior, the Dayspring  
from the east, has visited us  
from on high, and we who  
were in darkness and shadow  
have found the truth: for  
the Lord is born from the  
Virgin.

--Hymn of Light for Nativity



# St. Tikhon's Seminary Holds Celebration Banquet

**M**ore than 220 people gathered at the New York Athletic Club on September 16, 2004 to celebrate St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary's being granted full accreditation and membership in the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). St. Tikhon's received its official accreditation on June 7, 2004. The gala affair was hosted by Very Rev. Gerald Sudick, rector of Holy Trinity Church in Yonkers, N.Y., an alumnus of St. Tikhon's (1957), former faculty member, and a current member of St. Tikhon's Board of Trustees. Fr. Sudick has worked closely with the seminary since the very beginning of the accreditation process in 1986 and was always a firm believer that the school could accomplish this goal. Fr. Gerald and his wife, Matushka Valerie, received the St. Innocent award, silver class, in recognition of their hard work.

Banquet guests were treated to a fabulous dinner with a full view of Central Park. The keynote speaker at the banquet was His Beatitude Metropolitan HERMAN, who is the president of St. Tikhon's, St. Vladimir's, and St. Herman's seminaries. Without his vision the accreditation would not have been possible. Metropolitan Herman has labored at St. Tikhon's for over forty years, and as a bishop has always been an strong advocate of theological education in America. His Grace Bishop TIKHON, current rector of St. Tikhon's, also spoke, praising the work of all those who labored for the



Fr. Yaroslav Sudick gives tour of NY Athletic Club





accreditation. Bishop Tikhon is a graduate of the St. Tikhon's (1993) and faculty member; he joined the monastic community of St. Tikhon's following his studies.

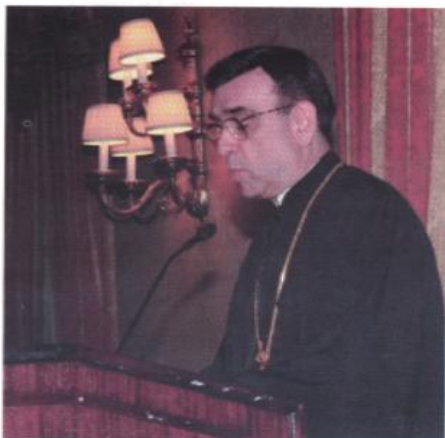
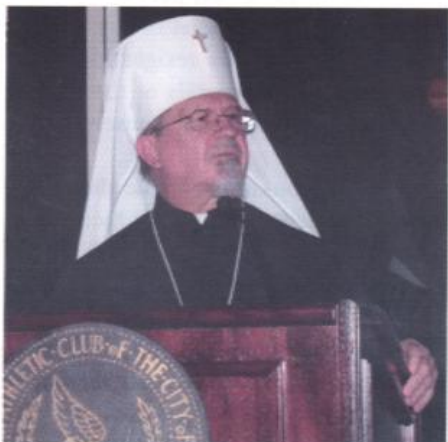
Recognized for their hard work and dedication throughout the accreditation process were the seminary's dean, the Very Rev. Michael Dahulich, and the seminary's academic dean, Very Rev. Alexander Golubov, both of whom wrote

the seminary's secretary, Matushka Dorothy Sulich, whose tireless work keeps the school running on a day-to-day basis and who is involved with the planning of all of the school's events.

Faculty members, students, alumni, and board members all made the accredi-

The Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania was well represented at the banquet. The Very Rev. Daniel Ressetar, rector of Christ the Saviour in Harrisburg, organized a charter bus, sponsored by the Frackville deanery, to take some forty banquet guests to New York. The bus originated in Hazleton and made stops in Wilkes-Barre and Scranton. Additionally, a number of seminarians from St. Tikhon's, who are the real reason for the accreditation and all that St. Tikhon's works for, rode the chartered bus with the members of the diocese.

ATS is the association that accredits its seminaries and theological schools in United States and Canada. Its membership includes 251 schools, offering graduate degrees in theology. ATS evaluates every aspect by which the school operates to ensure that it functions on a level of excellence in educating clergy. As a



Fr Michael Dahulich addresses guests



Fr. and Mat. Yaroslav receive St. Innocent Award



Presentation of vase to Matushka Dorothy Sulich and Fr Daniel Donlick

the extensive seminary self-study which was used by the ATS board to evaluate the school for accreditation. Further honors went to the Very Rev. Daniel Donlick, Dean Emeritus, who worked to have the Seminary certified to grant the Master of Divinity degree as authorized by the Pennsylvania State Education Board in 1988. Also remembered was the late Fr. Anthony (DuChaine), former academic dean, who helped in obtaining associate membership in ATS for the seminary. Last but not least among those honored was

tation possible and can rejoice in the accomplishment.

It was the vision of St. Patriarch Tikhon, the founder of St. Tikhon's Monastery a hundred years ago, to develop a seminary in conjunction with the monastery. It came to fruition at the 1938 Sobor, which established both St. Tikhon's and St. Vladimir's. The Orthodox Church in America is now blessed to have two accredited seminaries, St. Tikhon's and St. Vladimir's, which is a great accomplishment for such a relatively young church.

result of the accreditation, the Very Rev. Michael Dahulich and the Very Rev. Alexander Golubov were granted full voting privileges at this past June's ATS biennial meeting in Garden Grove, California. Among the strengths recognized by the ATS were St. Tikhon's vision and commitment to train priests to serve Christ's Church in America — a vision and commitment especially sustained by His Beatitude Metropolitan Herman, a strong and committed board of trustees, and a capable and dedicated faculty.



# Sermon on Repentance

by Saint Nicholai of Zicha

**T**he bright time of fasting has begun." This is sung in the Church stichiras at the beginning of Great Lent. Why is it called the bright time? It is because fasting naturally awakens in man repentance, prayer and deeds of mercy.

Why is this fast called the Great Fast? It is because this fast of Great Lent reminds us of the Great Cross of Christ, and of the Great Sufferings of the Son of God for the sins of others, for our sins, and not His own.

There were three crosses on Golgotha, but only one of them was the Most Honorable and Great Cross. This fast is called Great because it reminds people that through repentance and the correction of their lives, they should wash their human honor, soiled by various sins, and lift themselves up out of the muddy waters of sin into the beauty of the sons of God.

The Serbian national saying is: "For the Honorable Cross," which means: for Christ, for Christ's Truth and righteousness.

Even doctors advise their patients to fast, and they call this fasting a diet. Why doesn't anyone say Great Diet, but they say of Great Lent the Great Fast?

It is because diets are recommended for the body, for bodily health. A diet is not connected with God or the soul.

The Orthodox Church commands its children to fast for the sake of God and their souls. It does not matter how strictly you diet, or how carefully you nurture your body, because one day it will fall apart, but the soul will continue to live in the other world. This is a subject that needs to be deeply thought about during the honorable fast of Great Lent.

The first deed the Lord accomplished was His 40 day fast. The first commandment that He spoke was: "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

If we only fast and do not repent of



our sins, our fasting will be without fruit.

People fast much more easily than they repent.

During the preparation for Great Lent to begin, the Church reads to its faithful the gospel of repentance: first about the repentant Zacchaeus, second, about the repentant prayer of the tax collector, third, about the repentance of the lost son, that is, the Prodigal son.

Throughout the entire fast, repentance will be preached; also there will be given many examples of repentant sinners, who through sincere repentance became holy and have shone forth like the sun throughout the history of Christianity.

Repentance, with the admission of one's sins, is practiced even among non-Christian people who do not direct their lives in accordance with Christ's gospels, but only by their conscience.

In February, in the year 1936, a regiment of the Japanese army rebelled, and much blood was spilled. The rebels killed many high-ranking officers and civilians, and took possession of some government offices. At the end, when the rebellion died

out, the army general Kavashima gave an unusual announcement: "I am the only guilty one in these sad happenings, and am completely conscious of my responsibility." He gave his resignation along with seven other generals of the highest rank, and then they gave themselves over to be punished.

What a rebuking example this is for many Christians, who justify themselves when they are guilty, and are always blaming others for everything!

Whosoever is like that, does not have Christian enlightenment, nor Japanese consciousness. They do not resemble their Christian ancestors, who repented before God and did everything they possibly could for God to forgive them their sins.

King Dragutin, in repentance for his sins against his parents, built seven monasteries, became a monk, and became holy. Kara George repented publicly before his people for the evil he did to his father, and King Milosh built a church called "Repentance" for the evil he did to Kara George.

In the Orthodox calendar are written names not only of saints who never sinned — if there are such people — but of saints that were great sinners, who repented and became holy.

As we enter the Great Fast, let us repent.

Let us repent, not only with words, but in spirit and truth and in deeds.

Let us hurry to repentance, because time is passing quickly.

"Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" — to some Heaven, and to some Hell.

The bright time of fasting has begun for the sons and daughters of Light.

*From his Complete Works, Book 13, pg. 128. Translated from Serbian by Marija Miljkovic*



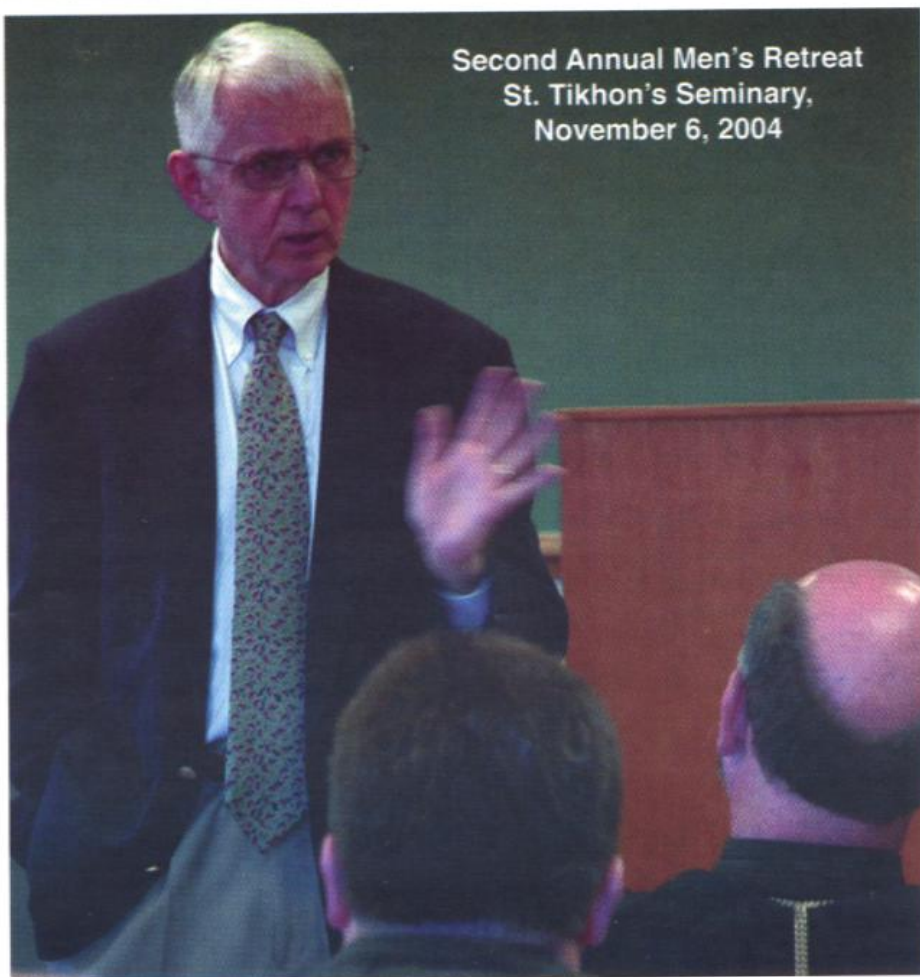
# Living as an Christian Man Today

## I. Vocation to be Male

**W**hat does it mean to live as an Orthodox man today? Better said, what does it mean to try to live a life of integrity as a male in today's culture?

Many of the thoughts that follow are not politically correct and, according to some, sexist. If nothing else, the thoughts that follow are rarely, if ever, espoused in today's culture, and are, to some extent, unthinkable. But if they are true, which I believe them to be, then it is all the more necessary to speak and write about them, which I have done in this article. I think it is more difficult to be a man than it is to be a woman today. That seems to be a bold, almost brash, and unsubstantiated claim. Perhaps it sounds pejorative and countercultural. Certainly, it is not an excuse for self-pity or evading responsibility for one's thoughts and actions as a man. I think it is simply a statement that, if we will give it some consideration, may provide a fresh insight to both men and women trying to live the Christian life.

Do women face less hardship, complexity, or challenge in today's world than men? Certainly not, but in many ways, they are better equipped and better prepared to survive psychologically in the maze of living in this culture. Women bear pain better than men, as attested by numerous psychological studies. Women resist communicable diseases better than men. In a crisis, women build better support networks than men. Women generally communicate their thoughts and feelings better than men; this in turn helps them to maintain physical and psychological health in the midst of stress and trauma. Similarly, they express emotions better



Second Annual Men's Retreat  
St. Tikhon's Seminary,  
November 6, 2004

Dr. Albert Rossi

than men (again, I am speaking in general terms).

We can see differences between men and women as early as the womb. All embryos are the same until testosterone is given to an embryo and that embryo becomes male. The testosterone weakens, discolors, and somewhat damages the cells of the embryo. Boys are more prone than girls to childhood diseases such as dyslexia, ADD [Attention Deficit Disorder], and learning disabilities. Adult males are more likely to become drug and sex addicts, more prone to commit felonies, much more likely to go to prison, and much more likely to commit suicide than women.

Our culture exploits the weaknesses of men. Movies and TV, which are the primary vehicles of our culture, do not present a strong, positive image of males as loving persons in fruitful relationships. More often than not, men are either portrayed as wimpy (browbeaten? subjugated?) fathers and husbands or as solo adventurers who achieve heroism alone, as in *Saving Private Ryan* or the Harrison Ford and James Bond thrillers. There are exceptions like Bill Cosby, but they are rare. Men are, more often than not, depicted as stupid, hapless, and witless, especially in sitcoms.

*Continued on the next page*



## Orthodox Man Today

*Continued from page 43*

### II. Where Do We Begin?

We begin with Jesus Christ, who transcends gender. He was, indeed, male but shows all humans how to be fully human. Christ empowers males to be fully male and females to be fully female. It was God who created humans as male and female. The sexes complement and complete each other.

I am not a male because of an arbitrary arrangement of genes. I am not a man because I was next in the genetic queue to become male. Rather, I am male because God chose me to be male and not female. I am called to live my life as a male and do my tasks on this planet as a man. Christ's words ring clear, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" to live as a man in this piece of geography in November, 2004.

All humans are called to become who we really are, God's image and His likeness. We are called to become Christ, to be able to say with St. Paul, "I live now not I, but Christ lives in me." I am called to live in such a way that, if the gospels were lost, others could discover the Good News of Jesus by looking at my life. I am called to be by grace what Christ is by nature.

I have a generic vocation to become all that God is by nature. I have the specific vocation to be a male, living in the twenty-first century, with the name of Al Rossi and the address of Crestwood, N.Y. My specific vocation is unique. My fingerprints, my voiceprint, my cellular makeup is like no other, past, present,

**Prayer provides the answer of how to live my life as a male in today's culture. I can only live as a male if I follow the promptings of the Lord**

or future. My set of tasks, my marching orders on this earth, is singularly mine. I am called to upbuild the Kingdom of God on this earth in a manner which no other human can replace. I am called to relate to and influence a particular group of humans, these and not others. And, the implications are grave. If I am myself, live the life God assigns me, then I and many others will achieve peace and be saved. If not, then not.

The doorway into my manhood, my personhood, is prayer. Prayer allows me to enter into that "sacred space of peace" within my heart where God dwells and where my identity resides. Prayer is a conscious awareness of God's presence, a listening to His Voice within, an intimate conversation with God, as St. Clement of Alexandria said.

Prayer provides the answer of how to live my life as a male in today's culture.

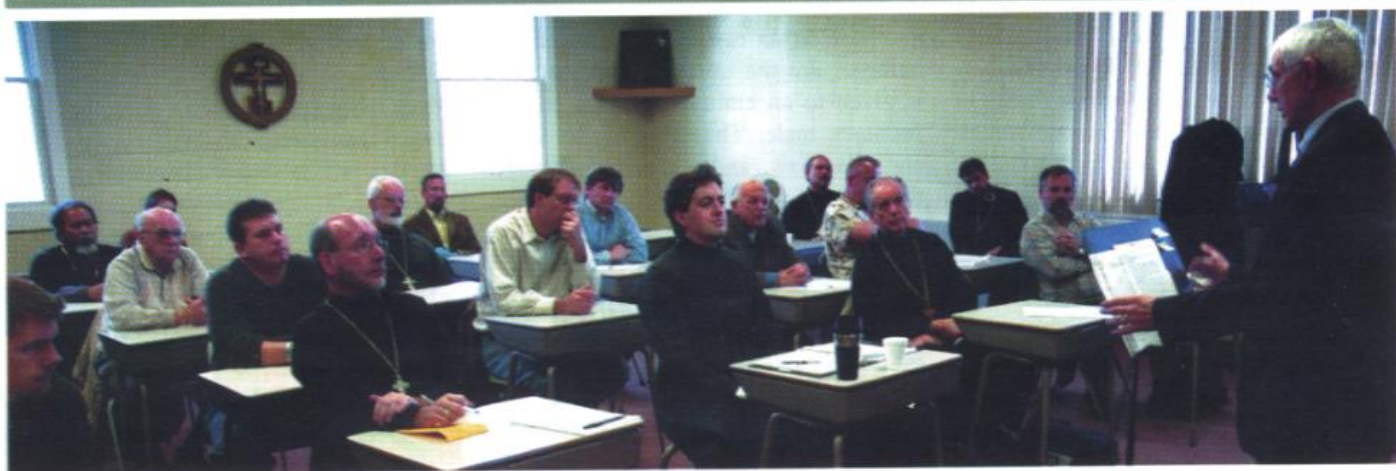
I can only live as a male if I follow the promptings of the Lord. Otherwise, I am a lost camper. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me . . ." (John 10:27). I either hear his voice telling me how to live as a male, or I lose my bearings.

St. Isaac of Syria said, "The way to pray better is to pray more." I need to know that prayer is a serious undertaking and that I must pray as "ceaselessly" as I can. The Jesus Prayer, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner," is the classical Orthodox prayer to be said, freely, throughout the day and night. The Jesus Prayer is also to be said in a more formal way, sitting with eyes closed for a period of time, every day. If I decide to pray more, and more fervently, I can expect inconvenience and trouble. St. John Chrysostom said that if we pray more we will rouse the snake within us. If I continue to pray despite the roused snake, I "lay the snake low." This is beautiful phraseology and exquisite theology.

### III. A Man with Other Men

We men are learning some of the skills and traits which empower us to live more robustly. These include a radical honesty, especially emotionally, a personal system of accountability, and more expression of deep emotion.

Radical honesty means that we say what we mean and mean what we say. Radical honesty means that our words correspond with reality, with exterior circumstance and with our interior landscape, our emotional state, particularly fear. Radical honesty means that we don't try to exaggerate, put a spin on our words,





or slant our comments to our advantage. Radical honesty means, in the words of the old Western movies, to be a "straight shooter." Radical honesty means that we don't cheat anyone else in any way, including the IRS on our income tax forms. Radical honesty means that we speak to others as forthrightly as if we were speaking to Christ.

Personal accountability means that we have someone in this world who knows everything about us. Usually this person is not one's wife if one is married simply because some of the "everything" could be unloving for her to know, especially if it involves lustful temptations towards one of her women friends. Does "everything" include dark and ugly thoughts? Yes. Of

ly, that men are "brutes" and women are "nags."

It seems that men generally take more risks than women and are typically better at math, science, special relations, logic, and reasoning skills. Women are typically more verbal, stronger impulse control, nurturing, and emotional. It is sometimes said that men are the "head" of the family and women are the "heart."

Men typically build the house (or work to earn money to buy the house), and women typically make the house into the home. The family and the world at large need the house, and the home.

These statements seem antiquated, stilted, and from an age whose time has passed us by. Television producers and

Children cannot thrive without affection and affirmation.

Communication with children means, first of all, listening to their little voices. That doesn't mean obeying their little voices but it does mean that we let children know that they are heard and respected. Adults must strongly discipline children today, in an age when some say we are raising a nation of brats. Men can discipline lovingly and strongly and children can flourish under loving eldership. Listening to children and disciplining children are not contradictory messages. Rather, active listening and discipline provide a balanced love for children.

The most important sentence we can say to a child is, "I have confidence in you." Why? The answer is that the child does not have confidence in him or her self. Providing confidence is rather like providing a drink of cold water in the desert. Humans must have water to survive, physically and psychologically.

Finally, the best way a father can love his children is to love their mother. And, the best way a mother can love her children is to love their father. Surprisingly, this holds true even when the parents are separated or divorced. Children want nothing more than unity at the top, or at least, minimum conflict. Now, that doesn't mean that either parent should tolerate abuse from the other. It does mean that parents are called to love their enemies, including a divorced mate, if that is the case.

## VI. Conclusion

I'll end where I began. We end and begin with Jesus Christ who shows us how to be a human being and how to be a man in today's world. Yes, I think it is more difficult to live as a male than as a female in today's culture. That is no excuse for self-pity or ducking responsibility for one's behavior. It is simply a statement of fact that must be part of the matrix of our reality.

The Orthodox Church is the living Body of Christ on Earth. Within the sanctuary of the Church's life and teaching, we men can find a source of strength, hope, and song as we struggle to become more like Christ, actually become more Christ, as we walk on our journey.

—Albert S. Rossi, PhD



course, this is done in a summary fashion, not compulsively, and with utmost discretion. But, yes, someone outside confession needs to know everything about me. I say "outside confession" because sometimes the beauty and confidentiality of confession can work against the carry-over of openness with others outside confession.

More expression of deep emotion means that we men learn to cry more openly and easily, and that we are more willing to show tenderness and compassion without hesitation and restraint. More expression of deep emotion means being more like Jesus when he was on earth, crying and speaking directly.

## IV. A Man with Women

One thing is sure. Women and men are radically different with every cell of their brains and bodies. Some say that a man's greatest fear is being inadequate and a woman's greatest fear is being perceived as unlovely. It is also said, stereotypical-

script writers would scorn such generalizations. However, as a practicing clinical psychologist for over twenty-five years and as a convert to Orthodoxy for over twenty-five years, all I can say is that I think this is the way humans are generally hard-wired in this fallen world.

## V. With Children

The role of a man with children, especially his own, cannot be overestimated. As men we can make specific choices to spend more time with children, especially our family members. During our time with children we can be intentional in two particular ways. We can affirm the children and we can communicate with them.

Children need affirmation and will get it somewhere. If we provide affirmation to them as a man in their lives, then they will get it from us. If we don't, they will go to whomever they must, often to peers of questionable repute, to be affirmed.



# History of St. Basil's Church in Simpson

**F**ounded in 1904 by a group of immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe, Simpson was chosen as the site for a new church building because of its central location relative to Carbondale and the Upper Valley of northeastern Pennsylvania.

The parish was started in 1903 under the leadership of the Rev. Hieromonk Arseny (Chahovtsoff), who later became Archbishop Arseny. Fr. Arseny was also the pastor of St. John's Russian Orthodox Church in Mayfield.

The St. Basil's Society was formed in 1903 and was instrumental in building up the community of St. Basil's in Simpson. Hard work was the contributing factor in the establishment of the original church community, as it is still a part of our parish's life today.

Many Russian people had been settling in Simpson, and in 1904 a building committee was established. John Babich, Matthew Garbera, Alexis Hitchko, Victor Koropchak, Kondrat Merena, Peter Schlachta, and Timothy Sucheniak were the original members of the building committee. A location known as the "Old Ballfield" was purchased as land for the church, and the original church building was dedicated in January 27, 1905.

The first priest assigned was Rev. Alexis Boguslavsky, who was assigned to alternate services between St. Nicholas, Olyphant and St. Basil's in Simpson. Since July 1991, Very Rev. Leo Poore has served as the priest at St. Basil's. Over the years, many temporary and permanent pastors have served the faithful of St. Basil's and contributed towards the progress of the parish. We have also been afforded the opportunity to work with many of the seminarians from St. Tikhon's.

This has brought about a learning experience for both the parish and the seminarians, while also contributing to the inner growth of the parish.

The first officers of St. Basil's were: president, Kondrat Merena; treasurer, John Babich; assistant treasurer, Pan-teleimon Tarris. The presiding priest was the secretary.

Andrew Tokarchick, son of Constan-



tine and Mary Tokarchick, was baptized on May 15, 1905. Peter Smetana and Christine Labowsky were united in the sacrament of holy matrimony on July 2, 1905.

The first parish meeting was held January 14, 1907. Various parishioners

have served in the offices of president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary, sexton, bellringers, gravediggers, collectors, auditors, and school sexton.

The Protection of the Theotokos Beneficial Society that was chartered in 1911 is still in existence today. The Sisterhood



## St. Basil's Celebrates Centennial

Friday and Saturday, October 15 and 16, 2004 were the dates of St. Basil's hundredth anniversary celebration.

On Friday evening, vespers were served and a memorial service was held for the deceased members of St. Basil's. Saturday morning, His Beatitude Metropolitan HERMAN celebrated the hierarchical Divine Liturgy. He was greeted with the bread and salt by Marie Proch, financial secretary of our church. Julia Mazza, president of the sisterhood, presented His Beatitude with flowers, and our pastor, Fr. Leo Poore, the cross.

Concelebrating with His Beatitude were Archpriests Vladimir Fetcho, dean of the Wilkes-Barre Deanery, Eli Krenitsky, John Kowalczyk, Theodore Boback, and David Shewczyk; Priest Fr. James Weremedic; Archdeacon Alexei Klimitchev; and Deacons Peter Henry and George Hill. Gregory Hatrak, Brian Fetsko, and Timothy Hojnicky served as subdeacons, and the altar servers were Ron Kavalkovich, Christopher Getzie, Vladimer Kella-

chow, Russ Hill, and James Weremedic. The choir was directed by John Paluch.

Fr. Leo was awarded the Order of St. Innocent, bronze class. In addition, Marie Proch, Seminarian John Proch, and Maria Proch were awarded gramotas for their service to God and the Church, and Peter Getzie received the award on behalf of the parish.

After the liturgy, a dinner was held at the Grattan Singer Social Hall, with 180 in attendance. Our former pastor Fr. David Shewczyk led us in singing O Lord, Save Thy People and Our Father. Walter Proch gave the centennial toast. Remarks were offered by Father Vladimir Fetcho, our esteemed Metropolitan, parish council president Maria Proch, and our pastor Fr. Leo, who announced to all present that the mortgage for the church has been paid in full after only four years.

We look forward in hope, praying that with God's blessing we may serve our Lord Jesus Christ well during the second century our parish's existence.

holds its annual cookie sale and hoagie sale, and is responsible for the success of the annual chicken barbecue. All monies raised through these events are used for purchasing items for the church, in accord with the original purpose of the Sisterhood.

In 1937, the church was extensively damaged by fire. Plans and specifications for the church were completed by Vladimir Koropchak, and the new church was started by the Holt Lumber Co. On July 10, 1937, the artistic painting of the iconostasis, main altar, and side altar were started by artist Michael Kupetz. Some of the icons painted by Michael were donated to St. Basil's and are presently hung on the walls of our church. The new church was dedicated on Sept. 6, 1937 by Archbishop Adam.

Many changes have taken place over the course of one hundred years. These changes brought about opportunities for growth. We embraced them and began another chapter in the life of St. Basil's parish.

Through many years of prayer and searching, it was decided to move to a new location for our church, and a parcel of land at 9 Lord Avenue in Simpson was chosen as the "perfect" site for a new church. Once used as a ballfield, the land was purchased in November 1998.

A groundbreaking service for our new church was held May 1, 1999. His Eminence the Most Rev. Archbishop HERMAN was the main celebrant, and was joined by our pastor Fr. Leo, and members of the diocesan clergy and sons of the parish, among them Fathers Eugene Tarris, Daniel Pavelchak, John Chupeck, and Joseph Gallick. On this occasion a cross was planted on the section of the land where the altar was to be situated. Carved by Michael Mikulak and his nephew, Peter Getzie, the cross was fashioned from a rare piece of native Douglas fir from the state of Washington.

After groundbreaking, a building committee was formed to develop plans for a new church. With Ronald Franks Builders chosen as the contractor, construction be-



Reader Timothy Hojnicky ordained sub-deacon



Deacon George Hill being ordained to the holy priesthood



Fr. Leo Poore receives St. Innocent Award

gan in July 2000. While \$13.80 purchased the heating system for the original church, the higher cost our new heating system was moderated by volunteer help donated by our parishioners and supervised by Stephen Kowalsky. The carpeting was installed by James Thomashefsky, a member of St. Nicholas Church in Olyphant.

On September 9, 2000, Benjamin Da-

*Continued on the next page*



## St. Basil's Centennial

*Continued from page 47*

vid Roat, son of David and Daria (Proch) Roat was baptized. Benjamin is the great-great grandson of Harry Kutch, one of the founders of St. Basil's.

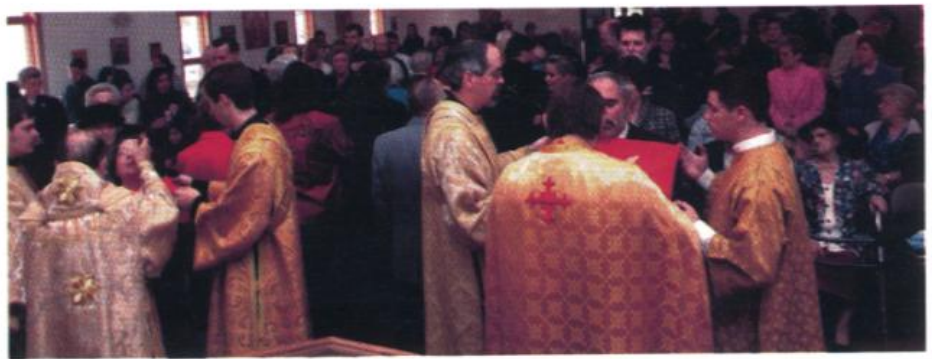
The first Divine Liturgy in our new church was served on October 1, 2000, the feast of the Protection of the Theotokos. Fr. Leo Poore celebrated the liturgy, assisted by Deacon James Weremedic and altar boys Christopher Getzie and James Weremedic. A celebration followed at the Grattan Singer Social Hall.

On Saturday, Sept. 15, 2001, the faithful of St. Basil's joyfully attended the blessing of the new church. The day began with the greeting of His Eminence Archbishop HERMAN by Fr. Leo Poore, and Michael J. Mikulak, our oldest parishioner, Julia Mazza, our sisterhood president, and Alexandra Roat, our youngest female parishioner. The Divine Liturgy was celebrated by diocesan clergy and priests who had served the parish, including Fathers Daniel Geeza, Michael Lepa, Michael Evans, David Shewczyk, and Joseph Irvin.

For the parish, it was a culmination of many years of carrying boxes on a weekly basis to set up a temporary church. Though the road was rocky at times, we realized that having a building of our own would make life a little easier every week.

During the last few years, the parish has hosted the deanery mission service, the advent lecture, and our annual lenten service with the faithful from St. Nicholas Church in Olyphant.

We are hopeful that with God's blessings we will continue to grow, both spiritually and numerically, and that a future generation may one day celebrate the bicentennial of St. Basil's Church.



On Sunday or on holidays, when you go to God's house bring your children! Teach them to love God, the faith, the church, and the nationality, and especially to pray! . . . When you go to God's house, come on time, and if you come early don't keep cigars or pipes in your mouth . . . There you are standing on sacred ground, don't use "chewing tobacco" . . . Did you ever do it at home? No, never! And is there a different God in America? . . . Hold on to your faith teaching and do not attack the faith of others, do not argue about the faith and religion in saloons. Each one's faith teaching is dear to him, and everyone believes that his own faith will lead him to salvation, as you do. Respect your spiritual father! . . . Love and treasure your nationality!

--St. Alexis Toth, from "How We Should Live in America"



## Joyous Celebration in Edwardsville

On Sunday, October 3, 2004, the faithful of St. John's Church experienced an inspirational liturgical blessing and liturgy as Metropolitan HERMAN blessed the new additions to the church.

The church undertook the building project in May of 2003 and completed in May 2004. Two beautiful wings were built to house an elevator, bookstore and comfort facilities on the church and basement levels. A new kitchen was added on the lower level of the church. Mr. Michael J. Pasonick, Jr. Architectural-Engineering firm of Wilkes-Barre designed the building additions.

The day of prayer and rejoicing began as a procession of the cross, banners, flags, candles, gospel, and icons. Altar servers and clergy led the Most Blessed Herman, Archbishop of Washington and Metropolitan of America and Canada to the church vestibule where parish president, Kathy Harmanos, welcomed our metropolitan with the traditional bread and salt. The Very Reverend Protopresbyter Michael Slovesko, pastor, presented the cross to His Beatitude. The clergy received the blessing from him and escorted our primate into the church to the cathedra for the ancient rite of vesting.

After the metropolitan was vested, he ordained Reader Paul Fetsko subdeacon. The metropolitan proceeded to bless the interior, icons, and exterior of the new addition.

The Divine Liturgy commenced with Very Rev. Dr. Michael Dahulich and Fr. Eugene Wozniak, Marine military chaplain, at the altar with Metropolitan Herman. The responses were sung beautifully

*Continued on the next page*





## Joyous Celebration in Edwardsville

*Continued from page 49*

by the church choir under the direction of Reader Matthew Hoidra. During the liturgy five young people received the Holy Eucharist from His Beatitude following their first holy confession on Saturday. This confession group consisted of Hannah Lukatchik, Brianna Fedorko, Sonia Toporcer, Megan Ferenchick, Anastasia Baney and Nicholas Klecha.

Nearly the entire church came forward to receive Christ in the Eucharist. At the conclusion of the liturgy Metropolitan Herman bestowed the St. Innocent Award, bronze class on Fr. Michael.

A grand banquet in honor of His Beatitude was held at the Appletree Terrace in Dallas, Pa. It was a delicious meal. Present on the dais with our metropolitan were Mr. and Mrs. Michael Pasonick, Fr. Eugene Wozniak and his Matushka Antonia, Fr. John Kowalczyk, Fr. Michael and Mat. Anna Marie Slovesko, Kathy Harmanos, Fr. Michael Dahulich and Fr. Leo Poore. Speakers included Fr. Eugene, Kathy Harmanos, and Metropolitan Herman, who extended his congratulations to the faithful of St. John's and complimented them for their cooperation with the leadership of the Church and for their generosity and courageous spirit. Fr. Michael extended gratitude to all. The festivities ended with the benediction by our archpastor, Metropolitan Herman.

The faithful of St. John's thank God for His blessing upon their efforts to provide the means and the willingness to bequeath to their posterity the precious inheritance which we have received. Fr. Slovesko emphasized that our forefathers built this beautiful church in the early 1900s with the best quality of materials, and gave generously of their hard-earned mining and factory earnings, which were minimal. St. John's has a long and fruitful history of spiritual life given to these who have been and are members of the parish community.

The history of St. John's is in some ways similar to that of numerous parishes organized during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In those years a large number of Orthodox Christians left their place of birth, their parents, friends and others who were dear to them and im-



Reader Paul Fetsko ordained subdeacon



migrated to this great land of America. The early Orthodox Christians of the Edwardsville parish came from Russia, Galicia, and Carpatho-Russia. They attended the Holy Resurrection Cathedral of Wilkes-Barre. Looking to the future and foreseeing the need of their own parish, a committee was formed and the first step towards their ultimate goal was taken in 1907 when a piece of property was purchased on Short Street and a school building was erected. Fr. Alexis Toth, rector of the cathedral, appointed his assistant, Fr. Gregory Shutak, to conduct evening religious classes and Russian culture.

In 1910, a special meeting was conducted at which a decision reached to petition Archbishop Platon for the establishment of a parish church in Edwardsville. On June 5, 1910, Fr. Shutak and Fr. Basil Oranovsky served vespers, after which a meeting was held and a resolution read from Archbishop Platon, officially opened a new parish and appointing Fr. Oranovsky as pastor. At this meeting the first parish council officers were elected: Matthew Evans, president; Peter Stapay, secretary; Michael Hoblak, treasurer. The first trustees were Jacob Berdy, Vasily Kuzemchak, Peter Llegosh, Nicholas Sass, Dimitry Menko, and Theodore



Blessing of the new addition

Pelak. The parish was placed under the patronage of St. John the Baptist.

Initially, divine services were conducted in the school building on Short Street. Early in 1911 a committee was appointed to select a site for the new church edifice. They found a suitable location on Zerbey Avenue, and purchased the single and duplex home located there. The single dwelling became the parish rectory, while the duplex was moved in order that the church could be built on that site.

On March 26, 1911, a building committee was appointed, and construction began soon after. On March 24, 1912 Bishop Alexander, vicar to Archbishop Platon, laid the cornerstone. The church was completed in the summer of 1913 and was solemnly dedicated on Labor Day of that year by Archbishop Platon, assisted by Bishop Alexander.

It is interesting to note the building costs of St. John's in 1911 and 1912. Architect, \$514.00; contractor, \$13,411;





Fr. Michael Slovesko receives Order of St. Innocent award



church windows, \$514; bells, \$637, steam heating plant, \$642; iconostasis and altar, \$1,187; icons, \$418; chandelier, \$125; painting the interior, \$270. The total cost was \$24,028.

Fr. Anthony Repella was appointed pastor on April 10, 1918. He served the parish until 1957. It was during his tenure that a new rectory was constructed in 1939. In conjunction with the golden

jubilee celebrated in 1960, a new and improved building offered many enhancements, including a new portico with a illuminated cross, a new side entrance, and new altar. In 1967 the church was rededicated after a complete renovation of the ceiling, interior dome, and iconostasis, with new carpeting added. Fr. John Rachko was pastor at this time.

On June 23, 1972, the parishioners of

St. John's along with thousands of residents of Wyoming Valley became victims of the greatest natural disaster in the history of the United States. As a result of the torrential rains of tropical storm Agnes, the Susquehanna River flowed over its dikes and caused what has become known as the "Great Flood of '72." The church and rectory were inundated by 18 feet of water. After the waters receded the parishioners and pastor, Fr. John Kuchta, returned to find their house of worship filled with slime and mud.

A small group of parishioners began the arduous task of cleaning away the foul smelling debris from parish properties. Because of their valiant efforts, on Sunday, July 2, 1972, only nine days after the flood, the bell of St. John's Church tolled and the Divine Liturgy was served.

As the parish drew near to its 75th anniversary, other improvements were made, with parking facilities.

On December 13, 1999, our present primate — then Archbishop Herman — assigned Fr. Michael Slovesko to St. John's as spiritual head and leader of the parish. Fr. Michael and Mat. Anna Marie, the choir and faithful joyously celebrated Christmas together, raising their voices in praise and adoration of Christ for all the blessings we have received.

And today again, as we draw nearer to completion of our parish's first hundred years, we thank God for His bounty manifested in the new additions and improvements through the cooperation of the parish faithful, under the leadership of Fr. Michael.

Thanks be to God for everything!



# The Spiritual Father and the Vision of Christ Transfigured In Symeon the New Theologian

*Editor's note: Dr. Christopher Veniamin, Associate Professor of Patristics and Liturgical Theology at Saint Tikhon's Seminary, delivered the following lecture at the seminary on October 5, 2004. Presented here without footnotes and without the Greek text of some quotations, the lecture appears together with this material, in Theologia kai Kosmos se Dialogo, ed. G.J. Mantzarides (Thessaloniki: P. Pournara, 2004).*

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of the role of the Spiritual Father in the life of the Christian according to St. Symeon the New Theologian (949-1022). The especial relationship which he formed at the tender age of fourteen with St. Symeon the Studite, known also as Symeon "the Devout" (*o eulaves*), undeniably ranks as one of the two most important events in the life of the New Theologian — the other being his vision of the Divine Light. These two events shaped his entire life and theological vision. Indeed, the centrality of an experienced guide in the Lord is clearly indicated in Symeon's own description of his very first experience of the Divine Light, in which he also saw his Spiritual Father.

It is significant, therefore, that both of these elements — the Spiritual Father and the Divine Light — are found intertwined in the New Theologian's treatment of the Transfiguration of Christ, where Symeon's chief concern is the practical question of how the Christian may ascend to the vision of Christ transfigured and contemplate the Light of His divine glory.

Like SS. Maximus the Confessor and Andrew of Crete before him, St. Symeon also stresses the importance of the worthiness of the Christian as a prerequisite for the vision of the Transfiguration; but in so doing he also asks the following revealing rhetorical question:

"How many have ascended and are even now ascending the Taborian mount, and have not at all seen the transfigured Lord, not because Jesus the Christ is not certainly present, for He is present, but because they are not worthy to be contemplators of His divinity?"

Thus, the vision of Christ transfigured is by no means granted to all Christians. Symeon adds elsewhere that this is often the case, even after great ascetic effort has been exerted on their part. The reason for this, he says, is not because Christ does not exist ceaselessly transfigured in divine glory, but simply because not all are worthy to be contemplators of it. How, then, may we become "worthy to be contemplators of His divinity"?

In order for the Christian to share in the very same vision of Christ that was granted to the three disciples on Tabor, it is first necessary to renounce the world and lay aside all cares for the things of the world; and then to practice obedience, by placing one's self under the direction of a Spiritual Father, that is to say, under the guidance of one who is experienced in "the things pertaining to the difficult work of virtue and the ascetic art," thereby cutting off or sacrificing one's own will. Such a man, says Symeon, is found by persistently *beseeking* God to guide us to one capable of shepherding us well. And once found, he should be obeyed, just as though he were God Himself, even when his advice seems harmful to us and appears to go against our better judgment. Indeed, adds Symeon, even when the disciple is inspired to remain with the Spiritual Father that he already has — envisaging, perhaps, a situation where one's Spiritual Father seems less experienced than others, absolute and perfect obedience is again required of him. For, as he continues, it is "better to be called a disciple of a disciple and not to live according to the fashion of one's own style



Dr. Christopher Veniamin

of life, thereby gathering up the unprofitable fruits of one's own will." Thus, by sacrificing his own will, by not yielding to vainglory (*kenodoxia*), sluggishness (*okneria*) or apathy (*rathymia*), and by eagerly doing those things which he is advised, the disciple might, says Symeon, be saved.

Especially worthy of note here is the fact that salvation for Symeon, though unequivocally the primary goal and purpose of the Christian life, is always viewed within the context of *the desire to seek after the vision of the light of God*. (There is, however, a subtle but vitally important distinction to be made between *desiring* to see Christ in glory and *expecting* to see Him thus. The former is regarded as a healthy spiritual state, while the latter lays one open to delusion of all kinds.) The *desire* for this vision, then, is a fundamental characteristic of the Christian's very mode of existence (*tropos hyparxeos*); and consequently, the lack of such a desire is seen as unforgivable, since, according to St. Symeon, it reveals one's spiritual condition as "dead or blind or



sick or paralysed and separated from the service of Christ'.

In direct reference to obedience to one's Spiritual Father *vis-a-vis* the vision of the divine Light of Christ, St. Symeon also adds the following:

"If he leads you to the mountain, ascend eagerly, for you will there contemplate, I know well, Christ transfigured and shining brighter than the sun with the light of His divinity, and perhaps you will

Tradition, which are themselves based on *theoria* — the vision of Christ in glory. Symeon thus appeals to Scripture and also to the Fathers, and although it is true to say that he only rarely identifies them by name, it is nevertheless clear that Symeon had both read the Fathers and was profoundly influenced by them.

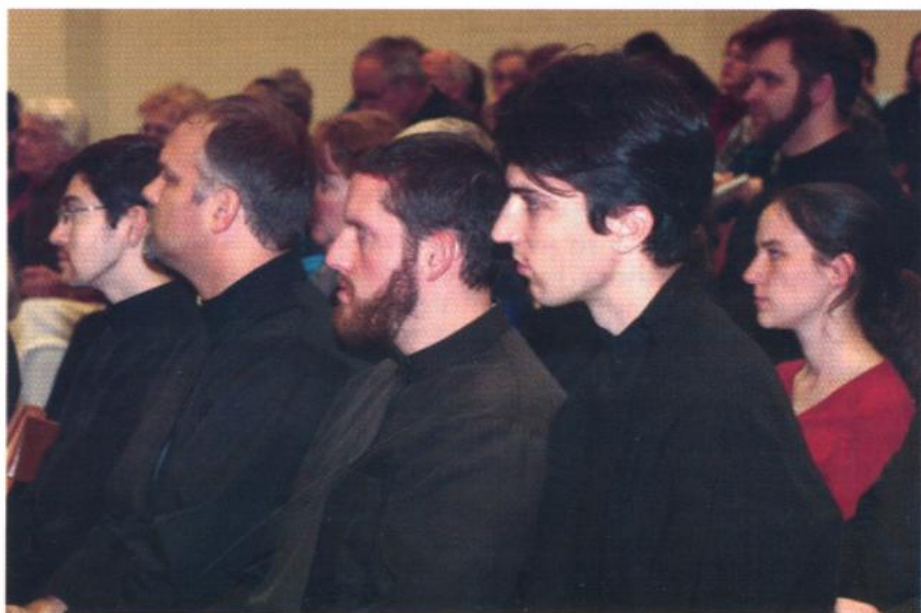
In his *Ethical Treatise*, St. Symeon refers to the worthy disciple as the *hesychast* — one who practices silence

worth noting that St. Symeon interprets the words uttered by St. Peter, firstly, in a Trinitarian sense, by ascribing three tabernacles to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and at the same time to their common rule or Kingdom — thereby signifying their co-equal status and unity; and secondly, in an eschatological and anthropological sense, where the three tabernacles of the Holy Trinity are presented as the place of eternal abode for soul (*psyche*), body (*soma*) and intellect (*nous*). Significantly, he also adds that soul, body and intellect — the human person in its totality — are made new by purification, and that they are edified and thus raised up to the summit by the cultivation of the virtues. Note that *summit* or *mount* in Symeon signifies the attainment of divine knowledge and contemplation; and also that divine knowledge is synonymous with contemplation, which is often described as being accompanied by noetic *hearing*, as in the following short passage: "... then come and stand with us, O my brother, on the mount of divine knowledge and contemplation and together we shall hear the Paternal voice."

Though not presented in a systematic way, there is in Symeon a discernible distinction between the different stages in the life of the Christian. He speaks of purification (*katharsis*), the practice of the virtues (also referred to as the keeping of the commandments of Christ), and the contemplation of the divine Light, which is a characteristic element in man's progress towards deification (*theosis*). Three stages, then, which broadly correspond to those found in such earlier writers as St. Dionysius the Areopagite (*katharsis, photismos, henosis or teleiosis*), and St. Maximus the Confessor (who also employs the Evagrius schema, *praktike, physike, and theoria*).

However, it is especially important to note in St. Symeon the reciprocal relationship between purification (*katharsis*) or purity (*katharotes*) and contemplation (*theoria*): "when purity is acquired, it is followed by contemplation." Purification, then, leads to contemplation; but also, contemplation in its turn effects further purification. Through the vision of God, the progressive nature of purification is revealed: "little by little thou hast chased

*Continued on the next page*



fall down unable to endure things which you have never seen, and you will hear from on high the Paternal voice, and see the overshadowing Cloud, and the Prophets standing in attendance and confirming Him to be the God and Lord of the living and the dead (cf. Matt. 22:3; Mark 12:2; and Luke 20:3)."

Of particular interest here is St. Symeon's phrase, 'I know well' (*eu oida*), which denotes that this is a vision of which he has had first hand experience. The New Theologian's appeal to personal experience is also reminiscent, *inter alios*, of the other two Theologians of the Church: John the Evangelist (as in for example, John 1:14: "and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father", 1 John 1:1-3, but also *passim* throughout his Gospel, Epistles and the Book of Revelation); and St. Gregory of Nazianzus, in his *First Theological Oration*, where we find that in addition to Scripture and Tradition, he appeals to his own direct personal experience as verification of the truth of both Scripture and

— and offers us a further insight into the effect of the mystical experience of the Transfiguration on him.

"Let the *hesychast* (*o hesychazon*) become like those who went up to Tabor together with Christ and beheld the flashing radiance and the change of His garments and the light from His face, who seeing the bright Cloud and hearing the Paternal voice saying: 'This is my beloved Son', fell down on their face panic-stricken, so that he too may say as did Peter: 'Lord, it is good for us to be here'. Let us build three tabernacles, to you and your Father and your Holy Spirit, to the one rule (*basileia*), for an eternal abode for soul and body and intellect, making them new by purification and edifying them to the summit by the variety of the virtues."

Thus, in a mystical way, the *hesychast* becomes a participant in every aspect of the Transfiguration. There is no indication here that his vision is in any way inferior to that of the three disciples. Indeed, we are told that the *hesychast's* reaction will be the same as that of St. Peter. It is also



## St. Symeon

Continued from page 53

away the darkness, driven away the cloud, refined the materiality, cleansed the rheum from the noetic eyes, fortified and opened the eyes of the mind, taken away the veil of insensibility, and with these every passion and every fleshly pleasure has been put to sleep and completely cast out from me." Purification and contemplation are thus inextricably intertwined. Purification, moreover, involves physical and spiritual labours, and here Symeon places possibly the heaviest emphasis on repentance and humility. But even so, he insists that *only by the grace of the Holy Spirit* can one be made worthy to see God.

As has already been shown, Symeon does not hesitate to invoke his own experience of the mystical vision of the Transfiguration. This may also be observed in an illuminating reference to the manner in which the divine Light of Christ is contemplated.

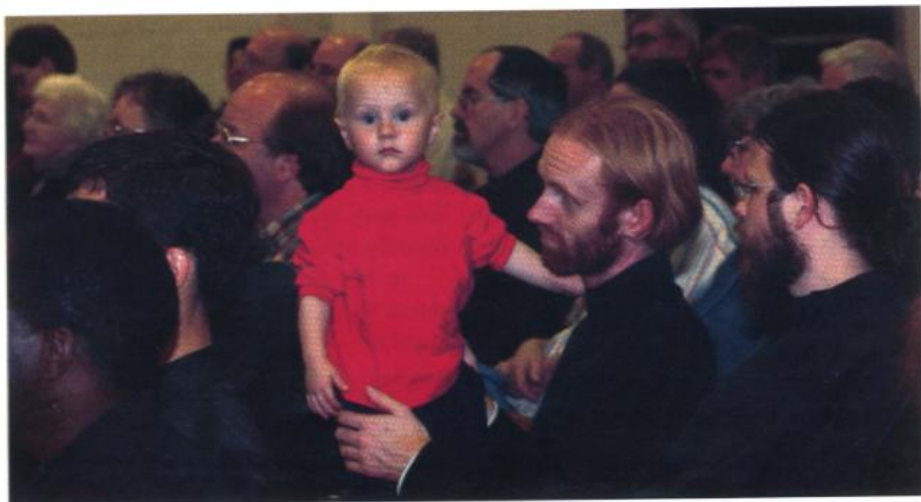
"For we do not speak of that which we have not known, but we bear witness to that which we have known, that the Light shines even now; both by night and by day, both within and without: within, in our hearts, and without, in our intellect, never-setting, immutably, without change, without form, speaking, acting, living and giving life and turning into light those who are working. We testify that God is light . . ."

Symeon's thought is clearly based on the Scriptural affirmation that God is light (1 John 1:5). Characteristically, he speaks of the experiential nature of the verification of this truth, appealing to his own experience of the divine Light — even if in this instance he uses the first person plural. The divine Light, he says, is visible by day or by night, and shines both *internally* and *externally*. When it shines from within, it is seen by the heart (*kardia*); when it shines from without, it is seen by the intellect (*nous*). The inner shining of the divine Light thus signifies deeper union with God.

St. Symeon, however, does not include here the participation of the physical eyes of the body. But while it is true that he often opposes the vision of the sensible light by the sensible eyes to that of the noetic light by the noetic eyes of the heart, it is equally true to say that he does not

deny the vision of the divine Light to the physical eyes of the body. In yet another reference to his own experience, he says: "and then the first time, you dazzled my feeble eyes by the immaculate radiance of your countenance." Hence, the weak eyes of the body do see, even though they cannot contain or endure the vision of the blinding light of God. As immaterial, though, the divine Light is seen *immaterially* in material bodies by the *noetic eyes of the heart*. Note also, however, that as divine the Light is defined as *invisible* to the sensible eyes, and, though perceived, remains unapproachable (*aprositon*) even "to the noetic eyes of the heart" (cf. 1 Tim. 6:16). It is essential, therefore, to appreciate that for Symeon the divine Light is nothing less than the manifestation of God Himself, whether it be referred to as the light of the Holy Trinity, or as the light of the *energies* or operation of Christ and the Holy Spirit, or simply as the light of His divine glory. It is, then, completely different to any other kind of light, for as divine it surpasses by nature every other light. Consequently, it is described in the same terms that one would use in describing God. Hence, the divine Light shines, "never-setting, immutably, without change, without form, speaking, acting, living and giving life," and significantly, brings about transfiguration, "turning into light those who are working," that is to say, those who are striving to fulfill the teaching of Christ.

There can be little doubt that in St. Symeon the New Theologian the Light, which is at one and the same time the Light of Christ and the Light of the Holy



Trinity — the energies and operation of God *ad extra* — is understood as immaterial, noetic and divine. Moreover, the New Theologian's treatment of the Transfiguration Light is deeply connected with the ascetic character of his mystical theology. Significantly, in his description of the mystical ascent towards the vision of the transfigured Christ Symeon points to a fundamental paradox: that while the whole human person — intellect, soul and body — shares in this vision, nevertheless it is one which surpasses every aspect of our created being, since the Light of Christ remains unapproachable *even to the noetic eyes of the heart*.

But without doubt the single most important and unique contribution in St. Symeon's ascetic-theological treatment of the Taborian Light stems from his own personal experience: namely, that the Divine Light may indeed be contemplated, just as it was by the three disciples on Tabor, by the person who freely places himself under the guidance of one who is truly experienced in the spiritual struggle for Christlike perfection. St. John Damascene had rightly stressed the importance of silence and prayer in the ascetic struggle for the attainment of the vision of Christ transfigured in His Divine Light and glory; but it is St. Symeon the New Theologian who completes the picture for us by underlining the important role of the Spiritual Father, of the inestimable value of an experienced and trustworthy guide in the Life in Christ.

*Dr. Veniamin is Associate Professor of Patristics and Liturgical Theology at Saint Tikhon's Seminary*



# St. Mark's Church Celebrates Thirtieth Year

Fr. Vladimir Borichevsky of blessed memory, writing the history of St. Nicholas Church in Philadelphia, said, "The history of every Orthodox Catholic parish begins the same way, with the same foundation. No matter where the parish is, whatever its physical characteristics, whatever its national and cultural coloration, the story of its origin is the same. The first chapter of every parish can be found in the book of the Acts of the Holy Apostles."

Here as in all of his teaching throughout his life, Fr. Vladimir emphasized that every local parish is a manifestation of the One Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. No matter who the historic agents of a given parish's founding are, Jesus Christ is the true and ultimate founder of every Orthodox Catholic parish from the Day of Pentecost until our Lord comes again in glory. And it is the same Holy Spirit who called the Apostles with power from on high, who in turn inspires the human founders to proceed, giving them courage and energy, and stirring their love for the sacred Body of Christ, to make the necessary sacrifices, to overcome the inevitable obstacles, and to persevere.

On November 15, 1972, the very first step was taken in the establishment of what was to become St. Mark's parish, when a small group of faithful believers met at St. Paul's Episcopal Church Hall in Doylestown, Pa. They met several times again, sometimes in the people's homes, soon deciding to contact the diocesan authorities to inform them of their activities and desire for a mission in the Doylestown area of beautiful Bucks county. The archbishop appointed three clergy as guides and advisors: Fr. Daniel Ressetar, Fr. Joseph Martin, and Fr. Michael Hatrak. At first the new mission gathered only for vespers along with the planning sessions, since each of those clergy had their own parish responsibilities. But the desire was there and growing stronger daily for

a priest to be assigned to the mission to serve regularly the Divine Liturgy and to provide the other normal pastoral services. Among the founders were Randy and Helen Freudig, Boris Borichevsky, Janet Kalenish, Samuel Mervis, Valentina Kiriakidi, Thomas Scheponik, John

Hawranick, Sr., and Hebe Bulley, of blessed memory. It was Boris who suggested his own father and called him to see if he might be appointed to serve the mission. His Eminence Archbishop KIPRIAN, of blessed memory, then assigned

*Continued on the next page*





## St. Mark's Church

*Continued from page 55*

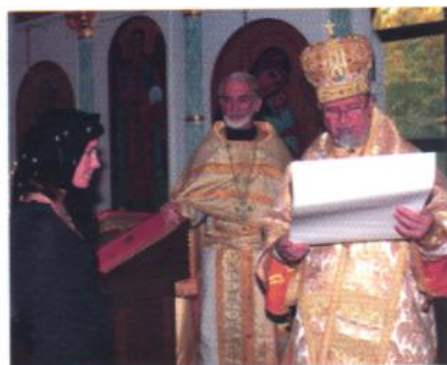
Fr. Vladimir as acting rector, and the first Divine Liturgy was served in the old historic Trinity Episcopal Church in Buckingham, Pa., in July of 1973.

The parish thus began a regular schedule of Sunday services, Fr. Vladimir commuting from South Canaan, where he continued his teaching duties and where he had his residence nearby. At first, of course, there were no icons in the church building. So, Fr. Vladimir brought with him enlarged reproductions of icons of our Lord and the Theotokos and placed them in front. A small anteroom was transformed into a place for fellowship and discussion after the services. Prior to her death, Hebe Bulley recalled, "I do not remember one Sunday when Father and Matushka were not there, no matter what the weather — rain, sleet, snow, good weather, or storm. One time Matushka related how their car was sliding on the icy mountain roads as they drove from their home. She said it was her belief that Father Vladimir had seven guardian angels on each side of the car, when he was driving it."

Fr. Vladimir, though he never lived in the vicinity of St. Mark's, nevertheless gave of himself tirelessly and with great loving care. "His emphasis," recalls Janet Kalenish, "was always on spirituality and spiritual knowledge." He conducted discussion groups after the liturgy as often as possible, and showed as much by his example as by his words that the spiritual life is not just for monastics, nor is it something extraneous to "normal life." Orthodox spirituality is the way of living life at its fullest, as God intended, in communion with God and at peace with one's fellow man.

The people responded to Father's warm pastoral guidance by cooperating with him and with one another in the patient building of a loving family of God. Janet Kalenish tells of the time when the parishioners heard that Father needed a fence for his farm at Lake Ariel. The whole membership made the trip north one Saturday and put up the fence that same day.

Father Vladimir set the spiritual and psychological foundation for this "pan-Orthodox" expression of the faith: a com-



munity in which everyone, of whatever ethnic background, would feel welcome and at home. On the one hand, no ethnic emphasis should dominate the parish or take precedence over the gospel message. On the other hand, no individual or family should deny his or her heritage or pretend it does not exist. One's heritage is like one's ancestors: to be remembered and held in sacred honor. The Church in this land of immigrants, he felt, must always be open to all; and it must forge a fundamental identity not with old-country cultures, nor with American culture — for that would only be replacing one ethnicity with another. One's true identity in the Church of Jesus Christ cannot be with this or that earthly nation, but as brothers and sisters of the Kingdom of God. This was a very deep conviction of Father Vladimir's, who himself dearly loved his Russian heritage — its language, literature, music, Church customs, etc. — but loved even more and above all the Kingdom on High.

Sam Mervis remembers the circumstances of the choosing of the name and heavenly patron of the new mission. At

the residence of Randy and Helen Freudig, by the pool, the members were gathered, informally discussing this question. A number of suggestions were mentioned, when Matushka Mary said, "Why not one of the four Evangelists such as Matthew or Mark . . ." — Mark, St. Mark's Church: that seemed to please everyone. The unanimous agreement came quickly, and the name was submitted to the Archbishop. The "Doylestown-Buckingham Mission" thenceforth became officially St. Mark's Parish on November 2, 1974.

Father Vladimir remained at St. Mark's until the appointment of the first resident rector, Fr. John Kowalczyk, on August 1, 1977. Fr. John continued the work of building the parish with great zeal. He had a special desire to emphasize the Church as the Eucharistic life, teaching vigorously the need for regular and frequent communion as the center of one's life in Christ.

In November of 1979, Father John was reassigned to Holy Assumption Church in Philadelphia, and Father Vladimir was again appointed rector. This time he remained until his retirement from parish





work in 1986.

Through the years the clergy and faithful always looked forward to having their own property, Church edifice and rectory. Hebe Bulley recalled, "The search for a site for our own church seemed long and difficult. When a possible location was examined, there was no agreement among the members or the search committee. Objections centered on expense, poor location, distance from the majority of members, proximity to noisy highways, drainage problems, and so on. The feeling developed among members that it was going to be extremely difficult to find a suitable property agreed upon by all."

Into this situation came the next

priest, Fr. Stephen Karaffa, newly graduated from St. Tikhon's Seminary. On June 1, 1986 Fr. Stephen was appointed acting rector and installed as rector in April, two years later. As soon as Fr. Stephen arrived, he plunged into the issue of finding a permanent home for St. Mark's. His enthusiasm and zeal were contagious, and God's hand was guiding. By June of 1987, the new property in Wrightstown was acquired. Hebe recalled, "The property was large (five acres) and beautiful. A small forest of tall, slender trees reaching to the far back of the grounds moved gently in the breeze. The previous owners had been lavish in planting flowered shrubs around the already existing home and among the

trees. Truly, thought the people, the Holy Spirit led our pastor and the search committee to this property. The purchase was made on June 10, 1987, and St. Mark's Church was built."

Groundbreaking and the planting of the cross took place on April 23, 1988 — His Grace, Bishop (now Metropolitan) HERMAN presiding, assisted by the venerable clergy of Philadelphia Deanery and the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania. Soon after, the clearing of the grounds began; and actual construction was started in August 1988. The church was complete enough for the lesser blessing and first Divine Liturgy on December 25, the Nativity of our Lord, that same year. The work of completion continued until September of the following year. The consecration of the new edifice then took place on October 14, 1989 — His Grace, Bishop Herman, presiding again with the local clergy assisting.

Father Stephen, Matushka Gayle, and the parishioners set about making the

*Continued on the next page*



## St. Mark's Church

*Continued from page 57*

new location a true home for St. Mark's Church. Hebe Bulley recalled, "Worthy of mention was our great gardener, Joseph Horoschak. With a love of flowers, trees, and bushes, Joe carefully planted many things in memory of his beloved wife Evelyn. Throughout the spring, summer and fall, the property blossoms." Beautiful to start, each year the new location became more splendid than before. And, as the physical property blossomed, so did the spiritual life at St. Mark's. With a permanent home and full-time rector, all the great feast days, complete with evening vigils and morning Divine Liturgies could be celebrated unhampered, along with the special services of Great Lent, Holy Week, Pascha, Bright Week and all the rest.

In the spring of 1992, Fr. Stephen was reassigned to St. John the Baptist Church in Nanticoke, Pa. Fr. Theodore Heckman, at the time an instructor at St. Tikhon's Seminary, was appointed to serve during the summer. In September, Fr. Theodore was assigned as the new rector. The new priest, a protege and close friend of Fr. Vladimir, was pleased to work in this parish, which had been the topic of many pleasant discussions between the two. The parish philosophy was announced at the beginning of this new phase: this church was to continue its pan-Orthodox orientation, resting on the four firm pillars of worship, sacraments, education (for all ages) and charitable works.

In October, 1993, St. Mark's celebrated its 20th Anniversary with great joy, led again by His Eminence, Archbishop Herman. At this occasion Mr. George Nakonetschny, a zealous worker in the parish, was tonsured reader by His Eminence.

In November, 1995, the parish was blessed by the official appointment of Deacon Gregory Moser to assist at the services. Deacon Gregory and his family have been enormously helpful both in worship at St. Mark's as well as in all other parish functions.

At the 25th anniversary celebration in 1998, Mr. Peter Bohlender, also a zealous worker in the parish, was tonsured reader by His Eminence, Archbishop Herman.

Through the years St. Mark's has been

blessed by a succession of outstanding, dedicated wardens, assisting the priest and facilitating good order. Since the appointment of Fr. Theodore, these include Mr. John Wanko, Mr. Sergei Borichevsky, Reader George Nakonetschny, Reader Peter Bohlender, Ms. Jeanette Ruano, and the present warden, Dr. Douglas Yates.

In recent years, many new sacred articles have been added to the inventory

orable occasion, was held as a fund raising project, under the expert leadership of Dorothy Martiak assisted by her sister, Martha Moser.

Our choir in the English language sings traditional liturgical music arrangements, based on a variety of national heritages. St. Mark's choir has continued to develop under the very capable direction of Mr. Sergei Arhipov and Mrs. Martha



of the parish, as well as many new icons, among them our Lord and the Theotokos on the analoys, the Iveron Mother of God (painted in Georgia), the Resurrection of our Lord (painted in Romania), St. John the Baptist, Transfiguration, St. Seraphim of Sarov, St. Helena, Nativity of our Lord, St. John Climacus, and the Theotokos with angels located above the front entrance — this in memory of our beloved Alla Nakonetschny.

A very capable group of engineers in the parish have been working diligently, making improvements, correcting problems, and facilitating normal maintenance: Mr. Peter Kiproff, Mr. John Malriat, Mr. Jim Pitra, Mr. Anatole Bredikin, and Mr. Patrick Colucci. Mr. Kiproff installed a new kitchen in the church hall. An extensive renovation of the rectory was undertaken under the watchful eyes of Mr. Anatole Bredikin, Ms. Jeanette Ruano, and others. The renewal included new siding and insulation, new roofs and windows and new plumbing. A successful multi-phased program was conducted to correct the flooding problem in the church basement during periods of heavy rain.

Our sisterhood, headed by Irene Arhipov, continually assists in our parish functions, always ready to help with funds for special projects or emergencies. In May of this year 2004 a wonderful gourmet five-course dinner, a most mem-

Moser. Mr. Tom Scheponik, who directed for many years, has recently retired and moved to Florida. His dedicated work will always be remembered with gratefulness.

With a growing number of small children in the parish, a new program of religious education for preschoolers has been implemented under the devoted direction of Ms. Patti Connelly.

With grateful hearts we give thanks to God for His merciful loving kindness towards our church and its faithful members. And we are deeply grateful for the many gifts and sacrifices which have been made for the benefit of this church, beginning with the kindness and love of our hierarch, His Beatitude, Metropolitan HERMAN, the support of both clergy and faithful of the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania, and all our parishioners and friends. The development of the Church of Jesus Christ here, as elsewhere and everywhere — with her teachings and worship intact and uncompromised, standing against the stubborn waves of secularism and sectarianism and standing for all that is worthy, true, and beautiful — is the highest task given to human beings. May Almighty God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, sustain and increase our humble efforts here at St. Mark's, preserve this Church until the end of time.



# Climate of Fear or Climate of Grace?

## Part III

3. *The world as the arena in which human beings make their choice for evil or for good with eternal consequences.*

In Matthew 13:37-43, Jesus explains the parable of the weeds (found in Matt. 13:24-30): "He who sows the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world, and the good seed means the sons of the kingdom; the weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age. The Son of man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and throw them into the furnace of fire; there men will weep and gnash their teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear."

Here, the Lord is referring to this world as a place of *testing*, in which we identify ourselves, through our faith and our actions, as "children of the kingdom," or as "children of the evil one." At the "end of the age," we will be judged on the basis of our choice. Key here is the following question, "Have I discerned the will of God, and have I endeavored to follow God's will in my life?" Pertinent to our subject at hand, namely, the threat of human-induced global climate change, it would perhaps be germane to consider the following oath, which Scripture says God gave to Noah, after the Great Flood: "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease" (Gen. 8:22).

We are also reminded of our duty to our fellow human beings through the Parable of the Last Judgement (Matt. 25:31-46), which Ecumenical Patriarch



Bartholomew of Constantinople connected directly to the challenge of climate change, in his September 1, 2002 Encyclical for the Feast of Creation:

"The recent floods in Europe, India and Russia, as well as those preceding the current year and previous ones in other parts of the earth, bear witness to the disturbance of the climatic conditions caused by the overheating of the atmosphere of our planet. These disasters have persuaded even the most incredulous persons that the problem is real, that the cost of repairing its damages is comparable to the cost of preventing them, and there is no margin left anymore for continuing to remain quiet.

"The Orthodox Church, being a pioneer in her love for humanity and its living conditions, on the one hand recommends us to live virtuous lives, looking for eternal life in the world beyond, heaven, but on the other hand, she does not forget that according to the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ, our virtue will not be assessed on the basis of individualistic criteria, but on the basis of applied soli-

darity, as this is . . . described in the parable of the future Judgement. According to this parable, the criterion for accepting one among those saved who inherit the Eternal Kingdom, is the supplying of food to the hungry, clothes to the naked, aid to the sick, sympathy to the prisoners and generally the offering to our fellow humans the possibility to live on our planet under normal conditions and to come to know God so that they too may enter into His Kingdom. This means that the protection of our fellow human beings from destructive floods, storms, tempests and other such disasters is our duty; and consequently, that failure to take appropriate measures for avoiding such phenomena is chargeable to us as an unpaid debt and constitutes a crime of negligence, which incurs a plethora of other crimes, such as the death of innocent people, the destruction of cultural monuments and property as well as regressive progress."<sup>1</sup>

Lest we excuse ourselves from responsibility for this problem of "applied solidarity," by imagining that it is solely up to governments and international organizations to mitigate the threat of global warming, Patriarch Bartholomew goes on to remind us:

"Nevertheless, the greatest part of . . . this crisis is due to the excessive waste of energy by isolated individuals. Thus, the restriction of this wasteful consumption will blunt the acuteness of the problem, while the increase in the use of renewable sources of energy will contribute to its alleviation. However insignificant the contribution of every individual to the averting of new catastrophic natural phenomena may appear, we are all obliged to do

1. Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople, "Letter to the Entire Plenitude of the Church," in *Orthodox Patriarchs and Hierarchs Articulate a Theology of Creation*, edited by Frederick W. Krueger. Santa Rosa, CA: The Orthodox Fellowship of the Transfiguration, 2003, pp. 33-34.

*Continued on the next page*



## Climate of Grace

*Continued from page 59*

whatever we can, because only then shall we be able to pray to God boldly to supply what is lacking in our own efforts. . .<sup>2</sup>

"Hence, we paternally urge everyone to come to the realization of their personal responsibility and do whatever they can to avert the increase of the temperature on the earth and the aggravation of environmental conditions."

### 4. *The world as the object of God's saving work.*

Most of the time that Jesus refers to "the world" in the gospels, it has a negative connotation, as we have seen. In John 3:16-17, however, He gives the term a different cast: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him."

This passage is echoed in the words that the Samaritan villagers say to the woman at the well: "It is no longer because of your words that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world" (John 4:42). Granted, the primary foci in these verses is the world of humanity, not creation in general since, among all the creatures of the earth, only humans are capable of conscious belief but the cosmic dimension is there, nonetheless. This becomes even more explicit in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans 8:19-23:

"For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies."

Bishop Irineu Pop of the Romanian Orthodox Church beautifully connects this passage to the Orthodox understanding of what happens during worship:

2. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

"The whole of the universe worships and offers gifts to its Creator. In the very shape of the churches and the placing of icons, mosaics or frescoes within them, we find a microcosm of the universe which clarifies the role both of humanity and the rest of creation in relation to God. For it is an expression not just of what is on earth today, but of what exists in heaven and what is to come: the eschatological promise and redemptive transformation of all creation through the salvation wrought by Jesus Christ [cf. Rom. 8].

"The psalms tell us of the sanctification of all creation. Every day at Vespers, we sing Psalm 103 which says, 'Bless the Lord, all His works. In all places of His dominion, bless the Lord, O my soul.' It is captured in our blessing for all manner of elements of creation. The blessing of

**"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him"**

the waters shows us the sanctifying and redemptive power given to an element of creation through the invocation of the Holy Spirit by the Church.

"What is important for us, however, is that the baptismal water represents the matter of the cosmos, the world as life of man. And its blessing at the beginning of the baptismal rite acquires thus a truly cosmic and redemptive significance. God created the world and blessed it and gave it to us as our food and life, as the means of communion with Him. The blessing of water signifies the return or redemption of

matter to this initial and essential meaning. By accepting the baptism of John, Christ sanctified the water made it the water of purification and reconciliation with God. It was then, as Christ was coming out of the water, that the Epiphany the new and redemptive manifestation of God took place, and the Spirit of God, Who at the beginning of creation 'moved upon the face of the waters,' that is, the world transformed it again into what He made it at the beginning: 'Confer upon these water the grace of redemption, the blessing of Jordan. Make it a source of incorruption, a gift of sanctification, a remission of sins, a protection against disease, a destruction to demons, inaccessible to the adverse powers and filled with angelic might . . .'<sup>3</sup>

In invoking God's blessing upon the baptismal font, then, the priest asks God to make real once again this cosmic act of sanctification of His material creation. Through the medium of this world's water, the initiate is brought into the presence of God's Kingdom, which is "not from this world" (John 18:36). Here is a great mystery: the transformation of creation has already begun — it was inaugurated by Christ through His Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection. But we mustn't think that all these events have no relationship at all to our lives, as sinful or mundane as they may be. For through the sacraments of the Church, which express our faith, we, too, participate in Christ's saving work; through grace, we are transformed from within. The Kingdom of God is "breaking through;" God's love has changed us, and our world, forever. The "climate of fear" that characterizes this fallen world is changed into a "climate of grace," as "perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18).

*To be continued.*

—Fr. Christopher Bender

Fr. Christopher, parish priest of Assumption Greek Orthodox Church, Morgantown, W.Va. is Chair of the Steering Committee of the Orthodox Fellowship of the Transfiguration, an organization endorsed by the hierarchs of SCOBA.

3. Pop, Bishop Irineu, "Orthodox Liturgy and the Care of Creation," in *Orthodox Patriarchs and Hierarchs Articulate a Theology of Creation*, edited by Frederick W. Krueger. Santa Rosa, CA: The Orthodox Fellowship of the Transfiguration, 2003, pp. 70-71.



# Daily Devotions

## JANUARY

1 Col 2.8-12	Luke 2.20-21,40-52 (Circumcision)
1 Tim 3.14-4.5	Matt 3.1-11 (Sat. bef.)
2 2 Tim 4.5-8	Mark 1.1-8 (Sun. bef.)
3 James 2.14-26	Luke 17.20-25
4 James 3.1-10	Luke 17.26-37
5 1 Cor 9.19-27	Luke 3.1-18
6 Titus 2.11-14; 3.4-7	Matt 3.13-17 (Theophany)
1 Cor 10.1-4	Mark 1.9-11 (Bless. of waters)
7 Acts 19.1-8 (St John)	John 1.29-34 (St John)
1 Peter 1.1-2,10-12; 2.6-10	Luke 19.12-28
8 Eph 6.10-17 (Sat. aft.)	Matt 4.1-11 (Sat. aft.)
Thess. 5.14-23	Luke 10.19-21
9 Eph 4.7-13 (Sun. aft.)	Matt 4.12-17 (Sun. aft.)
10 2 Tim 2.20-26	Luke 19.37-44
11 2 Tim 3.16-4.4	Luke 19.45-48
12 2 Tim 4.9-22	Luke 20.1-8
13 Titus 1.5-2.1	Luke 20.9-18
14 Titus 1.15-2.10	Luke 10.19-26
15 Eph 1.16-23	Luke 12.32-40
16 Col 1.12-18	Luke 18.18-27
17 Heb 3.5-11,17-19	Luke 20.27-44
18 Heb 4.1-13	Luke 21.12-19
19 Heb 5.11-6.8	Luke 21.5-7,10-11,20-24
20 Heb 7.1-6	Luke 21.28-33
21 Heb 7.18-25	Luke 21.37-22.8
22 Eph 2.11-13	Luke 13.18-29
23 Col 3.4-11	Luke 18.35-43
24 Heb 8.7-13	Mark 8.11-21
25 Heb 9.8-10,15-23	Mark 8.22-26
26 Heb 10.1-18	Mark 8.30-34
27 Heb 10.35-11.7	Mark 9.10-16
28 Heb 11.8,11-16	Mark 9.33-41
29 Eph 5.1-8	Luke 14.1-11
30 Col 3.12-16	Matt 25.14-30
31 Heb 11.17-23, 27-31	Mark 9.42-10.1

## FEBRUARY

1 Heb 12.25-26, 13.22-25	Mark 10.2-12
2 Heb 7.7-17 (Meeting)	Luke 2.22-40 (Meeting)
3 James 1.1-27	Mark 10.11-27
4 James 2.1-13	Mark 10.23-32
5 Col 1.3-6	Luke 16.10-15
6 1 Tim 1.15-17	Matt 15.21-28
7 James 2.14-26	Mark 10.46-52
8 James 3.1-10	Mark 11.11-23
9 James 3.11-4.6	Mark 11.23-26
10 James 4.7-5.9	Mark 11.27-33
11 1 Pet 1.1-2,10-12;2.6-10	Mark 12.1-12
12 1 Thess. 5.14-23	Luke 17.3-10
13 1 Tim 4.9-15	Luke 19.1-10
14 1 Pet 2.21-3.9	Mark 12.13-17
15 1 Pet 3.10-22	Mark 12.18-27
16 1 Pet 4.1-11	Mark 12.28-37
17 1 Pet 4.12-5.5	Mark 12.38-44
18 2 Pet 1.1-10	Mark 13.1-8
19 2 Tim 2.11-19	Luke 18.2-8
20 2 Tim 3.10-15	Luke 18.10-14
21 2 Pet 1.20-2.9	Mark 13.9-13
22 2 Pet 2.9-22	Mark 13.14-23
23 2 Pet 3.1-18	Mark 13.24-31
24 1 John 1.8-2.6	Mark 13.31-14.2
25 1 John 2.7-17	Mark 14.3-9
26 2 Tim 3.1-9	Luke 20.46-21.4
27 1 Cor 6.12-20	Luke 15.11-32
28 1 John 2.18-3.10	Mark 11.1-11

## MARCH

1 1 John 3.11-20	Mark 14.10-42
2 1 John 3.21-4.6	Mark 14.43-15.1
3 1 John 4.20-5.21	Mark 15.1-15
4 2 John 1.1-13	Mark 15.22-25, 33-41
5 1 Cor 10.23-28	Luke 21.8-9,25-27,33-36
1 Thess. 4.13-17 (Dep.)	John 5.24-30 (Dep.)
6 1 Cor 8.8-9.2	Matt 25.31-46
7 3 John 1.1-15	Luke 19.29-40; 22.7-39
8 Jude 1.1-10	Luke 22.39-42, 45-23.1
9 Joel 2.12-26	Joel 3.12-21
10 Jude 1.11-25	Luke 23.2-34,44-56
11 Zechariah 8.7-17	Zechariah 8.19-23
12 Rom 14.19-23,	16.25-27 Matt 6.1-13
13 Rom 13.11-14.4	Matt 6.14-21
14 Gen 1.1-13	Prov 1.1-20
15 Gen 1.14-23	Prov 1.20-33
16 Gen 1.24-2.3	Prov 2.1-22
17 Gen 2.4-19	Prov 3.1-18
18 Gen 2.20-3.20	Prov 3.19-34
19 Heb 1.1-12	Mark 2.23-3.5
20 Heb 11.24-6.32-12.2	John 1.43-51
21 Gen 3.21-4.7	Prov 3.34-4.22
22 Gen 4.8-15	Prov 5.1-15
23 Gen 4.16-26	Prov 5.15-6.4
24 Gen 5.1-24	Prov 6.3-20
25 Heb 2.11-18 (Theot.)	Luke 1.24-38 (Theot.)
Gen 5.32-6.8	Prov 6.20-7.1
26 Heb 3.12-16	Mark 1.35-44
27 Heb 1.10-2.3	Mark 2.1-12
28 Gen 6.9-22	Prov 8.1-21
29 Gen 7.1-5	Prov 8.32-9.11
30 Gen 7.6-9	Prov 9.12-18
31 Gen 7.11-8.3	Prov 10.1-22

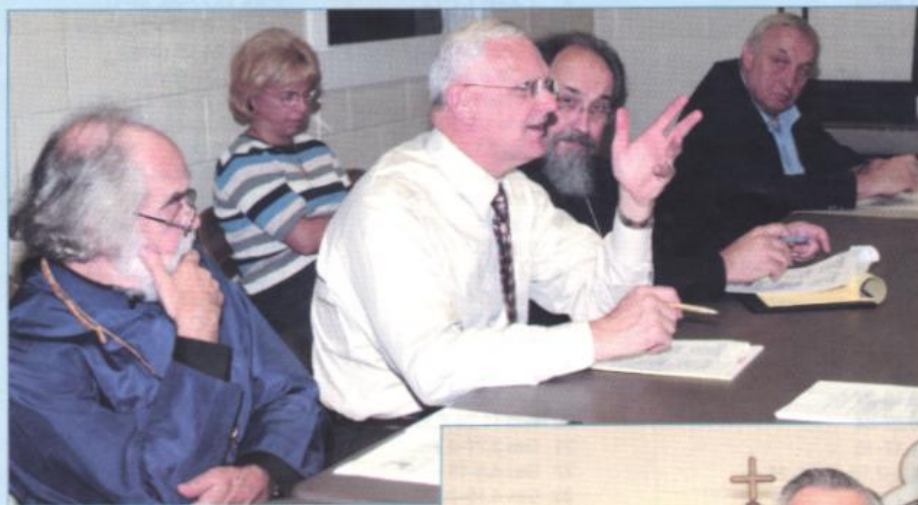
## APRIL

1 Gen 8.4-21	Prov 10.31-11.12
2 Heb 10.32-38	Mark 2.14-17
3 Heb 4.14-5.6	Mark 8.34-9.1
4 Gen 8.21-9.7	Prov 11.19-12.6
5 Gen 9.8-17	Prov 12.8-22
6 Gen 9.18-10.1	Prov 12.23-13.9
7 Gen 10.32-11.9	Prov 13.20-14.6
8 Gen 12.1-7	Prov 14.15-26
9 Heb 6.9-12	Mark 7.31-37
10 Heb 6.13-20	Mark 9.17-31
11 Gen 13.12-18	Prov 14.27-15.4
12 Gen 15.1-15	Prov 15.7-19
13 Gen 17.1-9	Prov 15.20-16.9
14 Gen 18.20-33	Prov 16.17-17.17
15 Gen 22.1-18	Prov 17.17-18.5
16 Heb 9.24-28	Mark 8.27-31
17 Heb 9.11-14	Mark 10.32-45
18 Gen 27.1-41	Prov 19.16-25
19 Gen 31.3-16	Prov 21.3-21
20 Gen 43.26-31; 45.1-16	Prov 21.23-22.4
21 Gen 46.1-7	Prov 23.15-24.5
22 Gen 49.33-50.26	Prov 31.8-31
23 Heb 12.28-13.8	John 11.1-45
24 Phil. 4.4-9	John 12.1-18
25 Ex 1.1-20	Job 1.1-12 Mt 24.3-35
26 Ex 2.5-10	Job 1.13-22 Mt 24.36-26.2
27 Ex 2.11-22	Job 2.1-10 Mt 26.6-16
28 Ex 19.10-19	Mt 26.2-20 Jn 13.3-17 Mt 26.21-39
Job 38.1-23, 42.1-5	Lk 22.43-45 Mt 26.40-27.2
29 Ex 33.11-23	Mt 27.1-38 Lk 23.39-43 Mt 27.39-54
Job 42.12-16 Is 52.13-54.1	Jn 19.31-37 Mt 27.55-61
30 Rom 6.3-11	Matt 28.1-20



# St. Tikhon's Seminary Convocation

Friday, October 8, 2004



Paul Chernay presents \$100,000 gift



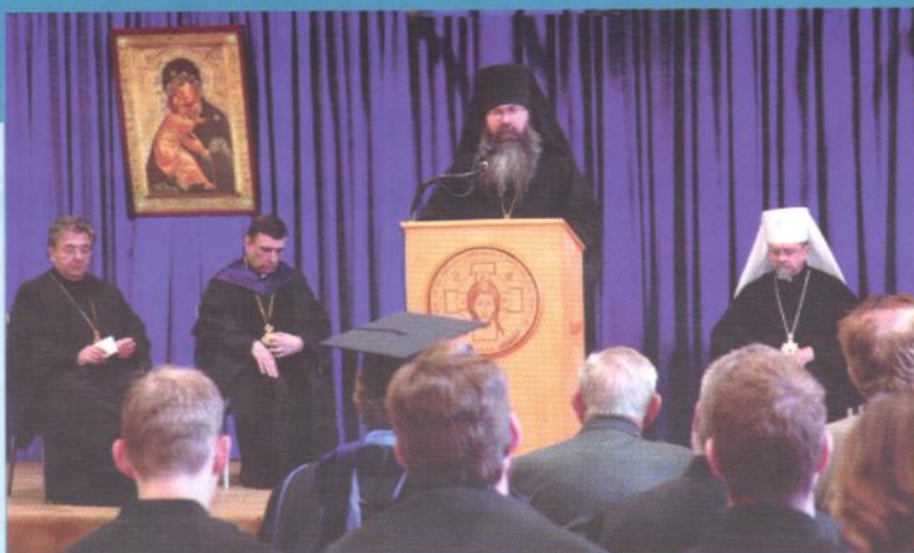
Board of Trustees



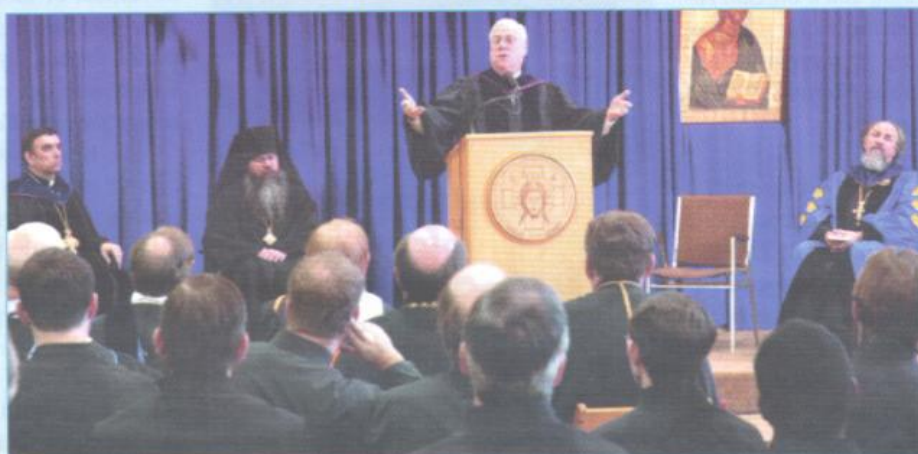




Training session for trustees



Seminary Convocation in honor of achieving accreditation



Daniel Aleshire of American Theological Schools addresses assembly





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

## Part XVIII

John 5:22-23

*Editor's note: The previous installment left off with St. Cyril commenting on John 5:22, "For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son." Cyril had suggested that the opponents of the truth will argue that, since the Son receives judgeship from the Father, he receives it as not having it; therefore he is of lower stature than the Father. St. Cyril now answers this argument.*

What then do we say to this? I think that our argument to this point has not been unskillfully managed, introducing a consideration especially suited to the time — of the Incarnation, that is — and most in accord with the economy of the flesh, when he was called a servant, when he humbled himself, being made in our likeness. But since it seems good to you to arrogantly despise the simpler doctrines, and to make more critical examination of them — come then, opposing your objections, let us first say: He who is said to give anything, sir, does not in any event and necessarily impart it to the recipient as though the latter did not have it; and neither is the giver always greater than the receiver. For what will you do when you see the holy psalmist saying in the Spirit, *Give glory to God?*<sup>1</sup> Should we consider that God is in need of glory, or that we who are commanded to offer him this, are on account of this greater than the Creator? But not even you, who do not fear to shun blasphemies, would dare to say this. For the Divine is full of glory, though it receives it not from us. For he who receives as an honor what he has of his own self, will



Theophany

never be thought inferior to those who offer him glory as a gift. One may often see that he who has received anything is not inferior to the giver, and that the Father is not therefore of superior nature to his offspring, because he *has committed* to him *all judgment*.

Next we must consider this too. To judge or to give judgment, are operations and acts conceived as properties of essences, rather than themselves truly essences. For we in giving judgment do something, being in ourselves what we are. But if we grant that judging or giving judgment is of the nature of an essence, how would we not, of necessity, grant, even against our wills, that some cannot exist at all, except as judges, and that their being wholly ceases together with the termination of the judgment? But to think so is most ab-

surd. Judgment therefore is an operation, and nothing else. What then *has the Father committed to the Son?* No accession from his own nature, in committing *all judgment* to him, but rather an operation in respect of those who are judged. How then will he be greater by this, or of superior nature, by having added anything which was not in the Son who says, *All things that the Father has are mine?*<sup>2</sup>

So, hear now how he must be conceived of as giving. As God the Father, having the power to create, creates all things through the Son as through his own power and might; so, having also the power to judge, he will work this too through the Son, as his own righteousness. As though it were said that fire too yielded the burning up of something, to the operation that is of itself by nature, the fact taking this direction: in this way piously interpreting *has committed*, we will the escape the devil's snare. But if they persist in shamelessly asserting that glory is added to him from the Father through his being manifested judge of the earth, let them teach us how he is any longer to be considered the Lord of glory who in the last times was crowned with the honors pertaining to this?

**That the Son, being God and from God by nature, and the exact image of him who begot him, has equal honor and glory with him.**

*That all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.* (John 5:23)

<sup>2</sup> John 16:15.

<sup>1</sup> Psa. 67(68):34.



A cause and reason for the things already recounted is now evident: namely that the Son ought to be honored in equality and likeness with the Father. For recapitulating a little, and being carried back to recollection of the preceding, you will view the force of the passage accurately. Accordingly he said *that God was his Father, making himself equal with God*;<sup>3</sup> next, again, he began showing that he was of equal strength and skill, saying, *whatsoever he does, the Son also does in like manner*.<sup>4</sup> That he is both life and life-giving by nature, as he who begot him is also, he plainly showed, adding, *For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom he will*.<sup>5</sup> But that he will also be judge of all, the Father co-approving and consenting in everything, he declared, saying, *Nor does the Father judge anyone, but has committed all judgment to the Son*.<sup>6</sup>

What then is the cause of these things? What induced the Only-begotten to say all this? He says, *That all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father*. For if he has everything whatsoever that the Father has, as far as appertains to divine dignity, how is it not fitting that he to whom nothing is wanting as regards identity of essence, should be crowned with equal honors with him? And so what do those who *pervert all equity*,<sup>7</sup> as saith the Prophet Isaiah, say to this?

"If (he says) because it is said *That all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father*, you suppose that one ought to magnify the Son with equal honors with the Father, you do not know that you are stepping far away from the truth. For the phrase *just as* does not completely introduce equality of acts, in respect of those things it is applied to, but often it marks out a kind of likeness, (he says) just as the Saviour counsels, saying, *Therefore be merciful, just as your heavenly Father also is merciful*.<sup>8</sup> Shall we then be as merciful as the Father, on account of the *as*? And again Christ says to his Father of his disciples: *You have loved them as you have loved Me*.<sup>9</sup> But we will not grant that the disciples are loved just as the Son,

on account of the *as*. Why then do you multiply words, and twist what is said in the direction of blasphemy, though it introduces no obligation on the hearers to *honor the Son in equal measure with the father*?"

What then is our answer to these things? The fighters against God bay at us with bitter words, but outside there are *dogs*, as Paul says; outside there are *evil workers*, outside the right faith are *the mutilation*.<sup>10</sup> For we are sons of the truth and children of the light. Therefore we will glorify the Only-Begotten together with God the Father, not with any difference, but in equality of honor and glory, as God from God, and light from light, and life from life. And excessive inquiry into what is to be received as faith, is not without hazard; nevertheless we must test the force of the *just as*, lest our opponents be overwise in their own conceits.

So — when *just as* is applied to things that are unlike in nature, it does not wholly introduce absolute equality, but rather likeness and resemblance, as you yourselves acknowledged above; but when it is applied to things that are like one another in all respects, it shows equality in all things, and similitude, and whatever else is found to have the same force as these [words]. Just as if I say: Bright is the sun in heaven, bright too is silver which is of the earth, yet is the nature of the things mentioned diverse. Suppose any of the rich of the earth say to his household servants, "Let the silver shine just as the sun." In this case we very justly say that earthly matter does not attain to equal brightness with the sun, but to a certain likeness and resemblance, although the expression *Just as* is being used of it. But let Peter and John (say) of the holy disciples be brought forward, who, both with regard to the account of nature and piety towards God, do not fail to have an close likeness to each other. Let the *Just as* be applied, some one saying of them, as is the case here:<sup>11</sup> Let John be honored by all, even just as Peter. Will the *just as* here be powerless, so that equal honor ought not to be paid to both? But I don't think any one would say such a thing, for they would see there is nothing to hinder it.<sup>12</sup>

In accordance with this line of reason-

ing, whenever *Just as* is applied to the Father and the Son, why should we shrink from crowning both with equal honors? For he<sup>13</sup> having considered beforehand, as God, the things to come, and having carefully observed the envious opposition of your lack of learning, has introduced the *Just as*, not naked and bereft of suitable assistance, but having confirmed it beforehand with appropriate proofs, and shown previously that he is God by nature (for he counted God his Father); again, having shown before that he is both God the creator, and in truth life, and having presented himself before as being entirely adorned (so to speak) in the attributes of the God and Father — he afterwards at the right time, adds *that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father* too. Accordingly, what objection still appears, what is there to prevent that he in whom are essentially [according to essence] the properties and excellencies of the Father, should attain to an equal degree of honor? For we will be detected honoring the very nature of the God and Father as it shines through in the Son. So he continues, *he who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him*. For the charge of dishonoring the Son, and the force of blasphemy against him, will ascend up to none other more truly than the Father himself, who put forth the Son, so to speak, from the wellspring of his own nature, though he is seen throughout the whole Holy Scriptures as everlastingly with him.

To be continued.

3. he: Jesus.

Deadline for the  
next issue of

**Your Diocese**  
**Alive in Christ**  
**is April 2, 2005**

Please submit all articles (typed),  
pictures, parish news, etc., on  
disc to

**Alive in Christ**  
Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania,  
Box 130  
South Canaan, PA 18459  
e-mail: library@stots.edu

3. John 5:18.  
4. John 5:19.  
5. John 5:21.  
6. John 5:22.  
7. Micah 3:9.  
8. Luke 6:36.  
9. John 17:23.

10. Phil. 3:2.  
11. I.e. in John 5:23, the passage under study.  
12. I.e. their being paid equal honor.



# Christ is Born!

## Berwick, Pa.

### Holy Annunciation Church

Father James & Matushka Lisa Weremedic  
James Jr. & Victoria Weremedic  
Tamara, Jordan & Zachary Beckley  
Helen Beily  
Carol, Nicholas & Josef Bodwalk  
Dotty Buckeye  
Mary K. Burns  
Joe & Ann DeMelfi  
Ann R. DeMelfi  
Robert, Man & Melissa Hinkle  
Sue Holoviak  
Jean Husak  
Gloria Kundrat  
Alyssa Macri  
Tom & Diane Macri  
Effie Mavrelos  
Andy, Lisa, Kristin, & AJ Mihaly  
Helen Mihaly  
Beverly & John Parker  
John Parker  
Lisa, Tom, Gabriella, Gianna Popko  
Paul & Sue Reagan  
Alice Sacco  
John & Yvette Skrip  
Stephanie, Todd, Nathan & Andrew Sponenberg

## Bethlehem

### St. Nicholas Church

St. Nicholas Church Choir  
Nicholas Lezinsky, Director  
St. Nicholas Altar Society  
Sarah Jubinski, President  
St. Nicholas O Club  
Dennis Chrush, President  
V. Rev. Eugene & Matushka Fran Vansuch  
V. Rev. & Mrs. Thomas Edwards  
V. Rev. & Mrs. James Mason  
Reader Andrew Fartuch & Family  
Reader Bartholomew & Michele Lovell  
Reader Nicholas & Judith Lezinsky  
Reader William & Barbara Podlasky  
Reader Jason & Katia Vansuch  
Gary & Marie Angstadt & Sons  
Mr. & Mrs. Ray Benensky & Alexander  
Martha Billy  
Mr. & Mrs. Gerard Bobal & Family  
Mrs. Patricia Brandstetter  
Barry & Ann Marie Bretz  
Dr. & Mrs. Gregory Brusko  
G. Damian Brusko  
Cameron Nicholas Brusko  
Helen Butch  
Therese Kasmer Butler  
Natalie Butler  
Nicholas Butler  
Joseph & Jean Butrymowicz  
Nicole Campbell  
Charlotte Carney  
Christopher Carney  
Sgt. Nicholas & Patricia Carney  
Joseph & Teresa Carney  
Paul Chernay  
Greg & Cindy Chernay  
Lorraine Chromiak  
Dennis Chrush  
Lynn Chrush  
Alyssa Chrush  
Lisa Curry  
Andrew & Karen Cuttje  
Mrs. Natalie Danczenko  
Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Danko & Family  
Larry & Irene Davis  
Michael & Mary Dorosh  
Michael J. & Toni Dorosh  
Damian A. Drasher  
Ted & Betty Fedora  
Patty Felix  
John & Olga Frimenko

Mr. & Mrs. James Gallop  
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Gaynor  
Mr. & Mrs. Walter Grigoruk  
Mr. & Mrs. Glenn Guanowsky  
Taras & Yuri Guanowsky  
Mr. & Mrs. Alan Guiducci & Family  
Elizabeth Hahalis  
Mary Ann Hanas  
Helen Haney  
Andrew Hasenecz  
Charles Hasenecz  
Elizabeth Hasenecz  
Nadine & Elias Hasenecz  
Matthew Hatrak  
Doctors Julius & Anna Herz  
Mr. & Mrs. Donald Holobeny & Daniel  
Mary Holva  
Mary Howell & Sons  
Mary Hudak  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Isbansky  
Dr. & Mrs. Gary Jenkins  
Peter Jubinski  
Sarah Jubinski  
Dr. Peter Daniel Jubinski  
George & Rosemary Jubinsky  
Mrs. Helen Karel  
Mrs. Mary Kasander  
Jeffrey J. Kasander, D.M.D.  
Eric Kasander  
Jim & Nadia Kelly  
Jessica Kelly  
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Keretz  
Bill & Sandi Keysock & Family  
Albert Kiechel  
Esther Kiechel  
Gary Kiechel  
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Kohudic  
Sclar & JoAnn Konsevitich  
Mr. & Mrs. Gregory Konsevitich & Family  
Olga Kozachonok  
Joanne Kuhns  
Dr. Michael Kuchka  
Mr. & Mrs. Austin Kurisco  
Mary Kushner  
Kyra, Matthew, Peter Lezinsky  
Lichtenwalner Family  
A Friend  
Mary Madensky  
Anna Mankowski  
Mr. & Mrs. Randall Marsh & Family  
Eugenia McIlinger  
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Metz & Family  
Mr. & Mrs. John Mikita  
Catherine Miller  
Mrs. Helen Mohr  
Mr. & Mrs. John Monarek & Family  
Mr. & Mrs. Scott Morgan & Family  
Katia Moroz  
Jim & Rachel Morissette  
Mrs. Theresa Nalepa  
Bill, Susan & Elizabeth Nielsen  
Robert & Ellen Novatnack & Family  
Mrs. Catherine Papaharalambos  
George Papaharalambos  
Mr. & Mrs. Ray Pasquel  
Mrs. Helen Perlou  
Margaret Petrovich  
Eleanor M. Phillips  
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph M. Pinkowicz & Family  
Cyril, Valeria, Andrej, Anna Quattrone  
Mrs. Pauline Radchuk  
Dr. Gregory Radio  
Rosalie Radio  
Scott & Amy Radio  
Ethan Scott & Kayleigh

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  
Cate Shea  
Patric Shea  
Mrs. Alexandra Schichalew  
Helen Schweisgut  
Mr. & Mrs. James Seifert & Family  
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Senick & Family  
Joseph Senick III  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Slivka, Eric & Peter  
John Smakula  
Laura Smakula  
Margaret & Wasley Smakula  
Michael & Dorothy Stafiniak  
Joseph & Emma Stafiniak  
Michele Stafiniak  
Stephen & Jen Stafiniak & Andi  
Boris & Vera Stoiancheff  
Julia Strohl  
Olga Sviatko  
Ola Tatusko  
Wash & Helen Telepach  
Jason & Keri Tomsic  
Basil & Kate Vansuch, Isabelle Claire & Leo Patrick  
Mr. & Mrs. James Weida  
Dr. Thomas J. Weida & Family  
Rosemary Ziegenfuss

## Catasauqua, Pa.

### Holy Trinity Church

Fr. Christopher & Mat. Mary Ann Rowe  
Katie & Samuel  
Fr. Timothy Hasenecz  
Reader Michael & Vincentine Brusko  
Edward & Pauline Bachert  
Donald & Gail Ortner, Alex  
JoAnn Yurconic  
Stephanie, Drake, Angela, Christopher  
Mary Yurconic  
Vince Fugazzotto, Blaise  
Nikolya Fugazzotto, Blaise  
Patrick Kelleher  
Kiprian & Sherri Fedetz, Alex, Andrew  
Steve & Barbara Symanovich  
Michael & Carol Limar, Matt, Tom  
Anna Katchur  
Dana Morgan, Alexis, Joshua  
Jack & Sandy Miller  
Christopher & Nina Bagshaw, Halle, Andrew  
Helen Fritzinger  
Richard & Jean Garrison  
Helen Haas  
Mary & Joseph Horoschak  
John Karpeuk  
William & Christine Reynolds, William, Steffany  
Rebecca Romanchik  
Dr. Serges & Fay Salivonchik  
Helen Suda  
Mary Yuhas  
Pat Wasko  
Sean & Christine Bullinger  
Patricia Hunkle  
Joe & Haydee Miller, Elizabeth  
Gary & Connie Solan, Caci, Nicholas  
Mary Baker  
Sue Cressman  
Charles & Mary Gaston  
Michael Gaston, Lucas, Michael  
Ed & Holly Bachert, Zachery, Issac, Nathaniel, Madeline  
Bob & Cheryl Steck, Cassia



# Glorify Him!

David & Danielle Bachert, Cidney, Micah  
 Sue Greitzer  
 Jim & Helen O'Brien, Kelly, Melissa  
 Sopaya Gerhard  
 Andy & Pat Brusko, Gabriel, Alexandra  
 Harriet Mazur  
 Keith & Millie Benner

## Coaldale, Pa.

### St. Mary's Church

Rev Andrew & Mat Suzanna Diehl & Fam  
 Barbara Bench  
 Gloria Bench  
 Harry Bialis  
 Ted Bogash  
 Stephanie Chmel  
 Analisha & Venessa Christman  
 Dave & Melanie Christman  
 Ray & Mary Jo Danchak  
 John & Mary Evetushick  
 Rose Harkins  
 Olga Hebda  
 Catherine Hedes  
 Helen & Wash King  
 John A. King  
 John & Dorothy King  
 Russ & Geri King  
 Ann Kononchuk  
 Michael Lorchak  
 Ted & Polly Lorchak  
 Mary Lutash  
 Ben & Olga Macalush  
 Pauline Maholick  
 Paul & Kay Maliniak  
 Helen Ostrosky  
 Julia Patochek  
 Petrina Poko  
 Melanie & Joe Preschutti  
 John & Irene Puschak  
 Ted & Kathy Puschak  
 Doug & Mary Ellen Rudenko  
 Nicholas, Julia, & Andrew Rudenko  
 Larissa Seneres  
 Paul & Helen Sheers  
 Althea Shellock  
 John & Eleanor Sidoriak  
 Olga Sidoriak  
 Ann Slanta  
 Simon & Martha Stafiniak  
 Jesse I. Weidaw  
 Olga Weiss  
 Harry Wyshosky  
 Helen Yaroma  
 Ron & Marie Yurchak

## Coatesville

### St. Nicholas Church

Fr. Joseph, Mat. Kathy & Family  
 Altar Boys  
 Church Choir  
 Reader John Kosturos  
 Reader John Zatyczy, Mary & Fam.  
 George Babich  
 Samuel Babich  
 Karen Campbell & Family  
 Mr. & Mrs. Darrell Collier & Fam.  
 Mr & Mrs Val Dzwonczyk  
 James Giannaris  
 Mr & Mrs James Fox & Fam.  
 Mr & Mrs Dennis Hare Hare  
 Vera Hatcher  
 Nina Petro & Son John  
 Nicholas & Ann Ruczhak  
 Charles Sarosi & Family  
 Michael Sarosi  
 Peter & Georgette Sarosi  
 Martha Skiadas  
 Mr & Mrs David Stauffer & Alyasa

Peter & Effie Svokos & Family  
 Mike & Maria Toth & Family  
 Ann Wilson  
 Athens Zaferes  
 Ita Zaferes

## Dundaff, Pa.

### St. John the Baptist Church

V. Rev. Dionysius & Mat. Marion Swencki  
 Mary Allen  
 Tammy Anderline & Family  
 Philip & Nadine Belejchak  
 John Jacob Bidgood  
 Nicholas Chichura  
 Eugenia Congdon  
 Greg & Kim Congdon & Casey  
 Mary Ann Congdon  
 Catherine Conick  
 Louise & Henry Gosh  
 Anne Janusz  
 Rosemary Jubinski  
 Tiffany Kilmer  
 Larissa & Sam Laing  
 In Memory of Mary & Thomas Mikolaichik  
 Kathryn Owens  
 George & Dolores Sheypuk  
 Joseph Shipsky  
 Mary Steponaitis  
 Elizabeth Wargo  
 Stephen Wargo  
 Yvonne & John Wargo  
 Janice Witko  
 Anna Wolfe  
 Ronald Wolfe  
 Martha Woytowich  
 Donald Zaboltsky  
 Patricia Zimowski  
 Michael Zuk

## Edwardsville, Pa.

### St. John the Baptist Church

Very Rev. Michael & Ann Marie Slovesko  
 Father Angelo  
 Deacon Father Paul & Matushka Michele Fetsko  
 Christine Adamski  
 Lorraine Arner  
 Doris Avios  
 Anna Billek  
 Nadine Booth  
 Julia Capp  
 Mary Cunius  
 Ed Davies  
 William Deletconich  
 Lucille Dragan  
 Anna B. Dutko  
 Elizabeth Dutko  
 Shirley & Eugene Gingo  
 Matthew Gingo  
 Aaron Gingo  
 Martha Gingo  
 Kathy Harmanos  
 Margaret Hoidra  
 Eva Kopko  
 Helen Moncovich  
 Anna Pengrin  
 Kathryn Prokopchak  
 Mary Rilko  
 Julia Sitar  
 Samuel & Mary Stanchak  
 Evelyn Swetts  
 Nicolette & Mark Toporcer  
 Wanda Wanko  
 Sandy Williams  
 Elizabeth Wozniak  
 Joseph Wozniak, Jr.

## Frackville, Pa.

### Holy Ascension Church

Fr. Barnabas, Mat. Daria & Myra Fravel  
 Nicholas Tatusko Family  
 The Chrush Family  
 Dr. & Mrs. Richard Chwastiak  
 Richard & Nicole Chwastiak  
 David A. Keysock  
 Michael & Helen Onuskanich  
 Mary Reed  
 Joanne Strenkowski  
 Eva Boniscavage  
 The Buchanan Family  
 Anna Martin  
 Paul Martin  
 Mel Martin  
 John Semanchick  
 Mary Krutz  
 John & Nancy Malinchok  
 Mat. Helen & Christina Kuchta  
 Mr. & Mrs. Donald Bricker  
 Mr. & Mrs. Shawn Kane, Joshua & Rebecca  
 Greg, Rita & Greg Tatusko  
 Paul Malinchok  
 Olga Williams Peter Rachko  
 Mike Weremedic  
 Margaret & John Neste  
 Anna Andrusichen  
 Jean & Frank Holowaty  
 Vera & Pat Kleman  
 Mary Diffenderfer  
 Anna Dikun  
 Sophie Osenbach  
 Mary Torick  
 Helen Polanchyck  
 Mr. & Mrs. Tom Fletcher  
 Sara Fletcher  
 Alex & Anna Peleschak  
 David, Stephen & Sandra Peleschak  
 Anna Sowachak  
 Olga Chrush  
 Mr. & Mrs. Sergius Chrush & Family  
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Cuttic  
 Larissa Holowaty  
 Peter & Marie Weremedic  
 Peter Weremedic Jr.  
 Michael & Rosanne Weremedic  
 John, Elizabeth & Madeline Wittig  
 Carole Sagan  
 Mark Cuttic  
 Mathew Cutti  
 Stephen Cuttic  
 Theresa Basara

## Harrisburg

### Christ the Savior Church

Archpriest. & Mrs. Daniel D. Ressetar  
 Archpriest & Mrs. Michael G. Kovach  
 Deacon Joseph Kreta  
 Matushka Tatiana Kreta  
 Mr. & Mrs. Roy Ambartsumian  
 Mr. Sebati Andemichael  
 Mr. James Antonio Jr.  
 Mr. Grigory Arakelov  
 Mrs. Sylvester Barbu  
 Mr. John R. Barns  
 Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Bretz  
 Mrs. Patricia Bromley  
 Mr. & Mrs. Willard Brown  
 Mr. Daniel Buddwalk  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Buddwalk  
 Mr. John Caba Jr.  
 Mrs. Barbara Cain  
 Mrs. Marina Cameron  
 Mr. & Mrs. Bogdan Ciorcirian  
 Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Cole  
 Mr. George Cvijic



# Christ is Born!

Mrs. Betty Danko  
Mr. & Mrs. John Dedyo  
Miss Susan Demchak  
Mr. Zekerias Dernas  
Mrs. Lorie DiClemente  
Mr. Joshua DiFlorio  
Mrs. Anna K Doray  
Mr. & Mrs. John Dotsey  
Mr. Paul Dotsey  
Ms Susan Dotsey  
Mrs. Paul Drebot  
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Drebot  
Mr. Terry Drebot  
Mr. Thomas Drebot  
Mr. Robert Drozd  
Mr. Joseph Dudick  
Mr. David Dugan  
Mrs. Marianne English  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Essis  
Mr. & Mrs. Salem Essis  
Mr. & Mrs. Johnny Farrow  
Mr. Joseph Fatula  
Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Fedetz  
Mr. Timothy Fedetz  
Mr. & Mrs. Kidane Ghebremichael  
Mrs. Saba Ghebremichael  
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Hadginske  
Miss Bethann Hancher  
Mr. David Hancher  
Capt. Ronald Hancher, Jr.  
Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Hancher Sr.  
Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Hanratty  
Mrs. Christine Hardenstine  
Mr. & Mrs. George Hatalowich  
Mrs. Maria W. Hebda  
Mr. & Mrs. James Henry  
Mr. & Mrs. Carl Hisiro  
Mrs. Elizabeth Howe  
Mrs. Marie Intrieri  
Miss Elaine Kalenevitch  
Mrs. Kathleen Kalina  
Mr. & Mrs. William Kantor  
Mr. & Mrs. George Kaznowsky  
Mr. & Mrs. George Krempasky  
Mr. James Krut  
Mr. & Mrs. Basil Kuchta  
Miss Katherine Kuchwara  
Att'y & Mrs. John S. Kundrat  
Mrs. Helen Kurylo  
Mr. & Mrs. Alex Kuzupas  
Mrs. Elena V. MacDonald  
Mrs. Stephen Macut  
Mrs. Gloria Maliniak  
Mr. Adam Mallick  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Mallic  
Mrs. Lydia Mantle  
Mrs. Adrienne Marsh  
Mr. David Martin  
Mrs. Maryann Mawhinney  
Mr. Joseph Mazurek  
Mrs. Deborah McGinnes  
Mr. Douglas McGinnes  
Ms. Meghan McGinnes  
Mrs. Angela McGreevy  
Mrs. Myra McInnes  
Mrs. Christine McKeown  
Mr. Timothy McMahon  
Mrs. Thomas Middlesworth  
Mr. John Midlick  
Mrs. Sonya Miele  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Mihalaki, Sr.  
Mr. & Mrs. Roger Miller  
Dr. Paul G. Miller  
Mr. Jonathan Minarich  
Mr. Eli Mioff  
Mr. James Milik  
Mr. Rodney E. Morgan  
Mrs. Jo-Ann Nesko

Dr. John D. Nester  
Mr. & Mrs. David Newhouse  
Dr. & Mrs. Joseph Norato  
Mr. Anthony Onufer, Jr.  
Mrs. Evelyn Onufer  
Mr. & Mrs. John Osuch  
Mrs. Katherine Punkiw  
Mrs. Rita Papach  
Mr. Stephen Pawlak  
Dr. David Pawlusz  
Mr. Michael G. Pawlusz  
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Pellegrini  
Mr. Nicholas Pestrock  
Mr. Carl Polansky  
Mrs. Christine Priggins  
Mr. Alexander Ressetar  
Mr. Gregory Ressetar  
Mr. Nicholas Ressetar  
Mrs. Agnes Risser  
Mr. Mark Rodak  
Mr. Joseph Russian  
Dr. & Mrs. Petru Sandu  
Mr. & Mrs. Russell Sass  
Mr. & Mrs. John Schilling Sr.  
Mr. Michael Schubert  
Miss Larissa Shuga  
Miss Basima Shunnara  
Miss Salwa Shunnara  
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Skirpan  
Mr. Lawrence Smith  
Mr. Nicholas Sompie  
Mr. Andrew Spaseff  
Mrs. Effie Spaseff  
Mrs. Marie Spaseff  
Mr. & Mrs. Basil Suple  
Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Sutovich Jr.  
Mr. & Mrs. Harry Sysak  
Miss Ruth Sysak  
Mr. & Mrs. Maksym Szeweyk  
Mr. Jamie Taleff  
Mrs. June Taleff  
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Taleff, Jr.  
Mrs. Helen Tatusko  
Mr. & Mrs. John Todorovic  
Mr. Jacob Toroney  
Mrs. Natalie Treece  
Mrs. Anne D. Trunk  
Mrs. Jane A. Volscho  
Mrs. Holly Webb-Komoroski  
Miss Jaimie Walker  
Ms. Noelle Webb  
Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Webb  
Mrs. Joanne Wevodau  
Mrs. Mary A. White  
Mrs. Mildred Wolfe  
Ms. Susan Wolfe  
Miss Marianne Wood  
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Wood  
Mr. Stephen Wood  
Mrs. Helen Yannonc  
Mr. Robert Yanosky  
Mrs. Mary Young  
Mrs. Michael Zart  
Mr. & Mrs. Aghesom T. Zerezgi  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Zuro

## Jermyn, Pa.

### St. Michael's Church

Father John & Matushka Kowalczyk, Sophia & Nicky  
Father Gabriel & Matushka Petorak  
Subdeacon Vasili & Alexandra Gardecki  
Andrea & Jeff Baldan & Family  
Debby Bernosky & Family  
Daryl & Jerry Beskovoyne  
Wendy & Serge Bochnovich & Family  
Eileen & Ed Brzuchalski

Dennis & Sonia Buberniak  
Dave & Ann Butler  
David J., David Jr. & Josh Butler  
Patricia & Tom Cadwalader & Tom  
Sandy & Kevin Carney & Family  
Sandy & Jeff Cavanaugh & Sons  
Sharon & Randy Cleary & Family  
Denise Cobb & Kyle  
Eileen & Bob Dance  
Eva Demchak  
Marie Derkasch  
Stephen & Chris Derkasch  
Dr. & Mrs. William Derkasch  
William, Courtney & Alexa Derkasch  
Delores Dreater  
Kaye Fedirko  
Donald & Rosalie Fives  
Annabelle Franchak  
Pauline & Nick Frenchko  
Peter & Delores Frenchko  
Joseph Getzie  
Nicholas Getzie  
Peter Getzie  
Chris & Rebecca Goetter  
Tom & Helen Grancey  
Dorothy & Andy Hanchak  
Julia Hanchak  
Mary Kay & John Hockin  
Wenona & John Hockin  
Jon, Debby & Jonathan Jaye  
Olga Jaye  
Rose Kelechawa  
Mike & Gloria Klapatch & Sons  
Henry & Simone Korpusik  
Jeremi & Nicole Korpusik  
Mary & Henry Korpusik  
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Krenitsky  
Irene Kupinski  
Maria & Nicholas Landi  
Daria Lehman  
Stephen Malec  
Dr. Cindy & Michael Mancini  
David & Domanica Mancini  
Sam & JoAnn Mattise  
Mark & Nicole Melesky  
Scott & Paula Melesky  
Tom Meredith  
Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Michalczyk  
Sam & Mary Ann Mosley  
Ann & Ed Narcoonis  
John & Barbara Nayduch  
Roxanne & Miles Neutts  
Justine Orlando  
John & Patsy Pash  
Andy & Peg Petrillak  
Stephanie & Rob Pliska & Family  
Martha Pollock & Fred  
Willard Puzza  
Susan Schlasta & Family  
Adam & Mary Ann Serafini  
Delores Sernak  
John Sernak  
Mary Sernak  
Ron, Lorraine & Ann Sernak  
Delores Serniak  
Steven & Kathy Serniak  
Gloria & Tom Shaw  
Anastasia Sloat  
Jerry & Marilyn Soroka & Family  
Bob & Julie Speicher  
John Susko  
Irene Swirdovich  
Col. (R) Peter & Martha Telencio  
Damian & Stephen Telencio  
Bob & Millie Telep  
John & Yvonne Wargo & Family  
Mary Wyziak  
Joanne Yurchak



# Glorify Him!

Julia Zaccone  
Peter D. Zaccone  
Mary Zielinski  
Betty Zrowka  
Joe & Dorothy Zrowka

**Lopez, Pa.**  
**St. Vladimir's Church**  
Hieromonk Michael Their  
Mrs. Elizabeth Caccia  
Helen Fullerton  
Vera Gulich  
Mary Kravetz  
Tresa & Dan Kulsicave  
Emily Andrewlavage  
Richard & Julia Vanderpool  
Joyce Walsh

**Lykens, Pa.**  
**Holy Ascension Church**  
V. Rev. John & Mat. Daria Mason  
V. Rev. Michael & Mat. Sonya Evans  
John & Nancy Coles  
Christopher Coles  
John M. Coles  
Warren & Irene Giordano  
Ann Mahoney  
Arlene Oakill  
Dr. Alexander & Katherine Pianovich  
Dr. Paul & Jane Pianovich  
Alex & Stephen Pianovich  
William & Susan Pinkerton  
Nadia Sass  
Catherine Siemons  
Ann Sovich  
Nicholas Sovich, Jr.  
John & Gayle Sultzbaugh  
Andrew Sultzbaugh  
Elizabeth Sultzbaugh  
George Tiazkun  
Patti & Joe Welsh  
Kathi Welsh

**McAdoo, Pa.**  
**Holy Trinity Church**  
Fr. Walter & Matushka Nancy Smith  
Flora Smith  
Helen Cortez  
Pearl Elko  
Anna Fanelli  
Rosella Gardecki  
Mary Ann Graino  
Joseph Jevit  
Michael & Michelle Klesh  
Anna Mae Kuklis  
Daniel Kurtz  
Douglas & Jen Kurtz  
Greg & Cathy, Carrie, Alyssa & Greg Kurtz  
Joseph & Linda, Joseph, Jr. & Jacob Kurtz  
Anna Kurtz  
Mike & Jan, Michael, Jr. Kurtz  
Anna Lazur  
Daniel Oneschuck  
Tague Osadche  
Helen Osuch  
Jack, Mariah, Sarah, Anna & Eva Oliveri  
Cindy Polli  
Lonnie Polli  
Sophie & Clark Shuman  
Annette & Paul Smerkanich  
Mary Stronko  
Irene Yaworsky  
Mr & Mrs Michael Zabitchuck

**Minersville, Pa.**  
**Ss. Peter & Paul Church**  
Fr. Michael & Matushka Hnatrak  
John & Gloria Barnetsky

JoAnn Brinich  
Ralph, Kathy Brinich & Adam  
Charowsky Family  
Susie Frew  
Elsie Herman  
Rick, Lynda, Lauren & Ricky Hutton  
Olga Kirkauskas  
Mr. & Mrs. John Malusky & Son  
Luke & Theresa Oakill  
Harry & Peggy Oakill & Family  
Anna Olexa  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Pascuzzo & Family  
Mike Barb & Cassandra Rogers  
Dave & Georgine Studlack

**Mount Carmel, Pa.**  
**St. Michael's Church**  
V. Rev. & Matushka Michael Evans  
June Mcgee  
Irene Yadzis  
Bernie & Tanya Malkoski  
George Panikarcheck  
Anna Gondal  
Mary Homicz  
Vera & Stan Zbicki  
Christine Buchkarik  
Brock Bridy  
Olga Berkoski  
Leon Markovich  
Mr. & Mrs. T. P. Alekseyko  
Patricia Chidovich  
Julia Bushick  
Catherine Shaffchick  
Margaret Olaf  
Jean Mathias  
Mary Zeluskey  
Mr. & Mrs. George Winnick  
Marie Cuff  
Sandra Sebasovich  
Catherine Hardnock  
Dorothy Beckus  
Anastasia Beckus  
Olga Leon  
Daniel Leon  
John Chidovich  
Charlie & Mary Chidovich  
Helen Timpko  
Ann Tanny  
Eveann Shamus  
Paul Wislock  
Adam Leschinsky  
Peter Yastishak  
Florence Bubernak  
Sandy & Joe Tosca  
Mildred & Ben Trefsgar  
Olga Paduhovich

**Nanticoke, Pa.**  
**St. John the Baptist Church**  
Fr. John Russin & Family  
Christina Cherkis  
Christine Cieslak  
Irene Miszczuk  
James & Mary Ann Oram  
John Pihanich  
Joe Paprota & Family  
Mary Paprota  
Jay & Marge Sokol  
Helen Solinski  
Olga Sulewski  
Mike, Sandy, Devon & Ian Wolfkiel  
Mary Zupko  
Pearle & Mike Zupko

**Old Forge, Pa.**  
**St. Michael's Church**  
Father David & Mat. Karen Mahaffey  
V. Rev. Theodore Orzolek  
V. Rev. Elias Krenitsky  
St. Michael's Altar Boys  
St. Michael's Church Choir  
St. Michael's Church School  
The Parish Council  
Nikolas Mahaffey  
Michael Mahaffey  
Seth Mahaffey  
Kyra Mahaffey  
Kate, David, Alexa & Adam Barsigian  
Margaret & Jacob Barsigian  
Sandra & John Barsigian  
Helen Bezuhly  
Paul Bezuhly  
Helen Chesniak  
Mr. & Mrs. William Condon  
David, Lana & David Paul Cushner  
John & Margaret Cushner  
Bernie, Bev, Nick & Steph Elko  
Maria Emily & Jake  
Neal & Ann Freeman  
Peter Gyza  
Peter, Jr. & Jan Gyza  
Jennifer & Michelle Gyza  
Mrs. Nicholas Halchak  
Aleck Jadick  
David Jadick  
Michael & Margaret Jadick  
John Jadik, Sr.  
Nancy Jurnack  
Al & Mary Krenitsky  
Harry & Mary Krevko  
Gregory Krevko  
Tina Ludwig  
Rose Macheska  
Nadia Macheska  
Joseph & Ann Marie Macijowsky  
Scott & Anne Peatross  
Michael & Sara Peatross  
Margaret & Walter Pregmon  
Al & Mary Pritchky  
Irene & John Pritchky  
George & Marilyn Serniak  
Sebastian & Adrian Serniak  
Stephen & Amanda Serniak  
Stephen & Ingrid Serniak  
Martha, Paul & Paul Andrew Tumavitch  
Stephen & Jennifer Yokimishyn  
Anna Zupko

**Olyphant, Pa.**  
**All Saints Church**  
Very Rev. Michael Lepa  
Very Rev. & Mrs. Eugene Pianovich  
Helen Bryer  
Stephana Butchko  
Elizabeth Generotti  
Mary Jane & Tanya Gilbert  
Justine Horhut  
Harry & Elizabeth Hunyak  
Robert & Cynthia Jones & family  
Justin, Sean, & Heather  
Eleanor Krushinski  
Michael & Amelia Kuzmiak  
Joseph & Anastasia Mazur  
Fran Meholie  
Dr. Gregory Meholie  
Claudia Mikulak  
Ann & Karen Naughton  
Maria Oles  
George & Elizabeth Perechinsky  
Michael & Sonia Prestys & family



# Christ is Born!

Barbara Puhalla Ashley Puthorsky

John & Peg Puthorsky

Marguerite Puthorsky

Pete & Joni Rezanka & family

Joseph & Ann Schlasta & family

Joseph R. & Helen Semon

James & Donna Specht

Kyra, Chelsea, & Ian Specht

Dan, Susan, Samantha, Stephanie, & Zachary Stafursky

Ken Stafursky

Mary Stafursky

Steve & Pat Stafursky

Linda Stuchlak

Michael Stuchlak Sr.

Mary Wasilchak

## Olyphant, Pa.

### St. Nicholas Church

Fr. Vladimir Fetcho

Matushka Marianne Fetcho

Mara Beckage

Julie & Richard Cesari

Jonathan & James Cesari

John & Josephine Chichilla

Sylvia & Paul Dreater Sr.

Capt. Paul & Lori Anne Dreater Jr.

Kayla & Liam Evanina

Joseph Fetchina

Dorothy Fetchina

Michael Grabania

Marie Grabania

Titiana & David B. Hughes

George Kopestonsky

Olga Kuzmick

John & Kyra Nightingale

Tom & Vera Price

Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Rebar

Dr. & Mrs. Larry R. Sherman

Eugene Strosky

James & Helen Thomashefsky

Ann & John Turko

Michaela Wall

Mary Youshock

## Philadelphia, Pa.

### St. Stephen's Cathedral

Fr. Daniel & Matushka Mary Geeza

Matushka Mary Fedoronko

J. Wellington Adams

Barbara & Karen Belsito

Mr. & Mrs. Igor Bergners

Mary D. Birkenbach

Ron & Kathy Bisaga

Irene & Ron Bisaga

Sonia, Dan, Stephen & Christine Bondira

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Burch

Anna Burdziak

Anna Cebular

Paul Cholakis

Elaine Kasmer & Joe Clark

Judy, Jack & Jennifer Clyde

Charles & Halina Colter

John & Kate Cox

Nicholas, Alexander & Andre Cox

Nicholas Cronin

Dorothy Crossan

Helen Davis, Mark, Steve & Family

Ray, Michele, Matthew & Natalie Decker

Willis & Lubie Dietrich

Dr. George & Pauline Englessen Margret Englessen

Paul, Diane, Laura & John Fedoronko

Dr. Jack, Irene, Alexander, Halina, Kyra & Sophia Forest

Nina & Bill Gavula

Michael & Matthew Gavula

Olga Gazak

Elisabeth Gentieu

Ekaterina Gorbachevski

Jelena Grabania

Lester, Nancy & Paul Grabania

Anna M. Fedryck-Hargrave

William & Nina Hartzell

Agnes Herbut

Nicholas & Nina Horsky

Galina, Michael & Lena Imms

Andrei, Kathryn, Stefan, & Peter Jablolkow

Katherine & Natalie Jadwin

Arnold, Katherine, Anna & Alexa Jensky

Catherine & Leonard Jones

Christopher, Michael & Nicholas Jones

Lorraine & Harold Kane

Nadia Kolesnik

Mr. & Mrs. John Kolesnik & Family

Mr. & Mrs. Michael Kolesnik & Family

Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Kolesnik & Family

Annette Kopistansky

Mike & Alice Kopistansky

John Kozlowski

Alex & Valentina Kuzman

Greg. Lydia, Kira, Nicholas & Gregory Kuzmanchuk

Carol & Faiad Labad

Helen Lackatos

Steven Lackatos

Mikeal, Alyssa & Sarah Lamprieck

Nicole Lamprieck

Peter & Martha Linski

Sonia, Larissa & Michael Jr. Mariani

Marge Maurer

Anna Miller

Janice Nass

Christine Nass

Phil & Irene O'Brien & Dasha

Joseph O'Brick & Kerri Irene

Olga Oprouseck

Catherine Paulasack

Helen Plunkett

Heinz & Tamara Poessl

Stephan & Marge Pron

Larissa Pron

Stephan Pron

Joe & Rena Quinton

Kathie & Sergio Rabaca

Mary Radick

Tom, Nina, Nicholas, Deanna & Victoria Rapak

Antonina Ren

Peter & Heather Ren

Katie & Holley Ren

Valentina & Jonathan Rhodes

Sarah & Alexa Rhodes

Stephanie Ristvey

Ralph, Irina, Daniel & Nikolai Rogers

John, Denise, Sonia & Michael Rowe

Al Silveira Jr.

Anna D. Simpson

Joseph C. Simpson

Martha, Jack, Megan, Adam, Jacob & Amelia Sisko

Larry & Connie Skvir

Jon & Chris Skvir

Anna Smith

Basil, Eva, Anthony & Anna Smith

Joseph & Catherine Stearne

Walter & Carolyn Stephan-Stephanowich

Tatiana Stephanowich & Kristin LaMacchia

Mary Suchniak

John & Helen Szulak

Robert Gregory Tallick

Dr. Michael, Amelia, Michael & Natalie Taptykoff

Lydia P. Tichy

Eva & Bill Wasser

Maura Ann & Andrew Wagner

Mr. & Mrs. Andrew J. Yench

Andrew, Megan, Stephen, Mathew, Timothy & Brielle

Yench

Diane & Vincent Zanghi

Nicholas, Kristina & Anthony Zanghi

Irene Zaroff

John & Anna Zwick

John Daniel Zwick

## Philadelphia, Pa.

### Assumption of the Holy Virgin Church

V. Rev John Udics

Father Sergius Willis

Matuska Mildred Soroka

David & Emelie Albrecht

Dr. David E. Albrecht

Melanie Albrecht

John & Helen Alexander

Norman, Barbara, Matthew, Christopher & David Andrews

William Brasko

Emma Burychka

Julianne Carrol

Elizabeth R. Chadwick

Robert & Grace Corba

Helen Dzugan

Nicephorus Wilfred Frisby

Julia Gavala

Edward & Patricia Gerasimoff

Emily Gerasimoff

Simon & Mary Herbert

Daniel S. Herbert

Sandra, Neil, Alex & Samantha Hourahan

Julia Jugan

Albert & Catherine Kavalkovich

Ken, Debra, Alex, & Anastasia Kavalkovich

Rick, Daria & Jason Leroy

Anna Mackiewicz

Richard, Linda, Stacey, Alexis Mackiewicz

John & Mary Makara

Julia Makara

Mary Makara

Anne McCartney

Michael McCartney

Ruthann Mohr

Nina & Natalie Patterson

David Pellack

Margaret Pellack

John, Mary & Emily Pellack

Joseph Rabik

Joseph, Kathy & Anastasia Renzetti

Helen Riley

Mary Robovitsky

Florence Savchak

Olga Vail

Ann Varhula

Helen & Timothy Wanenchak

Michael J Wanenchak

Michael Jr & Treasa Wanenchak

Kathy Wanenchak

Robert Wanenchak

Sharon Wanenchak

Lisa Welle

Peter & Annamie Witiak Jr

Daniel, Eleanor, Peter & Adam Witiak

Andrew Zuzulock

## Pottstown, Pa.

### Holy Trinity Church

Fr. Stephen, Mat. Jessica, Jacob & Julia Evanina

Dea. Peter, Mat. Marnie, Maria, Joshua & Kyra Skoog

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Bendyk & Family

Reader John & Alexandra Black & Family

Jon & Anna Marie Black

Mrs. & Mrs. Paul Boris & Family

Mrs. & Mrs. Michael Brilla & Family

Mr. & Mrs. James Crawford

Mr. & Mrs. Cyril Diener & Family

Mr. Joseph Dutzer

Mr. & Mrs. James Freeze



# Glorify Him!

Mr. & Mrs. George Gerasimowicz  
 Mr. & Mrs. Walter Green & Family  
 Leanne & Anya Harrison  
 Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Hrebien  
 Rebecca Hutnyan  
 Mr. & Mrs. James Hutnyan & Family  
 Janine Legg  
 Mr. & Mrs. Gregory Marchesini & Family  
 Marsteller Family  
 Mary Monarek  
 Montgomery Family  
 Mr. & Mrs. Eric Mosser  
 Martha Mossner  
 Helen Pershinsky  
 Debbie Ponis & Family  
 Mary Rapchinski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Ken Sekellick & Family  
 Charles Staso  
 Darren Taylor  
 Mr. & Mrs. Charles Wurster  
 Thekla Kutcha

## Shillington, Pa.

**St. Herman of Alaska Church**  
 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  
 Mr. & Mrs. Keith Bergan & Cailey  
 Vera (Ressetar) Bortniak  
 Wasil & Anne Boyko  
 Mr. & Mrs. Bret Challenger & Family  
 Ms. Louise Coleman  
 Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Dougherty & Family  
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Drenchko  
 John & Marie Drosdak  
 Stephanie, Mark & Joshua Drosdak  
 Pat & Bill Dudash  
 William M. Dudash  
 Mr. & Mrs. Douglas Duriez & Daughters  
 Mrs. Gloria Duty & Adam  
 Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Ermolovich  
 Emily Anne Ermolovich  
 The Gore Family  
 Mr. & Mrs. David Grim & Family  
 Bill & Rosalie Hardman  
 Terry & Debbie Hojnowski  
 Mr. Walter Hojnowski  
 Daniel Hretz  
 Kenia Hretz  
 Mr. & Mrs. Edward Hyland  
 Mr. & Mrs. Brad Kauffman & Alex  
 Mrs. Helen Karel  
 The Kawood Family  
 Mr. Kristopher Kringle  
 Dr. & Mrs. Vadim Kurjanowicz  
 Mr. & Mrs. Bernard Kusior  
 Reader & Mrs. Fred Leer & Family  
 Daniel & Marina Long  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Lorchak  
 Michael & Vera Losk  
 Mrs. Irene Lupco  
 John, Dana & Raymond MacKoul  
 Michael & Janice Mallick  
 Mr. & Mrs. Steve Matsick  
 Paul & Marie McCarty  
 John & Gertrude Melniczek  
 Dr. John & Laurie Melniczek & Family  
 Paul & Denise Melniczek  
 Reader George Nakonetschny  
 Dr. & Mrs. Tony Ngo  
 Mr. & Mrs. Karl Osterburg  
 George & Danielle Pahnomov  
 Larissa Pahnomov  
 Ms. Camille Palese  
 Mrs. Alexandra Prawlocki & Family  
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Reba & Family

Matushka Margaret Ressetar  
 Mrs. Ruth M. Ruth  
 Paul & Amy Savage  
 Mr. & Mrs. David Scheese & Taylor  
 Mr. & Mrs. Walter Sebastian  
 John & Lydia Seman  
 Ms. Alexandra Semion  
 Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Sichak & Family  
 Mrs. Tina Marie Snyder  
 Mr. Jonathan Sotak  
 Ms. Gloria Spitko & Kyra  
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Talley & Jonathan  
 The Terenchin Family  
 Kyle, Daria & Zoe Elizabeth Teter  
 Mrs. Sharon Vlasak  
 Mr. & Mrs. Steve Vlasak & Sons  
 Mr. & Mrs. Eugene Wanenchak & Family  
 Mr. & Mrs. Chip Weaver & Family  
 Ryan & Traci Weinstein & Daughters  
 Mrs. Deborah Wissler & Michael Lucas  
 Mr. & Mrs. Edward Yurick & Daughters  
 Hank & Anne Zerbe

## Simpson, Pa.

### St. Basil's Church

Fr. Leo Poore  
 James & Mary Anne Braun  
 Maria K. & Jefferson H. Braun  
 Olga & John Buberniak  
 Mary Chupeck  
 Nadine Demianovich  
 Helen Dorval  
 Olga Gallick  
 Helen Hrichuk  
 Ron & Lorraine Kavalkovich  
 Ron Kavalkovich & Damian Drobish  
 Stephen & Ester Kowalsky  
 Thomas & Elaine Kravetsky  
 Laurie, Lynn & Kimberly Kravetsky  
 Helen Kutch  
 Michael & Theresa Luczkovich  
 Julia Mazza  
 Michael & Julia Mikulak  
 John & Mary Okorn  
 Marie Proch  
 Maria Proch  
 Walter & Mary Anne Proch  
 John & Kimberly Proch  
 Christina M. & Elizabeth A. Proch  
 Dr. David & Daria Roat  
 Alexandra & Benjamin Roat  
 Jo Ann Somple

## South Canaan, Pa.

### St. Tikhon's Monastery Church

Metropolitan HERMAN  
 Bishop TIKHON  
 Very Rev. Michael G. Dahulich  
 V. Rev. Daniel K. & Mat. Dolores Donlick  
 V. Rev. Alexander, Mat. Elena & Alex Golubov  
 Protodeacon Keith S. Russin  
 Rev. Deacon David Mezynski  
 Reader Thomas Donlick  
 Reader Gregory Hatrak  
 Reader Gregory Sulich  
 Matushka Elizabeth Geeza  
 Matushka Dorothy Sulich  
 Mary Andreychik  
 Marge Barna  
 Alice Boga  
 Betty A. Figura  
 Drs. David & Mary Ford, & Emmelia  
 Julia Jacewicz  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Kuchmanich

John & Mildred Naholnik  
 Nicholas Orser  
 Mr. & Mrs. John W. Paluch  
 Martin S. Paluch  
 Robert H. Roth  
 Paul Wozniak

## Uniondale, Pa.

### Saints Peter & Paul Church

Rev. Hieromonk Alexander (Mayba)  
 Joseph Bendyk  
 Donald & Ann Bock  
 Paul Demianovich, Valerie & Thomas  
 Vladimir & Betty Demianovich  
 Martha Dorosh  
 Carol Kelleher, Ryan & Emily  
 Rose M. Kennedy  
 Lubov & Ronald Kilmer  
 Melanie McLaughlin  
 Antoinette Terry  
 Walter & Lorraine Terry & Family

## Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

### Holy Resurrection Cathedral

Very Rev Joseph & Matushka Gloria Martin  
 Protodeacon Keith S. Russin  
 Protodeacon Sergei & Matushka Vicki Kapral  
 Marina & Elena Martin  
 Jeff & Juliana Good & Children  
 Judd & Debbie Good & Sara  
 Dr & Mrs John Haber & Children  
 Andrew Buleza  
 Reader David & Kathryn Kessler  
 David, Tatiana, & Hannah Kessler  
 John & Doris Zoranski  
 Kyra Zoranski  
 Michael & Nancy Pieck  
 Margaret Anthony  
 Olga Layton  
 John & Irene Zimich  
 Mike Cooper  
 Sandy King  
 Mary Onufer  
 Myra Tarantini  
 Helen Humko  
 Vera & Ray Kraynanski  
 Manusky Family  
 Dolores M Grabko  
 Mr & Mrs Charles Romanuski  
 Mr & Mrs Paul Hutz  
 Dr David Hutz  
 Mrs William Kozey & Son  
 Charles & Irene Urban  
 Charlene Faust  
 John Dulsky  
 Cynthia Dulsky  
 Marguerite & Tom Czekalski  
 Sam & Rose Ostopick  
 Elizabeth Reese

## Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

### Holy Trinity Church

Fr. David & Matushka Sharon Shewczyk  
 Timothy & Nicholas Shewczyk  
 Holy Trinity Altar Boys  
 Liz & John Gurka  
 William & Mary Gurka  
 Anastasia & Bernard Golubiewski  
 Mrs. Robert T. Rhodes  
 Anna Goobic  
 Nettie Kompinski  
 Mary & Stephen Krill  
 Marianne & Jeremy Haugh  
 Jeremiah Haugh  
 Helen & Peter Welgo  
 Peter & Theresa Pawlak  
 John Pawlak  
 Andrew Dennis



# Christ is Born!

Jason, Colleen King  
Amber & Eva King  
Pearl Turko  
Mildred L. Mayher  
Marie & Vladimir Dutko  
Mary Piznar  
Michael & Leona Stchur  
Sophia, Julia & Besarion Tsintsadze  
Peter, Paula & Vladimir Holoviak  
J. P. & Denise Meck  
Paul, Corie & Abby Meck  
Michael & Lisa Talpash  
Rachael & Christa Talpash  
Marie Talpash  
William Talpash, Jr.  
In memory of William Talpash, Sr.  
David & Deborah Mills  
Gregory, Laura, Michael & Christopher Polk  
Ted & Eleanor Sovyrda  
Lydia Homick  
Olga Shewczyk

## Williamsport, Pa. Holy Cross Church

Fr Dan. Myra & Natalia Kovalak  
Paul Beard Family  
Tatiana Bohush  
Steve & Ronna Cassotis  
Matthew & Evelyn Chabal  
Ann Chabal  
Henry & Cally Herman  
John & Cathy Hoch & Family  
Eileen & Michael Juran  
John & Judy Kovich  
Phil Kundis  
Elsie Skvir Nierle  
Mr & Mrs Lewis Shatto  
Randy, Chris & Katya Shatto  
Sinatra Family  
Williams Family

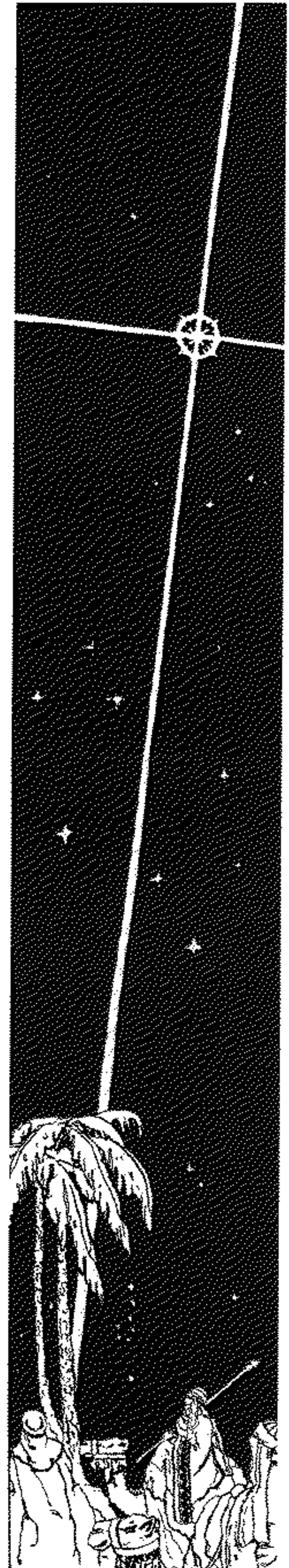
## Wrightstown, Pa. St. Mark's Church

Archpriest Theodore Heckman  
Deacon Gregory & Martha Moser  
Reader Peter, Sandy, & Stephanie Bohlender  
John Wanko  
Patrick G. Colucci  
Kevin & Mary Anne Swan & Family  
Elena & Vera Nakonetschny  
Nicholas & Cathy Nakonetschny & Family  
Bill, Valerie, & Alexander Peterman  
Jeanette Ruano  
Ken & Dorothy Martiak & Family  
Christian, Daniela, Peter & Paul Toma  
Joyce & Rhianon Beer  
Samuel Mervis  
Janet M. Kalenish  
Nicholas, Marina, Larissa & Katerina Moser  
Lucy Znak  
Irene & Sergei Arhipov  
Pam Freudig  
Anatole & Cynthia Bredikin  
Jack & Barbara Malriat  
Jim & Monia Pitra  
Elizabeth Werner  
Stephanos Kyriakodis  
Julia Petrov  
Patti Connelly  
Sean Chappe  
Reader George Nakonetschny  
Alexandra Prawlocki  
Doug, Sharon, Anna, John & Lydia Yates

## Wilmington, Del.

### St. Michael's Church

Rev. & Mat. Andrew Anderson  
Dolores E. Karawulan  
William & Alice Dryden  
George & Helen Kruse  
James & Olga S. Riley  
Rashid & Mona Elia & family  
Marie Karawulan  
Susan Skomarucha  
Irene Scarloss  
Ellen Gundersen  
Ed & Karen Hojnicky  
Basil & Emmelia Peck  
Mary Guretsky  
Alice & Nihnat Morjana  
Sophia M. Puit  
Tom & Lynn Sulpizi  
Paula Daubert  
Natalia Romaniouga  
Sergey Baldychev  
James & Anne Riley & family  
The Fedak family  
Jim Carpenter & Dusty  
Caton Tompkins & Family  
OCF of University of DE  
Marianne, Paul, Barbara & Julianna Newmeyer  
Ned & Pearl Minnich  
Jim & Paula Flynn  
Anne, Alexander & Stephen Pyle  
Harry & Evelyn Kutch  
Luke & Anna Wales  
Stephanie Hojnicky  
David & Christine Roberts & family  
Daniel & Cristina Kraitter & family  
Edward Torvik  
Allen & Colleen Shatley  
Debra Hines & family  
Sasha Stoyanov  
Elizabeth & Peter Melnik  
Nabih & Georgia Harb  
Mary Lewis  
Michael Sinovich  
James & Barbara Hicks  
Nicholas & Marie Holowatch  
Paul & Vera Chalfant  
Grace & Vassily Schulgin  
Greg & Laura Kaznowsky  
Marina Skazjinskaia  
Yelena Fox  
Gil Scheers  
Hope LaChance





## All in the Diocesan Family

### Berwick

#### Holy Annunciation Church

Renovations have begun on the entrance to our church edifice. A \$360,000 contract was awarded to Mariano Enterprises. The work is expected to be completed in time for the Feast of the Nativity.

The church school year began on September 12 with a brunch following liturgy. There are four classes for the parish youth and one adult class. This fall they enjoyed a hay ride and bonfire, and a fall festival where the children dressed up as their favorite saint or Bible character.

HALO sponsored a presentation on Romania by Margaret Gheorghiu, as well as the annual parish Christmas card that is sent to all parishioners. They are also conducting a food drive for St. Tikhon's Monastery.



First confession class: Nicholas Bodwalk & Victoria Weremedic



Dr. John and Kristen Husak wedding



Berwick adults & youth enjoy hay ride



Fr. Bob Kondratich congratulates Jason & Ekaterina

### Bethlehem

#### St. Nicholas Church

The faithful of St. Nicholas gather on Tuesday evenings for a prayer service to remember the sons and daughters in the military, especially those serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The annual Russian Days Festival was held on the weekend after Labor Day and

was very successful. St. Nicholas Choir recorded their fourth album in October and will have it available in time for Christmas. We celebrated the 25th anniversary of the consecration of our church

in the Chernay Fellowship Hall.

An iconography conference was held Oct. 29-30; guest speakers were Frs. Theodore Heckman and Walter Smith

*Continued on the next page*





Newlyweds Jason & Ekaterina Vansuch



Solomon & Genzeb Wondimu



Barry & Ann Marie Bretz with Fr. Eugene

and presenters were iconographers Dennis Bell and Xenia Pokrovsky. A Mystery Dinner Theater was held this fall in the Chernay Fellowship Hall and was enjoyed by all. The Mission Outreach Ministry sponsored an "All You Can Eat" spaghetti dinner to benefit charities and parish outreach programs for the community. The annual Christmas carol concert will be held Dec. 19 and is open to the public.

**Marriages:** Barry Alan Bretz & Ann Marie Hutz, Sept. 18; Jason Vansuch & Ekaterina Moroz, Oct. 3; Solomon Wondimu



Original St. Nicholas parishioners gather for photo



Recently illumined parishioners of Holy Trinity



First holy confession class at St. John's

& Genzeb Gossa, Oct. 9; Jeffery LoBalbo & Marianne Orzolek, Oct. 16.

#### Catasauqua

#### Holy Trinity Church

The faithful of Holy Trinity celebrated our parish's 105th anniversary on November 28. A hierarchical Divine Liturgy was

celebrated by His Grace Bishop Tikhon. **Baptisms:** Christopher & Angela McCormick, Aug. 15; Micah Bachert, Sept. 25. **Chrismations:** Haydee Miller, Sept. 19; Christine Bullinger, Oct. 17. **Marriage:** Joseph & Haydee Miller, Oct. 23.





Fr. Kovalak speaks at retreat in Frackville



Frackville food festival



Mr. & Mrs. Paul Fetsko and celebrating clergy



Harrisburg "O" Club cleaning around the church



Wedding of Joseph & Haydee Miller

#### Edwardsville

##### St. John the Baptist Church

The first holy confession class of St. John's was held on October 3. Completing their first confessions were: Hannah Lukatchick, Briana Fedorko, Sonia Toporcer, Megan Ferenchick, Anastasia Baney & Nicholas Klech.

#### Frackville

##### Holy Ascension Church

The parish held its annual food festival on Sept. 24-25. The parish outreach committee sponsored a fall retreat on Nov. 13. Fr. Daniel Kovalak of Holy Cross parish in Williamsport was the guest lecturer; his topic was "Building Parish Community."

#### Harrisburg

##### Christ the Savior Church

The Junior "O" Club held two parish yard sales at our church on August 7 & 14. The St. Mary's Altar Guild sponsored a successful Chinese auction Oct. 3. Miss Sheena Hisiro received the third F.O.C.A. scholarship grant to study at the Pratt Institute.

Two (OCF) Orthodox Christian Fellowships sponsored by our parish have begun to meet at Messiah College and at the Hershey School of Medicine.

**Baptisms:** Robel Kesete Embaye, son of Kesete Embaye & Luula Tewelde, Aug. 2; Tristan Michael Blain Marsh, son of Adrien Anne Trunk & Michael David Marsh, Oct. 10; Cassandra Elizabeth Zart, daughter of Andrea Hancher & Michael Albert Zart, Nov. 21.

**Chrismation:** Christine Elaina Neumann, Oct. 31.

**Marriages:** Robert Drozd & Christine Beeshore, Aug. 21; Paul Fetsko & Michelle Gontz, Aug. 22

*Continued on the next page*



## Jermyn

### St. Michael's Church

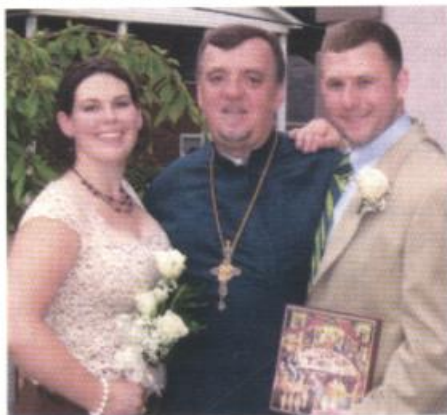
Two successful chicken barbecues and a Chinese auction were held in the summer and fall at St. Michael's church hall. During the advent season a sellout ethnic food sale was held under the leadership of Protodeacon Gabriel Petorak.

On Sunday, Dec. 12, the icon "Christ Blessing the Children" was blessed in the entrance of our church. It was given by Anthony J. Faliskie in loving memory of his wife, Irene Marmaluk Faliskie.

*Marriages:* Jeremi Kospusik & Nicole Foster, July 23; Rebecca Telep & Christopher Goetter, Oct. 15.



Blessing of new icon at St. Michael's, Jermyn



Mr. & Mrs. Jeremi Kospusik



Mr. & Mrs. Christopher Goette

## Old Forge

### St. Michael's Church

Our youth wanted to do something extra for the Christmas stocking project this year and so they had a spaghetti dinner in October. From the sauce recipe to the desserts, everything was handled by the youth.

The church school enjoyed a movie outing in November and a visit from St. Nicholas in December. They also sponsored a holiday fair in December for the benefit of the parish.



Newly illumined Anna with mother & god-parents



Holiday fair



Newly baptized Amaris Mathews





"St. Nicholas" with the parish youth



Youth preparing spaghetti dinner at St. Michael's, Old Forge



Breakfast fundraiser at St. Herman's



St. Herman's parish picnic

#### Pottstown

##### Holy Trinity Church

Baptisms: Anna Rapchiski, Nov. 20; Amaris Marie Matthews, Nov. 21.

#### Shillington

##### St. Herman of Alaska Church

The annual parish picnic was held on Aug. 29. Shillington's annual church rummage & bake sale took place Sept. 25. The church school of St. Herman's parish helped out with the Christmas stocking project by hosting a scrambled egg & sausage breakfast on Oct. 3rd. Over 70 parishioners attended the fundraiser. A pre-Advent harvest dinner was held in the church hall on November 14.

Chrismation: Joseph Reba, Sr., Sept. 19.



Chrismation of Joseph Reba



New heart recipient John MacKoul

### Is our Lord calling you to the Holy Priesthood?

For further information please call, write, or e-mail the seminary registrar at:

#### St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary

P.O. Box 130  
South Canaan, PA 18459  
(570) 937-4411  
stots@stots.edu

Continued on the next page





Ordination of Deacon Timothy Hojnicky



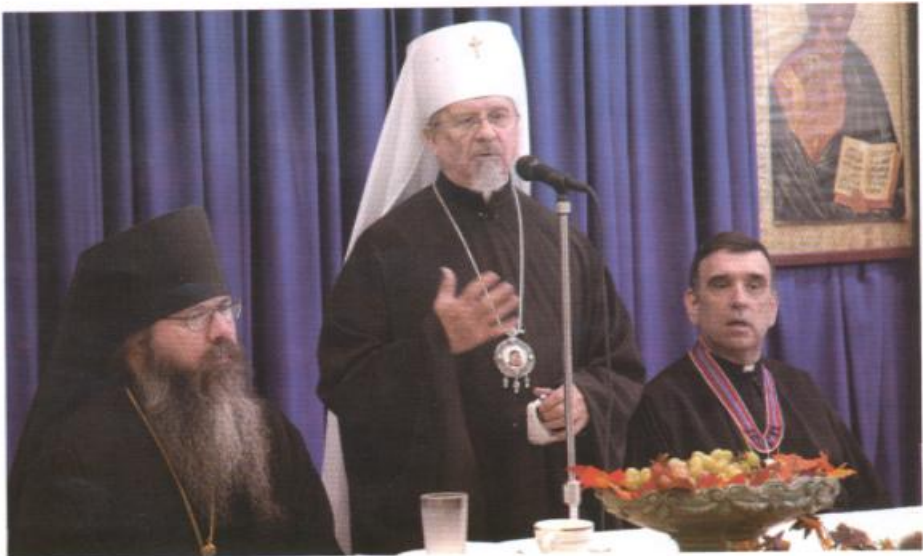
Friends of St. Tikhon fundraiser



Ordination of Deacon Paul Fetsko (above and left)



Archimandrite Hilary receives St. Innocent Award for 50 years of priesthood



Founder's Day at St. Tikhon's





Founder's Day dinner

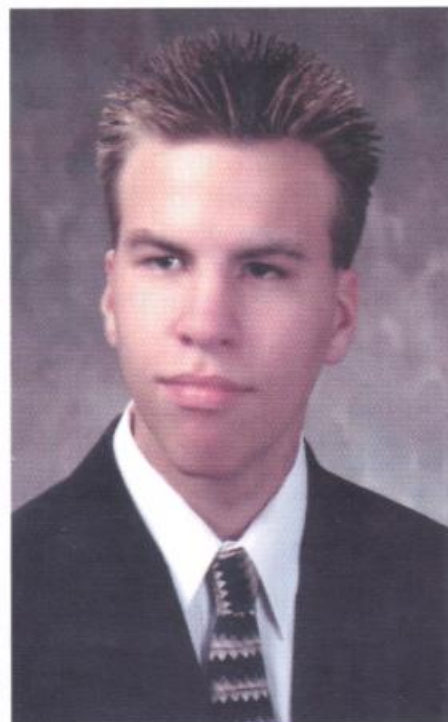


Frs. Michael Dahulich & Daniel Donlick receive St. Innocent Award



Pancake breakfast & bake sale

**Wilkes-Barre  
Holy Resurrection Cathedral**



Graduate Alexander Kapral



Graduate Kristin M. Gulczynski

**Wilkes-Barre  
Holy Trinity Church**

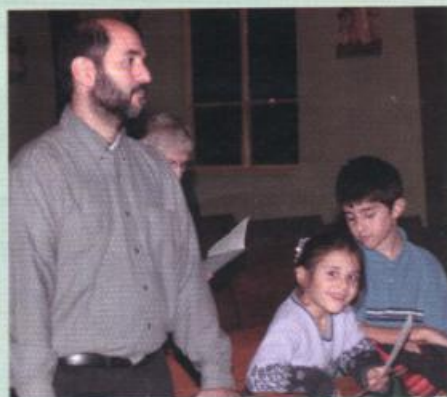
Our parish held a pancake breakfast and bake sale for the benefit of the Orthodox Church in America's annual stocking fund.

***Christ is Born!  
Glorify Him!***



# Diocese Explores Possibility of New Mission in Milford, Pa.

On Thursday, December 9, 2004, Fr. Daniel Kovalak, chairman of the Mission Department of the Diocese of Eastern Pa., organized a vespers service in Milford, Pa. at St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, and made a presentation to those present concerning the possibility of establishing an Orthodox parish in Milford. The next service and presentation by Fr. Dan will be held on Thursday, Jan. 27, 2005 at 7 p.m. at the same location. Anyone knowing of Orthodox living in the Milford area and / or wishing to support or participate in this venture, please call Fr. Daniel at 570-322-3020.





# St. Tikhon's Bookstore & Liturgical Supply



St. Tikhon's Bookstore has moved to a new facility where we are able to provide our customers with a greater and better service. Our display area is approximately 7000 sq. feet. We have expanded our stock and now offer a full line of custom made items including vestments, icons, church furnishings and bells at competitive prices.



The Bookstore is operated for the benefit of Seminary and Monastery. It offers its services to students, priests, parishes and visitors. The Bookstore has an excellent assortment of Orthodox and other Christian publications, CD's, audio and video tapes and various other items from all over the world.

(888) 454-6678

[www.stspress.com](http://www.stspress.com) [bookstore@stspress.com](mailto:bookstore@stspress.com)





**His Beatitude Metropolitan HERMAN**  
*and*  
**Orthodox Christians for Life**  
*request the honour of your presence for*  
**The Orthodox Witness on the Sanctity of Human Life**  
*at the*

# **2005 March for Life**

**Monday, January 24, 2005**

The Ellipse, Washington, D.C.

RSVP by January 14, 2004  
Orthodox Christians for Life  
P.O. Box 805, Melview, NY 11747



Christ blessing the children