

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

Diocese assembles in the North

41st Assembly held in
Springfield, VT and Claremont, NH

REPORT OF THE BISHOP

The Right Reverend NIKON,
Bishop of Boston
Administrator of the
Diocese of New England

The Election

Following the nomination at the Albanian special assembly early last October, the Holy Synod did in fact elect me as Bishop of Boston and the Albanian Archdiocese. The installation took place at Saint George Cathedral in November. It was heartening to see a great number of clergy and laity from the Diocese of New England in attendance and participating in the services.

In addition to my responsibility as Bishop of Boston, the Metropolitan has not changed my status as Administrator of the Diocese of New England.

Visitations & Representations

Since my last report to you, I have visited every parish in both dioceses (some more than once) and, along with the scheduled visitations, I also represented our diocese at an awards banquet honoring former Secretary of State James Baker in New York City. In addition, I met with Senators Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut, Joseph Biden of Delaware, and Paul Sarbanes of Maryland and former U.N. Ambassador Richard Holbrook during the Democratic National Convention when it was held in Boston. It was an informal luncheon, yet it was an opportunity to reinforce the Christian precepts upon which our country was founded.

Last winter, I accompanied the Metropolitan during the Right to Life March in Washington, DC, and was one of the consecrating hierarchs at the consecration of Bishop Tikhon,

Nativity Message of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman

NATIVITY 2004

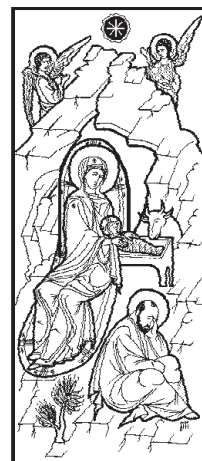
TO THE REVEREND CLERGY AND
FAITHFUL OF THE DIOCESE
OF NEW ENGLAND

*Make glad, O Jerusalem, and all who love Zion,
keep feast. Today the ancient bond of the
condemnation of Adam is loosed.*

*Paradise is opened to us: the serpent is laid low.
(Aposticha, Nativity of the Lord)*

Dearly beloved,

On this great and glorious Feast of the coming of the Lord, these words from the Aposticha verses call us to "keep feast." On this day, the Lord comes in the humility of our human form, "born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons." (Gal. 4:4b-5; Christmas Epistle)



In the humility of the cave, the glory of the Resurrection begins to shine in this world. The dark, empty hole in the earth, an icon of life in this world without Christ, is filled with His presence and becomes the light-filled vessel of salvation.

The ancient bond of death, spun around creation by the Fall, has been broken by the Birth of Christ. The new Adam has come to do what the old Adam failed to do: restore creation to communion with His Father.

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Diocese of New England • Orthodox Church in America

Volume 14 • Number 11 • December 2004

<http://www.dneoca.org>

O.N.E. (ORTHODOX NEW ENGLAND)

Diocese of New England, Orthodox Church in America
Published monthly except for July-August

His Beatitude, Metropolitan HERMAN, Locum tenens
His Grace, Bishop NIKON, Administrator
The Very Reverend John J. Dresko, Editor

Advertising: This publication will accept advertisements. However, we reserve the right to refuse any advertising that we find unacceptable for a publication of this type. **Rate:** \$50.00 per quarter page, \$100.00 per half page, \$175.00 per full page.

Subscription: Distributed free of charge to diocesan members. \$10.00 per year or any part thereof for others. Subscription outside of U.S.: \$15.00 (U.S. Currency).

Editorial Office: V. REV. JOHN DRESKO, Editor

E-MAIL: jdresko@cox.net

FAX: (860) 620-0739

US MAIL: 95 Butternut Lane, Southington, CT 06489

DIOCESAN WEBSITE: <http://www.dneoca.org>

ONE STEWARDS: PO Box 1182, Torrington, CT 06790-1182

Hardware: This issue was composed on an Apple Power Macintosh G5 with 1.5 gb RAM, a Umax Astra 3450 scanner, and a Hewlett-Packard LaserJet 5MP laser printer. **Software:** Microsoft Word X & PageMaker 6.52. Reproduction done at GT Graphics, Forestville, CT.

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ON THE DOCKET

A listing of upcoming events in the Diocese.

Please forward any dates you wish to be included to the Editor.

December 7, 2004

Connecticut Deanery Meeting, 7:00 P.M.
Holy Trinity Church, New Britain, CT

January 3, 2005

ONE Stewards Meeting, 6:00 P.M.
Sturbridge, Massachusetts

February 2, 2005

Diocesan Council Meeting, 6:30 P.M.
Holy Trinity Church, New Britain, CT



Parishioners at Holy Transfiguration in New Haven celebrate Father Michael Westerberg's Names's Day with a cake. Pictured are Father Michael and Starosta Dan Crosby.

O.N.E. Press Fund

YES, I enjoy the articles, correspondence and editorials of *O.N.E. (Orthodox New England)* and would like to contribute towards the expenses of publishing this periodical. Find enclosed my check made out to "Diocese of New England."

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MESSAGE FROM 1

Paradise, which was prepared for us by God even before the world was, is given once more to each of us. The sin and death brought through the temptation of the serpent has indeed been laid low. With this glorious moment, everyone who cleaves to Christ is now made one with God.

Beloved brothers and sisters, I greet you on this most wonderful Day of the Lord. May the newborn Christ shine brightly in each and every one of you.

With love in Christ,

+HERMAN

Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada
Locum tenens of the Diocese of New England

Around the Parishes

Ansonia, Connecticut

Sorry I have let this go for so long. I, as I'm sure many of you, have had a busy few months. Things have been moving along here in Ansonia quite well. Our Sunday School started up again for the year with all teachers/students attending confession and communion on Sunday, September 21st. The following week, classes were back as usual, with quite a good turnout in number of students.

We celebrated Fr. Nicholas Timpko's being with our parish for 25 years with a dinner held in his honor on Sunday, October 17. Good food and fellowship as well as many memories were shared by all in attendance. Congratulations, Father Nicholas, on 25 years with our parish – we have enjoyed all you have done with us.

Our seniors knitters sent a good supply of caps and lap robes with Metropolitan to Russia, which were much appreciated. The ladies will again be getting busy to replenish their supply for Fr. Timpko's visits to hospitals and shut-ins.

Our annual food and craft fair is scheduled for one



day only this year, Saturday, November 13. As of this writing, many parishioners are busy planning things that



Fr. Nicholas and Anastasia Timpko at the celebration of his 42nd anniversary of priesthood and 25th anniversary as Pastor of Three Saints Church in Ansonia. (Photo: Paul Kosowsky)



Heidi Crosby, Holy Transfiguration Church, New Haven, makes a presentation on available church school materials at a FORCC meeting.

are new and fun. May all have safe, healthy winter months!!

– submitted by Julie Craft

New Haven, Connecticut

We have begun our annual collection of non-perishable grocery items to help the needy in our area.

On October 22nd, members of the Institute for Learning In Retirement (ILM) visited our parish.

On Sunday, October 24th, we welcomed Deacon Joshua Mosher (ordained on September 14), serving for the first time in his home parish. Our congratulations and best wishes to Father Deacon, Matushka Jenny and their family.

Special thanks to all who purchased cookies at the children's cookie sale. The "R" Club donated the cookie ingredients. The children raised \$76.00 for the purchase of items for school kits for the IOCC/Church World Service "Gift of the Heart" program.

In conjunction with our 90th Anniversary, the children will be doing more fundraisers before assembling the kits in March. The kits will then be sent for distribution to children around the world who lack basic school supplies.

Our September special offerings raised \$2,155.00 for the aid of the children in Beslan, Russia. We also raised \$740.00 to aid the hurricane victims.

Father Michael Westerberg, Daniel Crosby and John Filyaw attended the New England Diocesan Assembly in Springfield, Vermont.

Our October stewardship tray was dedicated to the

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now Bishop of South Canaan and auxiliary to His Beatitude. In addition, my travels took me to the Armenian Cathedral in NYC for a banquet honoring Metropolitan Herman and the Greek Cathedral for the Vesper service for the United Nations delegates. I attended the Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers sponsored by the Boston Clergy Association. In August, I represented our diocese at the 100th Anniversary of the first Romanian parish in Cleveland Ohio at the invitation of Archbishop Nathaniel.

International Visitations

Just as it is the responsibility of the diocesan bishop to make Archpastoral visitations to the parishes in his care, it is the responsibility of the Metropolitan to make visitations to the other fourteen autocephalous Churches throughout the world. The Metropolitan asked that I accompany him on two of these visitations this year.

I have recently returned from the primatial visitation to the Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia. It was fruitful to exchange ideas and offer support to my brother bishops there, and to witness so many hundreds of lay people – including the very young – singing all the hymns by heart during the divine services.

Our delegation was also received by mayors and governors of the cities we visited and by the U.S. and other embassies in Prague and Bratislava. In late November and early December, I will be visiting the Church of Russia in St. Petersburg, and Moscow for the 10th Anniversary of St. Catherine's, our representation parish located there. A church that I know has helped many couples while adoption procedures took place in Moscow.

Since these visitations are part of the Metropolitan's obligation, all expenses for him and for the accompanying hierarchs are assumed by the national church.

Seminaries and Vocations

Although we in the New England diocese haven't felt the strain as yet, there is in fact, a shortage of clergy and this makes it increasingly difficult not only to fill pastorates throughout the OCA, but to give our current clergy a chance for a much needed retreat or vacation. Psychologists today will tell you that one of the most stressful occupations is that of pastor.

We do anticipate some relief from this problem in a few years. All three seminaries are almost full to capacity. Currently, Dimitri Kaluzny is at St. Tikhon's and doing very well according to Metropolitan Herman and the others that I've spoken to at the Seminary. And we have seminarians, both men and women, attending St. Vladimir's.

We certainly congratulate them, the clergy and lay leaders who support all initiatives in fostering vocations and act as an inspiration to their calling. As a reminder, we do offer scholarships to our seminary stu-



Michael Herzak addresses the Diocesan Assembly about insurance matters and preventing child abuse in our communities.

dents. These are not automatic and the students must submit an application to be considered for a scholarship. The applications are submitted for each term.

Another organization that helps seminary students is the Orthodox Women's Council in Connecticut. The procedure is that the local pastor in Bridgeport, Fr. Vadim Pismenny, must submit the names of our students for consideration. I was advised that this council aids one student from each diocese each semester. FOCA also awards scholarships for seminary students.

Although not a member of our diocese, I am personally proud of Fr. Joseph Gallick, of the Albanian Archdiocese, and our other chaplains who are serving or who have been deployed in the U.S. Armed Forces. It is our solemn duty to make sure that our troops receive spiritual care and we are more than honored by Fr. Joseph's service to our men and women of our armed forces, a deed which brings honor to the OCA as well. Unfortunately, this leaves a major burden on parish communities until our chaplains can return.

Local and National Church Responsibilities

I have just returned from St. Tikhon's monastery for the week-long meeting of the Holy Synod and celebration of the Metropolitan's 40th Anniversary of ordination to the Holy Priesthood.

The Metropolitan has also asked that I serve as Episcopal moderator of the OCA's Pension Board. I have accepted this additional responsibility and look forward to working with Fr. Michael Westerberg on this most important committee. Fr. Michael is the chairman of this board.

I have asked each pastor of both dioceses to meet with me during our respective assemblies to schedule my visitations for 2005, although many dates have already been scheduled through next year. There are certainly enough dates open so that each parish may be served.

One of the major aspects of my visitations is the

visible presence that our church is hierarchal. The bishops are responsible for their flocks and more importantly, the bishops are called to serve as pastor to the pastors and their families. Without archpastoral care, the church simply is not the church. Where the bishop is – there too is the church. This is simple Orthodox ecclesiology -

Communication

ONE is a fine vehicle for communication, but we still need individuals in our respective parishes to forward information to Fr. John Dresko, so that a more comprehensive view of our diocese is reflected in the publication. It certainly is not an easy task to gather the information, write the articles, put the issues together and distribute them to the parishes.

Many are receiving the issues via e-mail. This is an inexpensive way to communicate with the members of our diocese at large. How simple it would be to send out *ONE*, as well as news releases, up to date information to our membership at large. I know that privacy is a key issue these days and people are reluctant to give more information than absolutely necessary, but, do consider giving your and your parishioner's e-mail addresses to Fr. John so that you may receive *ONE* electronically.

Electronic communication is also being expanded by our national church chancery. In this way reaching more of our members at large at a minimal expense

Pastoral Support

There are some very telling aspects that speak to us – both from parishes and from pastors. Many parishes in our diocese and sister dioceses nationwide are quite comfortable with their pastors having outside employment – or pastors who are already receiving pensions from former employers.

In many cases, the parishes need their pastors to have outside employment since they are unable and/or unwilling to support their priest, even at a minimal standard of living. At the same time, many pastors today prefer to have outside employment, not simply to support their

families, but to give themselves and their families a sense of security and stability, as well as equity in personal property and control over their own lives and futures.

It appears that this is becoming the norm in many dioceses and spans denominational lines. It also limits the time that pastors, especially those in missions, can spend in spreading the good news and foster growth in our communities.

Concerns

We are all keeping Fr. Paul Burholt and Matushka Gabrielle in our prayers. We know that he is receiving the best, but intensive, treatments.

The same prayerful attention we have for Fr John Kreta and Evelyn as Matushka is also going through medical treatments. And we want them to know that they should not hesitate to ask us or tell us how we may be of help to them in addition to our prayers.

Highlights

Some of the highlights during the past year were both inspirational and uplifting, not only to me personally but to our community at large.

1) The placing of the relics of St. Nicholas in an icon of St. Nicholas at Holy Resurrection in Berlin, New Hampshire – albeit during last years blizzard!

2) The planting of the cross for the new Christ the Savior church building in Southbury, Connecticut and the subsequent occupancy of the community in their new building. We are all looking forward to the consecration scheduled for June 3-4, 2005. If you have a chance, go and see this beautiful building.

3) The consecration of St. Alexis parish in Connecticut must be considered one of the highpoints of our activities of last year. Father, Matushka and the parishioners did a wonderful job of preparation and it was a most prayerful and inspirational experience for all of those attending.

4) Fr. Nicholas Timpko celebrated the 42nd anniversary of Ordination to the Holy Priesthood and his 25th anniversary as pastor of Three Saints Church in Ansonia.

Fr. John Dresko celebrated his 25 years of priesthood at a gala sponsored by his parish.

Fr. Dennis Rhodes and Fr. John Pawelchak also celebrated their 25th priestly anniversaries this past year.

We wish them all many, many more years of service in the Lord's vineyard.

Holy Synod

Although you will be seeing the official minutes published I thought I would brief you on the discussions of our recent Synod meeting.

Metropolitan's Report

The Metropolitan's report is always given first covering his activities as primate of the church. Of note in his report



His Grace, Bishop Nikon, delivers his report to the Diocesan Assembly.

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is the need to reevaluate our status and participation in SCOPA. I am sure we will be hearing more on this subject during the next year.

Department of External Affairs

Reiterated the mutual benefit the pri-matial visitations are to us and the churches that are visited.

FOCA

Both the FOCA President, John Schultz, and Spiritual Advisor, Fr. Eugene Vansuch, pledged the support of FOCA and reconfirmed the aspects of FOCA as a service organization.

Board of Theological Education

The report was given by Fr. Gregory Safchuk, and five candidates who have completed the programs were recommended for ordination to the Holy Diaconate. His Beatitude strongly recommended that the minimum age for the late vocation program be raised from 35 to 45.

AAC

A report was given on the 14th All American Council. Of note, the Statutes of the OCA will not be an agenda item at the 14th AAC but is postponed to the 15th AAC as the updating is a more intensive responsibility as first anticipated.

Insurance

As an honor to His Beatitude's 40th Anniversary, Michael Herzak announced that LCBA will insure all seminary students, while they are in seminary with the following coverage: Student: \$20,000, spouse \$ 5,000 and each child for \$ 2,500. The value of this total is estimated at about \$2,500,000.

Diocese of NY/NJ

After a thorough discussion, it was decided that a full inquiry into the financial difficulties of the recent past will take place. In addition, Archbishop Peter's leave of absence will be extended until the date of his retirement, which will be determined by the Holy Synod.

Episcopal Matters

It is anticipated that information regarding a vicar bishop for the Archdiocese of Canada will be presented to the Holy Synod at the Spring Session.

Bishop Nikolai invited all the members of the Holy Synod for the celebration of the 35th anniversary of the glorification of St Herman. Travel to Alaska will be at our own expense but lodging of "some sort" will be provided when we arrive August 6-9, 2005.

Bishop Nikolai also proposed that nomination of a vicar bishop for Alaska be considered .

Also approved was Bishop Nikolai's suggestion that the Wonderworking Sitka Icon of the Theotokos tour the US in 2005, beginning in September and ending at the Synod meeting in October.

Financial Report

There has been a decrease in financial support in all areas and we are looking into areas to remedy this situation. Fr. Dimitri Oselinsky, OCA Treasurer, presented the 2005 operating budget and it was accepted by the Holy Synod for presentation to the Metropolitan Council.

Blessed Arseny

Bishop Seraphim offered both an oral and written report on the life and work of Archbishop Arseny of Canada. It was decided that Bishop Seraphim continue his work and that the report be given to the canonization committee.

Memorial Day weekend in 2005 will mark the 100th Anniversary of St. Tikhon's Monastery in South Canaan, Pennsylvania. A centennial committee for this celebration was approved and has begun its work.

Report of the Chancellor

Archpriest Michael Westerberg
Chancellor of the Diocese of New England

Your Grace, Reverend Fathers, Sisters and Brothers:

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Welcome to the 41st New England Diocesan Assembly.

Diocesan Life

Six diocesan parishes attained landmark anniversaries in 2004:

- Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church, Chelsea, MA – eighty years.
- All Saints Church, Hartford, CT, and Dormition of the Virgin Church, Stamford, CT – ninety years.
- Holy Trinity Cathedral, Boston, MA, and Holy Resurrection Church, Claremont, NH – ninety-five years.
- Holy Ghost Church, Bridgeport, CT – one-hundred-ten years.

Though the respective rectors and assembly delegates may choose to say more in their reports, we rejoice with two diocesan parishes that realized major goals in their respective parish life. Saint Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Church, Clinton, CT, joyfully celebrated the consecration of their church building on May 8, 2004. Metropolitan Herman presided and Metropolitan Theodosius and Bishop Nikon, with diocesan clergy and faithful, participated in the consecration. Effective May 7, 2004, the status of what had been Saint Alexis *Mission* was formally changed to full 'parish' status.

In November, His Grace, Bishop Nikon, presided at the service of ground-breaking and planting of the cross for the construction of a church building for Christ the Savior Mission, Woodbury, CT. The beautiful church and facilities are now in full use and the church will be consecrated on June 4, 2005. Originally the mission was established in rented facilities in Southbury. As the needs of the expanding mission

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grew, they moved to new rented facilities in neighboring Woodbury, CT. The property the mission acquired and on which they built their new church is again in Southbury. The parish is Christ the Savior Mission, *Southbury, CT*.

Since our last assembly we have experienced the loss of two respected and beloved servants of our Church in America, and our Diocese of New England:

- In December Matushka Olga Kiryluk, of Saints Cyril and Methodius Church, Terryville, CT, fell asleep in the Lord.

- In February retired Archpriest Vitaly Voshchullo, long-time rector of Saint Nicholas Church, Salem, MA, former dean of the Boston Deanery and member of our diocesan council, fell asleep in the Lord. May their memory be eternal!

In September, immediately prior to our last assembly, Father John Hopko was appointed Diocesan Youth Director. Father John rolled up his sleeves and has done excellent work. He deserves our collective diocesan thanks.

In October, Father John Dresko was appointed Director of the newly established Office of Diocesan Communications. This office manages our diocesan web site, and is responsible for distributing diocesan assembly information and forms and for receiving reports. Father John coordinates and facilitates transmission of information from national church offices to parishes and deaneries, and of parish and deanery information to diocesan and national church offices. This is in addition to maintaining diocesan mailing lists and serving as editor and circulation director of *Orthodox New England* [ONE], our excellent diocesan newspaper.

On November 22, 2003, our Diocesan Administrator, His Grace, Bishop Nikon, who also was administrator of the Albanian Archdiocese, was installed as Bishop of Boston and the Albanian Archdiocese. His Grace continues as administrator of our diocese, and without neglecting the Albanian Archdiocese, he continues to labor tirelessly for the good of the

Diocese of New England, its parishes and missions, its clergy and lay faithful.

In November, Father Mark Sherman was elected and blessed by Metropolitan Herman to serve as Dean of the Northern Deanery.

In February Father Deacon Sergius Halvorsen was ordained to the Holy Priesthood, at Saint Peter and Paul Church, Meriden, CT. Father Sergius is attached to the parish.

In June Father George Tyapko, who had been acting rector, was assigned as rector of Saint Nicholas Church, Pittsfield, MA.

In June Father Michael Korolev, who had been acting rector, was assigned as rector of Saints Peter and Paul Church, Springfield, MA.

In September Joshua Mosher, of Holy Transfiguration Church, New Haven, CT, was ordained to the diaconate at Saint Vladimir's Seminary.

For a second year we are pleased to be able to report that, by God's grace, there are no vacant parishes in our diocese at the time of the writing of this report.

Last year we reported that Father Paul Burholt, of Holy Resurrection Church, Claremont, NH, had been presented with a serious health diagnosis. Father Paul continues to recover from the difficult treatments he has needed.

In June of this year Matushka Evelyn Kreta was presented with a serious health diagnosis. Matushka has undergone surgery and continues to undergo difficult treatments. We pray for Father Paul and Matushka Gabrielle Burholt, and Matushka Evelyn and Father John Kreta, and their respective families. May our merciful God direct the hands that care for them.

In 2004 the following clergy awards were approved by Metropolitan Herman and the Holy Synod: • Fathers John Kreta and Marc Vranes were each awarded the Gold Cross • Father William DuBovik was awarded the office of Archpriest • Fathers Vasily Lickwar, John Pawelchak and Andrew Tregubov were each awarded the Jeweled Cross. And re-

tired Archpriest Peter Krochta was awarded a Synodal Gramota on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the Holy Priesthood, April 7, 2004.

National Church Life

In July our Church will assemble in Toronto, Canada, for the 14th All-American Council. For many years I have urged all parishes to set aside funds each year in preparation for this triennial gathering of our Church. It is my hope that parishes have done so and that we will have full representation and participation in Toronto next July.

And remember: Parishes have been billed and council fees are due by December 31st. These fees are assessed on and due from every parish including those that may choose not to attend the council. As required by the national statute, lay delegates to All-American Councils must be elected at a parish meeting. Delegates are not to be appointed by parish clergy, and they are not to be selected by parish councils but by a regular or special general parish meeting.

Approximately eighteen months ago all parishes received a directive regarding comprehensive coverage for sexual misconduct. Parishes were instructed to add the diocese, national chancellor and the Orthodox Church in America to their existing coverage. Some parishes complied in a timely manner. Some clergy never read the directive and/or lost this instruction on their desks rather than presenting it to their parish councils. Some parishes simply paid no attention. However, a number of parishes have made a serious and responsible effort to comply with the directive only to find that their insurance carriers are unwilling to accept the additional exposure. This is the same experience we had on a diocesan level. Having no wish to be difficult or disobedient, we find ourselves unable to comply quickly and promptly. I am pursuing this matter with the insurer of our diocese

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and many diocesan parishes, Emery & Webb. Though I hope to bring this matter to a resolution within the coming weeks, this is not a certainty. If we are not able to comply with the directive of our Holy Synod while remaining with current insurers, at the direction of the diocesan council, we will be making a recommendation that parishes take their business to an insurer willing to comply.

At the last All-American Council a fair-share system of support for the national church was adopted. Because our diocese had adopted a 'fair share' system some years earlier, we do not seem to have had much difficulty applying the same principles to our support for the central church. But we know too that the national budget also relies on an increased level of *voluntary* giving. Just as we urge support of our diocesan stewardship program, *ONE Stewards*, we also urge support of the national program, *The Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards [FOS]*. Good and wise stewardship includes 'first-portion giving,' returning to God a portion of what is already his, and wisely using the remainder for the extension and building up of his kingdom. Overwhelmingly, in the parish and beyond, our difficulty is not money, or its lack. Our difficulty is in our attitude regarding money and all the blessings given by God.

And to go one step further, I ask: "Is your estate in order? Do you have a will? Have you remembered the Church – your parish, the diocese, the National Church, our seminaries and/or monasteries, Orthodox scholarship programs or charities in your will?" This too is wise and responsible Christian stewardship.

Parish Administration

Having followed the procedure for some time, most parishes are helpful and cooperative in the timely reporting of parish numbers to diocesan treasurer, Father Dea-



Diocesan Chancellor Fr. Michael Westerberg serving at the liturgy at the Diocesan Assembly

con Paul Nimchek. However, in many instances the numbers reported do not correspond with reported parish mailing lists. At least annually, parishes are expected to submit updates to both diocesan and national church offices. Names of those who have reposed need to be deleted. Those who have moved away must be removed from parish lists (and a new address reported if possible). Those who have changed addresses while remaining in the same parish need to be receiving their mail promptly and directly at their new addresses. And new parish faithful must be added to parish mailing lists. There is a problem when a parish reports a census of ten faithful while having a mailing list of thirty-five, or twenty newly received catechumens and no new names for the parish mailing list. These numbers are fictitious but the situation is not.

Likewise, parishes that perennially report the exact same census number are receiving into the parish, year after year, the exact number they are burying, or failing to account for losses, or under reporting gains for reasons of laziness, indifference or deception. If asked, Mrs. Lydia Ludemann (lydia@oca.org) at the chancery in Syosset will provide a computer printout of your parish mailing list so that names and addresses can be verified and corrections made. As already mentioned, these corrections also need to be reported to Father John Dresko (jdresko@cox.net) for our diocesan communications.

One other area of parish administration needs our attention – this is in the area of tax reporting for social security purposes. At the end of each calendar year, on either the W-2 form or the 1099 form, parishes are required, by federal statute, to report the cash housing allowance for those who receive cash. For those who live in parish owned housing the fair market value of provided housing must be reported. This amount – either cash or value – is itemized separately from salary. The amount is not taxable income but, by law, it is included in computing social security taxes. Parish councils and parish financial officers have a fiduciary responsibility, a legal obligation to meet this federal requirement. It is not optional in the law. I invite your questions on this matter since it has come to my attention that some of our parishes are not in compliance with the law in this matter. Keep in mind that there is no insurance coverage and no diocesan bailout for parishes or parish officers who have violated the law. Parish financial officers should be particularly concerned about this. (In case I have been at all unclear– this is very serious. See me privately if you do not wish to discuss it on the floor of the assembly.)

ONE Stewards and Stewardship

The goal of our diocesan stewardship program, *ONE Stewards*, is to provide full funding and support for youth work, for scholarships, for diocesan support of the national Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards [FOS], and for the educational, charitable and missionary work of our diocese. Fair share assessments pay diocesan bills; but voluntary giving through *ONE Stewards* provides for the

Christian life of our diocese. Through the *ONE Stewards* program we foster and support Christian conduct and programs on a diocesan level. I challenge each assembly delegate and observer, clergy and lay, to be a member of *ONE Stewards* and to make a commitment of support. I call on each of you as representatives to this assembly and as parish leaders, to work within your parish to meet or exceed the minimal goal of 25% membership in *ONE Stewards* from every diocesan parish and mission. This year we came close to meeting our financial goal. When we turn to the proposed budget you will see that the bar has been raised, the goal increased, since there is more work that can and must be done.

Thanks to director Greg Shesko and to Deacon Paul Nimchek who this year has added to his work list the additional task of *ONE Stewards* treasurer and record keeper.

Diocesan Council and Officers

The Diocesan Council met four times since our last assembly to conduct regular diocesan affairs, to insure the continuing effective operation of the various diocesan departments and committees, and for the fulfillment of its many responsibilities for the life of our diocese. The diocesan finance committee meets occasionally with the finance committee of the Albanian Archdiocese to consider and discuss areas of mutual interest and concern. The next such meeting is November 10th.

"Thank you!" to the members of the diocesan council and especially: to diocesan treasurer Protodeacon Paul Nimchek, and to diocesan secretary Father John Hopko. Thanks to Father Steven and Matushka Cindy Voytovich for leading the diocesan choir director training program. Thanks to Father John Dresko for his work on our diocesan newspaper-*Orthodox New England*, and "Thank you!" to all the members of the diocesan council, diocesan committees and departments.

"Thank you!" to the deans of our three deaneries: Father Robert Arida, Father Mark Sherman, and Father

John Dresko, and to the dean of our diocesan missions, Father John Kreta.

I pray that our diocesan family will grow in faith, in love and in spiritual understanding. And I ask your forgiveness if I have offended or sinned against parishes, clergy or diocesan faithful during the course of the year. May the life-giving Holy Trinity continue to bless and guide the life of the Diocese of New England, her parishes and missions, and all her faithful.

PARISHES FROM 3

Ethiopian Orthodox Church, to help restore the 500-year-old church building, which is in danger of collapsing. The brother of our parishioner, Elizabeth Abebe, is a parishioner.

We extend our appreciation to guest lecturers (Dean John Erickson, Professor John Barnet, Father John Behr, Father Alexander Rentel and Dr. Albert Rossi), faculty members of St. Vladimir's Seminary, who traveled to New Haven for the annual SVS Lecture Series. We were delighted to see so many returnees to the SVS lecture series and the many newcomers.

Thanks also to the Orthodox Christian Library Outreach (OCLO) members and Susan Lickwar for coordinating these events and the great "munchies" on the hospitality table. Many thanks also to the many guests who attended the lectures for bringing goodies. May God grant all of you Many Years! We hope you will return next year and bring a friend.

Our Ladies Auxiliary is planning to hold a bake sale on Sunday, December 19th. They will also have a Botchka and a small craft table (afghans/hand work, etc) so one may purchase Christmas gifts.

The Ladies Auxiliary is preparing Christmas packages for the resident veterans at the West Haven Veterans Hospital. Father Michael, Chaplain at the VA, will distribute the packages.

Alexis Swan once again is coordinating the Christmas Stocking Project for our parish.

-submitted by Barbara Ann Dixon

Meriden, Connecticut

We at Ss. Peter and Paul have been busy since the beginning of summer. On June 29th, we celebrated our Parish's name day. We had a beautiful evening and Father Timothy Lowe and Father Sergius Halvorsen celebrated a Vespertal Liturgy. After Liturgy, we retired to the basement for our annual Ss. Peter & Paul Name Day Picnic. Our team of expert barbecue chefs cranked up the grills and treated us to hot dogs and hamburgers. In July, our Brotherhood held their Parking Lot Picnic.

On August 3rd, our parish had the pleasure of hosting a lecture by Fr. Marcel Sigrist from the Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem. Fr. Sigrist holds a Ph.D from Yale University in Assyriology and returns every summer to Yale to work on their ancient clay tablets. He gave an excellent lecture on the meaning of the resurrectional appearances of Christ.

He focused on three of them: Mary weeping and Christ appearing to her in the garden, the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and Christ's appearance to the 11 disciples. He connected these three appearances to their Old Testament prototypes to show the deeper meaning of Christ's resurrection and his healing power being given to a new creation. With Mary Magdalene, he connected it to the creation of Eve and the beginning of a new creation, with Mary symbolic of the Church. He likened the story of the two disciples to the Genesis story of Cain and Abel and the overcoming of the ancient antagonism of brothers who are now united in the burning love for the Gospel. Cain and Abel are very symbolic of Jew and Gentile now united in Christ. And the final appearance he referenced the story of Joseph and his eleven brothers who had betrayed him but are now redeemed by the merciful Christ. The evening was completed with a fellowship gathering after the lecture.

On September 10-11, we held a Tag Sale at our Community Center. Susan Macura organized the event

PARISHES TO 12

On Death

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh (†2004)
(con't from last month)

DEATH AS ENEMY AND FRIEND

Yet things are not so simple. It is true that, as St. Paul says, to live is Christ and to die is gain. It is true that to die is not to be divested of temporal life, but to be clothed with eternity. But there is a further point emphasised by St Paul, as also by the rest of Scripture. Man was not created for death; his calling is for eternal life; death is the result of sin in the sense of separation from God, breach with neighbour, loss of contact with man's real and deeper self. From that point of view, death is the last enemy that shall be destroyed (1 Cor 15:26).

Death is the enemy, God's as much as ours. Indeed, it is God's enemy in the most striking and dramatic way, for it extends even to Christ himself. But while on the one hand death is such an enemy, the fact that it does reach out to Christ, that it kills him who is perfect man and God himself incarnate, also shows that it is not an evil devoid of meaning. For however much a result of sin and evil death may be, it is not in itself a sin or an evil which necessarily corrupts whoever it touches. Christ was not defiled in his death on the Cross, in his descent into hell, in his partaking of the total tragedy of death: his person was not polluted by communing in its mystery.

So there is an ambiguity here. On the one hand death should not exist, death is the result of evil and is to be defeated. On the other hand death alone enables us to break through the vicious circle of endlessness (and endlessness is something quite different from eternity). If there were no death in a world of sin, evil and corruption, we would slowly decay and disintegrate without ever being able to escape the horror of such gradual destruction.

There was a soldier in a Russian fable who managed to capture death and put it into a bag. He carried the bag on his back, safely secured, and was regarded at first as a benefactor who had saved mankind from its greatest scourge. But then it became obvious that while death might have gone, illness and old age were as much present as before. And when the soldier one day met an old woman, bent with age and illness, she shook her fist at him and shouted: 'Look what you have done, you evil good-for-nothing. You may have captured death, but you have de-

prived me of my freedom. Here am I, a prisoner of endlessness, part of a process that has no resolution'. The soldier realized what harm he had done and unleashed death. I need hardly add that it is still free and abroad.

PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL DEATH

Each Easter midnight and throughout the forty days that follow we sing that Christ is risen, having undone death by death. And yet what do we see? Death free and abroad, people dying as before. It would seem as if we are affirming something that we know to be untrue.

But we should keep in mind that there are two aspects of death. There is physical death, but there is also death, understood as separation from God, as descent into Sheol, the place where God is not, the place of his radical and definitive absence. It is this second aspect of death which is certainly the more cruel and atrocious. When we look at icons of Christ's harrowing of hell or speak of it in the Apostle's Creed, we are confronted by something unquestionably real. The Lord experienced not only the first aspect of death, but the second also. He chose to share with us in all the consequences of evil – including the final separation from God ('My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?').

But although he descends to the place where all those who have lost God descend, he brings with him the fullness of the divine presence. Consequently there is now no place left where God is not. And it is this which allows us to understand our situation since Christ's death and resurrection. We have still to undergo a temporary death, what St Paul describes as a falling asleep (1 Cor 15:6). But there is no longer the death which was the terror of mankind, the final dissolution and separation from God. And in that sense death is indeed undone by death. Even now –however germinally and tentatively – we are the heirs of eternal life.

FACING DEATH

I once went to preach about death at a British university. Afterwards, the chaplain said to me, 'Do you know, I have never seen a dead person'. I was utterly amazed that a priest, a man in his fifties moreover, had never met death in his family life or in his priestly function – even during the war.

It was an incident that made me take

more note of my surroundings, and I realized that there is a very strong feeling here that death is a subject to avoid. The dead person should be committed to the care of the undertakers, while the living should turn away from the problem, and the less said about it the better. I found all this very offensive. Since giving that sermon I have taken every opportunity to speak about preparation for death to medical students, doctors, nurses, and to anyone else who is willing to listen.

And I have made the discovery that people are quite ready to think about preparing for the death of others. At the same time very few are prepared to reflect that their own turn will come, and that preparation for death really begins with assessing death for oneself, taking a stand, and learning how to live well in order to die well – not so much in moral terms as skillfully, in the right way.

Yet we are all of us sick with the terminal disease known as mortality. It may take us some time to die of it, possibly thirty, sixty years or more. But we are all without exception sick with it and there is no doubt but that death will ensue. It follows that preparing for death cannot concern merely the other person or persons in our care, it concerns ourselves.

FREEDOM FROM THE POWER OF DEATH

How then shall we prepare? From one point of view death has power over us. We were born and we shall die. It is as simple as that. But there is another aspect of death over which we can have some control.

Some years ago one of our parishioners fell ill. He was taken to hospital, where it was discovered that he had inoperable cancer and would die. He was not told about it at first. But his family was, and so was I. When I went to see him his first reaction (as so often is the case) was one of protest and recrimination. 'There is so much still to do, and here am I lying in this bed, unable to do a thing. How long is it to be?'

I reminded him of something he had often said: 'If only I could put a stop to time, if only I could simply be.' I reminded him also that as yet he had never made any serious attempt to put a stop to time. Now God had done it for him. Thus he had no reason to complain, nor any reason to feel guilty. The whole thing was beyond his power to change. Yet lying still as he was, with time flowing by on either side of him, he was given the

stillness of his present condition. And he could be as freely, completely and perfectly as he chose.

When I asked him whether he felt that he was yet in a condition of being, he answered, 'There is still turmoil within me. I can do nothing, yet I go through the motions in respect of all sorts of things'. I put it to him that illness always confronts us with the things that are ultimate, most obviously with death. In death there are two elements or powers in action. The one power is extrinsic: the germs, the virus, the cancer or whatever it is that seeks to destroy the body. The other consists of all the negative attitudes and feelings that suck away vitality from within: resentment, bitterness, remorse, regrets, lack of peace. I urged him to concentrate on all the power of death that lay within him, and to let the doctors look after the rest.

After that we went through a long process (extending over several months) during which, day by day, he assessed his attitude to those who were closest to him. He had the time to do it; moreover was able to do it in the right spirit, seeing things as they were, not from a pragmatic point of view, but from an absolute angle. In the process he made his peace with all those around him.

Next we went back into his past, moving from one thing to another, seeking to understand his own sense of guilt, to assess what he had done or left undone, what others had done or omitted to do. Gradually all this field was cleared. It took a great deal of courage. For it is by no means easy for a man to look at his own life from the stability of the present moment and to make this moment the beginning of God's judgement on himself.

Eventually, he reached the point when he was almost transparent, so weak that he could hardly use his hands to bring food to his lips. Yet he said to me, 'How extraordinary it is. I am a dying man, there is nothing left of my strength. Yet I have never felt so intensely alive as I feel now'. He had found himself at that point of absolute cogency and stability which was free and independent of whatever might happen to his body.

Only if we free ourselves from all the germs of death which are within us can we reach such a point, where we become aware that we are ultimately immortal, though our bodies die.

IT IS NOT TOO LATE

When we recall our past as this man did, we sometimes remember someone we have

harmed, but who is now long since dead; and it seems as if there is no way of setting things right. Let me give an example. I met a man in his eighties who, nearly sixty years before, when he was an officer in the Russian Civil War, had accidentally shot the girl he loved, a nurse in his unit. For the rest of his life he could never find peace. He told me that he had repented deeply, had confessed and received absolution. But it made no difference: nothing could free him from his sense of guilt.

So I said to him, 'Why do you turn only to God, to Christ, to a priest to be forgiven? These were not your victims. Turn to the one you killed, to the girl'. He was taken aback. 'What do you mean, "turn to the girl"? I killed her sixty years ago.' 'Indeed you did', I answered. 'For that very reason, when you are at prayer this evening turn to her and say, "It is sixty years ago now, but I still carry the guilt and reproach of what I did to you. As the victim, you are the only one who has the power to forgive. Forgive me. And ask God to give me an assurance of forgiveness through peace".' He acted on my suggestion and indeed gained such assurance.

Too often we fail to resolve something in our past because we turn in the wrong direction. If God is not the God of the dead but of the living (Matt 22:33), then all those who have departed this life are alive in him; we, for our part, can turn to them for their intercession and forgiveness. All too frequently people who have lost someone whom they loved feel that they have not loved them as perfectly as they should; that they are indebted to them in terms of love, but that now it is too late to do anything about it. This is a mistake which we should never allow ourselves to make. It is never too late if we truly believe that God is the God of the living. Never should we say that we loved one another in the past tense. The death of the body does not involve a breach in a relationship that was, is and always remains between people who met and loved each other on earth.

THE SEEDS WE SOW

Death is never the end. The good we have done continues after us and bears fruit in the lives of others. Unfortunately, the corollary is also true: we can also leave a legacy of evil.

On the positive side, consider the effect of the Gospels. There are countless people who have been converted and transformed by reading even a small

passage from them. This they gain from what someone, many centuries ago, formulated and wrote down for the sake of Christ. I myself owe my faith to St Mark. If there is anything good that has come out of my life it is because one day, when I was fifteen years of age, I read St Mark's Gospel and Christ revealed himself and entered into my life.

By contrast, I think of quite other people who have written books, such as the French nineteenth century writer Gobineau. Gobineau wrote some remarkable short stories, but also a miserable little treatise on the inequality of races. It is a treatise that would now be altogether and deservedly forgotten, except for one thing: it was read by Hitler. It is difficult to suppose that Gobineau shares no responsibility before God for all that resulted from his book. He was a theoretician. But his theories became practice, and they were to cost millions of innocent lives.

In this connection, I remember a fable by Krylov. Two individuals were sentenced to hell and placed in neighbouring cauldrons. One was a murderer, the other had merely written some trashy novels. The author took a quick look over the rim of his cauldron to see how the murderer was faring. He himself was being boiled so fiercely that he could not imagine how his neighbour might be treated. To his indignation he saw the murderer basking in tepid water. He summoned the devil on duty and expressed his dissatisfaction: 'I merely wrote some novels, and yet you give me such a violent boiling. Whereas this man committed murder and he is relaxing as if that were his bath'. 'True', said the devil, 'but that's no accident, it's deliberate.' 'How so?' 'Well', said the devil, 'this man murdered someone in a fit of rage. So we give him a hard boiling every now and again because that's how his rage flared up, then we give him a rest because it subsided. As for you, whenever anyone buys one of your books we stoke up the fire under your cauldron and add extra fuel'.

There is a theological point here. Our life does not end conveniently when we die, even on earth. It continues over the centuries through heredity and through the by-products of our existence; and we continue to carry a responsibility for its repercussions. Thus, we have met today; I have spoken; I shall be answerable for anything that you will have received and for the way in which it may affect your life.

** - Edited version of two addresses given at the Fellowship Conference 1978. Published in Sobornost, vol.1, 2, 1979. P. 8-18.*

PARISHES FROM 9

and coaxed parishioners to search their attics and basements for those long forgotten treasures. We had a steady stream of people both days, searching the racks and tables for a good bargain. The event was so successful that we held another Tag sale on November 6th.

We held our Annual Parish Picnic on October 3rd at the Community Lake in Wallingford. We were blessed with a nice early fall day and all who attended had a good time. In October, our Seniors got together to make blintzes. In November, our Church School hosted Coffee Hour to help raise funds for the OCA Annual Christmas Stocking Project. On November 7th, Father Timothy Lowe celebrated a memorial Panahida for all departed members who are remembered in our Endowment Fund.

On November 14th, we held our Seventh Annual Thanksgiving Feast. All parishioners were invited and once again, we had a large turn out. All present enjoyed turkey, stuffing, gravy, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, corn, squash, carrots, salad, baked breads, muffins, apple pies, and pumpkin pies. We also collected food goods and prepared several Thanksgiving Day baskets for needy families who live in the area of our Church.

Our sympathy goes out to the families of George Lukashevich, Arlene Gintoff, and Frances Mongillo who have passed away. Memory Eternal!

We have several events planned over the next few months, so give us a call if you would like to join us.

- submitted by John S. Nighyew

Southbury, Connecticut

We are beginning to settle into our new home and welcoming many visitors and curious passers by. Our open houses for our friends at St. Teresa's Catholic Church and for our neighbors opened the doors to well over 250 people. Father continues to fly the welcome flag when the church is open for those who would like to come in and

visit the church or with Father. We have been blessed with several new families and additions to our Live Wire Sunday school program.

On Sunday, October 24, the children in our Sunday school (Live Wires) provided a delicious extended brunch for us to enjoy. The children were able to collect \$542 for Christmas Stocking Project.

We were honored to have Fr. Thomas Hopko visit with us on October 31 to celebrate Liturgy and share a lecture on his new CD series discussing The Lord's Prayer.

During the month of November we staffed the Woodbury Food Bank. We also continue our weekly donations which Pauline Driscoll transports to help fill the shelves.

Our Advent Friend program will soon begin. Children are matched with a shut-in member of our community, praying for their friend and saving up money for a special, thoughtful gift which they will bring on a home visit before the end of advent.

- submitted by Sarah Cole

SVS Christmas Retreat

St. Vladimir's Seminary invites students in high school and college to "The Passion of the Christ," a Christmas retreat to be held on the campus of the seminary December 27-29, 2004. Students from ages sixteen to twenty-two will meet together, discuss their faith, pray together, and learn from interesting teachers. They will also take a fun afternoon excursion.

The total cost for the retreat is sixty-five dollars. This covers room, board, and an afternoon excursion. Travel to the seminary must be arranged independently. The retreat begins at 4:00 PM on Monday, December 27, and ends early in the afternoon on Wednesday, December 29. For more information, contact Fr. Steven Belonick at:

914-961-8313, ext. 328

ONE-Orthodox New England

P.O. Box 2876

New Britain, CT 06050-2876

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