

Volume 45/Number 4 ■ Winter 2009/2010

The Orthodox Church

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA



ICONS

Windows to the Kingdom of God

■ EPISCOPAL ELEVATIONS

DAHULICH, V. Rev. Michael was elected by the Holy Synod of Bishops as Bishop of New York and the Diocese of New York-New Jersey on September 22, 2009. Bishop-elect Michael will be consecrated on Saturday, May 8, 2010.

■ RECEPTIONS

BARTEK, Rev. Andrew is canonically received into the ranks of clergy of the Orthodox Church in America by Metropolitan Jonah from the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of the USA. He is under the omophorion of Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia and attached to the Diocese of Eastern PA/ September 1, 2009.

■ ORDINATIONS

FRANCHAK, Deacon Jason was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia at St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery Church, South Canaan, PA. He is under the omophorion of Bishop Tikhon and attached to the Diocese of Eastern PA/ September 8, 2009.

HICKMAN, Daniel was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Metropolitan Jonah at Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Jonah/ September 8, 2009.

NICHOLAS, James was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas at St. Justin Martyr Church, Jacksonville, FL. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Jonah and attached to the Diocese of the South/ December 9, 2007.

TARRIS, Michael was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Bishop Benjamin of San Francisco at SS. Constantine and Helen/Holy Theophany Church, Colorado Springs, CO. He is under the omophorion of Bishop Benjamin and attached to the Diocese of the West/ September 13, 2009.

WHITFIELD, Deacon Theophan was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Metropolitan Jonah at Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Jonah/ September 8, 2009.

■ ASSIGNMENTS

BARTEK, Rev. Andrew is appointed Acting Rector of Holy Trinity Church, Catasauqua, PA/ October 1, 2009.

BOLDIREFF, V. Rev. Nicholas is released from duties at Holy Trinity Cathedral, San Francisco, CA and appointed Assistant Priest of Holy Virgin Mary Cathedral, Los Angeles, CA/ October 1, 2009.

FECANIN, V. Rev. Alexander, who was Priest-in-Charge, is appointed Rector of St. Symeon the New Theologian Church, Birmingham, AL/ September 11, 2009.

FRANCHAK, Rev. Jason is attached to Holy Trinity Church, Pottstown, PA/ September 8, 2009.

GREENDYK, Deacon Jesse is released from duties at St. Nicholas Church, Whitestone, NY and from the Diocese of New York-New Jersey. Remaining under the omophorion of Metropolitan Jonah, he is attached to Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY/ August 14, 2009.

HERBEL, Rev. Dellas Oliver, who was on loan to the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, is released from this status and returned to the omophorion of Archbishop Job of Chicago. He remains attached to St. Herman Church, Minneapolis, MN/ August 11, 2009.

HICKMAN, Deacon Daniel is attached to Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY/ September 8, 2009.

[HOFFMAN], Igumen Joseph, in addition to duties at Church of the Holy Transfiguration, Pearl River, NY, is appointed Superior of Holy Cross Monastery, Niagara Falls, NY/ September 9, 2009.

* **KHALIMANOV, V. Rev. Nikolay**, who was on loan to the Diocese of the West from the Russian Orthodox Church, is released from duties at Holy Virgin Mary Cathedral, Los Angeles, CA, and from the Diocese of the West and returned to the Russian Orthodox Church/ September 12, 2009.

MAHAFFEY, V. Rev. David is released from duties at Holy Trinity Church, Pottstown, PA/ September 30, 2009. He is appointed Acting Rector of St. Nicholas Church, Bethlehem, PA/ October 1, 2009.

McFARLAND, Deacon Gary, who was awaiting assignment, is attached to St. Anthony the Great Mission, Bozeman, MT/ September 13, 2009.

NICHOLAS, Deacon James is attached to St. Justin Martyr Church, Jacksonville, FL/ December 9, 2007.

OGAN, Rev. David, who was awaiting assignment, is attached to St. Seraphim of Sarov Cathedral, Dallas, TX/ September 8, 2009.

PATTERSON, Rev. Justin, who was Priest-in-Charge, is appointed Rector of St. Athanasius Church, Nicholasville, KY/ September 20, 2009.

PAVLOV, Rev. Roman, who was attached, is appointed Second Priest of Christ the Saviour Sobor, Toronto, ON, Canada/ February 1, 2009.

RUCKER, Rev. David C. is released from duties at St. Justin Martyr Church, Jacksonville, FL and from the Diocese of the South. He remains under the omophorion of Metropolitan Jonah and is attached to St. Sergius of Radonezh Chapel, Oyster Bay Cove, NY. His duties with the Orthodox Christian Mission Center remain the same/ September 1, 2009.

TARRIS, Deacon Michael is attached to Transfiguration of Christ Cathedral, Denver, CO/ September 13, 2009.

VASSIOUCHKINE, Deacon Alexei is released from duties at Christ the Saviour Sobor, Toronto, ON, Canada and attached to the Bishop's Chapel of St. Silouan the Athonite, Johnstown, ON, Canada/ September 4, 2009.

WHITFIELD, Rev. Theophan is attached to Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY/ September 8, 2009.

WORTHINGTON, Rev. James is released from duties at SS. Peter and Paul Church, Endicott, NY and appointed Acting Rector of SS. Peter and Paul Church, East Herkimer, NY/ August 23, 2009.

YOUNG, Rev. Nicholas, who was Priest-in-Charge, is assigned Rector of St. Nicholas of Myra Mission, Toronto, ON, Canada. He is also released from

duties at Christ the Saviour Sobor, Toronto, ON, Canada/ April 19, 2009.

■ RELEASED

MISNIK, Rev. Leonid is released from the omophorion of Archbishop Seraphim and the Archdiocese of Canada, transferred to the omophorion of Metropolitan Jonah, and subsequently granted a canonical release to the Russian Orthodox Church/ September 4, 2009.

■ ON LOAN

ZITON, Rev. Stephen is placed on loan to the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Denver. He remains attached to St. Theodosius Cathedral, Cleveland, OH/ September 1, 2009.

■ RETIRED

CROCKETT, Rev. Ignatius, who was suspended, has his suspension lifted. He is granted retirement and attached to St. Symeon the New Theologian Church, Birmingham, AL/ September 11, 2009.

■ DEATHS

BREYAN, V. Rev. George, who in retirement was attached to St. Andrew the First-Called Church, New Port Richey, FL, died on September 14, 2009. *May his memory be eternal!*

[COOKE], Archimandrite Gabriel, who was attached to the Monastery of St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco, Manton, CA, died on September 10, 2009/ *May his memory be eternal!*

■ PARISHES

ARCHDIOCESE OF CANADA/ New Status.

St. Nicholas of Myra Mission Station, Toronto, ON, Canada is granted mission status and is now known as St. Nicholas of Myra Mission/ April 19, 2009.

DIOCESE OF THE SOUTH/ New Status.

St. Symeon the New Theologian Mission, Birmingham, AL, is granted parish status and is now known as St. Symeon the New Theologian Church/ September 11, 2009.

DIOCESE OF THE SOUTH/ New Status. St.

Athanasius Mission, Nicholasville, KY is granted parish status and is now known as St. Athanasius Church/ September 20, 2009.

DIOCESE OF THE WEST/ New Status. St. Anne

Mission, Corvallis, OR, is granted parish status and is now known as St. Anne Church/ September 13, 2009.

NOTE: * indicates non-OCA clergy.

■ EPISCOPAL CONSECRATIONS

[ROCHON], Archimandrite Irene was consecrated to the Episcopacy at Annunciation Cathedral, Ottawa, ON, Canada on October 1, 2009, and is now the Bishop of Quebec City, Auxiliary to His Eminence, Archbishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada. The following were the consecrating hierarchs: Metropolitan Jonah; Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate; Archbishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada; Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia

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IMPORTANT NOTE CONCERNING THIS ISSUE OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

In light of current financial realities facing the Orthodox Church in America, this issue of The Orthodox Church will only be available on-line on the OCA web site at www.oca.org. An announcement concerning printing and distribution of future issues via bulk mail to all parishes will appear on the OCA web site at www.oca.org at the beginning of April.

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On the eve of North America's first Orthodox Episcopal Assembly

The journey of the Orthodox Church in North America is entering a new stage. This spring, following the Great Feast of Pentecost, some 60 Orthodox bishops will gather for the inaugural meeting of the Episcopal Assembly of North America mandated by the IV Pan-Orthodox Pre-Conciliar conference at Chambesy, Switzerland, in June 2009. They will convene in New York at the invitation of Archbishop Demetrios of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, acting as representative of the Ecumenical Patriarch.

The Primate of the Orthodox Church in America, Metropolitan Jonah, has already affirmed the “Chambesy process,” telling the other hierarchs of the Standing Conference of Bishops at their meeting in the fall of 2009 that the Orthodox Church in America welcomes the creation of the Episcopal Assembly and regards the Assembly as an important and promising stage of the journey towards a fully united and self-governing Orthodox Church in North America.

In the Episcopal Assembly, all of the hierarchs – with one exception – will be bishops of patriarchates represented at the Chambesy conference of 2009. The one exception will be the bishops of the Orthodox Church in America. The OCA is not invited to the Pan-Orthodox Pre-Conciliar conferences, yet it is a member of SCOBA and will take its place in the Episcopal Assembly.

The autocephaly of the OCA, granted by the Patriarchate of Moscow in 1970, is recognized by four other Churches – Georgia, Bulgaria, Poland, and the Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia. The Orthodox Churches are divided into three parts on the question of the autocephaly of the OCA – one third fully recognize the OCA's autocephaly, one third withhold judgment, one third are strongly opposed. Nevertheless, in the words of the Ecumenical Patriarch to the OCA, the OCA is seen as a canonical Church, with legitimate bishops and valid sacraments.

During the decades of its autocephaly, the OCA has endeavored to be faithful to the Orthodox missionary vocation in North America, understanding the Orthodox mission in Alaska (1794) as the beginning of its history. The OCA also has endeavored to contribute to the building of a united Orthodoxy. The stated convictions and principles of the OCA have emphasized collaboration with the other

Orthodox churches in mission and in the quest for unity.

From time to time, voices within the OCA have slipped into triumphalism. These voices have been heard as making exclusivist claims for the OCA – claims suggesting that “others” must submit to the “canonical primacy” of the OCA in America. Such triumphalism is inappropriate, unjustified, and counterproductive. It also contradicts the Tomos of Autocephaly granted to the OCA by the Patriarchate of Moscow. The Tomos is clear that the new autocephalous Church is mandated to live in peace and collaboration with the other Orthodox churches in America while striving for the unity of all Orthodox.

For the OCA, the decisions of the Chambesy Conference of 2009 are a reminder of a previous stage in the history of the OCA. In the 1960s, the Russian Orthodox Church of North America – the “Metropolia” – appealed to the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras to take a strong initiative in resolving the canonical challenges and irregularities in America. The Ecumenical Patriarch's response was – you must solve your problems with the Russian Orthodox Church. It was in following this advice of Patriarch Athenagoras that the OCA achieved both reconciliation with the Russian Orthodox Church and recognition of the OCA's self-governing status in the form of the Tomos of Autocephaly.

Now the global pan-Orthodox process, led by the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, has achieved consensus on the question of Episcopal Assemblies in the so-called diaspora. The Orthodox Churches in America, including the OCA, are now invited to work together by consensus towards common mission and common witness. The hope expressed by the appeal to Patriarch Athenagoras in the 1960s is on the way to its fulfillment.

The Feast of Pentecost – both in June 2009 and in May 2010 – connects our pilgrimage of unity to the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles and on the apostolic community. We pray that the grace of the Holy Spirit may inspire us to build up of the Body of Christ in the spirit of mutual love and may equip us to collaborate in ministry and mission. And in the mist of the hard work this will require, we will depend on the joy to which Saint Seraphim of Sarov testified when he greeted all who came to him with the words “Christ is Risen, my joy!” ■

He is not here. He has risen, just as He said....
Go quickly and tell His disciples.

Matthew 28:5

Processions and emotions

We hold palms and pussy willows, celebrating the Palm Sunday procession from Bethany hill across the Kedron valley through the eastern gates of Jerusalem. We reenact the joy of Our Lord's followers on that glorious proclamation of His claim to leadership as the long-awaited Messiah of Israel. We are full of joy – even if, unlike the disciples on that day, we realize full well the rollercoaster of emotions that follow and the events of that traumatic week which changed history forever.

Joy turns to grief as we play the role of pall bearers at the funeral of Life. Five days later, we emulate the servants of the wealthy Sanhedrin members, Joseph the nobleman and Nicodemus, the disciple who wanted to keep his belief in Christ secret. The Church wants us to realize the incredible and muse on what is more than a contradiction – we mere humans, who were given life through the Word of God, are taking the Source of life to the grave. We reenact the procession from Nain [Luke 7:11] of a weeping widow in the entourage from that village approached by the Lord Jesus and His disciples. There Life personified raised the boy and cheered the lad's mother. This time it is Jesus on the bier, and we are here taking His corpse to the tomb. The disciples were in hiding for fear of their own lives. Here is where we part company with many who refuse to believe there is more to the story. What else but faith alone can transcend the logic of life ending in death? Here's where we separate from Jews, Muslims, humanists and all other non-Christians. Death has its temporary – but hardly permanent – victory.

Two more glorious processions follow. The Holy Myrrhbearers, who had been following the procession of the Lord's burial from a distance, could hardly wait for the Sabbath to end. They would then do the proper anointing of the Lord's body according to their custom. Those who have lost one they loved dearly – a parent, spouse or child – will recall the therapy of the burial ritual. Helpless,

overwhelmed with grief, unwilling to accept the raw fact of death, a “survivor,” as they are called, accepts the task of a proper burial. It's the only therapy available to assuage the awful feelings of despair.

But those wonderful women who loved Jesus with such intensity were surprised with a wonderful joy. The stone had been rolled aside, the tomb was empty but for an angel who told them what had happened and ordered them to rush back and tell Saint Peter and the others what they had learned. Can it be termed a procession, the lifting of their long dresses, stumbling, breathing heavily, running as best as their sandals would allow, to appear breathless before the men, with such an incredible tale? Or the response by Saint Peter and the young John, hustling to find out for themselves what part of this story might be true?

That's where our annual procession finds us – imitating the race of the two apostles. How different is our run to the tomb. Ours is regal, solemn yet hopeful, because we know what we shall discover. Not with the limber legs of John do we sprint ahead of the elder Peter; rather, we all follow the Cross of Our Lord, because the Cross itself offers us the worst and best, the end and the beginning, the final word of life as we know it, and the first word of the Word of Life: “Christ is Risen!” ■



Father Thomas Hopko

The human icon

The invisible God has become visible in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. This is the essence of the Christian faith.

Jesus Christ is “the icon of the invisible God” [Colossians 1:15; 2 Corinthians 4:4]. In Him, the God Who cannot be seen is now seen. The Lord Himself declared this when He told Philip that “the one who has seen me has seen the Father” [John 14:9]. In Jesus Christ, God’s incarnate Son and Word, God has shown Himself in the most perfect, complete, and definitive way possible.

God has become man as Jesus. He has assumed human nature, so that human persons could be what they were made to be from the beginning: creatures made in God’s image and likeness, for unending life in communion with God.

God’s plan for us, as the saints have said, is that we become by divine grace everything that God Himself is by nature. Human beings created, redeemed and sanctified by God through Christ and the Holy Spirit are made “gods by grace,” holy as God is holy, citizens of paradise, co-rulers with Christ in God’s Kingdom.

In and through Christ, we not only *know God*, but we also *know ourselves* in our true being and destiny as children of the Most High, creatures made in God’s image and likeness to live the divine life.

Created in God’s image, according to His likeness, we are made to be loved by God and to become lovers, loving with the very love with which God, Who is Love, loves us [1 John 4:8,16]. This is our calling as creaturely icons of God.

Jesus Christ not only gives the commandment of love. He manifests what love is through the cross. He actualizes it perfectly in His human life. He gives the power of this love to His disciples in the gift of the Spirit. When Christ pours the love of His Father into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, we are empowered to love with God’s very own love [Romans 5:5].

Christ’s “new commandment” is not simply to love. To love is the “old commandment,” the central commandment in the law of Moses, which we have “from the beginning” [1 John 2:7]. To love is the teaching of every religion and philosophy born of purity and light.

What is radically *new* in Christ’s “new commandment” is that we are to love one another *as He has loved us* [John 13:34;15:12]. We are to love everyone, including our worst enemies, as God in Christ loves us: completely, wholly, perfectly, absolutely, boundlessly, without reservation or condition.

According to the scriptures, human beings can find and fulfill themselves as icons of God only in loving union with others. We are persons in communion with other persons, just like the persons of the Holy Spirit: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The unique thing about God according to Christian belief is that He is Father by nature. God is not alone in His divinity. Indeed, He cannot be. God is Love, and therefore He has a divine Son according to His very being as God. He also has a personal Holy Spirit Who proceeds from Him as God and rests eternally in His uncreated Son.

The Godhead is a community of persons from all eternity. Divinity is three persons in an identity of being and life. This is what the Nicene Creed means when it says that the Son of God is “begotten of the Father before all ages” – *begotten*, not *created* – “of one essence with the Father,” the divine Son and Word, “by Whom all things are made;” and that the Holy Spirit is the “Lord, the Giver of Life... Who is worshipped and glorified with the Father and the Son.”

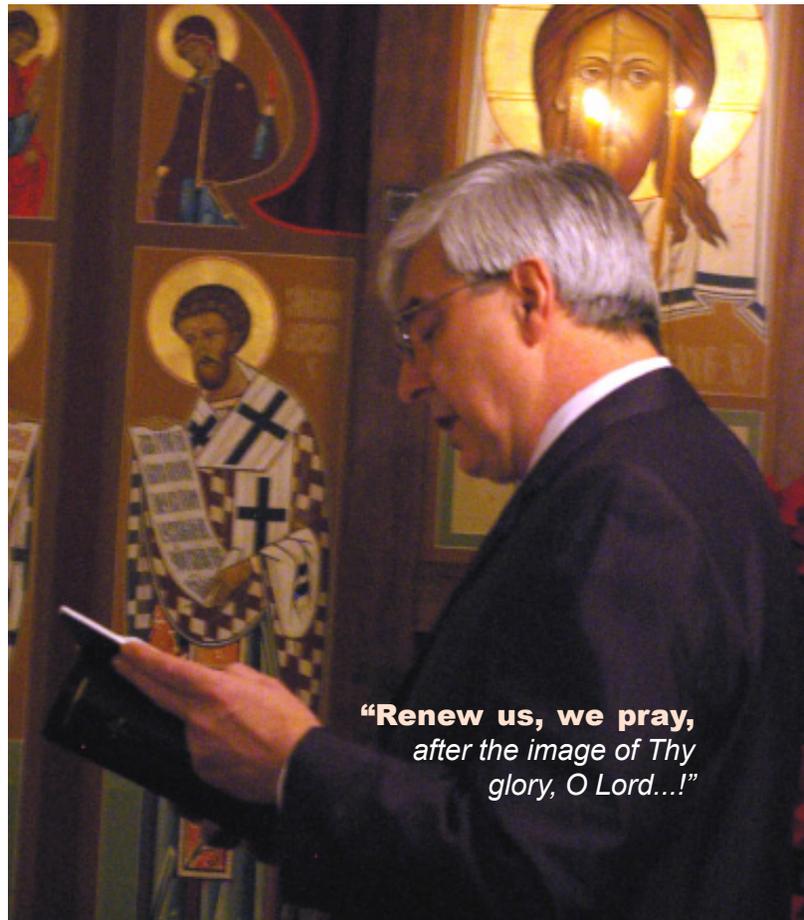
We human beings express in creaturely form the very being of God. We too are persons of the same nature, “of one essence,” with each other. We too are to form a perfect community of love.

The Church of Christ in its sacramental being is just such a community – a communion of truth and love, a plurality of persons in perfect unity: one mind, one heart, one soul, one body with each other and with God through the humanity of Our Lord – and our friend and brother – Jesus Christ.

In this light, it is critical to see that the modern “individual” is a total fiction, a product of the fallen mind. There is no such thing as an “individual.” There are only persons in communion with other persons, in the likeness of God Himself.

The Blessed Trinity is hardly a trio of “individuals” in “mutually fulfilling relationships.” Rather, the Godhead is three divine persons in a perfect unity of being and life, the content of which is Love.

Human to 43



**“Renew us, we pray,
after the image of Thy
glory, O Lord...!”**

Theology in Color

The icon is a witness to the fundamental experience of Orthodox Christianity, that “God is with us!”

The whole of life and everything about our life in Christ must be spiritual, just as everything about icons – the wood, the paint, the gold leaf – must become spiritual. Everything in the life of the Church, down to paying the telephone bill, must become spiritual if it is to be used for the building up of the Kingdom of God.

The icon is an expression of eternal and divine reality. That which is real demands not only serious consideration, but study in its totality, in its completeness, in its fullness, in its fulfillment. Today the icon stands as a witness to truth in an age when truth has become highly relativized. The icon says “No!” to the wisdom of this world, which has been made foolish by God; it witnesses to that truth. The icon is a Gospel proclamation and divine revelation, completing and complementing Holy Scripture. In a way, the iconographer’s function is to say “Amen!” to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The icon is theology in color – with the emphasis on the theology. The icon is an inspiration to holiness; it should make us pray and bring us into communion with God. The icon is the statement and reminder that, through the incarnate work of God, all things are made new. The icon attests to the creation which we especially celebrate during Bright Week. The icon is a witness to the fundamental experience of Orthodox Christianity, that “God is with us.”

Indeed, God is with us. In this reality we find our hope. The definition of the Second Ecumenical Council [II Nicea] states that we must preserve *the whole Tradition* which the Church



for our sake has decreed in written and unwritten form, without introducing any innovations. One of these traditions is the making of iconographic representations, which accord with the proclamation of the Gospel, for they show that the Incarnation of God the Word was real, not imaginary.

How does this relate to the iconographer’s work and ministry? The iconographer doesn’t write *about* painting. He doesn’t debate the use of acrylics vs. egg tempera, or endlessly discuss how panels should or

should not be prepared. Rather, the iconographer is one who struggles *within* the faith community – not alone as an individual, but as a member of the Body of Christ, the Church – with prayer and asceticism to achieve an ongoing relationship with God.

At the same time, the iconographer is not a mere “copier” of existing icons, though he certainly may be inspired by some – as, indeed, in the beginning he should be. Neither is he a passive instrument who mechanically and unconsciously draws and adds color to his lines and figures. The work of the iconographer is to express artistically the restored creation that extends from the future into the present. The icon is a revelation of the communion between God, man, and creation as it is meant to exist. It is an art form that emerges from and within the Christian community and proclaims the Gospel in line, form, and color. Because iconography witnesses to the Gospel, thereby becoming the visual depiction of the Gospel message, it remains obedient to

Icons to 8

Icons from 7

the revelation of God through the incarnation of Christ. Hence, the iconographer is one under obedience – to the Church and to her Tradition, in order to reveal in his work the very reality and truth of the new man and the new creation of which Saint Paul spoke in 2 Corinthians, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old must pass away, behold the new.”

In our age, we must struggle with the concept of Truth. Psychologists say that even speaking in such terms is dangerous, because it runs the risk of appearing chauvinistic, or indicating that “we know it all.” This, we are told, can lead to pride and arrogance, just as anything iconographic can lead to idolatry. Anything can be abused. Hence, “modern man” prefers to “dialogue” about *ideas, concepts, opinions, preferences, and relativistic interpretations* of this or that – but any discussion of Truth is to be avoided at all costs. Even when speaking about God as the very Source of Life, of Christ and His revelation, we are cautioned to be skeptical. As Mary, a pious old woman whose children no longer belong to the Church, once told me, “You know, there are many ways to God. There’s just one God and it doesn’t really matter, so long as a person leads a good life. We’re not to judge.”

At the same time, however, the media presents many things in absolute ways, as truth, and most of us accept them without questioning. “I read about it in the *New York Times* and saw it on television, so it *must* be true. Infallibly.” We accept endless things as true, as fully as the multitudes that panicked at Orson Welles’ 1938 radio broadcast of H. G. Wells’ *War of the Worlds*. It was a big hoax, but did anyone question it? No.

Rooted in the life of the Church and the quest for Truth, the icon cannot be considered (among other things) apart from prayer, theology, and liturgy. Many, both within the Orthodox Church and beyond, tend to avoid this fact, and they challenge such a position by seeking to isolate iconography, turning it into something else: a cerebral exercise, an historical phenomenon, a visual “proof text,” a pleasing object d’art. In this view, there is no absolute Truth. Everything is reduced to matters of preference in style and technique. Attention is turned to those things that make the individual “happy” (but not necessarily joyous), to those things that are superficial and short-lived, even if they last the course of a lifetime. For others, the icon provokes genuine interest, even if their interest is misguided or misdirected. I know an Episcopalian priest who has a wonderful collection of icons – Greek, Serbian, and Russian. (Many of the best collections of icons seem to be in the hands of non-Orthodox Christians!) He *loves* them. He loves everything about iconography, and every so often he will visit an Orthodox church and tell people how very nice it is to be among the Orthodox, to see what they have, to smell their incense, to see their icons, to hear the way they sing. And yet, he is careful not to take the Orthodox too seriously. Without verbally denying the power and reality of what his icons reveal, he fails to respond to them, thereby separating them from the whole of sacramental theology and the discipline of the Church – her liturgy, prayer, and life. This begs the question: Why would one collect icons while choosing to ignore the truth and life to which they attest?

The icon is a prayer in line and color. It must always



GALLERY

Archbishop Job began pursuing iconography as a college student in the mid-1960s. While during his later years he found little time to paint, his early works grace many churches and homes. **FAR LEFT:** Icon of the Mother of God in the refectory of St. Tikhon’s Seminary. **LEFT:** Icon of Archangel Michael in St. Michael Church, Portage, PA. **RIGHT:** Icons of St. Innocent and the Virgin of the Sign with four North America Saints, perhaps his best known work.

Icons by Archbishop Job

have a message. In icons of the Savior, one often finds a quotation from the Gospel which is intended to be implanted on the soul and intellect of the person who stands before God: “Come unto me all ye who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” The message presented is intended to be heeded. When an icon has been painted in a prayerful spirit, bringing salvation to the iconographer, it is perfectly acceptable to God – even when executed on a Sunday or holy day, because of the fact that it is prayer.

The discerning eye and spirit can pick out icons that were not created in an atmosphere of mental prayer. The danger of not holding this position reduces iconography to an intellectual exercise which invites abuses. I once attended a lecture devoted to one particular 18th century icon, on which the lecturer was an authority; he knew everything there was to know about it – its history, the school of painting, and the techniques employed. He spoke eloquently. But after the presentation, he stuffed this beautiful icon under his arm and walked out of the room. That gesture became his strongest statement; somehow everything else faded from



The traditional icon of Pentecost

memory. The intellectual was divorced from the prayerful; the struggle of prayer was lost – and with it went the sacredness, the holiness of the icon.

So too, it is evident when the iconographer fails to struggle in the “prayer of the paint brush,” inspired by the Holy Spirit. The iconographer must be a theologian, because the theologian is, by definition, one who prays. Everyone who stands before an icon in prayer must receive, along with the lines and colors, the witness of the iconographer’s prayerful spirit, borne of the spirit of repentance, which is the soul of our faith – a gift from God, turning the heart and mind into a fertile field sown with ripe seeds and warmed by the love of God.

No less, the icon must preach theology. Take, for example, the icon of Pentecost. In it one typically sees the unusual element of a king-like figure wearing a crown and holding a cloth on which are placed 12 scrolls. While not found in the narrative in the *Acts of the Apostles*, the figure represents the world, the *Cosmos*, traversed by the apostles as they proclaimed the Gospel “to the ends of the universe.” One

Icons to 10



Icons from 9

also sees the radiance of the Father coming down from above as rays of light. While the rays alone suffice to indicate that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, in some icons the rays terminate in the tongues of fire hovering over the heads of the apostles. In Western art, one finds little emphasis on the theology of Pentecost; the literal depiction of the biblical text becomes far more important, with the apostles grouped in the center of the composition. In this instance, the theology is diminished by the desire to depict the event, rather than its theological meaning.

As a graphic illustration of the link between liturgical rite and the icon, consider the incongruity of non-Orthodox Christians utilizing, as they sometimes do, the icon of the Baptism of our Lord to beautify their baptisteries. Were they not so iconoclastic, it would seem less foreign for Baptists to place such an icon in their sanctuaries, for like the Orthodox they baptize by immersion, and the icon shows Christ being totally immersed in the River Jordan. (The Greek word for “baptize” means “to immerse” – not unlike dunking your doughnut completely into your morning coffee. That’s baptism.) But when the rite celebrated before the icon involves the pouring or sprinkling of water, rather than immersion, the two are out of sync. Whenever the icon is placed in a situation in which it loses its meaning and importance, it also loses its credibility.

There must exist an integral link between the icon and its liturgical use. Icons may be painted of any event in the New Testament, with the exception of the parables. For example, one would not venerate the publican or the pharisee, as they are simply characters in a story. Modify the composition to include

An iconographer’s prayer

O divine Lord of all that exists!

Thou hast illumined the apostles and evangelist Luke with Thy Holy Spirit, thereby enabling him to represent Thy most Holy Mother, the one who held Thee in her arms and said, “The grace of Him Who has been born of me is spread throughout the world.

Enlighten and direct by soul, my heart, and my spirit. Guide the hands of Thine unworthy servant, so that I may worthily and perfectly portray Thine icon, that of Thy Mother and all the saints, for the glory, joy and adornment of Thy Holy Church.

Forgive my sins and the sins of those who will venerate these icons and who, kneeling devoutly before them, give homage to those they represent. Protect them from all evil and instruct them with good counsel.

This I ask, through the intercessions of Thy most Holy Mother, the Apostle Luke, and all the saints. Amen.

GALLERY

Archbishop Job spent several years producing icons for the iconostasis at St. John the Baptist Church, Black Lick, PA, where he served as parish priest and on whose grounds he was interred. **BELOW:** Icon of the Communion of the Apostles. **RIGHT:** Icon of Christ. **FAR RIGHT:** The iconostasis, based on early Russian prototypes, and the south deacon door.



Christ at the top, and it becomes an icon of Christ illustrated by a parable. The only potential problem would lie in whether anyone would receive the teaching adequately. Here I believe we must cultivate a discerning spirit. A few weeks ago, when one of our deacons prayed for “Those who travel by land, by sea, by air, and *through space*,” I was taken somewhat by surprise, so I asked him, “Are there any astronauts up there?” He replied, “No, not to my knowledge.” So I asked, “Then who are you praying for? When someone is launched, then pray for him; in the meantime it loses its meaning.”

So, an image of the parable alone without Christ present is like a closed door rather than a window opened onto the Kingdom of God; hang even the smallest icon of Christ on that door and there is a reason to venerate it, for the glory goes to the One Who gave us the parable. Thus, during the pre-Lenten Sundays, even when there are lots of hymns dealing with the theme of the publican and pharisee, it is improper to display an icon that does not depict Christ.

The same argument can be made for the parable of the Good Samaritan, with the additional complication that the hymnography in the *Lenten Triodion* speaks of the Samaritan as an image of Christ Who has come to heal the world. (Some interpret the Good Samaritan to be Christ Himself.)

How would such an icon be blessed? Here we must be careful, for an icon becomes holy as soon as the iconographer accepts the commission and begins the process of producing it. Every step, from the selection of a panel through gessoing to the application of every stroke of paint, becomes part of the act of sanctification. Bringing the icon to church to receive the

Church’s acceptance and blessing is only the final step, and it is done in a variety of ways. In the Byzantine practice, it is sufficient simply to place it on the altar table or in the sanctuary for a period of time. In the Slavic tradition, there’s generally a rite of blessing and sanctification through holy water. In some places, icons have been anointed with Holy Chrism. Whatever the method, the meaning is the same: the holiness of the icon is *ratified* by the Church, not somehow *infused* after the fact.

This approval by the Church underlines the fact that neither the iconographer, nor the recipient of the icon, is an isolated individual, acting and living independently of the worshipping community. Icons, therefore, are not “personal possessions;” they are entrusted to us – we become their stewards – to use for our own salvation and that of others. Even the late Slavic blessing for icons and crosses, introduced under Latin influence, does not stipulate that an icon or cross is made for a specific person. It asks that the sacred image “be made beneficial unto the salvation of those who venerate it” – meaning that it could be for anybody to venerate. This too demonstrates that the icon is always a part of the whole Church.

In conclusion, let us venerate the holy icons as men and women of prayer. Let us, through them, struggle to become theologians, taking every opportunity to understand the holy icons. And let us strive to be full and active participants in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church. ■

Condensed and adapted from the text of a lecture delivered by Archbishop Job at an iconography conference in the early 1980s.



Mother Alexandra

The Jesus Prayer

The Jesus Prayer, or the Prayer of the Heart, centers on the Holy Name itself. It may be said in its entirety: “Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me, a sinner;” it may be changed to “us sinners” or to other persons named, or it may be shortened. The power lies in the name of Jesus; thus “Jesus,” alone, may fulfill the whole need of one who prays.

The prayer goes back to the New Testament and has had a long, traditional use. The method of contemplation based upon the Holy Name is attributed to Saint Simeon, called the “New Theologian” [989-1022 AD]. When he was 14 years old, Saint Simeon had a vision of heavenly light in which he seemed to be

Born in Bucharest, Romania on January 5, 1909 as Princess Ileana, **Mother Alexandra** was the youngest daughter of King Ferdinand I and Queen Marie of Romania. Her early life was framed in the dramatic events of Europe during and between the two world wars. After the communist takeover of Romania, she and her family were exiled, eventually settling in the US.

From 1961, she entered the Orthodox Monastery of the

Protection of the Mother of God, in Bussy, France. Upon receiving monastic tonsure in 1967, she was given the name Alexandra, after which she returned to the US and established the Monastery of the Transfiguration, Ellwood City, PA. She served as the monastery’s abbess until her retirement in 1981. She remained at the monastery until her death in January 1991, four days after the foundation had been laid for the expansion of the monastery. ■



separated from his body. Amazed, and overcome with an overpowering joy, he felt a consuming humility, and cried, borrowing the publican’s prayer [Luke 18:13], “Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me.” Long after the vision had disappeared, the great joy returned to Saint Simeon each time he repeated the prayer; and he taught his disciples to worship likewise....

The prayer is held to be so outstandingly spiritual because it is focused wholly on Jesus: all thoughts, striving, hope, faith and love are poured out in devotion to God the Son. It fulfills two basic injunctions of the New Testament. In one, Jesus said, “I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it to you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” [John 16:23,24]. In the other precept we find Saint Paul’s injunction to pray without ceasing [1 Thessalonians 5:17]. Further, it follows Jesus’ instructions upon how to pray (which He gave at the same time He taught His followers the Lord’s Prayer): “When you pray, enter into your closet, and when you have shut the door, pray to your Father Who is in secret, and your Father Who sees in secret shall reward you openly” [Matthew 6:6].

Upon these and many other precepts of the New Testament as well as the Old, the Holy Fathers, even before Saint Simeon, based their fervent and simple prayer. They developed a method of contemplation in which unceasing prayer became as natural as breathing, following the rhythmic cadence of the heart beat.

All roads that lead to God are beset with pitfalls because the enemy (Satan) ever lies in wait to trip us up. He naturally attacks most assiduously when we are bent on finding our way to salvation, for that is what he most strives to hinder. In mystical prayer, the temptations we encounter exceed all others in danger. Because our thoughts are on a higher level, the allurements are proportionally subtler. Someone said that “mysticism started in mist and ended in schism;” this cynical remark, spoken by an unbeliever, has a certain truth in it. Mysticism is of real spiritual value only when it is practiced with absolute sobriety.

At one time a controversy arose concerning certain Hesychasts – monastics who worked out a whole system of contemplation based upon the Jesus Prayer, practiced in complete silence – who fell into excessive acts of piety and fasting because they lost the sense of moderation upon which our Church lays so great a value. We need not dwell upon misuses of the Jesus Prayer, except to realize that all exaggerations are harmful and that we should at all times use self-restraint.

“Practice of the Jesus Prayer is the traditional fulfillment of the injunction of the Apostle Paul to ‘pray always;’ it has nothing to do with the mysticism which is the heritage of pagan ancestry” [Forward, *Writings from the Philokalia*]....

The Jesus Prayer is the core of mystical prayer, and it can be used by anyone, any time. There is nothing mysterious about this (let us not confuse “mysterious” with “mystic”). We start by following the precepts and examples frequently given by Our Lord. First, go inside into a quiet place: “Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile” [Mark 6:31]; “Study to be quiet” [1 Thessalonians 4:11]; then pray in secret – alone and in silence.

Classics to 45

Father John Behr

Celebrating “in Spirit and Truth”

Discerning the meaning of the Triumph of Orthodoxy

The first Sunday of Great Lent – the Sunday of Orthodoxy – is not a congratulatory pat on the back for getting through the first week of Lent! Rather, it commemorates something very specific: the restoration of the icons, after two periods of iconoclasm during which, for various reasons, iconography was prohibited, icons were destroyed, and those who defended them were persecuted.



The holy icons are not simply religious art, and we don't place them in our churches and houses simply for decoration. They are a theological statement: they depict key aspects of our faith. Most importantly, of course, they show that God Himself, Whom no one has ever seen (and so all images were prohibited, as idolatry), has now become visible in His Son – our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the image of the invisible God. It is to Him that we look to see and understand Who and What God is, for in Him the fullness of divinity dwells bodily. We do not find God anywhere else.

So, as the apostles depicted Him in words, we also depict Him in colors, and all the aspects of His work of salvation, all the various events we celebrate. And we also depict all those who have put on Christ, all those in whose lives, words and deeds we can see the Spirit of Christ breathing – all the prophets, the Theotokos, apostles, martyrs and saints of every age. And we venerate these icons of Christ and His saints, not treating them as magic idols, certainly not worshipping creation rather than the Creator, but we venerate the icons, paying honor to the ones depicted on them, worshipping the one God.

This is what we commemorate today, as we proclaim the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy*: “What the prophets proclaimed and the apostles taught – that Christ is indeed true God – this is what the Church has received, and this is the tradition that we maintain. This is what we proclaim in venerating an icon, honoring the saints and worshipping Christ as Lord. This is the One for Whom the whole of creation was called into being. And so this is the faith

which establishes the universe.” At the heart of our faith stands this mystery of Christ – let us never change it for anything else!

Even before the first Sunday of Lent became the Sunday of Orthodoxy, it still pointed in the same direction. From many centuries earlier, the first Sunday of Lent was given over to remembering the prophets. That is why we heard so much about them in the hymnography last night and again this morning, in the Gospel and the Epistle during the Liturgy. This commemoration of the prophets is really another aspect of the same mystery: the icons confirm what the prophets foretold.

But we are now also taken a step further. In the Liturgy, we heard in the Gospel that when Christ called Philip, Philip went to tell Nathaniel: “We have found the One about Whom Moses wrote in the Law, and about Whom the prophets also wrote – Jesus of Nazareth” [John 1:45]. Or, as we sang last night, the prophets spoke of the One Who from all eternity was born from the immaterial and bodiless womb of the Father, yet was made flesh by being born from the Virgin, and so was seen by us on

Orthodoxy to 14

Orthodoxy from 13

earth. The message of the apostles – that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ spoken of by the prophets – this is what the icons confirm: He has come visibly in the flesh.

Then in the Epistle we heard of the sufferings endured by the prophets as they looked to the things that God had planned for us. Or again, as we sang last night, “The prophets refused to worship the creation instead of the Creator; they renounced the whole world for the Gospel’s sake, and in their suffering they were conformed to Thy Passion which they had foretold.” The prophets, by concentrating all their hearts and strength on the promise of God, the Gospel, refusing to compromise with the world and enduring all the suffering that this entails, were conformed to Christ’s passion, and in this way *they* became images of Christ.

And let us make no mistake about this: this is what *we* are also called to: not simply to be proud of our Orthodoxy – that we have icons – but to become icons ourselves. We are to be sharers in Christ’s passion, to be crucified with Him, and so be conformed to the image of the Son of God. Thus, the Epistle finished by exhorting us: “Being surrounded by this cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders us, let us throw off the sin that so easily entangles us, so that we can run with perseverance the race that is set out before us.” We are, the Apostle says, “to fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, so that He now sits at the right hand of the Father [Hebrews 12:1-2].

What amazingly powerful words! The Orthodoxy that we celebrate today is fulfilled not simply by having the right answers to particular questions, nor by preserving traditions for the sake of their antiquity or particular practices because we think that they will make us better Christians. No, the goal is to have our attention captivated by, our gaze fixed upon, our ears opened to, and our hearts enthralled with Our Lord, Jesus Christ. He is for us the beginning and the end of all things; He is the One Who began our faith and the one Who will bring it to fulfillment.

For the joy that was set before Him, he endured the Passion, and only by having His joy before us, are we able to set our hearts on high, above the things of this world, focused on the upward call of God in Christ Jesus, so that He can fashion us in His image.

But we all know how difficult this is, especially when everything about this world is thrown into uncertainty and confusion, when we can no longer feel safe and secure. If we no longer feel safe in whatever kind of security we had thought that we had established for ourselves, let us now take this opportunity to see where the treasure of our heart really lies. If we are going to follow Christ on His path to Golgotha, to be able to enter the joy that lay before Him, we need to set our hearts on high – above the supposed good things of this world. The Epistle already urged us to discard everything that holds us back, every sin and passion that entangles us in the things of this world. And this, of course, is why we are given the gift of Lent, not so that we can undertake arduous tasks and get through Lent, coming out at the other end satisfied with our performance. Lent is not here for us to “get through unscathed”, but so that we can learn again the joy that is given to us in Christ, the joy which alone can sustain us in this world. And, I would suggest, what prevents most of us

from experiencing this joy is not that we are living in great wickedness – murder, licentiousness, heresy, and so on – but that we have become numb to the gifts which God has bestowed upon us. We are so familiar with the riches of our Orthodoxy that we overlook that to which they point us.

That our minds and hearts should be captivated, held fast by Christ, also speaks to the other great theme of this Vespers on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, one that dates back not to some far off age and place, but to our contemporary situation.

We come together, from all jurisdictions, to celebrate this feast of Orthodoxy together, making a powerful statement of faith: our common witness as the one, undivided, body of Christ. And, as the one body of Christ, it is vitally important that we not only acknowledge, but also express, our unity. Saint Paul speaks very forcefully of the Church as the body of Christ, pointing out that every member is needed: the hand cannot work if the eye is not sound and working together with the hand, nor can any other bodily member function properly without the whole body working together.

This is often taken as speaking of the hierarchical structure of the Church, and that is certainly true: all are needed to fulfill their God-given roles harmoniously together. But it is also true of us as different church communities, that when we overcome our differences – ethnic, social, family, whatever they may be – and come together in the common faith in Christ, then Christ is all the more manifest in us. Our differences are no longer obstacles to unity, but in fact become an expression of our unity. Saint Irenaeus, writing in the second century when the churches were much more diverse than they are now, commented that “our differences in practice confirm our unity in faith.”

But it will only be so if we do indeed come together in the common faith, if it is Christ Himself – and He alone – Who binds us together, as the head does all the members of the body. If we try to come together in the name of anything else, it will be because of our own efforts, and will be bound to fail. If we come together in Christ – the One Whom the prophets saw, the apostles taught, the Church received, and Whose presence we maintain – then God can work and overcome all our human limitations.

So again we are directed back to Christ – the image of God, the fullness of divinity – as our only hope. By His shed blood and His broken body, Christ has called us to be His Church.

We like to use the language of the Church triumphant: the glorious body with a mission to bring the whole world within its fold, and so to manifest the Kingdom of God upon this earth. And this is indeed our mission: “Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit [Matthew 28:19].

But let us be careful that in doing this, in striving to bring all peoples to Christ, we don’t accommodate ourselves to this world, or begin to think in its terms, or reduce the Church to a worldly or national organization. We are called to come together, here and now, to be the one body of Christ, overcoming all the differences of our backgrounds, bearing witness to the hope that one day we will be able to overcome all the institutional, jurisdictional, structures that separate us, so that we will no longer be, as the apostle Paul puts it, *xenoi kai paroikoi* – “strangers

and sojourners” – or that we won’t simply be the diaspora of a nation, expats living abroad, waiting to go home.

But let us be careful how we now identify ourselves for, the apostle continues, “we are no longer strangers and foreigners,” not because we have now become indigenous (replacing one national identity with another), but because we have become “fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God” [Ephesians 2:19].

If this is our citizenship – being members of the household of God – then we will always be in diaspora in this world. The Church must always understand herself as being in diaspora – never settled down, never accommodating herself to a particular time or place within this world and its history. Christians live by faith, the Epistle to the Hebrews reminds us, so that they are “strangers and exiles on this earth,” searching for their true “homeland” [Hebrews 11:13-4], having no abiding city here on earth, but seeking the one which is to come [Hebrews 13:14]. Or as the second century Epistle to Diognetus puts it, Christians “dwell in their own fatherlands, but as if sojourners in them... as citizens, but [suffering] all things as strangers; every foreign country is their fatherland, and every fatherland a foreign country” [Chapter 5].

We are in this world, but not of it. We must indeed live somewhere, in some country and culture, but we can never settle down anywhere and claim it as our own, our proper home, or allow ourselves to be identified in this way.

In a world in which being a Christian is becoming ever harder – whether because of the oppression of others, or because of “secularism,” or because of our own addiction to consumption – let us make sure that we don’t take refuge in any other identity – nationalistic, economic, political – whatever it is that is offered to us, even under religious cover, as a means of understanding ourselves and belonging to a larger group. Let us accept no other identity but that of Christ alone.

Only if we realize that our identity does not lie in whatever identities we create in this world, or have foisted upon us by the circumstances of our birth, education, and society (or “jurisdiction”), but rather that our identity lies hidden with Christ in God, only then and in this way can we actually begin to find and manifest our unity together, here and now, as the one body of Christ. But this requires that we accompany Him to His Passion, that just like the prophets in their suffering, and like the martyrs in theirs, we also may become images of Christ, icons of Him.

This and nothing else is our task: that we conform ourselves to Christ. And this is why we are given the gift of Lent; that, sharing in the joy set before him, we too can follow the path to Golgotha and the empty tomb, with a broken but merciful heart, so being conformed to His image, so becoming ourselves icons of God. Only in this way will we be celebrating the feast of Orthodoxy “in spirit and in truth.” ■

Fr. John Behr is Dean of St. Vladimir’s Seminary, Crestwood, NY. The text is that of the sermon he preached on the Sunday of Orthodoxy 2010 at Holy Trinity Church, Yonkers, NY.

Habits of a grateful heart

While the heart says “Lord, have mercy,” the lips should say “Thank you!”

Someone once told me that as we grow older, we don’t necessarily *change* who we are, but *manifest* more intensely who we’ve become. I had often pondered what that meant. I now take it to mean that the things in which we diligently engage and practice day-to-day become ingrained in us. In other words, our attitudes become ingrained in our souls. These will then be revealed intensely in us, in those days when everything else is stripped away and our energy can be spent only on the things of the heart, and preparation for death. How important is it, then, to become accustomed to thanksgiving, to prayer, to forgiveness, in everything we do every day.

A recent experience brought this saying to mind again and shed some light on what I can only hope is a small confirmation of its truth. My husband and I visit a woman, Mary, who is widowed and in her mid-90s. Often, it is questionable whether she knows who we are or what we are doing there. We’re not family – at least, not in the commonly understood meaning of the word – but we are part of her family in Christ, even though we have only known her for the past 15 years or so.

Mary was the youngest of six children born and raised in Romania. She and her husband were married in Bucharest and in 1936 emigrated to the US. It was a time in which Europe stood at the brink of war and life abroad was uncertain. In the US, the Great Depression had begun only a few years earlier, and life here was difficult as well. They arrived at Ellis Island in New York City, and from there they settled in Indianapolis, to which her older sister and family had emigrated earlier.

In the early years, John worked in a meat packing house, and Mary went to work for a department store. Within a few years, they had saved up enough money to open their own business – not a small feat in those uncertain times. This was the first of several businesses that John and Mary purchased and operated. He would open their establishments in the morning, and she would take over in the afternoon and close at the end of the long day. They had no children, but their lives were blessed by family, especially nieces and nephews. And during those long years of hard work, they were always active in the life of the parish. Mary was parish council president on more than one occasion. Even in retirement, they lived only a few minutes from the parish in a quiet neighborhood where they welcomed family members who came in later years to the US.

In those later years, when my husband and I first came to the parish, we would see John and Mary only occasionally, advanced

Habits to 43

Father Mark Hodges

Haiti's gray area

A temporal catastrophe raises some eternal questions

The horrific earthquake that hit Haiti on January 12, 2010, resulted in the deaths of over 150,000 people and left countless orphaned children in its wake. Three million people were affected by the brutal quake. Over one million remain homeless. Many thousands are still without drinking water and food. One reporter stated, "Two weeks after the fierce earthquake hit, the odor of decaying bodies hangs heavy from the massive burial sites and from those still in the lethal embrace of collapsed buildings." Disease is breaking out in makeshift refugee camps set up to offer sanctuary. Security is a major concern, as desperately hungry men beat out – sometimes literally – women and children for food supplies. The toll in human suffering alone for the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere is unfathomable to most North Americans.



One day after the earthquake, the Christian Broadcasting Network reported on the Haitian earthquake during an airing of the *700 Club*. Following a compassionate report, which included an update on CBN's "Operation Blessing" efforts to provide relief to suffering Haitians, the Rev. Pat Robertson made editorial comments about an underlying spiritual cause for the horrible quake. (Voodoo and other anti-Christian practices are very popular in Haiti.) Robertson's off-the-cuff comments drew fierce criticism from around the world – rightly so.

Specifically, many years ago, said Robertson, the Haitians "were under the heel of the French... and they swore a pact to the devil. They said, 'We will serve you if you will get us free from the French.' True story. And so, the devil said, 'OK, it's a deal.' And they kicked the French out. The Haitians revolted and got themselves free. But ever since, they have been cursed by one thing after the other.... The Dominican Republic is prosperous, healthy... [while] Haiti is in desperate poverty [on the] same island.... They need to have and we need to pray for them [to have] a great turning to God. Out of this tragedy, I'm optimistic [that] something good may come. But right now we are helping

the suffering people, and the suffering is unimaginable." (Robertson was referring to the 1791 slave rebellion led by Boukman Dutty at Bois Caiman, where the slaves made a famous pact with the devil in exchange for victory over the French.)

Many immediately attacked Rev. Robertson's comments, labeling him a hateful man. The White House dismissed Robertson's comments as "stupid." But others have wondered, could there be any truth behind his comments? As embarrassing and untimely as the comments were, this question is a legitimate one. How to fully answer it, however, is a matter of opinion.

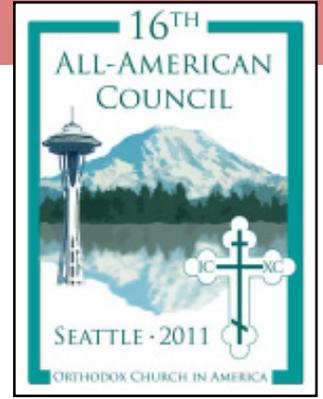
Regardless of how unpopular or politically incorrect it may be,

I would first of all submit that it *is* possible for the sins of a nation to result in tragic physical consequences for its citizens. The truth is, our sins *do* cause us, both individually and corporately, great calamity and tragedy. There are many examples of this in the

Bible – both Old and New Testaments – not the least of which involve the Israelites themselves as a nation. For instance, when Jesus healed, He would often say, "Go and sin no more, lest a worse thing befall you" [John 5:14]. Sin *does* have consequences, individually and corporately. Probably the greatest example would be the Fall of Adam and Eve, which affected the entire creation, while the most massive example would be the worldwide flood of Noah's time, when all mankind drowned, specifically because wickedness ruled their lives. And one cannot ignore the image of God's People wandering in the wilderness for 40 years as a result of their collective behavior.

It is important to remember, however, that the direct cause-and-effect of sin-to-tragedy is not always the case – or, at least, it is not readily apparent. The Bible teaches that only in the end will justice prevail. (Indeed, many scriptures teach that "the rain falls on the just and the unjust," and that the wicked do often unjustly prosper, while the righteous suffer in this world, so we look to the Day of Judgment for the ultimate vindication of goodness and the ultimate revelation of God's mercy). Several of those healed by Jesus demonstrate that this cause-and-effect is not always the case. For instance, when the blind man came to be healed, people asked Jesus, "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" It was an honest question, and Jesus treated it as such. Jesus answered that neither the man, nor his parents, had caused his three-decade blindness by sinning, but that he was born blind so the glory of God would be revealed. And Jesus healed his blindness.

Haiti to 44



Seattle site of 16th All-American Council

For the first time in the history of the Orthodox Church in America, an All-American Council will be held in the Diocese of the West.

“After exploring a dozen cities across North America, Seattle, WA was confirmed by members of the Holy Synod of Bishops and the Metropolitan Council as the site of the 16th All-American Council, October 31 through November 4, 2011,” said Archpriest Eric Tosi, OCA Secretary. “A major consideration in the site selection process was the desire to encourage maximum participation by clergy and lay delegates from the Diocese of Alaska. In past years, travel costs from Alaska to Councils held in east coast and midwest US cities prohibited most Alaskan parishes from sending participants.”

All sessions will be held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in suburban Bellevue, WA.

Father Eric, accompanied by Archpriest Myron Manzuk, Council manager, and Peter Ilchuk, logistics manager, visited the Hyatt Regency in February to make a final assessment of the venue and meet with members of the local planning committee, co-chaired by Archpriest John Pierce and Lynnell Brunswig. Dmitri Pletz and Michelle Mewhinney-Angel will serve as local

“The local committee has started organizing working groups, establishing local accounts and contacts, and overseeing ongoing site preparation,” Father Eric added. “Initial response from the region’s parishes and faithful has been quite enthusiastic.”

His Grace, Bishop Benjamin of San Francisco and the West, will chair the Preconciliar Commission, which is responsible for selecting the Council theme and developing its agenda and related materials and resources. The Commission will meet for the first time shortly after Pascha 2010.

Timeline announced. According to the organizational timeline mandated by the *Statute of the Orthodox Church in America*,

- the Preconciliar Commission will publish the proposed AAC agenda, notices and final arrangements on August 24, 2011.
- the Holy Synod and Metropolitan Council will approve the final agenda at their fall session in September 2011. All proposed changes to the *Statute*, resolutions, and related actions must be submitted by this date.
- the Chancery will issue delegate credentials and certification and distribute Council reports on September 30, 2011.

In addition to plenary sessions, the AAC schedule will include liturgical services, workshops, displays and exhibits, and related activities. Other Council events, including two possible pilgrimages to Sitka and select sites in the Pacific Northwest, are in the planning stage.

In addition to Bishop Benjamin; Fathers Tosi, Manzuk, and Pierce; and Mr. Ilchuk, other members of the Preconciliar Commission include Archpriest Alexander Garklavs, Chancellor; Melanie Ringa, OCA Treasurer; Priests Victor Gorodenchuk, Alexander Rentel, and John Vitko; and Prof. David Drillock, Lisa Mikhalevsky, and Valerie Zahirsky. Archpriest Leonid Kishkovsky will serve as a consultant, while Archpriest John Matusiak, OCA Media Coordinator, will oversee press and public relations and communications efforts. ■

Seattle’s magnificent skyline.



Father Ted Bobosh

Conciliarity

The mind of Christ expressed through His Body

There is some discussion among Orthodox Christians in America about the conciliar nature of the Church, and what it means in a Church which also claims to be hierarchical.

The work of the Orthodox Church in America's Metropolitan Council has become a veritable clinic in conciliar Christianity for Orthodox. Conciliarity is not the most efficient method for accomplishing the ministry of the Church, for it requires a tremendous amount of patience, love and active listening. Conciliarity is decision making which rejects the unchristian method of leadership by "lording over" subordinates – which Christ Himself rejected in Mark 10:42-45 – and invites leadership through brotherly interaction. Brotherly love also proves to be hard work, for we have to wrestle with – and at times overcome – our pride, passions, temptations and sins to enable conciliarity to happen.

Facing difficult administrative issues, the Metropolitan Council sat together with members of the Synod of Bishops to set the direction for the Church as we move into the future, to deal with problems that inevitably face us in this fallen world, and to listen to the concerns and wisdom which each Council member brings to the table. We considered the problems of the Church seen through the faith filter of each member as they expressed their thoughts, offered their opinions regarding decisions to be made, and shared their own experiences in wrestling with applying the Gospel to real Church issues.

Conciliarity is not unanimity. But neither is it democracy, for it respects hierarchy and is not merely ruled by the majority. Conciliarity does not guarantee that everyone will be happy; rather it guarantees that each person must take up his or her cross to follow Christ.

Conciliarity encourages members to do soul searching, and encourages them to learn how to apply the Gospel to decision making. It also promotes listening and discernment as one considers what one has learned from a fellow Christian. In conciliar decision making, the Metropolitan Council sat with the Synod of Bishops to discuss administrative issues – strategic planning, Church discipline, Chambesy, legal issues, the investigation of Saint Tikhon's Monastery, Church finances, clergy conduct, administrative plans and failings, the All-American Council, the good of the Church, and the Gospel of Christ.

Official and other Church media outlets will be posting the

official decisions of the Metropolitan Council [see <http://www.oca.org/news/2096>, <http://www.oca.org/news/2097>, and <http://ocanews.org/news/LetterFromSyosset3.9.10.html>] which soon will post releases. I am not intending to compete with them, nor to "scoop" them. They have the responsibility to offer to the Church and the public the official decisions of the Council.

Neither do I intend to give the impression that the Council, in following conciliar principles, was a love fest in which everyone was made to "feel good" about themselves. What I saw, in considering the most difficult of decisions, were Christians searching their souls, their faith, and their Church for guidance in how to decide what actions the Church should take. There were also moments of realization, that we are called at times to the cross, to martyrdom as the way to the Kingdom. It was hard work, and at times each of us, like Israel, was engaged in a spiritual wrestling match with God. We were seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit to help us keep the Church on that narrow path to the Kingdom of God. Each person was called upon to take up his or her cross to follow Christ.

At times people were also bored, or found the goings on not to their liking. Tempers flared. But overall, we were doing the work of the Church in a conciliar fashion. And, while it is certainly true that other Orthodox jurisdictions in America also lay claim to conciliarity, I have to wonder whether they experience what we have brought to the table: an absolute willingness to speak openly and transparently with one another. This is the spirit that the OCA has to offer to the upcoming Episcopal Assembly, which will be setting the agenda for future Orthodox cooperation and integration in North America.

The work of the individuals in the committees was truly impressive, and this will become obvious through time in the work of the OCA and through its official and independent media outlets. The Metropolitan's office staff also must be commended for the job they do despite the lack of a full time staff – yes the OCA is learning to live within its budget! This too is part of conciliarity, for it means accepting the limits imposed on us by the resources of our membership.

I know some will be disappointed that I am not revealing the "juicy" details of the Church's problems. But at least I wanted to write about the experience of using conciliarity to administer the Church. Conciliarity is not opposed to hierarchy. Rather, I would say that conciliarity is the experience of the entire Body of Christ, in all its parts and members working together to accomplish the mission of the Church. The mind of Christ is expressed through all the members of His Body. Conciliarity is not opposed to hierarchy, but is a real learning experience, for all members of the Church, in how to work with, in and through hierarchy. The Holy Spirit works in and through the Body of Christ, and in and through each and all of its members who work together to build up the Church. ■

Fr. Ted Bobosh is rector of St. Paul the Apostle Church, Dayton, OH, a member of the OCA Metropolitan Council, author, religious educator, and frequent contributor to The Orthodox Church. He maintains a blog at <http://frted.wordpress.com>.

Metropolitan Council, Lesser Synod, tackle full agenda

Following two days of meetings primarily directed at reviewing the work of individual committees and a draft of the OCA's Strategic Plan, members of the Orthodox Church in America's Lesser Synod of Bishops and Metropolitan Council turned their attention to reports by the Church's officers and a variety of general matters at their spring session on March 3-4, 2010.

Following the celebration of the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on Wednesday, March 3, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah opened the morning session by addressing the participants.

After expressing his pleasure with the results of the Strategic Plan workshop held the previous day – he noted that difficult issues had been discussed in a “serious, open and sober manner” – he offered observations on the Church's immediate future, including the episcopal searches underway in the Dioceses of the South and Midwest and his “hope that there will be an election of two bishops in the fall.”

He then turned his attention to broader issues affecting Orthodox Christianity in North America.

“In five, ten, twenty-five years – or longer – we will enter into a larger Church in America,” he observed. “No one can say when that will happen, but it will. The face of Orthodoxy in America will change on a diocesan and Local Church level.”

While he felt that little will change on the parochial level, “the future is not the OCA in isolation.

“What we have to offer to this process is the vision of a conciliar Church which involves clergy and laity working together in making decisions,” he continued. “What we have to offer is our vision as a missionary Church embracing all languages, cultures, and races as we bring the Good News to all men and women. That is the particularity of the OCA – more than autocephaly itself. We can model conciliarity and missionary work for others, for the united Orthodox Church in North America.

“This process will create change, and Orthodox do not like change,” he concluded. “The most important question, above all others, is what is the Will of God? All of these questions – legal, Chambesy, mission, strategic planning, and other issues we are facing – must be addressed in light of this ultimate question: What is the Lord's Will? How do we hear it and do it? That is our authentic mission as Orthodox Christians.”

Archpriest Alexander Garklavs, Chancellor, reported on the day-to-day operation of the Chancery and its staff, noting that while “conditions are far from ideal” – whereas several years ago the Chancery staff included dozens of members, it now consists of six full-time employees and three part-timers – a strong sense of teamwork is present as “all of the Chancery personnel are called on to perform jobs outside of their primary



Metropolitan Jonah tells Metropolitan Council
“the future is not the OCA in isolation.”

duties.” He expressed his appreciation for the work of the new OCA Treasurer, Melanie Ringa, whose “regular, two-day-a-week presence at the Chancery has meant that there is normal input and interaction between the Church's chief financial officer and the operations of the central Church administration.”

Father Alexander went on to describe various matters involving the Metropolitan's office, Church departments, legal issues, and the Strategic Plan process.

Archpriest Eric Tosi, Secretary, reported on a number of practical issues, including the updating of parish files for the 501(C)3 status and preliminary plans for the 16th All-American Council in 2011. He also reported on various communications issues being aggressively addressed.

Melanie Ringa, Treasurer, reported that expenses for 2009 were within or under budget in most categories. She also reported on income from the Fellowship of Orthodox Steward's two 2009 drives, a drop in assessment income as a result of a corresponding decline in reported parish membership, and investments, which in light of the current economic environment experienced an overall decline.

Archpriest Leonid Kishkovsky, Director of External Affairs and Interchurch Relations, reported on inter-Orthodox relations and preparations for the forthcoming Episcopal Assembly in May 2010 mandated by the Fourth Pan-Orthodox Pre-Conciliar Conference in Chambesy, Switzerland, in June 2009.

The 2010 proposed budget was reviewed and approved after several revisions were made. The completed 2008 financial audit by the Lambrides auditing firm was also presented. It was noted that a “clean audit is in sight.”

John Sedor and Maureen Ahearn reported on the OCA pension plan which, despite the economy, is stable.

While complete financial and other reports, together with minutes of the Metropolitan Council spring session, will be forthcoming from the office of Father Eric Tosi, Secretary, and posted on the OCA web site in the immediate future, other highlights of the meeting include the following.

- A detailed report on the Alaskan Lands question clarified many questions with regard to ownership and use of various properties within the Diocese of Alaska.
- Preliminary plans the 16th All-American Council, slated to be

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Full agenda

held in a Seattle, WA suburb in 2011, were reviewed. It was noted that the AAC will be the first in the history of the Church to be held west of the Mississippi, thereby making it possible for greater participation on the part of parishes in Alaska.

- As already reported on the OCA web site at <http://www.oca.org/news/2007>, the report of the Synodal Committee charged with conducting an investigation into past financial practices at Saint Tikhon's Monastery and Bookstore was heard. The report, together with recommendations, will be submitted to the members of the Holy Synod of Bishops for review and further action at their March 16-19, 2010 spring session.
- A variety of policies and procedures to enhance the ongoing effort to make the Church more open, transparent, accountable

WHO'S WHO?

Metropolitan Council membership

- The Primate and officers of the Orthodox Church in America – **Metropolitan Jonah**; **Archpriest Alexander Garklavs**, Chancellor; **Archpriest Eric Tosi**, Secretary; and **Melanie Ringa**, Treasurer.
- Members elected at the 14th All-American Council for six-year terms: **Archpriest Theodore Boback** and **Eleana Silk**.
- Members elected at the 15th All-American Council for six-year terms: **Archpriest David Garretson** and **Dr. Faith Skordinski**.
- Members elected at the 15th All-American Council for three-year terms: **Archpriest Theodore Bobosh** and **Protodeacon Peter Danilchick**.
- Alternates elected at the 15th All-American Council for three-year terms: **Priest Thomas Moore** and **Dr. Paul Meyendorff**.
- Members elected by their respective dioceses: **Archpriest Michael Oleksa** and **Anna Cheryl Andrew** [Alaska], **Archpriest Joseph Gallick** and **William Peters** [Albanian], **Archpriest Andrew Moulton** and **Protodeacon Michael Myers** [Bulgarian], **Archpriest Cyprian Hutcheon** and **David Grier** [Canada], **Archpriest David Mahaffey** and **David Yeosock** [Eastern Pennsylvania], **Archpriest Michael Matsko** and **Mark Stokoe** [Midwest], **Archpriest Robert Arida** and **Deacon John Zarras** [New England], **Archpriest Alexis Vinogradov** and **John Kozey** [New York and New Jersey], **Priest Gleb McFatter** and **Judge Ray Lanier** [South], **Priest John Vitko** and **Rosalie Luster** [Washington], **Archpriest Matthew Tate** and **Dr. Dmitri Solodow** [West], and **Archpriest John Reeves** and **Gregory J. Nescott** [Western Pennsylvania]. The Romanian Episcopate representations are vacant at this time. ■

and efficient were discussed and adopted.

- In an executive session, a number of legal issues were discussed thoroughly in the presence of the OCA's General Counsel, **Thaddeus Wojcik, Esq.**

The overall reaction to the meeting was summed up by Archpriest Michael Oleksa of the Diocese of Alaska.

"I think we... rejoiced in each other, delighting in the gifts God has given each member of the Holy Synod and to each member of the Metropolitan Council," Father Michael said. "They listened with respect and patience to each other this week, appreciating that everyone present sincerely loves God, loves Jesus Christ, and loves His Church. If we can enlarge this circle now to include more clergy and laity in the parishes and dioceses of North America, if we can bring the questions and challenges we face before the entire People of God, and with the same respect and love hear their voice, our Church will heal and regain her strength and her voice. And then we will, in whatever canonical governing structure, have the renewed commitment to our mission, bringing the joy of Pascha, the reality of the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, to the people of this continent which we also deeply love." ■

SVS Press assumes distribution, development of OCPC materials

Saint Vladimir's Seminary Press has assumed responsibility for the publication and distribution of Christian education resources formerly published and marketed by the Orthodox Christian Publications Center [OCPC].

Known for its books on Church history, patristics, spirituality, iconography, biblical studies, hagiography, liturgical music, and other aspects of Orthodoxy, SVS Press entered into an agreement with the Orthodox Church in America to distribute OCPC's educational resources for Church schools, teachers, and those engaged in faith formation.

SVS Press assumed OCPC's entire stock in December 2009. It is anticipated that the inventory will be processed and ready for distribution through the SVS Press web site at www.svspress.com.

The agreement between SVS Press and the Orthodox Church in America was approved by the OCA's Metropolitan Council in the fall of 2009.

"We are thrilled with this new arrangement," said Archpriest Alexander Garklavs, OCA Chancellor. "For the OCA, this provides an opportunity to profit from the professionalism and efficiency that are the hallmarks of SVS Press."

He also commended Frank Tkacz of Cleveland, OH, who for years had overseen OCPC's operations.

SVS Press director Theodore Bazil concurred, adding that "the assumption of the OCPC inventory will lead to exciting possibilities. Among them will be the ability of SVS Press to expand the markets for existing educational material and to reprint currently out-of-stock titles." ■



**His Eminence,
Archbishop Job of Chicago**

In Memoriam: Archbishop Job of Chicago

On Friday, December 18, 2009, clergy and faithful across the Church were shocked to learn that His Eminence, Archbishop Job of Chicago and the Midwest had fallen asleep in the Lord unexpectedly en route from Cleveland to Chicago.

“Archbishop Job’s unexpected death came as a shock to everyone,” said Archbishop John Zdinak, Chancellor of the Diocese of the Midwest, who had spoken with the Archbishop as he was driving from Cleveland to Chicago, two hours before his repose. “If I were to characterize him, I would have to say that, regardless of the circumstances in which he found himself, his intense love for the Church and the People of God was unquestionable.”

The cause of death was listed as a blood clot in the lung. According to Father Zdinak and Cleveland Deanery clergy, with whom he had met on the preceding day, the Archbishop had felt ill for several days. Feeling increasingly ill, he spent the night in Toledo during his return drive to Chicago. Shortly before noon the next morning, he was stricken in the parking

lot of his hotel after packing his car.

Hierarchs from the Greek, Antiochian, Ukrainian, Serbian and Romanian Archdioceses and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia concelebrated funeral services and the Divine Liturgy with His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah and members of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America at Chicago’s Holy Trinity Cathedral December 22-23, 2009. His Grace, Bishop Melchisedek of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania, presided at additional services and interment at Saint John the Baptist Church, Black Lick, PA on Saturday, December 26.

Born Richard John Osacky in Chicago on March 18, 1946, Archbishop Job entered Saint Tikhon Seminary, South Canaan, PA, after completing studies at Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL. After graduating from the seminary in 1970, he served as cantor and youth director at Saint John the Baptist Church, Black Lick, PA. Since the parish was without the ministry of a resident pastor at that time, he conducted services in the prescribed manner for readers and organized religious education classes. He also established a thriving Orthodox Christian Fellowship for students at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. His extraordinary affinity with Orthodox youth and young adults was widely recognized by the Church throughout his entire life.

Prior to ordination to the holy diaconate and priesthood by His Grace, Bishop [later Metropolitan] Theodosius of Pittsburgh, he visited monastic communities on Mount Athos, Greece, which made a major impact on his life. After his assignment as rector of Saint John Church, he continued to serve as spiritual director for the Orthodox Christian Fellowship. He also continued to pursue his lifelong vocation as an iconographer, completing the icons that grace the iconostasis at Saint John Church. He was instrumental in the design and building of the parish’s new church in the early 1980s. His icons may be found in a number of other churches, at Saint Tikhon’s Monastery and Seminary, and in many private homes.

He was also widely known in the field of liturgical music. He was especially interested in the Carpatho-Rusyn plain chant – *prostopinije* – indigenous to the region of central Europe from which his family hailed. Among his many arrangements is the widely sung “A New Commandment I Give to You,” based on the text of John 13:34ff. He also arranged the Paraklesis to the Mother of God in plain chant. The arrangement, recorded by a male chorus which he personally directed in fall 2009, will be available on CD from the Midwest Diocese in the near future.

A celibate, he maintained a zeal for the monastic life in all his endeavors. In 1975, he became a riasaphore monk; seven years later, he was tonsured to the Lesser Schema by His Grace, Bishop [later Metropolitan] Herman. In November of the same year, he was elevated to the rank of archimandrite.

In 1982, he was nominated by the Diocese of New England to fill the diocese’s vacant episcopal see. The Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America ratified the nomination and elected him to the See of Hartford and the Diocese of New England. He was consecrated to the episcopacy

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Metropolitan Jonah addresses Maryland legal case

After discussions that took place at the joint session of the Lesser Synod of Bishops and Metropolitan Council of the Orthodox Church in America at the Chancery here during the first week of March 2010, Metropolitan Jonah issued the following statement.

“As the Archbishop of Washington, certain matters of the dispute between the Archpriest Raymond Velencia, Pastor of Saint Matthew Church in Columbia, MD, and Kristine Koumentakos fall under our hierarchical/diocesan oversight. This has also been a serious concern within the Chancery of the Orthodox Church in America. Complaints from Ms. Koumentakos were brought to the attention of the administration of the Orthodox Church in America in January 2007. An investigation by the Orthodox Church in America took place in the early part of 2007. Ms. Koumentakos protested that the investigation was incomplete and brought her concerns to the members of the Holy Synod and the Metropolitan Council during the summer of 2007. The response to Ms. Koumentakos by the Orthodox Church in America was inadequate. During that time a private letter containing sensitive information was improperly shared with members of the Metropolitan Council.

“I apologize, on behalf of the Orthodox Church in America, to Kristine Koumentakos and to her family, for the lack of pastoral attentiveness and sensitivity to the matters at hand. The lawsuits that came about as a result of the disagreement between Ms. Koumentakos and Fr. Velencia were most unfortunate and should have been avoided. At this time the Orthodox Church in America is in the process of revising and updating its *Policies, Standards and Procedures* that address questions of alleged misconduct. Together with that there is an ongoing review of how to respond to complicated pastoral issues, conduct pastoral investigations, provide pastoral comfort and address allegations of misconduct. We will do all in our power to insure that the response and intervention in such matters of alleged misconduct will be ethical, professional and proper, as is befitting the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the teachings and canons of the Orthodox Church.” ■

Sexual Misconduct Allegations Review Committee meets

Members of the Orthodox Church in America’s Sexual Misconduct Allegations Review Committee met at the Chancery March 1, 2010.

Recently formed and blessed by Metropolitan Jonah, the committee began a careful review of the existing policies and procedures through which the Church investigates allegations of misconduct.

The committee is also following up on compliance of

preventative guidelines by parishes, dioceses, and institutions. At present, only partial responses have been received at the Chancery. Achieving compliance by all parishes and institutions is an ongoing task. A revised document of Policies and Procedures is planned for distribution later this year.

Committee members include Fr. Alexander Garklavs, OCA Chancellor; Fr. Eric Tosi, OCA Secretary; Frs. Michael Matsko and Theodore Bobosh; Protodeacon Peter Danilchick, Dr. Nikita Eike; and James Spencer, Esq. ■

Lesser Synod, MC participates in Strategic Plan workshop

Members of the Orthodox Church in America’s Lesser Synod of Bishops and Metropolitan Council reviewed a working document on the Strategic Plan during a full-day workshop at the Chancery Tuesday, March 2, 2010.

The Strategic Plan Committee has been meeting regularly for several months. Committee members are intent on soliciting input from every level of the Church, beginning with the Holy Synod of Bishops and the Metropolitan Council, in formulating a final plan.

“The workshop marked the next step in the conciliar process guiding the plan’s development,” said Priest John Vitko, Strategic Plan Committee secretary. “While there is still much work to do and a wide variety of viewpoints that must be carefully considered, especially as input is solicited from the dioceses and parishes, today’s workshop realized broad agreement on the plan’s spirit and principles as they exist at this point.”

A key concern involved the need to better articulate the OCA’s identity as Church.

“From the very first days of Saint Herman and the Alaskan Mission, the focus has been on bringing Orthodox Christianity to America,” Father John said. “And since the era of Saint Tikhon – the late 19th and early 20th century – the Church has pursued a conciliar approach involving the hierarchy, clergy and laity in its decision making. The same characteristics will guide us as we move into the future.”

Another key element is the importance of developing a common, clear understanding of how the parish, the diocese, the Office of the Metropolitan, and the Church’s other institutions and organs should relate to one another effectively in building up the Body of Christ.

“Lesser Synod and Council members offered suggestions with regard to the importance of and best ways to garner input from the dioceses, parishes, and other Church institutions in developing the plan,” Father John added.

Archpriest Leonid Kishkovsky, OCA Director of External Affairs and Interchurch Relations, provided invaluable insights on the upcoming Assembly of North America’s Orthodox hierarchs and related issues and how they might relate to the OCA’s strategic planning process. ■



ROCOR First Hierarch guest of Metropolitan Jonah

Metropolitan Jonah recently hosted Metropolitan Hilarion, First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia [ROCOR], at the OCA Chancery.

During their meeting, the Metropolitans discussed the initiation of an official dialogue between the the Orthodox Church in America and ROCOR to study ways by which relations might be strengthened. Both the OCA and ROCOR hierarchs had agreed earlier this year to initiate the dialogue.

During their meeting, Metropolitans Jonah and Hilarion concelebrated a Memorial Litiya for Patriarch Pavle of Serbia, who fell asleep in the Lord on November 15, 2009. The service marked the first time that the Metropolitans of the OCA and ROCOR have served together since the mid-1930s. ■

Holy Synod shares human rights concerns with US congressmen

A variety of issues affecting traditionally Orthodox Christian lands – including the situation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Turkey in light of His All Holiness, Patriarch Bartholomew’s widely acclaimed December 2009 interview on *60 Minutes*; the plight of Orthodox Christians in Kosovo and Coptic Christians in Egypt; and human trafficking – were the topics of discussion between members of the Holy Synod of Bishops and a number of congressmen during a late-January 2010 meeting in the US capital.

Congressman Christopher “Chris” Smith [R-NJ] and other members of Congress welcomed Metropolitan Jonah and other Synod members January 21.

The hierarchs also attended a congressional session, at which they were introduced by Congressman Smith.

Among the other congressmen whom the hierarchs met were Mr. Frank Wolf of Virginia, Mr. Joe Pitts of Pennsylvania, Mr. Trent Franks of Arizona, Mr. Gus Bilirakis of Florida; Mr. Jeff Fortenberry from Nebraska, and Mr. Bob Inglis from South Carolina. ■

Consultation addresses OCA’s communications needs

In an initial effort to move the Orthodox Church in America’s external communications to “the next level,” a consultation was held at the Chancery in mid-December.

“The focus of the consultation was to brainstorm the means by which the message of the Church and its ministries might be most effectively communicated through the internet and print media,” said Fr. Alexander Garklavs, OCA Chancellor, who, together with Fr. Eric G. Tosi, Secretary, facilitated the gathering.

Of primary concern was the effective use of the internet, specifically the OCA’s web site at www.oca.org.

“It was announced at the 15th All-American Council in 2008 that the web site would be undergoing a serious, comprehensive overhaul,” Fr. Alexander noted. “For a variety of reasons, this did not happen, although preliminary work on making the site more ‘user friendly’ has been undertaken.

“At present, the site contains well over 10,000 pages of information, but navigating it has become burdensome,” Fr. Alexander observed. “Two of the greatest concerns we hear is that finding specific resources on the site can be difficult and that the site does not permit two-way communication.”

Consultation participants suggested making the site interactive – introducing a blog is among several recommended upgrades – while featuring podcasts and videos and providing direct links to ministry resources. Enabling parishes to directly update their listings on the OCA web site without relying on a third party was also recommended.

With regard to communicating the work of the Church, it was agreed that more information on day-to-day happenings affecting the OCA at large must be forthcoming through regular – ideally daily – press releases.

“Reporting not only ‘what’ is happening, but also ‘why’ it is happening, was seen as essential,” Fr. Alexander noted. “Important events often go unreported, while others are shared apart from an appropriate context. It was strongly felt that, while the web site has been effective in communicating the activities and events of non-OCA and pan-Orthodox ministries and agencies, it has fallen short in its primary task as the ‘voice’ of the Orthodox Church in America itself.”

An in-depth discussion on the “new ways” people communicate – Facebook, Twitter, and so on – concluded that, while the OCA must take such things seriously in upgrading its on-line communications, the need for printed communications remains, since many of the faithful, especially seniors, do not have access to the internet.

“For example, it has become evident, for the second time in four years, that posting *The Orthodox Church* quarterly on the web site exclusively instead of mailing hard copies to the faithful is ineffective,” Fr. Alexander said. “While printing

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Patriarch Kirill with Metropolitans Jonah and Hilarion of Volokolamsk.

15th anniversary celebrated at the OCA's Moscow Representation Church of St. Catherine

In celebration of the 15th anniversary of the selection of Moscow's Church of St. Catherine as the Orthodox Church in America's Representation Church, Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and Metropolitan Jonah concelebrated the Divine Liturgy on December 7, 2009, the parish's patronal feastday.

The hierarchs were welcomed by Archimandrite Zacchaeus, parish dean and OCA Representative in Moscow. Also present for the celebration were Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department of External Church Relations; hierarchs and clergy from the Moscow Representations of the Churches of Antioch, Serbia, Bulgaria, the Czech Lands and Slovakia, and Poland; US Ambassador John Beyrle; and the ambassadors of Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Greece, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Columbia, Cuba, Latvia, Moldova, the United Arab Emirates, Peru, Poland, Romania, and other nations. Metropolitan Jonah presented the Order of St. Innocent, Silver Class, to Mr. Beyrle in recognition of the gracious assistance he has offered the community.

Patriarch Kirill and Metropolitan Jonah offered thanks to Archimandrite Zacchaeus for his work as OCA Representative to the Russian Orthodox Church and parish dean. Metropolitan Jonah presented him with a Synodal Gramota, signed by the members of the Orthodox Church in America's Holy Synod of Bishops. ■

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costs and postage have increased several times in recent years, the consensus was that earmarking sufficient funds to print and distribute hard copies is essential."

"The consultation was a first step in addressing our need to provide more – and better – communications," Fr. Alexander concluded. "Finding the means and personnel to do this, which will not be accomplished overnight, is one of our greatest challenges at this time."

Also participating in the consultation were Melanie Ringa, OCA Treasurer; John Maddex of Ancient Faith Radio, CEO of Conciliar Press Ministries, and member of the OCA's St. Elizabeth Mission, Chesterton, IN; Mr. Mark Stokoe, Metropolitan Council member; Protodeacon Eric Wheeler, Director of Finance at Old Westbury Gardens, Old Westbury, NY; Fr. John Matusiak, *TOC* managing editor; and Fr. Leonid Kishkovsky, *TOC* editor. ■

Chancery announces staff changes

In a memo dated January 1, 2010, Fr. Alexander Garklavs, chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America, informed members of the Holy Synod of Bishops and the Metropolitan Council of a number of staff changes, adding that "job description changes are being worked on and any budget changes will be found in the proposed 2010 budget, which the finance committee is working on and will be forthcoming."

Effective December 31, 2009, Fr. Andrew Jarmus has returned to parish ministry after serving as Director of Ministries and Communications. Fr. Samuel Gantt will no longer serve as communications specialist. He has been assigned to a parish in Houston, TX.

In response to discussions during the special consultation on ongoing communications needs held at the Chancery on December 15, 2009, Fr. John Matusiak will continue part-time duties as OCA Media Coordinator, in addition to his duties as managing editor of *The Orthodox Church* and rector of St. Joseph Church, Wheaton, IL. His immediate tasks will be to expand his current work while managing day-to-day communication needs, especially with regard to web site content.

Fr. Dennis Swencki will no longer serve as controller, but will function as an assistant to the OCA treasurer. He will work at the Chancery two days each week assisting the treasurer with financial reporting. His new duties will include coordinating the work of the Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards appeals, and financial development.

Archdeacon Kirill Sokolov, who has relocated to California, will no longer serve as the Metropolitan's deacon. He will remain webmaster of the OCA web site and continue to oversee the OCA's Diaconal Vocations Program. Concurrently, Protodeacon Joseph Matusiak will serve as the Metropolitan's deacon, while residing in Chicago. He also will assist in coordinating some of the work of the OCA's departments.

Frank Tkacz, Cleveland, OH, will no longer manage the Orthodox Christian Publications Center, in line with OCPC's new arrangement with and inventory transfer to St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.

Mrs. Helen Detke, who worked in accounts receivable and as office assistant, will now be engaged on a part-time basis.

Father Alexander also informed Holy Synod and Metropolitan Council members that "further communications needs are being identified by the communications team and may necessitate a new job description." ■

Igumen Sergius [Bowyer] elected Abbot of St. Tikhon's Monastery

For the first time in 47 years, members of the brotherhood of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery, South Canaan, PA were afforded the opportunity to elect their own Abbot.

Igumen Sergius [Bowyer] was elected on October 24, 2009.

"This historic change will enable our Brotherhood to grow in a new and unprecedented direction, operating as a stavropegial, self-determining, autonomous monastery directly and exclusively under the hierarchical authority of the Metropolitan," Father Sergius wrote in a letter announcing the election. "The Bishop of Eastern Pennsylvania, His Grace, Bishop Tikhon, will no longer function in a hierarchical capacity, but as a primary adviser to the Abbot and community and will remain a very important part of the monastery brotherhood."

Igumen Sergius was installed at Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery Church on Saturday, January 23, 2010. ■



Igumen Sergius

Metropolitan Jonah visits Mexican Diocese

Bishop Alejo of Mexico City welcomed Metropolitan Jonah to Mexico for a brief archpastoral visitation during the second week of January 2010.

It has been customary for many years for the Primate of the Orthodox Church in America to visit the faithful in Mexico in conjunction with the Great Feast of Theophany. Prior to his retirement and the election of Bishop Alejo, Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas and the South also participated in the annual archpastoral visitation in his capacity as Exarch of Mexico.

Great Vespers was celebrated at Mexico City's



Metropolitan Jonah with Bishop Alejo and local clergy at Mexico City's Ascension Cathedral.

Cathedral of the Ascension on Saturday, January 9. The following morning, Metropolitan Jonah presided at the Divine Liturgy, after which the Blessing of Water – a highlight of the annual visitation – was celebrated.

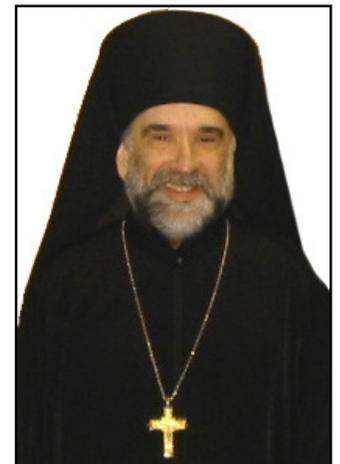
Prior to his departure on Wednesday, January 13, Metropolitan Jonah visited communities throughout the region. At every mission, including one in the midst of a building project, he was well received by clergy and laity alike, answering their questions while encouraging them to share their faith with others through evangelistic ministry.

Joining Metropolitan Jonah and Bishop Alejo were Bishop Benjamin of San Francisco and the West, Locum Tenens of the Diocese of Alaska, and Fr. Michael Oleksa, a specialist in the evangelization of native peoples who hopes to establish links between clergy in Alaska and Mexico as a means of encouraging the latter in their evangelistic outreach to the country's indigenous population. ■

Schedule for consecration of Bishop-elect Michael announced

Fr. Joseph Lickwar, the chancellor of the OCA's Diocese of New York and New Jersey, recently announced preliminary plans for the consecration of Bishop-Elect Michael [Dahulich].

With the blessing of Metropolitan Jonah, diocesan Locum Tenens, the complete schedule of consecration services and related events has been prepared.



Archbishop Job from 19

Archbishop Job

on January 29, 1983, at All Saints Church, Hartford, CT.

While ministering in New England, he emphasized the importance of religious education, stewardship, lay ministry, and outreach to youth and college students. One of the most important ministries he initiated was the diocesan youth rally that attracted hundreds of children, teenagers, and young adults every summer.

At its session of November 5, 1992, the Holy Synod of Bishops elected Bishop Job to fill the vacant episcopal see of Chicago and the Midwest. On February 6, 1993, he was enthroned as Bishop of his native city at Holy Trinity Cathedral, Chicago, IL.

Under his guidance, the diocese established over 15 new missions and parishes. In an effort to “turn around” parishes experiencing decline, a diocesan-wide parish health ministry was initiated. His concern for children and youth continued as he participated in summer camps, youth retreats, and outings throughout the geographically immense diocese. During the 1990s, he attended several international Orthodox summer youth camps in central and eastern Europe. While he had little time to pursue iconography, he continued to enjoy his excellent reputation as an iconographer and iconologist, and was often called upon to lecture on the subject. He also initiated annual clergy convocations and, as he had done in New England, he established a Council of Presbyters, in line with the vision of Saint Ignatius of Antioch.

In recognition of his 20-plus years of service to the Church, the Holy Synod of Bishops elevated him to the rank of archbishop at its March 2004 session.

In recent years, Archbishop Job expressed intense concern for the spiritual, financial, and administrative crises that had gripped the Orthodox Church in America, while displaying his willingness to do whatever he could to restore trust, transparency, and integrity to the Church on all levels.

Several weeks before his repose, he had informally shared his hope to retire in 2011 during the Midwest Diocese’s annual assembly, and had given his blessing to the formation of a committee and process by which a new diocesan hierarch might be nominated.

May Archbishop Job’s memory be eternal! ■

NOW AVAILABLE

St. Tikhon’s Monastery is now producing hand dipped, 100% beeswax candles to support its daily operations. For order forms visit sttikhonsmonastery.org.

Matushka Mildred Soroka

DUNCAN, TX – Matushka Mildred Soroka, 86, formerly of Philadelphia, PA, fell asleep in the Lord on October 24, 2009. She was the wife of the late Very Rev. Leonid Soroka.

Born February 23, 1923 in Olyphant, PA, the daughter of the late John W. and Tillie S. Turko, she was a graduate of Eckels College of Mortuary Science in Philadelphia. She and her husband served parishes in Endicott, NY; Minneapolis, MN; and Detroit, MI. After Father Leonid’s death, she relocated to be with her children and worked in Philadelphia for over 30 years. Adored and loved, she will be greatly missed by her family and friends.

Matushka Mildred is survived by four sons and one daughter and their families, nine grandchildren, and two brothers and two sisters.

Services were celebrated at All Saints Church, Olyphant, PA, October 30, 2009, with interment at Saint Tikhon’s Monastery Cemetery, South Canaan, PA.

May Matushka Mildred’s memory be eternal! ■

Mr. Stephen Beskid

WARREN, OH – Mr. Stephen Beskid, 88, former circulation librarian at Saint Vladimir’s Seminary, Crestwood, NY, fell asleep in the Lord on October 25, 2009.

A member of Saint John the Baptist Church, Warren, OH, he graduated from Saint Vladimir’s Seminary in 1953, where he was named circulation librarian in 1964. He served faithfully in that position until his retirement in the mid-1980s. Known by generations of students for his kind manner, he was much loved and respected, always lending assistance to his colleagues and seminarians.

Services were celebrated at Saint John the Baptist Church, Warren, OH, with interment at Pineview Cemetery.

May Stephen’s memory be eternal! ■

Resa Ellison

MINNEAPOLIS, MN – Resa Ellison, choir director at Saint Mary Cathedral here, fell asleep in the Lord on January 3, 2010 after a two month illness.

The daughter of the Rev. James and Linda Ellison of Saint Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church, Urbana, IL, Resa was admitted to Unity Hospital, Fridley, MN, on November 8 after being diagnosed with H1N1 and an aggressive form of pneumonia. By November 18, her condition had become grave. Breathing with the assistance of a ventilator, she remained in an induced coma. In late December, she was transferred to the University of Minnesota Hospital, Minneapolis.

Resa was a graduate of Saint Vladimir’s Seminary, Crestwood, NY. She directed the cathedral choir for three years and was involved in youth and camping ministries in the deanery.

Funeral services were celebrated at Saint Mary Cathedral, Minneapolis, and Saint Nicholas Church, Urbana, with interment in Bailey Cemetery.

May Resa’s memory be eternal! ■

The V. Rev. George Zmed

CHICAGO, IL – The Very Rev. George Zmed, 93, retired pastor of Holy Nativity Church here, fell asleep in the Lord on Tuesday, January 12, 2010.

Father George was born in Chicago on April 24, 1916 to Nicolae and Paraschiva [Balan] Zmed, both of Comlosul Mare, Timis, Romania. At the age of five years, he and his family returned to Comlosul Mare, where he lived until returning to the US in November 1952.

He graduated from the Timisoara-Caransebes Theological Academy in 1942, after which he studied for one year at the Law School in Cluj. He was ordained to the diaconate in Pesac, Banat, Romania, on October 18, 1942, and to the priesthood the following week in Satchinez.

After his return to the US, he was received into the ranks of the clergy of the Romanian Episcopate in July 1958. He served Chicago's Holy Nativity parish until his retirement in 1983.

Father George served as spiritual advisor to the American-Romanian Orthodox Youth and administrative dean of the Episcopate's Chicago Deanery, contributed to the *SOLIA* newspaper, and participated in numerous other Episcopate activities. He is well remembered as a musician with a fine voice, who organized many musical programs for his parish. He was elevated to the dignity of archpriest by the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America on March 19, 1996.

Married to the former Persida Golub of Cerneteez, Romania in Timisoara on October 15, 1942, he and his wife are survived by three sons, Cornel, Walter, and Adrian, a well known actor.

Funeral services were celebrated at Chicago's Holy Nativity Church on January 20-21, 2010.

May Father George's memory be eternal! ■

Matushka Mary Varian

MINNEAPOLIS, MN – Matushka Mary Varian, 91, widow of the late Protodeacon Peter Varian, fell asleep in the Lord on Thursday, January 28, 2010.

She was born Mary Leschisin in 1918, the eldest of three daughters and a son, to John and Susan Leschisin in Columbia Heights, MN. After graduation from Columbia Heights High School, she took business courses and worked in the secretarial field. In 1942, she married Peter Varian of Minneapolis, MN, with whom she had two daughters and a son.

Throughout her life she pursued many interests. While her children were in school, she was active in the PTA. Later, she returned to work as a secretary. She worked for many years for the Camp Fire Girls. Her last place of employment was the Northeast Neighborhood House in Minneapolis.

After retirement, she became increasingly active in activities at Saint Mary Cathedral, Minneapolis, serving on the mission project and accessibility committees and as president of the women's club. She was a long-time member of Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America. She also helped organize numerous activities for the cathedral's seniors. She and her

husband frequently attended All-American Councils and Midwest Diocesan events.

Matushka Mary is survived by three children, Sister Pearl [widow of the late Very Rev. David Homiak] of Holy Assumption Monastery, Calistoga, CA; Jane [Robert] Smith, Blaine, MN and Fort Myers, FL; and James, also of Blaine; and eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Other survivors include her sister, Ann Leschisin, New Brighton, MN, and her brother, John [Barbara] Leschisin, Andover, MN.

Funeral services were celebrated at Saint Mary Cathedral, Minneapolis, on February 5-6, 2010, with interment in the cathedral cemetery.

May Matushka Mary's memory be eternal! ■

Matushka Paulette Hirsch

DENVER, CO – Matushka Paulette Hirsch, wife of the late Very Rev. Joseph Hirsch, long-time rector of Holy Transfiguration Cathedral here, fell asleep in the Lord after a brief illness on February 12, 2010.

Father Joseph fell asleep in the Lord on August 24, 2009.

After serving in the Diocese of the Midwest for several years, Father Joseph and Matushka Paulette relocated to Denver in 1984 to serve Holy Transfiguration Cathedral, in the city's Globeville neighborhood. Almost immediately, the Hirsches focused on renewing not only the cathedral parish, but the entire neighborhood. At a time when many inner-city congregations were leaving for the suburbs, they made the commitment to bring new life to the cathedral and the surrounding community.

Over the years, largely through Matushka Paula's organizational skills, the neighbors began to improve the Globeville area. A new parish hall was built, and the parish became "ground zero" for efforts to clean up industrial waste, install sidewalks, and reduce crime and pollution. Matushka served as president of the Globeville Civic Association until 1996. By example, the Hirsches showed how, with determination and God's help, the light of the Orthodox Christian Faith and love for one's neighbor can transform some of the most desperate, dark and forgotten corners of the inner city.

The diversity of the cathedral community also reflects the Hirsches' love for their neighbors. One of the oldest parishes of the Diocese of the West, the cathedral's original membership was composed of Little Russians, Serbs and Slovaks who had settled near and worked in the factories, packing houses, and stockyards. To this day, the parish welcomes a diverse Orthodox population which now includes many Romanians. Matushka Paulette led the singing for many years and drove Father Joseph where ever his pastoral duties took him.

Matushka Paulette is survived by her sons David, Joseph and Benjamin and their wives and children. She also leaves behind a parish family and neighborhood grateful for her willingness to pour out her life for them in so many ways.

Services were celebrated at Holy Transfiguration Cathedral on February 19-20, with interment at at Crown Cemetery.

May Matushka Paulette's memory be eternal! ■

Official from 2

and Eastern Pennsylvania; Bishop Benjamin of San Francisco and the West; Bishop Melchisedek of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania; Metropolitan Sotirios of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto; Bishop Iov of Kashira, Administrator of the Patriarchal Parishes in Canada and Acting Administrator of the Patriarchal Parishes in the USA; Bishop Alexander of the Antiochian Orthodox Diocese of Ottawa, Eastern Canada and Upstate New York; and Bishop Meleti of Khotyn, Auxiliary Bishop of the Church of Ukraine's Diocese of Chernivtsi.

■ EPISCOPAL CHANGES

[ROCHON], Bishop Irinee of Quebec City, who was Priest-in-Charge, is appointed Rector of St. Benoit de Nursie Church, Montreal, QC, Canada. He is released from duties as Dean of the Quebec Deanery. All other duties remain the same/ October 1, 2009.

■ NAME CHANGE

KSYNYUK, Rev. Igor, Acting Rector of SS. Peter and Paul Church, Bayonne, NJ, has legally changed his last name to Kseniuk/ September 25, 2009.

■ ORDINATIONS

BURGESS, Deacon Ian was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Bishop Benjamin of San Francisco at Holy Trinity Cathedral, San Francisco, CA. He is under the omophorion of Bishop Benjamin and attached to the Diocese of the West/ August 16, 2009.

CHURCHILL, Benedict was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Metropolitan Jonah at Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Jonah/ October 11, 2009.

HICKMAN, Deacon Daniel was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Metropolitan Jonah at Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Jonah/ October 11, 2009.

PACURAR, Deacon Ovidiu was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Bishop Irineu of Dearborn Heights on behalf of Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit at Holy Cross Church, Hollywood, FL. He is under the omophorion of Archbishop Nathaniel and attached to the Romanian Episcopate/ September 13, 2009.

STAHOVIK, Matthew was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Bishop Melchisedek of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania at Holy Ghost Church, Ambridge, PA. He is under the omophorion of Bishop Melchisedek and attached to the Diocese of Western PA/ July 12, 2009.

■ ASSIGNMENTS

BERTOLINI, V. Rev. James, who was attached to St. Paul the Apostle Church, Las Vegas, NV, is granted retirement/ October 19, 2009.

BURGESS, Rev. Ian is appointed Rector of St. Nicholas of Japan Mission, Redding, CA/ August 16, 2009.

CHURCHILL, Deacon Benedict is attached to Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY/ October 11, 2009.

COZBY, V. Rev. Dimitri is released from duties at St. Seraphim of Sarov Cathedral, Dallas, TX and attached to All Saints Mission, Victoria, TX/ October 1, 2009.

DEMKO, Rev. Michael, who was Acting Rector, is appointed Rector of Holy Annunciation Church, Berwick, PA/ October 1, 2009.

DUMITRU, Rev. Antonel, who was awaiting assignment, is appointed Mission Priest of Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste Mission, Aurora, ON, Canada/ October 10, 2009.

FRANCHAK, Rev. Jason, who was attached, is appointed Acting Rector of Holy Trinity Church, Pottstown, PA/ October 1, 2009.

GANTT, Rev. Samuel is released from duties at St. Sergius of Radonezh Chapel, Oyster Bay Cove, NY. Remaining under the omophorion of Metropolitan Jonah, he is transferred to the Diocese of the South and appointed Priest-in-Charge of St. Cyril of Jerusalem Mission, Houston, TX/ October 1, 2009.

HERBEL, Rev. Dellas Oliver is appointed Priest-in-Charge of Holy Resurrection Mission, Fargo, ND. He remains attached to St. Herman Church, Minneapolis, MN/ September 25, 2009.

HICKMAN, Rev. Daniel is attached to Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY/ October 11, 2009.

KONDRATICK, V. Rev. John N., who is attached to St. Sergius of Radonezh Chapel, Oyster Bay Cove, NY, is granted retirement/ October 23, 2009.

MELNYK, V. Rev. Anatoliy, in addition to duties at SS. Peter and Paul Sobor, Montreal, QC, Canada, is appointed Interim Dean of the Quebec Deanery/ October 1, 2009.

MOULTON, V. Rev. Andrew is released from duties at St. Sophia Church, Lawrence, KS. He remains Rector of SS. Cyril and Methody Church, Granite City, IL/ October 28, 2009.

PACURAR, Rev. Ovidiu is appointed Pastor of St. Polycarp of Smyrna Mission, Naples, FL/ October 1, 2009.

PIASTA, V. Rev. Andrew is appointed Priest-in-Charge of Holy Trinity Church, Kayville, SK, Canada. All other duties remain the same/ May 1, 2008.

PISARCHUK, V. Rev. Theodore is appointed Dean of the Orlando Deanery. All other duties remain the same. July 23, 2009.

RUIZ-GOMAR, Rev. Juan Pablo is appointed Administrator of St. Seraphim of Sarov Cemetery. All other duties remain the same/ January 1, 2009.

SMITH, Rev. Walter is released from duties at Holy Trinity Church, Kayville, SK, Canada/ April 28, 2008. He is also released from duties at Holy Trinity Church, Moose Jaw, SK, Canada and granted a Leave of Absence for one year/ October 31, 2009.

STAHOVIK, Deacon Matthew is attached to Holy Ghost Church, Ambridge, PA/ July 12, 2009.

STEVENS, V. Rev. Mark is released from duties as Dean of the Orlando Deanery/ July 23, 2009. He is released from duties at St. Stephen the Protomartyr Church, Longwood [Orlando], FL and granted a Leave of Absence for six months/ August 18, 2009.

YERGER, V. Rev. Paul, in addition to duties at Holy Resurrection Church, Clinton, MS, is appointed Temporary Priest-in-Charge of Christ the Savior Mission, McComb, MS/ September 30, 2009.

* **VINT, Rev. Cosmin**, who was awaiting assignment,

is appointed Pastor of Protection of the Holy Mother of God Mission, Fort Qu'Appelle, SK, Canada/ October 10, 2009.

■ LEAVES OF ABSENCE

SMITH, Rev. Walter is granted a Leave of Absence for one year. He is attached to the Bishop's Chapel of St. Silouan the Athonite, Johnstown, ON, Canada/ October 31, 2009.

STEVENS, V. Rev. Mark is granted a Leave of Absence for six months. He is attached to St. Justin Martyr Church, Jacksonville, FL/ August 18, 2009.

■ RELEASED

TASSOS, Rev. Michael is released from duties at St. Sergius of Radonezh Chapel, Oyster Bay Cove, NY and from the omophorion of Metropolitan Jonah. He is granted a canonical release to the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese/ November 1, 2009.

■ RETIRED

BERTOLINI, V. Rev. James is granted retirement. He is attached to St. Paul the Apostle Church, Las Vegas, NV/ October 19, 2009.

KONDRATICK, V. Rev. John N. is granted retirement. He is attached to St. Sergius of Radonezh Chapel, Oyster Bay Cove, NY/ October 23, 2009.

■ DEPOSED

NAUMAN, Rev. Sergius, who was attached to St. Innocent Cathedral, Anchorage, AK, is deposed from all sacred functions of the Holy Priesthood and his name is removed from the ranks of clergy of the Orthodox Church in America by the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America/ September 2, 2009.

■ PARISHES

BULGARIAN DIOCESE/ Diocese Change.

St. Sophia Church, Lawrence, KS is transferred from the Bulgarian Diocese to the Diocese of the Midwest/ October 28, 2009.

ARCHDIOCESE OF CANADA/ Reactivated Church.

St. Nicholas Church, Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, Tofield, AB, Canada. Served by Alberta Deanery Clergy. Contact: Rev. Vasyl Kolega/ July 1, 2009.

DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST/ New Mission.

Holy Resurrection Mission, 1845 16th St. South, Fargo, ND 58103. Rev. Dellas Oliver Herbel, Priest-in-Charge/ September 29, 2009.

ROMANIAN EPISCOPATE/ New Mission.

Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste Mission, Aurora, ON, Canada. Rev. Antonel Dumitru and Rev. Stefan-Dan Morariu, mission priests/ October 10, 2009.

ROMANIAN EPISCOPATE/ New Mission.

Protection of the Holy Mother of God Mission, Fort Qu'Appelle, SK, Canada. * Rev. Consim Vint, mission priest/ October 10, 2009.

ROMANIAN EPISCOPATE/ Mission Closed.

St. Stephen the Protomartyr Mission, Columbus, OH, is closed/ October 10, 2009.

ROMANIAN EPISCOPATE/ Mission Closed.

Annunciation Mission, Niles, is closed/ October 10, 2009.

DIOCESE OF THE SOUTH/ Status Change.

St. Michael Skete, Canones, NM is granted monastery status and is now known as the

Monastery of the Holy Archangel Michael/ September 30, 2009.

DIocese OF THE SOUTH/ Status Change.

All Saints Mission Station, Victoria, TX is granted mission status and is now known as All Saints Mission/ October 8, 2009.

NOTE: * indicates non-OCA clergy.

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■ **EPISCOPAL CHANGES**

[PAFFHAUSEN], Metropolitan Jonah is released from duties as Abbot of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery, South Canaan, PA. All other duties remain the same/ October 24, 2009.

[MOLLARD], Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania is released from duties as Deputy Abbot of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery, South Canaan, PA. All other duties remain the same/ October 24, 2009.

■ **ORDINATIONS**

BRINEGAR, Theodore was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas at St. Seraphim of Sarov Cathedral, Dallas, TX. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Jonah and attached to the Diocese of the South/ March 29, 2009.

CUNEO, Deacon Andrew P. was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Bishop Melchisedek of Pittsburgh on behalf of Metropolitan Jonah at Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Jonah/ November 14, 2009.

HERREM, Leonard was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Archbishop Seraphim of Ottawa at Holy Resurrection Sobor, Saskatoon, SK, Canada. He is under the omophorion of Archbishop Seraphim and attached to the Archdiocese of Canada/ November 8, 2009.

JOHNSON, Simeon was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Bishop Melchisedek of Pittsburgh on behalf of Metropolitan Jonah at Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Jonah/ November 14, 2009.

[TERENTA], Archdeacon Nicholas was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Metropolitan Volodymyr of Kyiv and All Ukraine on behalf of Metropolitan Jonah at St. Elijah Monastery Church, Odessa, Ukraine. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Jonah/ October 18, 2009.

WRIGHT, Gregory was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Archbishop Seraphim of Ottawa at St. Herman of Alaska Church, Langley, BC, Canada. He is under the omophorion of Archbishop Seraphim and attached to the Archdiocese of Canada/ September 13, 2009.

■ **ASSIGNMENTS**

ANTONESCU, Rev. Cosmin is released from duties at Holy Trinity Church, Youngstown, OH and appointed Pastor of Falling Asleep of the Ever-Virgin Mary Church, Portland, OR/ October 1, 2009.

[BOWYER], Igumen Sergius is appointed Abbot of

St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery, South Canaan, PA/ October 24, 2009.

BRINEGAR, Deacon Theodore is attached to St. Justin Martyr Church, Jacksonville, FL/ March 29, 2009.

CLEENEWERCK, Rev. Laurence, who was Acting Rector, is appointed Rector of St. Innocent Mission, Eureka, CA/ November 24, 2009.

CUNEO, Rev. Andrew P. is attached to Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY/ November 14, 2009.

DRESKO, V. Rev. John, who was Acting Rector, is appointed Rector of St. Paul the Apostle Church, Las Vegas, NV/ November 24, 2009.

[EDWARDS], Igumen David is appointed Interim Rector of Holy Trinity Church, Moose Jaw, SK, Canada. All other duties remain the same/ November 15, 2009.

FRIESEN, Protodeacon Wilhelm, who was attached, is assigned Holy Resurrection Sobor, Saskatoon, SK, Canada/ November 10, 2009.

[GERKEN], Igumen Sergious, who was Priest-in-Charge, is appointed Chaplain of Holy Assumption Monastery, Calistoga, CA/ November 24, 2009.

GULIN, V. Rev. George, who was Acting Rector, is appointed Rector of Holy Myrrhbearing Women Church, West Sacramento, CA/ November 24, 2009.

HASENECZ, Rev. Timothy is released from duties at Holy Trinity Church, Catasauqua, PA and attached to St. Nicholas Church, Bethlehem, PA/ October 1, 2009.

HERREM, Deacon Leonard is assigned to Holy Resurrection Sobor, Saskatoon, SK, Canada/ November 8, 2009.

JACKSON, Rev. Matthew is released from duties at Christ the Saviour Mission, McComb, MS and granted a Leave of Absence/ September 16, 2009.

JOHNSON, Deacon Simeon is attached to Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY/ November 14, 2009.

KALINOWSKI, V. Rev. Bazyl, in addition to other duties, is appointed Priest-in-Charge of St. Vladimir Church, Santa Barbara, CA/ November 24, 2009.

LOWELL, V. Rev. David is released from duties at Holy Trinity Cathedral, San Francisco, CA and appointed Acting Rector of Transfiguration of Christ Cathedral, Denver, CO/ November 24, 2009.

MAEV, Rev. Yuri, who was Acting Rector, is appointed Rector of St. Spiridon Cathedral, Seattle, WA/ November 24, 2009.

* **POPA, Rev. Gavriel Liviu** is released from duties at Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel Church, Palm Springs, CA and appointed Pastor of Falling Asleep of the Ever Virgin Mary Church, Colleyville, TX/ September 1, 2009.

RASSAM, Rev. Joseph (Yousuf), who was Acting Rector, is appointed Rector of St. Innocent Church, Tarzana, CA/ November 24, 2009.

SAWCHAK, V. Rev. Timothy, in addition to other duties, is appointed Priest-in-Charge of St. Sophia Church, Lawrence, KS/ November 9, 2009.

SCHROEDEL, Rev. John, who was Acting Rector, is appointed Rector of St. Juvenaly Mission, Kona, HI/

November 24, 2009.

SEAMORE, Rev. Gabriel, who was Acting Rector, is appointed Rector of St. George the Great Martyr Church, Hesperia, CA/ November 24, 2009.

SMIRENSKY, V. Rev. Alvian, who is retired, is released from attachment to St. Basil Church, Watervliet, NY and from the Diocese of New York/New Jersey. Remaining under the omophorion of Metropolitan Jonah, he is attached to New Skete Monastery/ October 28, 2009.

TATE, V. Rev. Matthew is released from duties at SS. Cyril and Methodius Mission, Chico, CA; St. Innocent Mission, Eureka, CA; and St. George the Great Martyr Church, Hesperia, CA. All other duties remain the same/ November 24, 2009.

[TERENTA], Priestmonk Nicholas is attached to the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos Monastery, Weaverville, NC/ October 18, 2009.

VELEZ, Rev. Joseph is released from duties in the Military Chaplaincy and is granted retirement. He is released from the omophorion of Metropolitan Jonah, transferred to the omophorion of Bishop Benjamin of San Francisco, and attached to the Diocese of the West/ November 9, 2009.

[WEBBER], Archimandrite Meletios, who was Acting Superior, is appointed Superior of Monastery of St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco, Manton, CA/ November 24, 2009.

WRIGHT, Deacon Gregory is assigned to St. Herman of Alaska Church, Langley, BC, Canada/ September 13, 2009.

■ **LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

JACKSON, Rev. Matthew is granted a Leave of Absence for six months. He is attached to Holy Resurrection Church, Clinton, MS/ September 16, 2009

■ **RETIREMENTS**

VELEZ, Rev. Joseph, who was in the Military Chaplaincy, is granted retirement. He is transferred from the omophorion of Metropolitan Jonah to the omophorion of Bishop Benjamin and the Diocese of the West and attached to Holy Trinity-Holy Resurrection Church, Wilkeson-Tacoma, WA/ November 9, 2009.

■ **SUSPENDED**

GLEASON, Protodeacon Patrick, who was attached to St. Seraphim of Sarov Cathedral, Dallas, TX, is suspended from all diaconal functions/ November 5, 2009.

STEVENS, V. Rev. Mark, who was attached to St. Justin Martyr Church, Jacksonville, FL, is suspended from all priestly functions/ November 3, 2009.

■ **DEATHS**

* **MARIONCU, V. Rev. Nicolae**, who was attached to St. George Cathedral, Regina, SK, Canada, died in retirement on November 1, 2009. *May his memory be eternal!*

■ **PARISHES**

ROMANIAN EPISCOPATE/ New Mission.

St. Polycarp of Smyrna Mission, Naples, FL. Rev. Ovidiu Pacurar, Pastor/ July 2, 2009.

ROMANIAN EPISCOPATE/ New Location.

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St. Dimitrie Church, Bridgeport, CT has relocated to Easton, CT. Address: 500 Sport Hill Rd., Easton, CT 06612-1744/ April 12, 2009.

ROMANIAN EPISCOPATE/ New Location. Holy Apostles Mission, Portland, OR has relocated to Vancouver, WA. Address: 4300 Main St., Vancouver, WA 98663/ November 24, 2009.

NOTE: * indicates non-OCA clergy.

509 December 2009

[OSACKY], Archbishop Job of Chicago and the Diocese of the Midwest died on December 18, 2009.

[PAFFHAUSEN], Metropolitan Jonah is appointed Locum Tenens of the Diocese of the Midwest by the Holy Synod of Bishops. Concurrently, he is released from duties as Locum Tenens of the Bulgarian Diocese by the Holy Synod of Bishops/ December 23, 2009.

[PLESKA], Bishop Melchisedek of Pittsburgh and the Diocese of Western PA is appointed Locum Tenens of the Bulgarian Diocese by the Holy Synod of Bishops/ December 23, 2009.

■ TONSURED

DAHULICH, V. Rev. Michael was tonsured a Riasophore Monk by Metropolitan Jonah at St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery, South Canaan, PA. He is now known as Priestmonk Michael/ October 24, 2009.

■ ORDINATIONS

KARCHER, John was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Bishop Benjamin of San Francisco and the West at St. Nicholas Church, Saratoga, CA. He is under the omophorion of Bishop Benjamin and attached to the Diocese of the West/ September 19, 2009.

YAKUNIN, Igor was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Metropolitan Jonah at St. Sergius of Radonezh Chapel, Oyster Bay Cove, NY. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Jonah and attached to the Diocese of New York-New Jersey/ December 2, 2009.

■ ASSIGNMENTS

FRASE, Rev. Stephen is released from duties at All Saints of North America Mission, Columbus, OH and attached to St. Gregory of Nyssa Church, Columbus, OH/ December 2, 2009.

HICKMAN, Rev. Daniel is released from duties at Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY. He is transferred to the Diocese of the South and appointed Acting Rector of St. Stephen the Protomartyr Church, Longwood, FL/ December 13, 2009.

KARCHER, Deacon John is assigned to St. Nicholas Church, Saratoga, CA/ September 19, 2009.

KRETA, Deacon Joseph is released from duties at Holy Apostles Church, Columbia, SC and attached to St. Seraphim of Sarov Cathedral, Dallas, TX/ December 21, 2009.

SIMERICK, V. Rev. Michael, retired, is released from attachment to SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Detroit, MI and the omophorion of Archbishop Job and the Diocese of the Midwest, and transferred to the omophorion of Bishop Melchisedek and the Diocese of Western PA, where he awaits attachment/ December 3, 2009.

SOKOLOV, Archdeacon Kirill is released from

duties at Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY, and from duties as Archdeacon to the Metropolitan; transferred from the omophorion of Metropolitan Jonah to the omophorion of Bishop Benjamin of San Francisco and the West; and attached to Holy Trinity Cathedral, San Francisco, CA/ January 1, 2010.

YAKUNIN, Deacon Igor is attached to Holy Trinity Church, Brooklyn, NY/ December 2, 2009.

■ ON LOAN

[ZAIENS], Igumen Gregory is placed on loan to the omophorion of Metropolitan Isaiah of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Denver. He remains attached to St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery Church, South Canaan, PA/ December 14, 2009.

■ RELEASED

LESKO, Rev. Andrew is released from duties at St. Anne Church, Pomona, CA and from the omophorion of Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate and transferred to the omophorion of Metropolitan Jonah/ December 24, 2009. He is granted a canonical release to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America/ January 1, 2010.

■ SUSPENDED

GOETTING, Deacon Timothy, who was attached to Holy Trinity Cathedral, Chicago, IL, is suspended from all diaconal functions/ November 16, 2009.

■ DEATHS

[OSACKY], Archbishop Job of Chicago and the Diocese of the Midwest, died on December 18, 2009. *May his memory be eternal!*

510 January 2010

■ RECEPTIONS

POWER, V. Rev. Gerasim is canonically received into the ranks of clergy of the Orthodox Church in America by Vesting by Archbishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada at St. Herman of Alaska Sobor, Edmonton, AB, Canada. He is under the omophorion of Archbishop Seraphim and attached to the Archdiocese of Canada/ December 13, 2009.

STURZU, Deacon Ioan is canonically received into the ranks of clergy of the Orthodox Church in America by Metropolitan Jonah from the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of the Americas. He is under the omophorion of Archbishop Seraphim of Ottawa and attached to the Archdiocese of Canada/ December 3, 2009.

■ ORDINATIONS

FRANCIS, Matthew was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Archbishop Seraphim of Ottawa at St. Herman of Alaska Sobor, Ottawa, ON, Canada. He is under the omophorion of Archbishop Seraphim and attached to the Archdiocese of Canada/ January 1, 2010.

LEHR, Deacon Vincent was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Archbishop Seraphim of Ottawa at St. Herman of Alaska Sobor, Ottawa, ON, Canada. He is under the omophorion of Archbishop Seraphim and attached to the Archdiocese of Canada/ January 1, 2010.

ONOFREI, Deacon Rares was ordained to the Holy

Priesthood by Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate at the Falling Asleep of the Ever-Virgin Mary Cathedral, Cleveland, OH. He is under the omophorion of Archbishop Nathaniel and attached to the Romanian Episcopate/ October 11, 2009.

WERNER, Thaddeus was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Metropolitan Jonah at St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery Church, South Canaan, PA. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Jonah/ October 25, 2009.

■ ASSIGNMENTS

BOUTENEFF, V. Rev. Sergei is released from duties at St. George Church, Trumbull, CT and attached to St. George Cathedral, Boston, MA/ January 3, 2010.

[DAHULICH], Priestmonk Michael is appointed Administrator of the Diocese of New York-New Jersey. All other duties remain the same/ January 1, 2010.

FRANCIS, Deacon Matthew is assigned Third Deacon at St. Herman of Alaska Sobor, Ottawa, ON, Canada/ January 1, 2010.

FRIESEN, Protodeacon Wilhelm, who was attached, is assigned to Holy Resurrection Sobor, Saskatoon, SK, Canada/ January 14, 2010.

HERREM, Deacon Leonard, who was attached, is assigned Third Deacon at Holy Resurrection Sobor, Saskatoon, SK, Canada/ January 14, 2010.

JARMUS, V. Rev. Andrew is released from duties at St. Sergius of Radonezh Chapel, Oyster Bay Cove, NY and from the omophorion of Metropolitan Jonah and transferred to the omophorion of Bishop Melchisedek of Pittsburgh and the Bulgarian Diocese. He will remain on loan to the omophorion of Bishop Nikon of Boston and the Albanian Archdiocese and continue to service St. Nicholas Church, Jamaica, NY/ February 1, 2010.

LEHR, Rev. Vincent is assigned Third Priest at St. Herman of Alaska Sobor, Edmonton, ON, Canada and will serve as a Deanery Supply Priest/ January 1, 2010. In addition, he is appointed Priest-in-Charge of SS. Peter and Paul Church, St. Walburg, AB, Canada and All Saints Church, Meadow Lake, AB, Canada/ January 2, 2010.

ONOFREI, Rev. Rares is attached to St. Dumitru Church, New York, NY/ October 11, 2009.

PAPISH, Deacon Taras, who was attached, is assigned Second Deacon at Holy Resurrection Sobor, Saskatoon, SK, Canada/ January 14, 2010.

POWER, V. Rev. Gerasim is attached to All Saints of Alaska (St. Arseny of Konevits) Church, Victoria, BC, Canada/ December 13, 2009.

WERNER, Deacon Thaddeus is attached to St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery Church, South Canaan, PA/ October 25, 2009.

■ SUSPENDED

WOJTIUK, Rev. Mirosław, who was attached to the Bishop's Chapel of St. Silouan the Athonite, Johnstown, ON, Canada, is suspended from all diaconal functions/ January 1, 2010.

■ DEATHS

ZMED, V. Rev. George, who in retirement was attached to Holy Nativity of Our Lord Church, Chicago, IL, died on January 12, 2010. *May his memory be eternal!* ■

Briefing from 25

Consecration

On Friday, May 7, 2010, Great Vespers for the Feast of the Holy Apostle John the Theologian will be celebrated at Saints Peter and Paul Church, 109 Grand Street, Jersey City, NJ, at 7:00 p.m.

Bishop-Elect Michael will make his Profession of Faith at Saints Peter and Paul Church on Saturday, May 8, at 9:00 a.m., followed by the consecration Divine Liturgy concelebrated by Metropolitan Jonah and members of the Holy Synod of Bishops. A banquet will follow at the Casino-in-the-Park Restaurant, Jersey City, from 1:00 until 5:00 p.m. Tickets are \$75.00 for adults, \$25.00 for children age 8 and under. Banquet seating reservation forms must be submitted by March 31. Seating is reserved in tables of eight, according to the order in which responses are received.

On Sunday, May 9, Metropolitan Jonah and the members of the Holy Synod of Bishops will concelebrate the Divine Liturgy and Enthronement of Bishop Michael at Holy Virgin Protection Cathedral, 59 East Second Street, New York, NY, at 9:30 a.m. A reception will follow in the cathedral auditorium.

Motel accommodations are available at the Double Tree Jersey City, just north of Saints Peter and Paul Church. On-line reservations may be made at www.jerseycity.doubletree.com, using group/convention code SPP. Those who register by April 16 will be guaranteed the special daily rate of \$109 plus tax from Friday May 7 through Sunday, May 9, 2010. Reservations may also be made by calling 800-222-TREE.

A commemorative booklet also is being planned. An ad form is available on the web site of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey at <http://nynjoca.org/files/2009/12-27/commemorative-publication.pdf>

Other members of the consecration committee include Frs. Stephen Evanina, Alexey Karlut, Samuel Kedala, and Wiaczeslaw Krawczuk; Matushki Shirley Lickwar and Mariam Vernak; and Peter Eagler and George Elia. ■

OCA Christian Ed department releases third activity book on saints

■ **Saints Commemorated in the Litiya Prayers** is the third in a series of activity books for children and parents now available for downloading – free of charge! – at dce.oca.org/page/activity-books.

The book was developed and written by several members of the Orthodox Church in America's Department of Christian Education.

Like earlier books in the series, it contains biographical stories and iconographic drawings of 12 saints, maps of their travels or the areas in which they lived, discussion questions, and puzzles and activities related to each story. Quotations from or about each saint, photographs of those saints who lived in recent times, and a glossary round out the activity book.

Among the 12 saints presented in the new volume are the fourth century Ambrose of Milan and Catherine of Alexandria, the 11th century Anthony of the Caves in Kyiv, the 15th century Jonah of Moscow, and the late 19th/early 20th century Nicholas of Japan.

In the book's informative and engaging introduction, the Litiya is historically defined and described as "a section of Vespers that culminates in the blessing of bread, wheat, wine and oil for the strengthening of the faithful who then continue in worship during a Vigil. The selection of saints in this volume was specifically inspired by a popular composite of names used during Vespers in many American Orthodox communities.

Saints Commemorated in the Litiya Prayers is geared to pre-teens and teens, although with parental guidance it also can also be used with younger children. Like the first two books, it offers a variety of ways for young people, with their different learning styles, to get to know the lives of a very diverse group of saints.

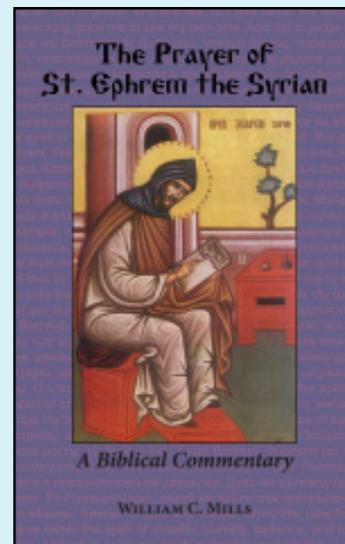
Download on-line – along with the book's companion volumes, **Saints in Times of Trouble** and **Saints of North America** – at dce.oca.org/page/activity-books. ■

■ The Prayer of St. Ephrem: A Biblical Commentary

by Fr. William Mills provides a thorough examination of St. Ephrem's most widely known writing. The book provides a reflection on the prayer, which outlines both the sins and virtues of community life, in light of its scriptural background.

The author is rector of the Nativity of the Holy Virgin Church, Charlotte, NC, and an adjunct professor of religious studies at Queens University. His writings have appeared in *America* magazine, *Congregation* magazine, and *Theological Studies*. Among Fr. William's other books are *From Pascha to Pentecost*, *Prepare O Bethlehem*, *Baptize All Nations*, *Let Us Attend*, *A Light to the Gentiles*, *Feasts of Faith* and *Our Father*. He also edited *Orthodox Pastoral Service* by Archimandrite Kyprian Kern.

Available on-line at www.orthodoxresearchinstitute.org for **\$10.95 plus shipping**. ■



Alexis Liberovsky

Changing times

After 50 years, SCOBA embarks on new, uncharted course

The 50th anniversary of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas [SCOBA] in 2010 stands out as an opportunity to reflect on its history and the various steps it has undertaken to coordinate activity and to forge eventual unity among the various Orthodox Christian communities on this continent.

While SCOBA's title designates it as an organization whose activity is "in the Americas," it has in reality been focused on North America as a whole. Its effect on Orthodoxy in Canada was so insignificant over several decades that in recent years, a similar conference of hierarchs has been constituted in Canada. SCOBA has been throughout its existence in practical terms a conference of hierarchs in and for the US only.

Once bishops of the Russian Church ceased being the only Orthodox hierarchs residing in North America and a multiplicity of Orthodox jurisdictions dependent on their Mother Churches abroad began to flourish in the 1920s, the various Orthodox communities lived largely in isolation from each other. They had no forum to work together or to provide any semblance of unity among them.

An initial attempt in 1943 to establish a cooperative Orthodox body – "The Federated Orthodox Greek Catholic Primary Jurisdictions in America" – stemmed not from a sense of need for ecclesial unity, but rather for the purpose of presenting a united Orthodox front in obtaining exemption for Orthodox clergy from military service in World War II. In this, the federation was successful. But as an organization, it was beset by numerous problems and soon, for all intents and purposes, it ceased all activity, though it continued to exist on paper for another decade. This federation was spearheaded by George E. Phillips, a controversial layman, with the involvement of the Greek, Antiochian, Russian [Patriarchal] and Serbian hierarchs. The Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in America – or *Metropolia*, as the Orthodox Church in America was then known – was not involved, as it was not administratively dependent on a Mother Church abroad, which was a prerequisite for membership in the federation. An additional complication, no doubt, was the involvement of the Exarchate of the Moscow Patriarchate, as the Metropolia was then under suspension by the Patriarchate and not on "speaking terms." Despite its short existence and lack of ecclesial orientation, this federation did set a precedent for a future organization to build upon, which would occur in 1960.

An exploratory meeting of 12 Orthodox hierarchs, including



Archbishop Demetrios of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, SCOBA chair, with Archbishop Anastasios of Albania and Metropolitan Jonah and other hierarchs at the blessing of new Orthodox Christian Mission Center facilities in May 2009. OCMC is one of several pan-Orthodox ministries supported by SCOBA.

three from the Metropolia, was convened by Greek Archbishop Iakovos [Coucousis] at the offices of his Archdiocese in New York City on March 15, 1960. The meeting concluded that increased cooperation was desirable and that a common approach in relations with non-Orthodox religious bodies should be implemented. A commission of theologians was appointed to formulate a plan for the establishment of a Standing Conference of hierarchs. In the words of the late Father Alexander Schmemmann, who was one of the theological minds that would shape SCOBA's vision for more than two decades, "an event of the greatest significance for the future of Orthodoxy in America took place on the afternoon of June 7, 1960." SCOBA was formally established "for the consideration and resolution of common problems, the coordination of efforts in matters of common concern, and the strengthening of that unity which is the essence of Orthodoxy," as stated in a resolution passed that day. Regular meetings began to take place every few months. A structure and procedure were developed through the adoption of a constitution which, interestingly, called for an annually rotating chairmanship among the presiding hierarchs of the various Orthodox Churches in America. However, Archbishop Iakovos was reelected as chairman year after year throughout SCOBA's first decade, and eventually the issue of rotating chairmanship was no longer raised.

In its early years, some differences and misunderstandings arose within SCOBA due to interjurisdictional conflicts, including that between the Metropolia and the Exarchate of the Moscow Patriarchate, which were not in communion at the time, and other similar situations. However, this did not prevent SCOBA

from making significant strides in its work. It established oversight and provided some funding to several existing pan-Orthodox initiatives, such as the Orthodox Christian Education Commission, the Orthodox Scouting Commission, and the Council of Eastern Orthodox Youth Leaders of America, as well as creating other organizations including the Orthodox Campus Commission. While SCOBA's efforts to establish a united representation in the National Council of Churches of Christ and other ecumenical bodies were unsuccessful, it did create dialogue commissions with several non-Orthodox Christian traditions.

In the mid-1960s, SCOBA began to consider constituting itself as more than a consultative body and to concretely create greater unity among the Orthodox Churches on this continent. In 1965, SCOBA sought recognition from the Mother Churches

of its member hierarchs to establish itself as the "Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America." This attempt was unsuccessful due to the objections of some of its member jurisdictions and their Mother Churches abroad. Another attempt was made in 1968 to send a SCOBA delegation to a Pan-Orthodox Conference in Geneva, convened in preparation of the Great and Holy Council of the Orthodox Church – the same Council still in preparation today, four decades later – to inform this Conference of the real situation of Orthodoxy in North America, which SCOBA felt was insufficiently known by the Mother Churches abroad. While the Patriarchate of Constantinople rebuffed this initiative, SCOBA continued efforts for its establishment as a canonical Synod for a few years, even suggesting the idea of eventual consideration of its

"autocephalous" status. At the same time, the Metropolia was in the process of reconciling with its Mother Church in Russia and was granted autocephaly by the Moscow Patriarchate in 1970.

The controversies surrounding the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in America throughout the Orthodox world and its non-recognition by many Patriarchates created new tensions in SCOBA. This discord, as well as the complete lack of support from the Mother Churches of SCOBA's efforts towards viable Orthodox unity, put an end to further activity by SCOBA in this regard. SCOBA continued to hold regular meetings, but largely only to review reports on its various interconfessional dialogues and its affiliated organizations.

In 1979, the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America adopted a resolution seeking to reinvigorate SCOBA through some organizational adjustments, including a rotating chairmanship, and its immediate reorientation toward "organic unity of American Orthodoxy." The resolution had little effect at the time until several circumstances once again brought the issue of Orthodox unity to the fore.

Changing political tides throughout the world, particularly the fall of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe with the resulting freedom of religious practice there, allowed several patriarchs to visit America [Dimitrios of Constantinople Aleksy II of Russia, Pavle of Serbia].

SCOBA to 45



First steps. Hierarchs and representatives of several jurisdictions [above] meet in New York in the mid-1950s.

Young adult ministry was the focus of the Orthodox Campus Commission, one of SCOBA's first and most active agencies. Among those who gathered for a conference in Erie, PA in 1970 [below], many today serve the Church as clergy and lay leaders.



It's a date!

June parish ministries conference has something for everyone!

“Equipping the Saints” will be the theme of a parish ministries conference to be hosted by three OCA departments on the campus of Baldwin-Wallace College, just minutes from the Cleveland airport, June 27-30, 2010.

“The theme is based on Ephesians 4:11-13, in which Saint Paul challenges every member of the Church to use his or her unique gifts for the ‘building up the Body of Christ,’” said Matushka Alexandra Safchuk, co-chair of the Department of Christian Education [DCE]. “The conference will fill the growing need for continuing ministry education for lay leaders and clergy in an exciting atmosphere.”

Digging deeper

“Wonder,” a blog for young adults and college students makes its debut on OCA web site

Since making its debut at www.ocawonder.com on February 26, 2010, the OCA’s new blog for young adults and college students, “Wonder,” is already averaging over 300 hits per day.

The blog was launched by the Orthodox Church in America’s Department of Youth, Young Adult and Campus Ministry. Its content is geared toward providing thought-provoking articles on a variety of topics touching young adults, college students, and those who minister to this age group.

The blog’s first installment explores the theme, “Engaging Modern Atheism,” and features articles by Priest Sean Levine, Andrew Boyd, and Logan Johnson.

“Capital Punishment” is the theme of the second installment, slated to appear on March 25, while the April 25 installment, “Help My Unbelief,” will explore the topic of faith and doubt.

Readers may submit articles, creative writing and artwork, poetry, photos, and videos for these and future installments. Suggested topics for subsequent installments are also welcome. Send all materials and comments to wonder@oca.org.

Every month, “Wonder” will feature four articles on a specific theme, blending theological and academic insights with practical ideas for ministry, according to co-moderators Protodeacon Joseph Matusiak and Andrew Boyd.

To subscribe to “Wonder,” log on to www.ocawonder.com and click the “sign me up” link on the left of the page. ■

Joining the DCE in hosting the event are the Departments of Liturgical Music and Translation and Youth, Young Adults and Campus Ministry, and the Diocese of the Midwest’s Parish Health Ministry, a flagship effort in the field of evangelization, growth, and parish ministry.

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah will be the featured speaker. Other presenters include Prof. David Drillock, Joseph Kormos, Matushka Valerie Zahirsky, and others.

A variety of workshops on a number of themes – including liturgical music, directing, composition, leadership skill building, parish development, teaching moral issues, witnessing to those of other faith traditions, parish leadership, and discerning spiritual gifts – will be offered. Young adults will enjoy sessions focusing on the Orthodox Christian response to pop culture and the new media, youth ministry, and campus leadership.

Workshops will be repeated throughout the conference to enable participants to attend several tracts.

Additional information and registration forms will be sent to all parishes and will be available in PDF format on the OCA web site at www.oca.org. ■

Addressing needs

Five new Resource Handbook articles explore family issues, disabilities

Five new articles were added recently to the *Resource Handbook for Lay Ministries* at www.oca.org/HIndex.asp?SID=15 on the OCA web site.

The Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the America’s 2009 statement, “Embracing People with Disabilities in the Church,” is a welcomed addition to the growing awareness and corpus of literature on this important pastoral issue.

In “Children with Special Needs and the Orthodox Christian Family,” Priest Steven P. Tschlis shares a variety of insights into this often overlooked issue.

Matushka Dennise Kraus offers guidelines for ministering to those grieving as a result of the loss of a child during pregnancy or thereafter in “Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month.”

In “Family As Garden,” Dr. Albert Rossi offers a wealth of theological and practical insights on the nature of the family.

The growing interest in medical bioethics is addressed in a timely article by Protodeacon Basil Andruchow.

The *Resource Handbook* has been published continuously by the Orthodox Church in America’s Department of Christian Service and Humanitarian Aid since 1982. Mrs. Arlene Kallaur serves as Handbook coordinator. Featuring hundreds of articles on a wide variety of ministries, the *Handbook* is invaluable for lay and pastoral ministries on the parish level and beyond. ■

International honors

St. Tikhon's Seminary honored by Greek government; St. Vladimir's Seminary receives Russian award

Two of the Orthodox Church in America's seminaries – Saint Tikhon's and Saint Vladimir's – recently received international honors.

The administration and faculty of Saint Tikhon's Seminary were pleased to learn that the Ministry of Education of the Hellenic Republic decided to recognize the seminary as an accredited higher education institution, equal in standing to the schools of theology at Greek universities.

According to Bishop-elect Michael [Dahulich] of New York and New Jersey, seminary Dean, the Ministry of Education affirmed that the Master of Divinity degree conferred by Saint Tikhon's Seminary is equivalent to the first degree in Theology conferred by the Theological Schools at the Universities of Athens and Thessalonica. As such, it makes it possible for degree holders to pursue the universities' graduate studies and doctoral [Th.D.] programs.

By virtue of Greece's membership in the European Union, this distinction extends to all schools and religious faculties at EU member state universities.

"This is truly a great event in the history of Saint Tikhon's Seminary and the culmination of tremendous work and effort by everyone associated with it, especially our dearly beloved and deeply respected Dean, Bishop-Elect Michael," said Dr. Christopher Veniamin, Professor of Patristics. "The Saint Tikhon community is grateful to God for bestowing this great and unsolicited blessing upon our humble efforts to spiritually form and academically prepare pastors and leaders for His Holy Orthodox Church."

At a special ceremony in Moscow on January 21, 2010, His Holiness, Patriarch Kirill of Moscow presented the "Unity of

Orthodox Peoples Award" to Saint Vladimir's Seminary.

The seminary was selected to receive the award by the International Foundation for Unity of Orthodox Christian Nations for its activity "aimed at strengthening the unity of Orthodox nations through theological education." Patriarch Kirill chairs the foundation's board of trustees.

Accepting the award on behalf of the seminary were Archpriest John Behr, Dean, who was accompanied by the school's Chancellor and Associate Chancellor for Advancement, Archpriest Chad Hatfield and Mr. Theodore Bazil.

Similar awards were presented to His Holiness, Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians; His Excellency, Russian President Dimitry A. Medvedev; and Serbian cinematographer and director Emur Kusturica.

Following the ceremony, the seminary representatives met with Patriarch Kirill, at which time he spoke of his respect and love for the former deans of the seminary, Archpriest Georges Florovsky and Protopresbyters Alexander Schmemmann, John Meyendorff, and Thomas Hopko, whom he knew personally. He also commended the seminary for bringing the richness of Orthodox theology to the New World while maintaining a proper place within the Church's Tradition.



Metropolitan Hilarion and clergy visit St. Tikhon's.

SVS Dean and Chancellors with Patriarch Kirill, Russian President Medvedev, and other award recipients.



Making history

ROCOR First Hierarch, clergy visit St. Tikhon's Monastery, Seminary

History was made on Tuesday, March 2, 2010, as His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion, First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, visited Saint Tikhon's Monastery and Seminary.

Accompanying Metropolitan Hilarion were His Grace, Bishop Jerome of Manhattan; His Grace, Bishop George of Mayfield; and a delegation of over 70 clergy from ROCOR's Eastern American and New York Diocese.

Seminaries to 36

Making history

Metropolitan Hilarion was welcomed to the monastery by the recently elected Abbot, Igumen Sergius, after which he and his entourage toured the monastery and seminary grounds, church and chapels, icon repository, and museum.

His Grace, Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania; His Grace, Bishop Melchisedek of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania; Priestmonk Michael [Dahulich], Bishop-Elect of New York and New Jersey; and 35 clergy from the OCA's Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania joined Metropolitan Hilarion, Bishops Jerome and George, and the ROCOR clergy for lunch, served by the faithful of Saint John the Baptist Church [ROCOR], Mayfield, PA, in the monastery dining hall.

"This event had tremendous significance in so many ways, and hence was a joy for the Brotherhood and community which can only be epitomized by the Palm Sunday Hymn, 'Today, the Holy Spirit has gathered us together, and taking up Thy Cross we sing: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord!'" said a monastery spokesman. "It was truly a joyful and historic day in the life of the monastery and the Church in America." ■

West meets east

Amidst controversy, Archbishop of Canterbury delivers lecture at SVS

Despite controversies surrounding recent events within the Anglican communion, Dr. Rowan Williams ended his visit to New York City in late January by demonstrating his academic acumen and continued interest in Orthodox Christianity.

On Saturday, January 30, 2010, the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury delivered the 27th annual Father Alexander Schmemmann Memorial Lecture, titled "Theology and Contemplative Calling: The Image of Humanity in the *Philokalia*," and received an honorary doctoral degree on the campus of Saint Vladimir's Seminary.

Four hundred people attended the lecture and ceremony, distinguished by an episcopal presence from both the Orthodox Christian and Anglican traditions.

Dr. Williams received the invitation to be this year's Schmemmann Lecturer for his pioneering work in Russian Orthodox studies and his long-standing interest in Eastern Christian studies. His doctoral work at Oxford University focused on Vladimir N. Lossky, a famous mid-20th century Orthodox theologian; and his first book, *Wound of Knowledge*, was a study of spirituality from apostolic times to the 16th century.

Dr. Williams's lecture on the *Philokalia*, a collection of monastic writings ranging from the fourth through the 15th centuries, reflected his vast knowledge on the subject.

Beginning and ending with quotes from Father Schmemmann's classic work, *For the Life of the World*, he delivered a discourse on the spiritual battle that human beings must wage in journeying from a self-centered life to a life in Christ, according to the writings of the Christian ascetics. Additionally, he thanked the seminary for its "overwhelming warm and generous welcome," which, he stated, crowned his first visit to Saint Vladimir's in 1974, and was all that he "had hoped and prayed for."

In his welcoming remarks, Archpriest John Behr, SVS Dean, said, "In and through all of this and more, Rowan Williams has made a great contribution towards the increasing knowledge of Eastern Orthodoxy in the West, and also helped the Eastern Orthodox themselves think through their own tradition, providing insights, asking questions, opening up dialogue; and for this we are truly thankful."

Father John, who had been examined by Dr. Williams for his own doctoral degree at Oxford, saw an opportunity for the Anglican cleric to be this year's Schmemmann Lecturer coincident with his planned travels to the US, and also viewed his visit to the seminary campus to be an occasion to further Anglican-Orthodox relations. The faculty and Board of Trustees of Saint Vladimir's together voted to confer upon the Dr. Williams a Doctorate of Divinity *honoris causa* at the event.

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah, seminary President, bestowed the honorary doctoral degree upon Dr. Williams. The Metropolitan recently signed a concordat on behalf of Saint Vladimir's with Nashotah House, an Episcopalian seminary, signaling the agreement of the two seminaries to work together for the preservation of the Orthodox-Anglican dialogue that began in the early 20th century.

Matushka Juliana Schmemmann, wife of Father Alexander, expressed her thoughts on the extraordinary visit, saying, "As diverse as our ways to the Kingdom, as different as our journeys to the Lord, we are all united in our love of the Lord and in our joy to serve Him. This unity is reinforced by the Archbishop's coming to speak to us and to share in our universal love in Christ."

A complex and controversial figure, Dr. Williams has been widely criticized in both Orthodox and conservative Anglican circles, particularly for his writings on homosexual unions (especially in his 1989 paper, "The Body's Grace"), and his promulgation of arguments in favor of the ordination of women, beginning at the 1988 Lambeth Conference. Conversely, he has equally challenged liberal theologians and post-modern atheists: he defended the bodily resurrection of Christ in the face of Episcopalian Bishop John Shelby Spong's ridicule of the doctrine, and has poked holes in the logic of Richard Dawkins, author of anti-theistic books, including *The God Delusion*.

Particularly noteworthy among his audience were bishops in the Anglican Church of North America [ACNA], a "Province-in-formation" within the global Anglican Communion formed in June 2008. The ACNA represents a traditional, conservative, and "biblically-faithful way of following Jesus," in opposition to many current practices that, its members say, are "accommodated and incorporated" by the Episcopal Church in the US and the Anglican Church of Canada.

Valerie Zahirsky

Team work works!

Cooperative learning with high school students

Knowing three unique characteristics of high school students can help teachers develop methods that are especially effective with this age group. High school students

- ◆ thrive when working together toward a goal.
- ◆ bring to the classroom a variety of preconceptions about how the world works – something teachers must help to enhance, if correct, or to “unlearn,” if not correct.
- ◆ have learning preferences – that is, some prefer to see examples as they hear new information, while others prefer to do research.

Cooperative learning capitalizes on these characteristics, allowing students to work in small groups in such a way that every student’s input is essential to completing a given assignment. Each group member is accountable to the others, helping each other while working interdependently. Such an arrangement helps avoid a common pitfall of group work – one or two members taking over and doing most or all of the work while resenting the “slackers.” Cooperative learning also develops students’ ability to work together for a goal and to appreciate each others’ gifts and knowledge.

The teacher plays a critical role in making cooperative learning work. Some points:

Assign work in such a way that groups can work toward a goal. For example, a teacher might assign individuals or smaller groups to explore various aspects of the life and work of Saint Basil the Great by

1. developing a timeline of the major events in his life.
2. researching and describing the “Basileiad” – a house in which the poor were cared for. What does it say about Saint Basil as a person?
3. reviewing and sharing some of the his prayers and writings.
4. describing the way Saint Basil, an Eastern saint, is viewed by Roman Catholicism and other Christian traditions.

Each of these elements is necessary to form a comprehensive “picture” of Saint Basil, so if each person in the group is assigned one element, his or her willingness to work together will be enhanced. But the variety in the elements also allows students to use their preferred learning styles. A visual learner, after doing research on the Basileiad, might draw pictures to show how

the poor were being helped there. A musical student might have a special interest in presenting information about Saint Basil’s prayers and writings, while a student with a mathematical bent might enjoy producing the timeline. The teacher should choose members of each group with their preferences in mind as much as possible.

Groups should number three to five members each and include a mixture in terms of ability. This helps students learn social skills and broadens their relationships. Too often, if students are allowed to form their own groups, the most able students will work together and leave the others behind.

Competition among groups (never within groups) can be another useful aspect of cooperative learning. In our example of Saint Basil, after groups present their findings, the teacher would decide which group gave the most complete or most engaging portrait of the saint. This would help ensure that more capable group members would help and interact with less capable ones, because they would need to bring all the elements of their assignment together to reach the goal of making the best presentation.

In conclusion, cooperative learning requires the teacher to be actively involved in several ways – by providing abundant resources and helping students learn how to use them, by helping students learn to employ the skills that make cooperation possible – listening, making eye contact, and developing a real interest in what others have to say – and by monitoring each group’s work and checking on those students who may be off task by asking questions like, “What part of the group’s work should you be doing right now?”

Cooperative learning is an effective way to nurture social skills and to enhance students’ knowledge. It requires dedication, but the results make it worth the effort. ■

Valerie Zahirsky is co-chair of the OCA Department of Christian Education.

“Where two or three can gather...” Many parishes have less-than-ideal educational facilities. Cooperative learning small groups can meet just about anywhere “two or three can gather” – in church, in the choir loft, in a corner or hallway, or even outdoors.



Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew meets with SCOBA hierarchs

His All Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew met with the heads of North America's Orthodox Churches during his fall 2009 US visit on October 27.

Present for the audience were His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios of America of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, who chairs the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas [SCOBA]; His Eminence, Metropolitan Philip of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese; His Eminence, Metropolitan Christopher of the Serbian Orthodox Archdiocese; His Eminence, Metropolitan Nicholas of the Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese; His Eminence, Archbishop Nicolae of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese; His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah of the Orthodox Church in America; His Eminence, Metropolitan Constantine of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the USA; His Grace, Bishop Ilia of the Albanian Orthodox Diocese; and Archpriest Alexander Abramov of the Representation of the Moscow Patriarchate in the USA.

On behalf of the hierarchs, Archbishop Demetrios welcomed Patriarch Bartholomew, who shared insights into the present state of world Orthodoxy.

The Patriarch's remarks are as follow.

"We bring to you the greeting, the blessing, and the love of the Apostolic, Patriarchal and Ecumenical Throne of the First-Called Andrew, and we express as well our appreciation to the Most Reverend Chairman of the Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas, His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios of America, for bringing you together today so that we may have this opportunity for fellowship in the Holy Spirit and for a dialogue of love.

"For nearly 50 years, the Standing Conference has served as a place for the Primates of the various jurisdictions that are present in North America to gather and discuss common concerns and issues. Also, through the many agencies that have been formed under your aegis, you have been able to activate pan-Orthodox ministries that extend beyond the confines of your particular Churches, so that your united effort might be brought to bear in common interests.

"The success of SCOBA has always been based in the true sense of cooperation, of synergy, between the Orthodox ecclesiastical entities here in North America. You have been successful at providing a common witness to all the Orthodox faithful, even as you have maintained your ties to the Mother Churches and sought to establish yourselves in the countries and culture within which you live.



Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew *presides at Prayer Service for the United Nations community at New York City's Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral.*

"Nevertheless, SCOBA has always been an organization that lacks authorization from the Mother Churches, being a self-started and volunteer body. This reality reflects both strengths and weaknesses – strengths in that SCOBA was free to find creative solutions to issues and problems, without seeking approval from a higher authority – and weaknesses, because without authorization from the Mother Churches, there has been no methodology to effectuate decisions and policies that prepare for the future.

"Given these considerations, it was logical for the status quo to evolve, as it did at the Synaxis of the Heads of the universally recognized Autocephalous Churches last October at the Ecumenical Patriarchate. At that time, the common will of the universally recognized Autocephalous Churches was expressed as follows:

"As Primates and the Representatives of the Most Holy Orthodox Churches, fully aware of the gravity of the aforementioned problems, and laboring to confront them directly

as “servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries” [1 Corinthians 4:1], we proclaim from this See of the First-throne among the Churches and we re-affirm 1) our unswerving position and obligation to safeguard the unity of the Orthodox Church in “the faith once for all delivered to the saints” [Jude 3], the faith of our Fathers, in the common Divine Eucharist and in the faithful observance of the canonical system of Church governance by settling any problems that arise from time to time in relations among us with a spirit of love and peace; 2) our desire for the swift healing of every canonical anomaly that has arisen from historical circumstances and pastoral requirements, such as in the so-called Orthodox Diaspora, with a view to overcoming every possible influence that is foreign to Orthodox ecclesiology. In this respect we welcome the proposal by the Ecumenical Patriarchate to convene Pan-Orthodox Consultations within the coming year 2009 on this subject, as well as for the continuation of preparations for the Holy and Great Council.’

“As you all know and are well aware, the Fourth Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference did take place in June of this year, at the Center of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambésy, Switzerland. The Decision, and the Regulations promulgated by the Pre-Conciliar Conference establish a *modus operandi* by which the Bishops, in the regions of the world defined by the Conference, may progress institutionally toward the solutions that we all seek in the forthcoming Great and Holy Council.

“This is not to say that there will not be difficulties along the way. The region defined for this portion of the Western Hemisphere is quite extensive, including Spanish-speaking Mexico and Central America, together with the rest of Anglophone and Francophone North America. There are many bishops who have never been represented in SCOBA, and who will now participate through their Mother Churches in the Assembly of Bishops. There are also the issues of so-called ‘autonomies’ and ‘autocephalies’ that are not recognized by the Church Universal, and for which solutions must be found in order allow for full participation on every level in the processes of the Assembly of Bishops. All of the issues and problems that require resolution first require willing hearts and minds, study and careful consideration, and the unfailing loving application of the canonical tradition of our Holy Orthodox Church.

“As the convener of the Pan-Orthodox world, the Ecumenical Patriarchate stands ready to be of assistance through guidance and an ongoing dialogue based in the truth of Gospel. We welcome positive suggestions and, as it said in our modern world, ‘thinking outside the box,’ so that we may construct models of ecclesiastical polity and governance with foundations sunk deep in the venerable tradition of our One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church – and at the same time are relevant to the spiritual needs and societal conventions of the world within which our faithful live.

“Here, we do not reference compromise nor conformity to the world, but, following the exhortation of the Holy Apostle Paul – that we be ‘transformed by the renewing of our minds,’ we speak of transformative and transformational models that are faithful to the history of the Church, for this history is that of the Holy Spirit Who infuses and guides the Church in every generation – in times of weakness and in times of strength, in times of persecution

and in times of triumph, in times war and in times of peace. And in whatever time the Church finds her incarnate presence through the grace, operation and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we know that the Church lives in accordance with the Apostle’s injunction “that everything be done decently and in good order.”

“Therefore, beloved brothers in the Lord, let the order of the Church be observed perfectly among you, beginning and ending always with the commandment – new and divine – that we have received from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: Love one another. Everything else that we attempt – even with all our skill and might – will come to naught if love does not reign supreme among us all. With these words we leave each of you with our Patriarchal and paternal blessing, invoking upon you the grace of God and His infinite mercy.”

Following Patriarch Bartholomew’s remarks and an exchange of gifts, His Eminence, Metropolitan Emmanuel of France, who accompanied the Patriarch throughout his US visit and who chairs the already functioning Episcopal Assembly of France, engaged in a brief dialogue with the hierarchs. ■

Episcopal Assembly to convene May 26-27, 2010

Some 60 Orthodox hierarchs from across North America will gather in New York City May 26–27, 2010, for the long-anticipated initial meeting of the Episcopal Assembly.

The establishment of Episcopal Assemblies in regions of the world that exist beyond the borders of the autocephalous Churches was authorized by the Fourth Preconciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference at the Orthodox Center of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambésy, Switzerland June 6–13, 2009.

The Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas reviewed documents related to the organization of the Assembly at a special session September 25, 2009, in which His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah, was a participant.

Additional information on the Assembly will be posted on the OCA web site at www.oca.org and in the spring 2010 issue of *The Orthodox Church*. ■

NA Orthodox-Catholic Theological consultation holds 77th meeting in DC

The North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation held its 77th meeting at Saint Paul’s College, Washington, DC in October 2009. Co-chairing the meeting were His Eminence, Metropolitan Maximos of the Greek Orthodox Diocese of Pittsburgh, and Roman Catholic

Consultation to 40

NA consultation

Archbishop Gregory Aymond of New Orleans, who had been with His All Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in New Orleans the day before the Consultation opened, and extended the Patriarch's warm greetings to Consultation participants.

Consultation members finalized a joint response to the international dialogue's 2007 "Ravenna Document." The response examines the Ravenna Document's treatment of conciliarity and authority at three levels within the Church: the local level (diocese), the regional level (Episcopal conferences, metropolitanates and patriarchates), and the universal level.

The members also examined a first draft of a proposed agreed statement on conciliarity and authority, titled "Steps Towards a United Church: A Sketch of an Orthodox-Catholic Vision for the Future." Still in its preliminary stages, the text will be revised and considered again at the next meeting of the dialogue, scheduled to take place at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Brookline, MA, June 1-3, 2010.

Other topics discussed included the Fourth Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference and its implications for Orthodoxy in North America, the papal encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, the nomination of a new US Ambassador to the Holy See, relations between the two Romanian Orthodox jurisdictions in North America, and the recently announced creation of personal ordinariates for former Anglicans within the Catholic Church.

The North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation is sponsored jointly by the Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas, the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Additional information on the consultation may be found at <http://www.scoba.us/articles/2759.html>. ■

Customized parish radio stations available from OCN

The Orthodox Christian Network [OCN] recently announced that it now offers customized on-line radio stations to parishes and ministries world-wide.

As the over the air radio market begins to shrink and the on-line radio market grows, OCN has strategically positioned itself to take advantage of the growing audience accessing on-line radio programming while maintaining a strong land base presence as well. Since recently acquiring new on-line radio server software, OCN can now offer completely customized 24/7 on-line radio stations in a cost effective and efficient way allowing parishes to stay connected to their parishioners more so than ever before.

With offerings ranging from personalized radio players to managed custom radio stations, OCN's on-line radio stations allow parishes of all sizes to provide Orthodox Christian programming aimed to their current and potential membership.

The Branded National Radio Solution creates a custom radio station on OCN, while parish web sites utilize the already existing content of the "Ark" or "Rudder" channels. Self managed and OCN managed stations are completely customizable. With the self-managed option, parishes and ministries can upload their own sermons, liners, announcements and podcasts to their customized radio station. With a managed station, OCN provides weekly updates and the recording equipment so that a parish's commercials, announcements, sermons and other programs can be seamlessly integrated with the OCN music of its choice.

The OCN music library has thousands of titles available, ranging from contemporary to traditional Orthodox Christian Music. The OCN library currently offers numerous podcast channels to stream, as well as the highly recognizable and national radio program "Come Receive the Light," which is now celebrating over a decade of excellence in broadcasting.

For more information, visit www.myocn.net or call OCN at 954/522-5567 to speak with a support staffer.

The Orthodox Christian Network is an official SCOPA agency dedicated to creating a national, sustainable and effective media witness for Orthodox Christianity. ■

FOCUS North America awards \$15K in grants

The Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve – North America [FOCUS] recently announced that it had awarded \$15,000.00 in grants to help fund several of the agency's new and existing partner ministries.

New ministries receiving funding include Sheltering Tree, Inc.; ReEngage, Inc.; Saint Herman House of Hospitality; Martha and Mary House; and Saint Nicholas Orthodox Church Kids' Club. Existing partner recipients include Saint Brigid's Fellowship, Saint Xenia Sisterhood, and Philoxenia House, the latter of which received an additional \$10,000.00 raised through FOCUS's efforts.

"In these difficult economic times, uniting together to serve is all the more important in order to accomplish our common Gospel mandate to love our neighbor," said a grateful Ed Malouf of the Los Angeles-based Saint Nicholas Kids' Club. "We are excited to partner with FOCUS North America to extend our ministry to help even more families in need this year. Because of the tough economy and the number of struggling families, we anticipated an increased demand at our Christmas breakfast and toy giveaway, but our budget was also limited. FOCUS North America helped to fill that gap for the struggling families and many needy children we will serve this Christmas."

Based in Kansas City, MO, FOCUS North America is a pan-Orthodox 501c3 not-for-profit agency committed to serving those in need, supporting Orthodox Christian social action ministries, and providing parishes and others with training and resources for initiating and expanding community ministries.

For further information or to make a donation to its expanding ministries visit www.FOCUSNorthAmerica.org. ■



**His Holiness,
Patriarch Pavle of Serbia**

Church mourns Serbian Patriarch Pavle

Considered “a living saint” by many

At the age of 95, His Holiness, Patriarch Pavle of Serbia was known for his humble simplicity – he was frequently seen making his rounds on foot or by public transportation – as well as the wisdom and gentleness that led many to call him a “living saint.”

After months of failing health, Patriarch Pavle fell asleep in the Lord on November 15, 2009.

His 19-year tenure as Patriarch spanned a rocky period in the life of his Church and nation. He walked a tightrope – sometimes successfully, at other times less so – guiding the Church through the violence-charged last days of formerly communist Yugoslavia’s violent demise through numerous sanctions and wars to the Kosovo crisis and NATO’s 1999 bombing campaign.

Born Gojko Stojcevic at the outset of World War I in

Slavonia (now in Croatia), Patriarch Pavle graduated from the Orthodox seminary in Sarajevo in the 1930s, after which he studied medicine and later theology at Belgrade University. During World War II he served in the army medical corps.

He embraced monastic life with the given name Pavle in 1948, spending time in the monasteries of Blagovestjenje and Raca and teaching in the seminary in Prizren in Kosovo. After further theological studies, he was awarded a doctorate in New Testament and liturgy by the Theological Academy in Athens in 1957, after which he was consecrated Bishop of Raska and Prizren, a diocese covering southern Serbia and Kosovo with large Muslim and Albanian minorities. In December 1990, he was elected to succeed the ailing Patriarch German, who would die the following year.

The final years of Patriarch Pavle’s life were marked by increasing frailty and ill health. Confined since 2007 to a military medical academy in Belgrade, he continued for some time to issue public statements and comments.

In an official message of condolence to the Serbian Church, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah, spoke of Patriarch Pavle’s tremendous example of Christ-like humility, especially in the face of countless trials. A few days later, Metropolitan Jonah and His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion, First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, concelebrated a Memorial Litiya at Saint Sergius of Radonezh Chapel at the OCA Chancery.

May Patriarch Pavle’s memory be eternal! ■



Worth a thousand words....

Known for the simplicity and austerity of his life, Patriarch Pavle was often seen making his rounds by foot or on Belgrade’s busses and trams, often drawing double-takes from passersby.

Patriarch Irinej enthroned in Belgrade

International celebration will take place in Pec in fall 2010

Fraternal greetings were sent by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah to His Holiness, Patriarch Irinej of Serbia, who was enthroned in Belgrade on January 23, 2010, one day after he was elected to succeed His Holiness, Patriarch Pavle, who fell asleep in the Lord on November 15, 2009.

Patriarch Irinej, 79, was one of three candidates to win the most support in several rounds of voting in the council of 45 bishops heading dioceses in Serbia, former Yugoslavia, Germany, the US, and Australia. The candidates' names were placed in sealed envelopes and placed in a Gospel book. A single envelope was then drawn from the book by a senior monk.

The Patriarch of Serbia also bears the title of "Archbishop of Pec" and "Metropolitan of Belgrade and Karlovac."

Representatives of the Serbian government and the region's Roman Catholic and Muslim communities attended the enthronement Liturgy at the Belgrade cathedral, at the end of which His Eminence, Metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro presented Patriarch Irinej with the patriarchal insignia and wished him a blessed ministry as "a worthy successor to Saint Sava and his worthy and honorable predecessors."

"Now my thoughts are directed toward God, our Savior, the Great Shepherd of the Church, Who has granted me His grace and goodness," Patriarch Irinej responded in his first sermon as Patriarch. He went on to note that the day was a great one, not only for him personally, but also for the Serbian Church and people, adding that the Patriarchal Office has always represented, before God and in history, the fullness of the Serbian people, whose tragedies and joys it shares.

A second enthronement, to which representatives of the sister Orthodox Churches were to be invited, was to have been

held on April 25 at the ancient Patriarchal See in Pec. On March 1, however, the Serbian Holy Synod announced that the celebration would be postponed until the fall of 2010 in order to provide "adequate organizational and logistical preparations."

Patriarch Irinej was born Miroslav Gavrilovic in the village of Vidova, near Cacak, in 1930. After completing high school studies, he enrolled in and graduated from the seminary in Prizren. He pursued advanced theological studies at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Belgrade. Upon graduation, he served in the army.



Patriarch Irinej is presented with the patriarchal insignia during the enthronement Divine Liturgy in Belgrade.

After completing military duty, he served as a professor at the Prizren seminary. He was tonsured to monastic rank with the given name Irinej at the Rakovica Monastery by His Holiness, Patriarch German and ordained to the priesthood in October 1959. He pursued additional postgraduate theological studies in Athens.

In 1969, he was appointed head of the monastic school at the Ostrog Monastery, after which he returned to the Prizren seminary as rector.

He was elected and consecrated Bishop of Moravica, vicar to the Patriarch of Serbia, in 1974. The following year, he was elected to the See of Nis, Serbia's third largest city, where he served until his election to the Patriarchal See.

A detailed account and photos of Patriarch Irinej's election may be found at http://www.spc.rs/eng/bishop_nis_irinej_elected_new_patriarch_serbia. For interesting information on the ancient Patriarchal See of Pec visit www.kosovo.net/epatrijarsija.html. ■

The human icon

Human beings can be “individuals” if they choose, with all kinds of “relationships.” But if they do so choose, to use the language of the Bible, they choose death and not life, curse and not blessing [Deuteronomy 30:29]. In an act of metaphysical suicide, they destroy themselves in their self-contained, self-interested isolation, which is the very image of hell.

When we live in God’s way, we live in communion with others. We are “members of one another” [Ephesians 4:15]. We are not our own; we belong to one another [1 Corinthians 6:19]. We love our neighbor as our self because he or she *is* our very self. We find our self in the other through an act of self-emptying, self-denying love. This is our very nature, made this way by God, Who finds and fulfills His own divine self in this same way. We can doubt or deny this basic truth, but only to our destruction and death.

Human beings are icons of God, not only as persons in communion with other persons, but also as persons created to be male and female, men and women. Gender difference is part of our human nature as made in God’s image and likeness.

This does not mean that there is gender in God. He is not a man or a woman. Indeed, God is not even a “being,” if we think of Him as being the way we are in our created existence. As Saint Gregory Palamas put it, “If God is being, I am not; if I am being, God is not.” By this he meant that we cannot speak of the uncreated God and the created world in the same way, using the words in the same sense.

But the scriptures do say that God made us male and female in His own image and likeness, thus indicating that our sexuality is at the very heart of our being, made for loving communion in imitation of the Godhead [Genesis 1:26-27]. The first “no good” from the mouth of God in the Bible is when God looks at Adam alone. All that God makes is very good. But man alone is no good; “It is not good for man to be alone” [Genesis 2:18]. So God creates woman as a companion, the completion of humanity and perfection of the icon – and the prefiguration of Christ and the Church, the new Adam and new Eve, Who are “one flesh” in the mystery of God’s Kingdom.

There is nothing essential to human nature that does not belong equally to men and women. And there is nothing in the redeemed humanity of Christ and the Church that is not equally the possession of women and men. This is the meaning of Saint Paul’s famous statement, that “in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female,” but that we are “all one in Christ” [Galatians 3:28].

According to the old covenant law, there were radical differences between men and women in their relationship to the Lord, just as there were fundamental differences between Jews and Greeks, slaves and freemen. But as we sing during the Rite of Baptism and in the most festive eucharistic liturgies, “As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” [Galatians 3:27]. In the new covenant in Christ, the age of the “new creation” in the Messiah, there is the same calling, the same mission, and the same judgment for all – even though there is not the same function and ministry in those aspects of life that are

specifically masculine and feminine, such as fatherhood and motherhood in families and Church communities.

In Christ and the Church, we know *who* we are as men and women. We know *why* we are made, and *why* we are made as we are, in our masculine and feminine creaturely forms of existence. We know our task and our calling. We know our destiny as creatures. We know these things because in Christ and the Church, by the power of God’s Spirit, we know God Himself: the source, ground and goal of our being and life – the very Life of our life – in Whose image we are made as icons of God.

This is the message we receive every time we see and venerate an icon of Christ, His mother Mary, or any of God’s saints, who love and are loved with divine perfection. ■

Fr. Thomas Hopko is dean emeritus of St. Vladimir’s Seminary, Crestwood, NY.

Habits from 15

Habits of a grateful heart

as they were in years, and then only when their aches and pains would permit them to venture out. Both walked with difficulty and John always relied upon a cane, but invariably Mary’s face would be softened and lit up by a broad and beautiful smile. In her low accented voice, she would whisper to the altar boys and tell them what a good job they had done that day, and then she would slip them dollar bills. John’s health ultimately failed and he reposed in the fall of 2004. Mary now resides in a nursing facility, unable to care for herself. Her heart is weak, her strength is gone, and the long years have taken their toll. But she has all those nieces and nephews who still love and care for her, and she has retained her broad and beautiful smile.

In a recent visit my husband and I paid to Mary, as usual, when she saw us, her face lit up. But this time I was unexpectedly and deeply moved, because unlike in past visits, her response upon seeing us this time was, “thank you.” In fact, her response to everything was “thank you.” Even while praying with her, my husband paused for the usual response, but instead of the expected “Lord, have mercy,” she said, simply and with conviction, “thank you.” While my first response was “oops, wrong response,” I soon realized that here was a woman who had spent her entire life in remembrance and gratitude to God for the many blessings He had showered upon her, not only in the days of joy and prosperity, but in those uncertain days spent in want and sorrow as well. Her gratitude to Him was now being manifested more intensely. And now, toward the end of her days, the first response upon her lips is “thank you.” Her thankfulness is automatic, almost reflexive. Mary confirms to me that the lips speak by affirmation of the heart what they have learned through years of experience and the daily practice of gratitude. And while “thank you” may not always be the anticipated response, it is always the *right* response. Such should be the attitude of all of us, that when we are at the end of our days, when our hearts cry out “Lord, have mercy,” our lips will respond with “thank you!” ■

Psa. Janene Wey is the wife of Fr. David Wey, rector of SS. Constantine and Helen Church, Indianapolis, IN.

Gray area

In fact, Jesus was asked something very close to the question implied by Robertson's comments. When told of a great shame and tragedy, Jesus explained, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered thus? I tell you, No; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, No; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish" [Luke 13:2-5].

From these biblical examples, I think we can see two parallel and complementary perspectives. On the one hand, we are called to the fear of God – "unless you repent you will all likewise perish" – while heeding the inseparable call in a democracy to speak out, warning all citizens that sin has horrible consequences. On the other hand, since we are not God, and God's thoughts are above ours, we should not judge too readily when tragedy befalls others, not only because we could be wrong in our discernment, but because the way of Christian humility says, "There but for the grace of God go I." As Orthodox Christians confess at every Liturgy, "I am the greatest of sinners," the one deserving the tragic consequences of my sin, and nothing other than sheer mercy – the unmerited favor of God – keeps me in eternal torment.

Still, I don't believe in coincidences as much as I believe in Providence. I don't believe it was merely coincidence that the Titanic sunk, after its producers brazenly proclaimed that "God Himself couldn't sink it." God will not be mocked. And I don't believe it was mere coincidence that 9/11 happened to a nation that murders its own innocent and most vulnerable children – to the tune of 50 million babies and counting. God commanded the destruction of the Canaanites for such sins! The same fire-and-brimstone fate of Sodom and Gomorrah is the certain future of such a country eventually. So, I would not be surprised if a country experienced a divine call to repentance through an earthquake, just as I will not be surprised should the US fall, not so much through outside invaders, but through an internal tolerance of sin and lack of repentance.

All that being said, I cringed when I heard of the Rev. Robertson's comments. They were horribly insensitive and untimely, at the very least. Because they were given immediately following the devastating earthquake, while people were dying, the comments were uncharitable and inappropriate for a Christian, let alone an international Christian broadcast. Personally, while I favor speaking out against injustice and a lack of mercy, religious falsehood, and societal immorality – not to mention the practice of voodoo or any other soul-damaging pursuits – in the midst of a life-destroying earthquake or similar tragedy is simply the *wrong* time to do so. It only serves to justify a lack of compassion for those suffering. Whether intended that way or not, such comments imply that the disadvantaged men, women and children all deserved their fate. Instead, tragedies like the Haitian earthquake are opportunities for Christians to step up and show God's mercy, grace and kindness.

I think the rhetoric should stop when calamity befalls anyone; you don't kick a man when he's down, even if he's a thief trying

to steal your wallet a minute before. We care about *all* – even those who hate us. Whether to our advantage or not, Christians seek to assuage the suffering of everyone, friend or foe. So whether the sufferer is a Christian or a Muslim or an atheist or a devotee of voodoo practicing against us, we love him and care about him and seek his good, in all ways and at all times, especially when he experiences personal tragedy. After all, Jesus said, "Love your enemies." So, now is not the time to issue prophetic warnings after-the-fact, in my opinion. Now is the time to help those who are suffering! (My first reaction was to pray for a close friend with whom I went to college, who serves now as an American Baptist missionary in Haiti.) Spiritual assessment can come later; now is the time for Christians to pray and do all we can to assist. One blogger put it well: "A fallen and sinful world will have such tragedies. To those who do not trust in God, it should be a wake up call. To those who believe, it should be a challenge to find one more opportunity to demonstrate God's love."

So, to be honest, we must admit that national culpability for a disaster *is* possible. At the very minimum, Christians believe God allows natural disasters to occur. Psalm 148 says nature does the "bidding of God;" Jesus demonstrated His authority over the winds and waves by calming them with a rebuke. There are many biblical examples of God using the natural elements as His instruments of judgment, as well as His instruments of blessing. As we have seen, there are instances of natural calamity caused by national sin, and, there are instances when calamity was not the result of sin. So the real question is, was this particular earthquake brought about by the cumulative effect of sin? I don't know the answer to that question. Moreover, I think that to attempt to answer it is to miss the "one thing needful" in this tragic situation. This is *not* what we should be concerned with at all, especially in the days and weeks after such a tragedy has occurred.

I don't know if there's any truth in what Pat Robertson asserted. Maybe there is, and maybe there isn't. Either way, I don't think that this is the primary issue right now, so long as there are suffering and dying people, relying on us to bring the Light of Christ to all. ■

Fr. Mark Hodges is rector of *St. Stephen the First Martyr Church, Lima, OH.*

Seminaries from 36

Making history

The Rt. Rev. Ray R. Sutton of the ACNA, stated, "With grateful hearts to Metropolitan Jonah, we welcome and rejoice over his vision and commitment to restoring Anglican-Orthodox dialogue. We who are faithful Anglicans thank Saint Vladimir's for its deep commitment to the faith once delivered and its love for others outside Orthodoxy who share likeminded love for the love and truth of Jesus."

A podcast of the lecture and convocation is available on the web site of Orthodox Christian Network at www.myocn.net. The lecture also will be available in print form on the web site of the Archbishop of Canterbury, www.archbishopofcanterbury.org. ■

Changing times

These visits served to bring together hierarchs, clergy and people of all Orthodox jurisdictions for joint liturgical celebrations and gatherings around these leaders. This, along with media coverage of the patriarchal visits, raised awareness of the need for Orthodox unity in America. New pan-Orthodox initiatives – the Orthodox Christian Mission Center and International Orthodox Christian Charities, for example – arose, functioning under the aegis of SCOBA. This forged a greater sense of united Orthodox effort.

Perhaps partly in response to all of these circumstances, SCOBA decided to convene an unprecedented conference of 29 hierarchs of its member jurisdictions at Antiochian Village in Ligonier, PA in 1994. Two groundbreaking statements were issued: “On the Church in North America” and “On Mission and Evangelism.” The first statement declared that calling the Church in North America a “diaspora” is unacceptable and that SCOBA’s goal is to achieve an “administratively united Church.” The hierarchs implored the Mother Churches, under the leadership of the Ecumenical Patriarch, to consider the North American situation specifically within the framework of preparation for the Great and Holy Council. The second statement vowed a recommitment to a variety of united efforts in mission as “the very nature of the Church” in North America and throughout the world. Unfortunately, the Ecumenical Patriarch and the heads of other Mother Churches abroad repudiated the “Statement on the Church in North America.” Since that time, besides regular meetings, SCOBA holds larger gatherings of hierarchs every few years and nurtures the a growing number of pan-Orthodox ministries. New initiatives in the last decade have included rapprochement with the Standing Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches and an annual joint prayer service for the UN community.

Throughout its 50 years, SCOBA has undoubtedly raised awareness of the value of Orthodox unity, resulting in the growth of joint ministry, cooperation and concelebration at all levels of Church life. Administrative unity, however, has been elusive. During the past year, however, there have been several developments on the world stage concerning the complex issue of Orthodox unity in North America that are bound to affect SCOBA’s future work. In June 2009, the decisions of the Fourth Preconciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference mandated the imminent establishment of regional Episcopal Assemblies throughout the Orthodox “diaspora.” Metropolitan Jonah has stated that “the OCA’s charter and vocation is for it to disappear: it is kenotic. Either it is to become the basis for the unity of the rest of the Churches in America, or it must enter into a new organization that will be fully autocephalous. We await this day, eagerly, so that the mission of the Orthodox Church and the proclamation of the Gospel are no longer compromised by the scandal of disunity.” The Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission, meeting in December 2009, put forward proposals on the process of granting autocephaly and autonomy.

It is perhaps too early to discern how the future activities of SCOBA or an episcopal assembly towards an administratively

united Orthodox Church in North America may be influenced by these recent events. However, Father Alexander Schmemmann’s exhortation, written after SCOBA’s first meeting 50 years ago, bears consideration on the path going forward: “But even more important than the practical aspect is the spiritual and ecclesiological value of this achievement. For anyone who knows the history and the present situation of Orthodoxy in this country, the various tensions and misunderstandings among jurisdictions, and the extent of difficulties which Bishops faced when they decided to meet, the final result was experienced as an action of the Holy Spirit. Much remains to be done, and we are at the very beginning of a long and difficult journey. But the essential has been achieved – the unity of concern, the desire to put the vital interests above temporary difficulties, to fulfill the absolute condition of growth into the fullness of the Church: the unity of those, whom God has appointed as ministers of Church’s unity in faith, love and life – ‘episcopatus unus est.’” ■

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Classics from 36

The Jesus Prayer

The phrases “to pray in secret, alone and in silence” need, I feel, a little expanding. “Secret” should be understood as it is used in the Bible: for instance, Jesus tells us to do our charity secretly – not letting the left hand know what the right one does. We should not parade our devotions, nor boast about them. “Alone” means to separate ourselves from our immediate surroundings and disturbing influences. In fact, never are we in so much company as when we pray “seeing we also are compassed with so great a loud of witnesses” [Hebrews 12:1]. The witnesses are all those who pray: angels, archangels, saints and sinners, the living and the dead. It is in prayer, especially the Jesus Prayer, that we become keenly aware of belonging to the living Body of Christ. In “silence” implies that we do not speak our prayer audibly. We do not even meditate on the words; we use them only to reach beyond them to the essence itself.

In our busy lives this is not easy yet it can be done – we can find a few minutes in which to use a prayer consisting of only a few words, or even only one. This prayer should be repeated quietly, unhurriedly, thoughtfully. Each thought should be concentrated on Jesus, forgetting all else, both joys and sorrows. Any stray thought, however, good or pious, can become an obstacle.... *Think* the prayer as you breathe in and out; calm both mind and body, using as rhythm the heartbeat. Do not search for words, but go on repeating the Prayer, or Jesus’ name alone, in love and adoration.

When I arise in the morning, the Jesus Prayer starts me joyfully upon a new day. When I travel, it sings within my breast. When I stand on a platform and face my listeners, it beats encouragement. When I gather my children around me, it murmurs a blessing. And at the end of a weary day, when I lay down to rest, I give my heart over to Jesus: “Lord into Thy hands I commend my spirit.” I sleep – but my heart as it beats prays on: “Jesus!” ■

Communities



The OCA's Fr. Antonio Perdomo of Pharr, TX, consoles earthquake victims as part of an International Orthodox Christian Charities team.

OCA priest helps coordinate aid, assist IOCC partners in Haiti

PHARR, TX – Fr. Antonio Perdomo, rector of Saint George the Great Martyr Church here, arrived in Haiti on the first weekend of February to consult with Orthodox Christian communities and ecumenical partners with regard to ongoing assistance and short and long term needs of those who survived the January 12 earthquake there.

Father Antonio was accompanied by Mark Ohanian, senior program coordinator for International Orthodox Christian Charities [IOCC]. He assisted the IOCC team to support the efforts of Orthodox partners in Haiti, where there are an estimated 3,000 Orthodox Christians.

IOCC is currently providing food and hygiene items to 350 Orthodox faithful in six parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia [ROCOR] in Haiti with the support of a \$10,000 grant from the ROCOR "Fund for Assistance."

Born in the Dominican Republic, Father Antonio is a native Spanish speaker and a member of IOCC's *Frontline*, a volunteer network of highly trained, credentialed and experienced emergency response personnel. Mr. Ohanian, who managed recovery and reconstruction projects for IOCC in Bosnia-Herzegovina, is a disaster response veteran who grew up in Lebanon during the war and speaks French.

Nearly \$1.7 million in assistance has been provided by IOCC in the month after the earthquake ravaged much of Haiti's capital and environs. Medicines, medical equipment, water purification and sanitation equipment, tents, hygiene

kits, shelter materials, fuel, food, blankets, jerry cans for water and mattresses have been shipped and distributed throughout Haiti in cooperation with ACT Alliance members and Orthodox Christian and other partners.

IOCC is the official humanitarian aid agency of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas [SCOBA] and a member of the ACT Alliance, a global coalition of churches and agencies engaged in development, humanitarian assistance and advocacy.

To help the victims of disasters around the world, including those in Haiti, log on to www.iocc.org, call toll-free 877-803-4622, or send a check or money order payable to IOCC, PO Box 630225, Baltimore, MD 21263-0225. ■

How has your community helped the suffering people of Haiti?

Send photos and stories to tocmed@hotmail.com for including in the Spring 2010 issue of *The Orthodox Church*.

Wisconsin parish celebrates "alternative Halloween"

KENOSHA, WI – Pursuing a "sacred quest" treasure hunt around the church, gourd bowling, pumpkin painting, and caramael apple making were among the exciting activities in which families at St. Nicholas Church here engaged during the last weekend of October in an afternoon billed as a "churchly alternative to the traditional Halloween celebration."

"While everyone still had a significant sugar rush – and crash – there was something nice about being together around church on what is becoming increasingly a dark holiday," said Fr. Stephen Hrycyniak, rector. ■

A "churchly alternative" to Halloween delighted faithful of all ages at Kenosha's St. Nicholas parish. Notice the "three barred" warrior in the center of the pic!

