

# The Orthodox Church



## REDISCOVERING **AFRICA'S** ANCIENT CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

# InMemoriam

**Editorial request:** Please inform the TOC editorial office by phone [630/668-3071] or e-mail [ljm@oca.org] when a death occurs so announcements may be made on the OCA web site and in TOC in a timely manner.

## Protonica Ivanka Tanaskoski

**CROWN POINT, IN** – Protonica Ivanka Tanaskoski, 86, wife of the late Very Rev. Spiro Tanaskoski, fell asleep in the Lord on Monday, June 5, 2006.

Born and raised in Bitola, Macedonia, she came to the US in 1961 with her husband, the Very Rev. Spiro Tanaskoski. Together they ministered to the faithful of Saint Clement of Ohrid American Macedonian Orthodox Church, Merrillville, IN, until Father Spiros' death in 1995. The parish, within the Orthodox Church in America's Diocese of the Midwest, was the first canonical Macedonian parish in the US. During her more than 40 years in the parish, she was a devout and most supportive member.

She is survived by three children: Jovan [Cveta] Tanaskoski and Simeon [Ivanka] Tanaskoski, both of Crown Point, IN, and Lupka [Vangel] Baloski, Fort Wayne, IN; eight grandchildren and four great grandchildren; one sister in Macedonia; and several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were celebrated at Saint Clement Church by His Eminence, Archbishop Job and the Rev. Elijah Mueller, rector, with interment in Calumet Park Cemetery.

May Protonica Ivanka's memory be eternal! ■

## Protodeacon Nicholas Polansky

**EAST MEADOW, NY** – Protodeacon Nicholas Polansky fell asleep in the Lord here on Wednesday, July 5, 2006, after a lengthy illness.

Born in Minersville, PA, in 1919, Protodeacon Nicholas began singing in the choir at Saints Peter and Paul Church, his home parish, at a very young age. After completing a tour of duty in the US Army during World War II, he and his wife, the former Paraskeva [Pearl] Polinsky, also a Minersville native, relocated to Farmingdale, NY, and joined Holy Trinity Church, East Meadow, NY. Over the years, he faithfully served the parish as a singer, choir director, youth choir director, parish council member, and in other capacities.

In 1968, he was ordained to the diaconate by His Eminence, Metropolitan Ireney and assigned to Holy Trinity Church. In 1986, he was elevated to the rank of Protodeacon by His Grace, Bishop Peter of New York and New Jersey. In recognition of his many years of faithful service to the Church, he was awarded the Order of Saint Innocent by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman in 2003.

Protodeacon Nicholas is survived by his wife Paraskeva; his son Stefan and his wife Ellen; his daughter Susan Ingretsen and her husband Bruce; and three grandchildren. A second son, Cyril, preceded him in death.

Funeral services were celebrated at Holy Trinity Church, with interment at Pine Lawn Cemetery, Farmingdale, NY.

May Protodeacon Nicholas' memory be eternal! ■

# Official

Nos. 466/467 ■ May/June 2006

## ■ ORDINATIONS

**ASKOAK, Daniel** was ordained to the Diaconate by Bishop Nikolai at St. Innocent Cathedral, Anchorage, AK. He is under the omophorion of Bishop Nikolai and attached to the Diocese of Alaska/ February 12, 2006.

**ASKOAK, Dn. Daniel** was ordained to the Priesthood by Bishop Nikolai at St. Innocent Cathedral, Anchorage, AK. He is under the omophorion of Bishop Nikolai and attached to the Diocese of Alaska/ February 15, 2006.

**CANTRELL, Matthew [Brice]** was ordained to the Diaconate by Metropolitan Herman at Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman/ May 20, 2006.

**ERICKSON, Dn. John H.** was ordained to the Priesthood by Metropolitan Herman at Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman/ May 7, 2006.

**MILETKOV, Deacon Nikolay** was ordained to the Priesthood by Metropolitan Herman at Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman/ May 20, 2006.

**NEUMANN, William John** was ordained to the Diaconate by Bishop Benjamin on behalf of Metropolitan Herman at Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman/ October 16, 2005.

**ROSTCHECK, David** was ordained to the Diaconate by Archbishop Kyrill at the Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church, Monongahela, PA. He is under the omophorion of Archbishop Kyrill and attached to the Diocese of Western PA/ April 30, 2006.

**RUIZ-GOMAR, Dn. Juan Pablo** was ordained to the Priesthood by Bishop Seraphim at SS. Peter and Paul Sobor, Montreal, QC, Canada. He is under the omophorion of Bishop Seraphim and attached to the Archdiocese of Canada/ April 29, 2006.

**SARAFIN, Christopher** was ordained to the Diaconate by Archbishop Job at the Protection of the Virgin Mary Church, Merrillville, IN. He is under the omophorion of Archbishop Job and attached to the Diocese of the Midwest/ March 11, 2006.

**TCHANOURIDZE, Lasha** was ordained to the Diaconate by Bishop Seraphim at St. Nicholas Church, Napoléon, MB, Canada. He is under the omophorion of Bishop Seraphim and attached to the Archdiocese of Canada/ May 14, 2006.

**VANSUCH, Dn. Jason** was ordained to the Priesthood by Bishop Nikon at St. Stephen Cathedral, Philadelphia, PA. He is under the omophorion of Bishop Nikon and attached to the Diocese of New England/ June 17, 2006.

**VERNAK, Stephen** was ordained to the Diaconate by Metropolitan Herman at Christ the Saviour Church, Paramus, NJ. He is under

the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman/ June 24, 2006.

## ■ ASSIGNMENTS

**ASKOAK, Dn. Daniel** is attached to Holy Resurrection Cathedral, Kodiak, AK/ February 12, 2006.

**ASKOAK, The Rev. Daniel** is attached to Holy Resurrection Cathedral, Kodiak, AK/ February 15, 2006.

**ASKOAK, The Rev. Daniel** is released from Holy Resurrection Cathedral, Kodiak, AK and appointed Rector of St. Nicholas Church, Nondalton, AK/ June 1, 2006.

**[BRITTAI], Archimandrite Isidore** is released from St. Innocent Cathedral, Anchorage, AK and as dean of the Anchorage Deanery, but remains assigned to the cathedral and as chancellor of the Diocese of Alaska/ July 1, 2006.

**BROWNE, The Rev. Raymond Martin** is released from St. Tikhon Monastery Church, So. Canaan, PA and from the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman; transferred to the omophorion of Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia and Eastern PA; and attached to the Diocese of Eastern PA, where he awaits assignment/ June 20, 2006.

**BRUM, The V. Rev. David** is released as Secretary to the Metropolitan, from St. Sergius Chapel, Oyster Bay Cove, NY, and from the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman; transferred to the omophorion of Bishop Tikhon of San Francisco, Los Angeles, and the West; and attached to the Diocese of the West, where he awaits assignment/ July 1, 2006.

**CANTRELL, Dn. Matthew [Brice]** is attached to Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY/ May 20, 2006.

**ERICKSON, The Rev. John H.** is attached to Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY/ May 7, 2006. He is further appointed chairperson of the Department of History and Archives/ June 22, 2006.

**GASSIOS, The Rev. Paul**, who was attached to St. Gregory of Nyssa Church, Columbus, OH, is appointed rector of Archangel Michael Church, St. Louis, MO and the Nativity of the Virgin Church, Desloge, MO/ June 1, 2006.

**HILL, The Rev. George** is released from St. Tikhon Monastery Church, So. Canaan, PA and transferred to the Military Chaplaincy/ June 20, 2006.

**JANNAKOS, Dn. Nicholas** is attached to All Saints of North America Mission, Albuquerque, NM/ March 25, 2006.

**KEDALA, The V. Rev. Samuel**, in addition to duties at Holy Spirit Church, Wantage, NJ, is appointed dean of the New Jersey Deanery/ June 16, 2006.

**KULIK, The Rev. Miroslaw** is released from St. Mary Nativity Church, Masontown, PA/ April 30, 2006.

**LARSON, The Rev. Alexander** is released from Holy Resurrection Cathedral, Kodiak, AK,

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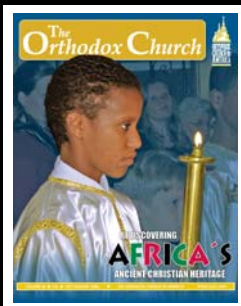
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## Our Cover

Rediscovering Africa's ancient Christian heritage was the theme of two separate conferences in Newark and Detroit in June 2006.



Cover design by John Mindala

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## Seeing the “other” as a fellow human being

**A**s this is being written, we are observing with anguish the violence in the Middle East. The military forces of Israel are in confrontation with Hezbollah in Lebanon and with Hamas in Gaza and the West Bank. Cities in northern Israel are being hit by rockets fired by Hezbollah from southern Lebanon. Throughout Lebanon, cities are under aerial bombardment by Israeli military airplanes. In Lebanon and Israel, the dead and wounded are civilians, women and men and children. There are now refugees fleeing north from the war zone in southern Lebanon. Citizens of the United States and other countries are being evacuated from Lebanon.

When the Middle East spiraled into a new cycle of violence in early July, I was in Amman, Jordan, participating in a conference hosted by Prince Hassan of Jordan (the brother of the late King Hussein, and uncle of the present King Abdullah). The theme of the conference was “Promoting Political Participation as an Alternative to Extremism.” My role was to represent the World Conference of Religions for Peace. The other participants were diplomats and representatives of foundations and institutions in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

It was my task to draw attention to the “religious factor” in social and political life. Just the simple fact that the world’s population is approximately six billion, with approximately five billion holding membership in religious communities, suggests that the religious communities and religious values are unavoidably a serious factor, and either contribute to extremism or offer alternatives to extremism.

The violence in the Middle East is an urgent and alarming reality, with no just resolution in sight. It is not right that the citizens of Israel, both Jewish and Palestinian, are under threat of bombardment and terrorist attacks. It is not right that the people of Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority are under threat of air strikes. When violence is directed against Israel by Hamas and Hezbollah, the innocent suffer. When violence is directed against militants and extremists by Israel, the innocent suffer.

It is obvious that offering political solutions or strategies is usually not in the competence of churches and religious communities. It is in our competence, however, to insist on the value of

human life, on the importance of mercy and compassion, on the urgent need to see the “other” as a fellow human being. In other words, it is the task of churches and religious communities to confront hatred and prejudice, to offer insistently the insight that the suffering of the “other” is not something to rejoice over, but something to grieve over.

And perhaps this is the spiritual strategy that will be the beginning of the road leading away from the cycle of violence,

whether in the Middle East, or the Balkans, or Africa, or anywhere in situations of fear, suspicion, and conflict. Only the recognition of our common humanity can show us the way to the recognition of the presence of the living God among us.

With regard to the Middle East, there is another issue that is

of concern to Christians, and should be of concern to all. The story of the past fifty years has been the story of a declining Christian population in the region, due to emigration. In the confrontations between Israel and the Arab populations and states, there is less and less space for Christians, since more and more of the space is occupied by Muslims and Jews. The Christian presence in the Holy Land, therefore, is likely to become a custodianship of holy sites, rather than the presence of living Christian communities.

While this can appear to be a matter of concern for Christians only, it is in reality something which affects the future of the Middle East region and its people, whether Jewish or Christian or Muslim. If the Christian population continues to dwindle, it will mean that the Jewish and Muslim communities will eventually be left as the only religious communities in Israel and the Arab States, respectively. This is not promising for the creation and maintenance of societies in which alternatives to extremism are promoted. Two religious communities are likely to be in confrontation, while three communities have a greater possibility of interaction.

We pray that all those who look to Abraham as their father – Jews, Christians, and Muslims – will offer the world a sign that their common spiritual origin is not a cause for conflict, but an invitation to recognize in each other – and in every human being – the image and likeness of God. ■





# That's the Spirit

Father Vladimir Berzonsky

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely... meditate on these things.  
— *Philippians 4:8*

## Inspirers & Muckrakers

**W**e members of an earlier generation were raised in a culture that lifted up the best a person could be in life. We were inspired by greatness in all walks of life. Today's generation will laugh at the myth of George Washington and the cherry tree episode: "I chopped it down. I cannot tell a lie."

In athletics, we honored Jim Thorpe, part Sac and part Fox native American, who won both decathlon and pentathlon gold medals in the 1912 Olympics and went on to play professional football and baseball. There were baseball players like Ted Williams, who could have turned out like his alcoholic brother except for his strong will and determination to succeed, his going to school hours before it opened just to escape his horrid family life, and his enlistment in the military in World War II. And there was Jesse Owens, who humiliated Adolph Hitler at the so-called 1936 Nazi Olympics by defeating the pride of the Aryan race in its own country. Even today, there are such as Pat Tillman, who abandoned professional football to serve his country and make the ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan. Such heroes were – and still are – offered to us so that we might be inspired to drive ourselves to our maximum potentials.

Saint Patrick of Ireland is famous as the great missionary bishop of Erin, but also because in his youth, he had been captured by pirates, with whom he spent grueling years before taking the opportunity to escape. Though he had little formal education, he worked his way through the ranks of Christian clergy to convert the pagan druids in the land and inspire many missionaries and simple Christians everywhere ever since.

It may be that some of the lives of the saints of the Church and those secular heroes of more recent times had been embellished somewhat, puffed up beyond the literal truth in order to motivate the readers, despite their readers' noble intentions. Their purpose was to inspire future generations to aspire to higher things above mediocrity and material goals. They sought to create in their readers dissatisfaction with the mundane things of life, to question the status quo, and to reach beyond our supposed limitations. Was that wrong of them? If we had been taken in by their exaggerations, should not those storytellers be accused of falsifying the facts or praised for their intentions?

Spirit to 6

## WISDOM from the Fathers

### Saint Polycarp of Smyrna

These things, concerning righteousness, I write to you not at my own instance, but because you first invited me. For neither can I, nor anyone like me, match the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul. When he was among you, face to face with the men of that time, he expounded the word of truth accurately and authoritatively; and when he was absent, he wrote letters to you, the study of which will enable you to build yourselves up in the faith that was given to you – a faith that is the mother of us all, when hope follows along and the love of God and Christ and neighbor goes before. If anyone be devoted to these, he has fulfilled the commandment of justice: for whoever has love is far from every sin.

### Saint Cyril of Alexandria

We say emphatically that the knowledge of God is revealed to human nature, the Creator having invested that nature with the innate knowledge of all that is useful and necessary for salvation. And it was ever seemly that that nature, for which such wonderful things had been prepared, should go straight to the truth, as reasoning from the creation of the world, from its order and beauty, and from its continuance in such, to recognize that the wisdom and power of Him Who created all this and brought it into existence far surpasses every created mind.

### Saint John of Damascus

Since the Creator bestowed on us His own image and His own Spirit, and we did not keep them secure, He Himself took a share in our poor and weak nature, so that He might cleanse us, make us incorruptible, and reinstate us as participants in His divinity. ■



Nancy Forest-Flier

## Beauty will save the world

Bridging the gulf between the world and self

**D**ostoevsky wrote, “Beauty will save the world.” I used to think of this as a romantic idea, that we will be saved by the beautiful things around us, that the world will be saved if it can be made more attractive. The idea seemed romantic, something expressed by such sentiments as “there’s beauty in everything, if only we would stop and smell the flowers.” This suggests there is a gulf between the world and ourselves – we have to put on the right eyeglasses to see it properly.

Today, I realized that what Dostoevsky meant is that beauty must be our principle of life – that beauty is not a perception, an influence, to be found outside us; it is the principle that must characterize the way we do everything. Everything we do must be done in beauty, with grace. The phrase, “the beautiful gesture,” kept coming back to me. Everything we do, even digging a ditch or scrubbing the floor, must be done in beauty. This does not mean that we are trying to make a beautiful ditch or a beautiful floor. It doesn’t mean that we are trying to become beautiful ditch diggers or floor scrubbers. It doesn’t even mean that we are trying to make a sort of ballet out of our ditch digging or floor scrubbing. It has to do with the way in which we execute the task, the way we live every minute as we do what we do; it has to do with being attentive to the activity at hand, acting without being concerned with how we look as we act. It is an innocent acting, not concerned with appearances or results or rewards; it is not concerned with being treated fairly, with getting even, with showing off, with making an impression, with getting the work out of the way, with wallowing in self-pity over one’s misfortune. I would think it is not even concerned with acting out of certainty that this is God’s will. I think it is simply making the beautiful gesture.

But why? Because this is the radical application of being at the center, where God is.

As I was cleaning the bathroom today, I was suddenly overcome with this sense that I must do this work as a beautiful gesture. This is the only free action available to me. If I act out of sense of resentment (because other people in the family are not doing what I’m doing), or anger (because the bathroom has a way

of getting very messy very often), or self-pity (“poor me!”), then I become a slave to my self and my work will be exhausting. Even if I work out of sense of pride (“I’ve got to make this place shine”) or some simple ethic of good behavior (“God expects me to be a responsible wife and mother; this is how I become a good person”), I’m still a slave to my self. The only way to go about it with joy, as a free person, is to work in the presence of God, in prayer. And this, I think, is how beauty will save the world.

I felt this all day long. I started the day making blueberry muffins; I finished the day making soup and pita bread, thinking all the while about the beautiful gesture.

The paradigm for living this way is the Liturgy. Every action that we perform in the Liturgy should be a beautiful gesture, from lighting candles and reverencing icons to receiving Holy Communion. It’s the school in which we learn how to live from moment to moment. The climate of continual prayer, the entreaties of the choir, the attitude of attention all teach us how to be grace-full people.

But cleaning the bathroom as though you were standing at Liturgy? It sounds scandalous, but I think it’s true. A monk once told my husband that one should wash the dishes

as though one were washing the baby Jesus – every gesture deliberate, beautiful, and free. ■

Nancy Forest-Flier is a translator and editor and a member of St. Nicholas Church, Amsterdam, Holland. Her husband, Jim, is general secretary of the Orthodox Peace Fellowship.



John Mindala  
“O Lord, how manifold are Thy works!” A procession through the natural beauty of God’s creation to the original grave site of St. Herman on Alaska’s Spruce Island.

### Spirit from 5

## Inspirers & muckrakers

Scholars and journalists today dredge up the worst in order to expose the failings of the influential and prominent. They sniff about for some odor coming from the great persons of past and present. Like Ham, Noah’s son who called his brothers to mock the inebriated patriarch, they dig out the faults of the famous and consider themselves worthy of a reward. In fact, they play a game of exalting the victims and raising them high on their verbal pillars, only to chop them off and chortle at their downfalls. In the end, we are left with the opposite of what Saint Paul calls us to do in the verse above. Truth, dignity, honesty, purity, and beauty are treated as unattainable for humans, vapid Platonic ideals that can never be met and, as such, are not worth striving for. And our society is all the worse for fixating on the lowest aspects of human nature. ■



Father Alexis Vinogradov

## What is this great mystery?

### Six giant steps we all need to take!

**T**he Church as “mystery” – or the Church as embarrassment and failure. The Church as the spotless Bride of Christ, with neither wrinkle nor blemish – or the Church as Byzantine pomp, juridical primacy, and self-justification. Already, in Saint Paul’s letters, we have local intimations of what was to come in the Church’s torturous historical journey from Golgotha to Syosset, for along with exalting this spotless and mysterious Bride of Christ, Saint Paul warns of and condemns conflicts and afflictions in Christ’s Body. Just recall his letters to the Corinthians.

The late Protobishop Alexander Schmemmann liked repeating the old truth that the Church is not an institution that has mysteries, but something exactly the opposite: she is herself a Mystery *that happens to have institutions* that are, he would add, “more or less useful.” We have to pause on this simple yet revolutionary truth, already opened to us by Saint Paul as the paradigm of marriage [Ephesians 5:32], if we are to understand *who we are*, ultimately, as the Bride of Christ. And this understanding is critical if we are to respond to our current OCA crisis, and all past and future crises in the Church.

Today there is no shortage of solutions to “fix” or “save” the Church. In a crisis, everyone becomes an expert, knowing what the leaders *should* do. For those experts, this article may prove disappointing, for it proposes no concrete solutions. It is, however, one attempt to suggest what we may courageously and truthfully begin to discuss, examine, and question in creative ways and without recrimination what all the recent fuss has taught us.

We might admit that sometimes we have things upside down. If we think

the Church is an “institution,” then we may rightly think that we have to “save” her. Again, Father Schmemmann reminds us that *we* are not saving the Church; rather, *the Church saves us*. Surely the failure to see this essential antinomy between the Mystery and her institutions gets many folks riled up, particularly when they get angry at bishops and institutions in conflict. They see the often ugly and seamy human face of the Church and want to flee. They might wonder what Christ meant when He affirmed that Hell’s gates have no power over the Church!

However, Christ’s mysterious spotless Bride also is not a disembodied “spiritual reality” that somehow exists side-by-side with the messed-up earthly Church. Christian spirituality derives from the Spirit of Christ, the same Spirit by Whom Christ received His fully human, sweaty, tired, and hungry body from a human virgin. In Christ, heaven and earth are reunited; the earth is renewed and saved because heaven comes to dwell and infuse the earth’s life and materiality with Spirit. It is this unity and transformation of the earthly creation, this recreation through the incarnate Christ, that is most fully manifest in the Church. This is not a scientific theorem; this is the Mystery of the Bride, who is saved and sanctified by the divine Bridegroom, Christ.

**Step one.** The first step toward finding solutions, then, might be to face, without surprise, the messiness of things, to begin acknowledging and accepting that the human nature of and in our institutions is flawed and imperfect. Our very surprise and indignation at institutional failures reveals perhaps our own misguided pride in those institutions, our belief that these institutions *should* be above failure and reproach. When we say “Holy” Synod, we don’t mean it is a perfect organization; rather, we say “Holy” because the Synod is a synod *of the Church*, and the Church *in her essential nature as Christ’s body is Holy*, as we affirm in the Creed. Yet we discern that each member of the Holy Synod is also a particular fallen and redeemed member of the human family who is not saving others, but is himself *being saved* by the Church. Through these and all other sinful

**Giant steps to 8**



## InSites

### Giant steps from 7

members, it is always – and only – Christ Who is doing the saving work, despite our individual sins.

Step two. Facing these crises, however, does not absolve us from taking steps towards repentance and change. Each crisis reveals some tear in the Church's human cloth. To be preoccupied solely with the symptoms is to miss the disease. We fuss over internet chat, unofficial web sites, irreverent and painful missives, but they are not the disease, only the outlets for the puss beneath the boil. Here's a question for discussion: is it possible, for example, that our financial failures today reveal an inordinate obsession with financial success, status, and solvency in the first place? Do we not hear in the Gospel of the essential choice between serving God or Mammon [Money]? Do we define "stewardship" solely in terms of money? If not, then why aren't we speaking of ecology, and why don't our parishes grow vegetables instead of acres of lawn and live materially with more modesty in order to share with the poor? Should not we explore all the possible Christian service and outreach programs that can be accomplished through fewer institutional resources and through greater personal initiative, involvement, and commitment of time? Are such questions retrograde or "out of order"?

Step three. Maybe now, as an entire local Church, we can conscientiously meet regularly, locally and regionally, to genuinely and creatively seek ways to move away from our preoccupation with money, to recognize and identify those creative ways in which the Church's work and mission can be accomplished with "no purse for the journey" [Luke 9:3]. These are questions, not solutions. Perhaps to some this questioning might seem a step backwards – fine, then we will have exciting dialogue! But such regional gatherings should also raise many other topics relevant to those striving to live the Gospel in our culture, in an effort to discuss not ways of opposing the culture with some sectarian idea of an "Orthodox culture," but of infusing and transforming it with the leaven of the Kingdom. Father Schmemmann used to quip that we get much more excited when we hear "Caesarea in Cappadocia" than "Milwaukee," because the mythical past has much more allure and cachet than the living present, in which our hands must get dirty. But for that, we must understand and see ourselves as *inextricable participants* in the culture into which God has thrown us by birth or circumstance. Even in prison camps, the saints loved and prayed for their captors [read Solzhenitsyn, or Father Arseny, or Mother Maria of Paris, or Father Roman Braga, who lives among us in the OCA). For that, we at times may have to leave the outward insignia of our Orthodoxy at home and, like Christ, become ourselves *hidden* like leaven among the crowds, like one of the people whom Jesus came to love and serve.

Step four. One universal claim of Orthodoxy that still binds us together is our agreement that Christ's Bride is revealed in her glory in two ways: when she is found bringing love to the weakest and poorest of God's children, and when each day she celebrates the Pascha of her Lord. In our gatherings, we cannot be afraid to speak of and argue about Baptismal and Vespertal Liturgies, translations and texts, music and poetry, vestments and icons, architecture and time, rubrics and ordination. This is not the exclusive domain of bishops and seminary faculties, but the work of the entire Church. Again, most will agree that for all our claims and despite much creative work, we have been polarized over issues of style and form. Open conversations on these themes can

only enrich our lives and help us discern what is living within this tradition, and what belongs in museums of religion.

Step five. None of these steps is possible without love and freedom. As God is Love, so the Church is Love; as God is free, so the Church is free. And, as the evangelist John reminds us, perfect love casts out fear. Every member of the royal priesthood – that means every member of the Church – must decide not to be frozen by unfounded fear. Orthodoxy is emphatically *not* one of the world's major religions that must be propped up by a show of pan-Orthodox solidarity or jurisdictional and hierarchical power. Orthodoxy is the answer and solution to all religions, because she is not at all a "religion," but the great Mystery of God's life and Kingdom made present through the weakness of frail and feeble men and women to the rich and poor, to the powerful and weak, to all cultures, in all places, at all historic times. This vision, then, becomes the very foundation of evangelical work, not because we have attractive programs for families and youth, not because we have achieved international Orthodox unity (on the level of faith we already have this, while on the institutional level we probably never will), but because "we have seen the true Light, we have received the heavenly Spirit." We must now ask ourselves in what ways this is to be transmitted, not by programs, but by the personal daily witness each of us must reveal in the world.

Step six. Finally, we might suggest a new asceticism – not the kind that causes us to look like 18th century monks or to fret over the precise days on which oil and wine are permitted, but an asceticism of discernment, a critical and patient eye on everything of human provenance, a discernment not only of the "secular" world, but especially of the world of the institutional Church, of all the little temptations and passions that color and distort our churchly lives. In her book, *Talking About God can be Dangerous*, the Soviet Christian Tatiana Goricheva warns of the subtle transformation of American parishes from *theocentric* into *anthropocentric* communities that eventually lose their focus and reference to God while "aiming to please" by every means in order to multiply the financially contributing and all important "client": the "member-in-good-standing."

All these are not once-and-for-all projects that can be catalogued in stewardship handbooks and replicated in parish growth seminars; these very steps are subject to the living and unpredictable movements of the Holy Spirit, which blows where it wills. The important thing is that we plunge repeatedly, lovingly, and fearlessly together to seek the Spirit's guidance; to ask that the Father's will, not our own, be done; and to be thankful every day for the measure of that day's "bread," for that is not ordinary bread, but the bread of the Kingdom! Whenever institutional sin precipitates the call for accountability, let everything in the common trust be brought to light; yet, in the meantime, let the initiative and steps for the relentless mission of love, fellowship, discernment, and service continue to flow from *every* responsible member of the Church, for truly we "are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that [we] may proclaim the excellencies of Him Who has called [us] out of darkness into His marvelous light" [1 Peter 2:9]. ■

Fr. Vinogradov is rector of St. Gregory the Theologian Church, Wappingers Falls, NY, and a frequent contributor to The Orthodox Church.



# OCA News Notes Notices



Metropolitan Herman opens the two-day meeting of the OCA's Metropolitan Council by celebrating a Service of Intercession in St. Sergius Chapel.

## Metropolitan Council reviews finances, investigation

### Audits, investigation, loan, and All-American Council on agenda of two-day meeting

**M**embers of the Orthodox Church in America's Metropolitan Council gathered at the Chancery in Syosset, NY in mid-June for an intense two-day meeting that focused on past and present finances, the investigation being conducted by the Church administration, and a number of related matters.

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, opened the meeting on Tuesday, June 13, 2006, with a Service of Intercession in Saint Sergius Chapel, after which he delivered his opening address. *[The text of Metropolitan Herman's address is found on page 14 of this issue.]*

Metropolitan Herman especially noted that the investigation being conducted by the law firm of Proskauer Rose had yet to be completed, adding that it would be premature to offer an "interim report." He also affirmed that the services of Proskauer Rose

have been retained on behalf of the entire Orthodox Church in America.

Acting treasurer reports. The Very Rev. Paul Kucynda, acting treasurer, presented his report, together with an updated financial report prepared by the Very Rev. Stavros Strikis, comptroller. *[The text of the acting treasurer's report is found on page 15.]*

Father Kucynda then introduced Mr. William Arnold, CPA, of Lambrides, Lamos, and Moulthrop, the accounting firm that had been engaged by the Church to undertake audits for the fiscal years 2004-05. Mr. Arnold read the report prepared by Mr. Lamos, who was unable to attend the meeting.

Mr. Arnold reported that the accounting firm had completed its review of all annual and special appeals for the years between 2001 and 2005, as requested by

the Holy Synod of Bishops. He reported that the 2004 audit was nearing completion. Because it was necessary to check all information against the compilation reports for fiscal years 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003 in order to establish accurate opening balances for 2004, the process took more time than expected.

Following Mr. Arnold's report, Father Strikis responded to a number of questions.

It was further noted that, according to the financial guidelines established in the fall of 2005, the comptroller is directly responsible to the treasurer, who in turn is responsible to the Metropolitan. Prior to this, the comptroller was directly responsible to the chancellor.

Teleconference meeting minutes reviewed. Council members reviewed the minutes of their May 18, 2006, teleconference meeting. It was noted that the *Statute of the Orthodox Church in America* does not specifically provide for absentee ballots in the Metropolitan Council's voting process. Thus, the vote taken during the teleconference meeting could be considered invalid by the New York State Attorney General's Office, whose requirements must be satisfied. Upon the advice of the law firm of Sahn, Ward and Baker, PLLC, which represents the Orthodox Church in America to the Honesdale National Bank, Honesdale, PA in the matter of the \$1.7 million loan council members had voted to accept, Father Kucynda reported that the vote should be recast during the Wednesday morning session.

FOS, development reports. The Very Rev. Eugene Vansuch, executive director of the Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards [FOS], offered a detailed report on his work and distributed a packet of promotional materials that includes the current issue of *The Steward* and a newly developed informational brochure. He also reported on his recent visits to dioceses and parishes.

The Very Rev. John Dresko, director of development, reported that he is working diligently to develop relationships that may provide major gifts in the future. He suggested that a "Donor Bill of Rights" be drafted as a part of the "Best Practices" docu-

**Council to 10**

## Acting treasurer issues memo on loan

In a memorandum dated July 6, 2006, the Very Rev. Paul Kucynda, acting treasurer, updated the Holy Synod, the Metropolitan Council, and the OCA's elected auditors on the status of the loan offered to the OCA by the Honesdale National Bank, Honesdale, PA.

The text of the memorandum reads as follows.

"As you are aware, the Honesdale National Bank, located in Honesdale, PA, offered a Commitment Letter to the Orthodox Church in America in the amount of \$1,700,000.00 on May 3, 2006, with a termination/closing date of July 3, 2006.

"The Board of Directors of the Honesdale National Bank offered an Extension of Commitment Letter dated June 28, 2006, with a termination/closing date of August 3, 2006.

"Since the Orthodox Church in America is an institution located in the State of New York, while the Honesdale National Bank is a banking association in the State of Pennsylvania, all relevant Pennsylvania, New York, federal banking, and civil law requirements were researched and will be met. Since the loan will be secured by the two properties owned by the Orthodox Church in America in the State of New York, County of Nassau, it was necessary to affirm that the Orthodox Church in America complies with a checklist of 14 items. The following are a few of the primary requirements: Have the existing land surveys verified for accuracy; clear titles to both properties searched and affirmed as belonging to the Orthodox Church in America without mortgages or taxes due; and appraise the properties in regard to current real estate values in Syosset, NY.

"At this time, application is being made to the Superior Court of Nassau County, as well as the New York State Attorney General's Office, to go forward with the loan as approved by the Metropolitan Council of the Orthodox Church in America on June 14, 2006, during the Council's meeting at the Church's national headquarters for its regular spring 2006 session. Since these filings require a minimum of 15 days' notice, it is anticipated that approval from Nassau County and the state of New York will be received near the end of this month of July. The Honesdale National Bank is represented by Attorney Richard B. Henry, Honesdale, PA. The Orthodox Church in America is represented by Attorney Michael Sahn, Uniondale, NY." ■

### Council from 9

ment and volunteered to compose the bill. He also cited the need for additional updated software that would be applicable to his work.

Presentation by Fr. Berzon-sky. On Tuesday evening, the Very Rev. Vladimir Berzon-sky, rector of Holy Trinity Church, Parma, OH, and Metropolitan Council clergy representative of the Diocese of the Midwest, presented a talk titled "Learning from Our Current Situation."

Loan acquisition. The second day of the Metropolitan Council meeting opened with a review by Father Kucynda of the process by which the Metropolitan Council approved acquisition of the \$1.7 million loan from the Honesdale National Bank. The bank's legal representative requested that the vote be recast. Thirteen council members voted in favor of the loan, while three members voted against it and two members abstained.

A discussion on various aspects of the loan, including repayment, ensued. It was stated that there is no penalty for pre-payment. It was also noted that the Martin Drive property could be sold, the proceeds of which could be used to pay down the principal of the loan. No action was taken in this regard.

Metropolitan Council responsibilities. Father Kucynda went on to inform council members that he had received a legal opinion concerning personal liability of Metropolitan Council members with regard to financial mismanagement if such is found during the investigation and audits. Though personal liability of Metropolitan Council members might be a legitimate issue, generally it is considered as such when it is found that a member acted in a deliberately inappropriate way in regard to his or her duties. It was recommended that at this time, it would be preferable that Metropolitan Council members not attempt to answer any specific questions about the investigation until it is completed. This is also true with regard to the reviews or audits performed by the accounting firm of Lambrides, Lamos, and Moulthrop. The attorneys added, however, that Metropolitan Council members can affirm that they have been made privy to information concerning the release of the former chancellor, as well as the oral interim audit reports, without sharing spe-

cific details at this time.

Presentation by Mat. Mary Buletza Breton, CPA. Matushka Mary Buletza Breton, CPA, distributed materials for review and presented a report titled "Best Practices Document and Amendments."

Matushka Mary noted that she had been asked to review the draft of "Best Practices" that had been discussed by the members of the Holy Synod of Bishops, the Metropolitan Council, and other groups within the Church. She noted that "Best Practices" is simply the codification of common sense, and that good business practices should exist within the Church as the best way to steward God's gifts.

Matushka Mary offered a review of the "Best Practice Principles for Nonprofit Financial Accountability," prepared by Protodeacon Peter Danilchick. She emphasized that, while the working documents are subject to revision, approval, and implementation by the Metropolitan Council, the principles contained therein will be implemented immediately. At their fall 2006 meeting, members of the Metropolitan Council will review the implementation process, make revisions, and adopt a final document as the administrative operating policy of the Orthodox Church in America. She emphasized that this does not supplant hierarchical authority, but rather establishes a base line for operations.

Highlights of "Best Practices" principles include (1) assurance of clear and decisive financial accountability; (2) adoption of ethics and conflict-of-interest policies; (3) implementation of appropriate financial controls; (4) the conducting of regular independent financial audits; (5) assurance of the transparency of financial data and performance; and (6) the maintenance of knowledge of emerging nonprofit issues. Also reviewed was the "Ethics Policy" outline. This policy would be agreed upon and signed by all employees and agents of the Church.

It was emphasized that reviews of "Best Practices" should take place on a regular basis, and that revisions or amendments should be made as necessary.

In reviewing and discussing the summary of the "Conflict-of-Interest Policy," Matushka Mary noted that those who might



## OCA News Notes Notices

have a conflict of interest, defined as "interested persons," are understood to be those persons, family members, or affiliated organizations who might have existing or potential financial or other interests that impair or might reasonably appear to impair that person's independent and unbiased judgment in the discharging of his/her responsibilities to the Orthodox Church in America.

Matushka Mary also outlined the "Whistleblower Policy" and expressed the thought that the Church needs to go beyond that for which such a policy provides. "Audit Committee Principles and Standards" also was reviewed and discussed, as was the "Document Retention Policy."

A motion was passed by council members "to adopt the presented draft practices/policy documents as 'working documents' and that they be implemented immediately. Further, the implementation of the draft document will be reviewed by the Metropolitan Council at its 2006 fall meeting, which will also examine, revise, and adopt the final documents."

The All-American Council. Dr. Richard West, lay representative from the Diocese of the Midwest, introduced a motion concerning the All-American Council that reads: "The Midwest Diocesan Council and Council of Deans, having

unanimously directed their representatives to ask the Metropolitan Council to urge the Holy Synod to reconsider its decision to extend the time between All-American Councils from three to five years and return the periodicity to three years, [asks that] the Metropolitan Council accept this recommendation for presentation to the Holy Synod." The motion passed.

Concerning repayment of the loan. Matushka Mary Buletza Breton spoke concerning the approved loan, the question of repayment, and the concerns that were raised by members of the Metropolitan Council. She noted that it is important is to create a strategy to repay the loan, since the Metropolitan Council is the responsible body in this matter. She expressed the thought that if we are going to be committed as members of the Church, and if we want the Church to move forward, we need to work together and to move on. She offered her services to assist with the strategy process; Metropolitan Herman gladly accepted her offer.

Miscellaneous questions. In response to a question as to the status of ownership of Saint Catherine the Great Martyr Church, Moscow, Russia, Metropolitan Herman responded that the Russian Orthodox Church owns the property and loans it to the Orthodox Church in

America for use as the OCA's representation church to the Moscow Patriarchate.

In answer to a question concerning the appointment of a new chancellor, Metropolitan Herman replied that the matter is under review.

With regard to the Church lands in Alaska, Father Isidore, clergy representative from the Diocese of Alaska, reported that three properties have been sold or transferred since His Grace, Bishop Nikolai, became presiding hierarch of the diocese. Two sales involved properties that otherwise could have been taken through adverse possession. The third transaction involved an acre-for-acre land exchange, so that a water system could be installed in one of the villages. Father Isidore also referred to the land sale in Kodiak that was entered into during the administration of the late Bishop Innocent, but completed after the arrival of Bishop Nikolai.

Father Isidore further reported that Grace Oakley had been hired to review the Alaska lands and was entrusted with developing an extensive review of previous inventories and providing a definitive inventory of lands in the diocese's possession. She has assured the diocese that all titles are now secure. He noted that the Alaska Lands Account commission was

**Council to 30**

## Metropolitan Council statement on finances, investigation

**M**embers of the Metropolitan Council of the Orthodox Church in America, meeting under the chairmanship of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, at the Chancery on June 13-14, 2006, approved the following statement concerning the status of audits and the ongoing investigation into the Church's finances.

"The allegations of financial mismanagement leveled against the Church administration over the past year have provided a serious 'wake-up' call for the members of the Metropolitan Council of the Orthodox Church in America. Thus, we fully support the actions of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, and the Holy Synod of Bishops in obtaining professional expertise to 1) determine the nature of our financial activities from a legal perspective, and to 2) obtain clear and independent audits of our financial records, past and present.

"The year 2004 audit and the year 2001 to 2005 annual and special appeals audit will be delivered on or before August 30, 2006.

"No date has been set for the completion of the investigation, since it is ongoing at this time. With a significant amount of work yet to be done, the completion date for the investigation cannot be determined at this time.

"While awaiting the full and final report from the auditors, members of the Metropolitan Council received an interim report, through which some clear trends were detected and on which we wish to comment at this time:

"1. The operating budget of The Orthodox Church in America has been in a deficit status for several years.

"2. As a result, money has been borrowed from earmarked funds to cover operating expenses.

"3. The lack of proper checks and balances on a financial administrative level has created an atmosphere inconsistent with best practices for a non-profit corporation.

"4. The lack of an independent audit since 1999 has prevented real scrutiny and oversight of our finances and financial practices for many years. (The reports completed since 1999 are not audits, but only compilations.)

"We are determined to take the steps that are necessary to restore good order, proper financial management, and trust. They are as follows:

"1. We are taking the necessary and difficult steps to have a balanced budget.

**Statement to 26**

## Over 40 seminarians complete studies

Commencement ceremonies were held in May 2006 at the Orthodox Church in America's seminaries. Metropolitan Herman, presided at graduation exercises at Saint Tikhon's Seminary, South Canaan, PA [right] and Saint Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY [below]. Bishop Nikolai of Sitka, Anchorage, and Alaska presided at commencement at Saint Herman's Seminary, Kodiak, AK [bottom, right]. ■



## Giving of time, talent theme of Resource Handbook installment

A new installment of the Orthodox Church in America's popular *Resource Handbook for Lay Ministries* is now available on-line at <http://www.oca.org/RHIndex.asp?SID=15>.

"Giving" of one's time and talents to help others is the theme of the installment's five articles.

Two articles appear in the section "Witness and Mission."

"A Bridge That Goes Both Ways" by Elizabeth Perdomo and Michael Price describes the ambitious outreach program undertaken by members of Saint George Church, Pharr, TX, on the US-Mexican border.

"FOCA Mission Hotline" by Betty Yanowsky Slanta outlines a program conducted by the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America that gathers unused liturgical items from established parishes and channels them to new missions. Originally established in 1948, the hotline was reactivated some two decades ago and continues to provide a valuable service to mission parishes.

In the "Family Life" section, Wendy Cwiklinski introduces the term "invisible disabilities" in an article titled "The Church and the Child with Invisible Disabilities." She describes the struggles families with such children face, offers suggestions on how parishes and individuals can be of help to these families, and provides a list of internet resources. Additional information on this subject is provided by Michele Karabin, a former state rehabilitation counselor, who discusses various state resources.

In the "Youth/College" section, an article titled "The St. Mary's 'Rent-A-Saint' Project" by Debbie Manzoni describes a success-

## Chaplains to meet in November

The Very Rev. Theodore Boback, dean of OCA military and VA chaplains, recently announced that a comprehensive chaplain conference will be held at St. Tikhon Monastery and Seminary November 2-4, 2006.

All Orthodox military, VA, and institutional chaplains are encouraged to attend.

Military and VA chaplains wishing further info should contact the Very Rev. Joseph Gallick at [JGall41080@aol.com](mailto:JGall41080@aol.com) or 508/626-1312. Institutional chaplains may obtain additional info from the Rev. Steven Voytovich at [SVoytovic@srhs.org](mailto:SVoytovic@srhs.org) or 203/789-3248. ■

ful youth fund-raiser conducted at Saint Mary Cathedral, Minneapolis, MN, by which parish teens offered themselves in service to others to earn money for a worthy cause.

In the "Seniors" section, retirement years and how they are spent is the subject of an article by Kitty Vitko, titled "Giving Back to the Community." She relates the story of a retired engineer who thoughtfully seeks ways to help others. She also invites individuals and parishes to share their stories of this phase of their lives.

*Resource Handbook* installments now appear only on the OCA web site. Hard copies of back installments are still available from the Orthodox Christian Publication Center at <https://secure.oca.org/ocpc/scripts/prodList.asp>.

Funding for the *Resource Handbook* is provided by free-will donations to the Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards/ FOS. ■



## Pilgrimage to mark 40 years of monastic life at New Skete

In celebration of forty years of monastic witness, the New Skete monastic communities, Cambridge, NY, will host their annual pilgrimage on Friday and Saturday, August 11-12, 2006.

A presentation on the history of New Skete will be given on Friday at 3:45 p.m., followed by Vespers at 5:00. Saturday's events begin with Matins at 8:30 a.m., followed by the celebration of the Divine Liturgy at 9:30.

On Saturday afternoon, the Very Rev. Alexis Vinogradov will offer a talk on "Alexander Schmemmann and New Skete: Road to Orthodoxy." Dr. Roberta Ervine and New Skete monastics will speak on "Liturgy at New Skete."

Exhibits, tours, demonstrations, and youth activities are planned throughout the day. An array of delicious foods, the nuns' cheesecakes, and baked goods from the chapel community will be available for purchase on Saturday.

The pilgrimage will end with the celebration of the Vigil at 5:00 p.m. Saturday. All visitors are welcome.

For more information, contact Vera Beecroft at 518/753-4877 or Anna Chapman at editorinvt@aol.com. ■



## Bishop Nikon receives warm reception in Albania

For the first time, His Grace, Bishop Nikon of Boston, New England, and the Albanian Archdiocese of the Orthodox Church in America visited Albania May 2-11, 2006.

During his visit, Bishop Nikon met with His Beatitude, Archbishop Anastasios, Primate of the Orthodox Church of Albania, and conveyed greetings from His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman. The two hierarchs concelebrated the Divine Liturgy at Tirana's Annunciation Cathedral on Sunday, May 7.

His Excellency, Albanian President Alfred Moisiu, also received Bishop Nikon at the Presidium of the Republic.

Bishop Nikon also visited the Resurrection Orthodox Seminary and the Monastery of Saint Blaise near Durres, where he was hosted by His Grace, Bishop Ilia of Aneasion, director of the seminary, and met with the faculty and students.

**Albania to 29**



Albanian President Alfred Moisiu receives Bishop Nikon at the Presidium of the Republic [below].

Bishop Nikon blesses children at the Home of Hope orphanage [above], a charitable institution of the Albanian Church.

Archbishop Anastasios, Bishop Nikon concelebrate the Divine Liturgy at Tirana's Annunciation Cathedral [below].



## Metropolitan Herman meets visiting Indian hierarch

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, attended a reception in Bayside, NY, marking the first US visit of His Holiness, Baselios Mar Thoma Didymus I, Catholicos of the Malankara Syrian Church. Metropolitan Herman addressed the gathering and presented the Catholicos with a gift on behalf of the Orthodox Church in America.

Based at Kottayam, Kerala, India, the Malankara Syrian Church

traces its roots to the Apostle Thomas, who according to tradition established the Church there in 52 AD. In recent years, the number of Indian parishes in the US has increased significantly.

The Catholicos was enthroned in October 2005. ■



Metropolitan Herman presents gift to the visiting Indian Primate.



METROPOLITAN HERMAN

## Address to Metropolitan Council

It is with the joy of the Holy Spirit, Whose descent we just celebrated, that I welcome you to the 2006 spring session of the Metropolitan Council. Surely, it is the Holy Spirit, Who is “everywhere present, filling all things,” Who guides us as the People of God, the Church; Who inspires us as we struggle to build up the Body of Christ; and Who fills us with His very presence as Orthodox Christians called to proclaim the fullness of truth, despite our sins and flaws, to any and all who would receive it. It is in this context that we gather today, relying on the Holy Spirit’s direction in our deliberations and seeking to do, not our own will, but the will of Him Who brings us together.

One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is discernment – the ability to differentiate and distinguish between that which is true from that which is not true. This is not an easy task, and it is sometimes the case that we stumble in the process. But the Holy Spirit always abides in us, correcting our steps when we stray, lifting us up when we fall, and granting us the ability to refocus on that which is essential in the life of the Church from that which is of no benefit or spiritual importance. In striving to discern – and to do – the Lord’s will, it is the Holy Spirit upon Whom we rely, in Whom we place our faith and hope, and by Whom we ultimately experience the love of the God Who is Love Itself.

We invoke the Holy Spirit to fill us as we gather once again to consider where we have been and are as the Church, and where we are going. Much has transpired in the life of our Church in recent months. New missions continue to be planted. Young men continue to be ordained to the holy diaconate and holy priesthood. Our Church-wide departments and offices, in most cases staffed by talented volunteers who freely offer their time and talents to the Church, continue to strengthen existing ministries and to develop new ones. Our widely acclaimed web site continues to attract a growing number of visitors from around the world, while the new magazine format of *The Orthodox Church* continues to receive positive reactions. The essential life of our Church, rooted in worship and revealed in service to God and His People, remains strong and vibrant, thanks to the devotion of countless clergy and laity who labor, often in the midst of difficult circumstances and growing tensions, for nothing other than the glory of God. In these, and in countless other areas of our Church’s life, we find the indwelling and operation of the Holy Spirit, and we find much in which we can indeed rejoice.



At the same time, however, it has been painfully obvious to me – and I am sure to you as well – that our Church is facing a multitude of intensely serious issues that have dampened our joy, shaken our faith and hope, and in far too many instances hardened our hearts to the love of God.

It is no secret that we are facing accusations and allegations, aggravations and assumptions. They range from the demand for accountability in the area of financial management and practice, to an increase in parochial isolation and disunity, to an increasingly evident conflict rooted in competing ecclesiologies and visions, as they relate to the very nature of the Church’s administration and ministry.

During our deliberations, we will consider in detail the ongoing investigation of our financial practices, past and present, as well as the growing number of serious concerns that have surfaced as a result of the findings. At the recent meeting of the Holy Synod of Bishops, I shared my conviction that, if all issues are not addressed squarely, firmly, and appropriately, and dealt with openly and forthrightly, the Orthodox Church in America will face an even deeper crisis than we presently are experiencing, one that will take years, if not decades, to reverse. Today, I share this same conviction with you, calling upon you to maintain focus on that which is essential to the life of the Church, even as we struggle to sort out and sift through the various means at our disposal to bring about concord and stability to the

Church.

The time for action is now. I will refrain from presenting details that will be offered by others during our time together. However, I do want to offer my observations on some of the most current, major issues that demand our immediate attention and unified action. We cannot ignore that which has been discussed publicly and that, for many, appears self evident. True or false, public opinion cannot be ignored as if it did not exist. In order to stabilize the life of the Orthodox Church in America, restore trust on every level, and return to our fundamental mission and ministry as the Church, the time for action is now.

Since the fall of 2005, as is well known, numerous questions with regard to the financial practices of the Orthodox Church in America, past and present, surfaced as Protodeacon Eric Wheeler raised in the public forum a number of concerns dating back to the early 1990s. The controversy that arose as a result is widely known, and there is no reason to trace its chronology in detail at this time.

It is important to note that, after much prayer and reflection, I became convinced that an investigation of the Church’s finances and financial practices was appropriate and necessary. Hence, a special session of the Holy Synod of Bishops was convened in the early days of March 2006 to address the issues that faced us at that time. Unfortunately, our deliberations were inconclusive.

I was made aware of the utter seriousness of such public allegations and the effect they can have on the life of not only the central administration of the Church, but on every parish enrolled as a participant in the government recognized tax exempt roster filed each year with the United States Internal Revenue Service. To the extent that we must conform to all financial regulations emanating from the federal government, to take no action is generally perceived by regulatory agencies as negligence by the leadership of the Church. All things considered, for me not to exercise my authority as the Primate of the Orthodox Church in America when I did, could have resulted in placing the very existence of our beloved Orthodox Church in America in jeopardy.

Special meeting of the Administrative Committee. As Primate of the Church and in my capacity as Chairman of the Metropolitan Council, I convened a special meeting of the Administrative Committee of the Metropolitan Council on March 16, 2006, as you are undoubtedly aware. I announced at that time that I had taken a number of actions.

On a number of occasions prior to the day of the meeting, I had encouraged the chancellor to take an administrative leave of absence, but in each instance he refused to consider this. My

**Metropolitan to 25**



FR. PAUL KUCYNDA

## Report of the Acting Treasurer

Two sets of financial guidelines are being used as the basis of all operating fund and designated fund activity. The first became effective late in 2005, and the second in January 2006. *[The texts of these guidelines may be found on the OCA web site at [www.oca.org/DOC-policies.asp?SID=12](http://www.oca.org/DOC-policies.asp?SID=12) and [www.oca.org/PDF/DOC-PUB/MET\\_COUNCIL/2006.spring/2-EventsSchedulingGuidelines.pdf](http://www.oca.org/PDF/DOC-PUB/MET_COUNCIL/2006.spring/2-EventsSchedulingGuidelines.pdf).]*

2004 independent audit. At our 2005 fall meeting, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, announced that beginning with the year 2004, an independent audit of the finances of the Orthodox Church in America would be conducted annually as a normal practice.

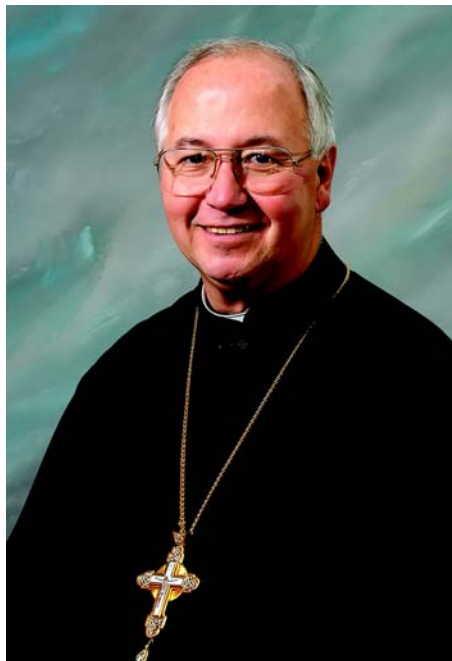
In fulfillment of this announcement, Metropolitan Herman authorized the engagement of the accounting firm of Lambrides, Lamos and Multhrop in January 2006. This accounting firm's primary work is with religious and other not-for-profit organizations. When they began their work in January 2006, they anticipated that their work would be completed by March 31, 2006.

At the request of the Holy Synod, Metropolitan Herman extended the engagement of the accountants conducting the 2004 audit to also include the financial records and activity related to the annual and special appeals for the years 2001 through 2005.

Conducting the 2004 audit, as well as the annual and special appeals audits, required an inordinate amount of time. Much data had to be reviewed – going back as far as 1998-1999 and even earlier. Though a progress report concerning the audit will be presented to you this afternoon by a representative from the accounting firm, it is important that we comprehend the history of all independent as well as internal audits of central Church administration finances conducted since the 1980s.

The firm now conducting the audits was the same firm that conducted independent audits for the Church from the early 1980s. In each instance, after the independent audit was completed for a given year, the Church auditors officially elected at each All-American Council held during those years, would also fulfill their responsibilities as internal auditors.

It is important to note that between 1999 and 2004, the financial audits were only conducted by the duly elected Church auditors. In lieu of an independent audit, a compilation report was prepared for each of those years. This fact is affirmed in correspondence I received from the accountant who prepared these reports. He wrote: "I just realized that you used the phrase, 'your Orthodox Church in America audit,' in your mes-



sage to me. The term 'audit' has a very specific meaning in accounting terminology, and carries with it much higher reliance than that for which we were engaged for 1999 through 2004. Our engagement was to compile the financial statements each year and issue our report based on such standards as set by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Specifically, our report contained the language, 'A compilation is limited to presenting, in the form of financial statements, information that is the representation of management. We have not audited or reviewed these statements and, accordingly, do not express an opinion or any other form of assurance on them.'"

**Best practices.** The second important decision from our last meeting was the request that the central church administration of the Orthodox Church in America subscribe to "Best Practice Principles for Non-Profit Financial Accountability." As you may remember, though Metropolitan Herman came to the meeting and announced that beginning with 2004, independent audits would be a normative practice, he also accepted the suggestion coming from a member attending the meeting, that the "Best Practice Principles" be accepted as the standard used particularly as they relate to the management of central church administration funds.

With the blessing of Metropolitan Herman, Protodeacon Peter Danilchick prepared a draft of a basic document and a number of amendments for consideration. We will receive the document

and discuss it tomorrow as part of our morning session. *[The text of "Best Practices" may be accessed on the OCA web site at [www.oca.org/PDF/DOC-PUB/MET\\_COUNCIL/2006.spring/3-BestPracticesDocument.pdf](http://www.oca.org/PDF/DOC-PUB/MET_COUNCIL/2006.spring/3-BestPracticesDocument.pdf).]*

In addition to Protodeacon Peter, Matushka Mary Buletza Breton and Mr. Robert Kornafel are also participating in this effort. You may want to familiarize yourself with their talents and previous Church service. *[Brief biographical information on these individuals may be accessed on the OCA web site at [www.oca.org/PDF/DOC-PUB/MET\\_COUNCIL/2006.spring/4-BestPracticesPersonnel.pdf](http://www.oca.org/PDF/DOC-PUB/MET_COUNCIL/2006.spring/4-BestPracticesPersonnel.pdf).]*

**The loan.** When we met last fall, we also agreed that as acting treasurer, I would try to secure a loan offer or offers to consolidate our indebtedness. Because we only had compilation reports for years 2002, 2003, and 2004 – all of which reflected a negative cash flow – my efforts came to naught.

The Honesdale National Bank, which has a history spanning more than 150 continuous years of service to the public, has a stellar reputation that speaks for itself. However, the willingness of their board of directors to make a loan offer to us in a formal commitment letter comes as a result of their deep respect for Metropolitan Herman. They consider him as a man of honor, of integrity, whose word can be trusted, someone who has borrowed and met every obligation made with them on behalf of Saint Tikhon Monastery and Saint Tikhon Seminary over many years. Saint Paul speaks to the qualifications for bishops. In 1 Timothy 3:7, he teaches that a bishop "he must have a good testimony among those outside [the Church]".

In preparation for our teleconference meeting, in addition to the full text of the Honesdale National Bank's commitment letter, I also sent a Fair Share Support Report as of March 31, 2006, a Designated Appeals and Restricted Income 2006 Report, and a FY 2006 Operating Budget with a comparison of income and expenditures to budget for January, February, and March 2006, to keep you informed as member of the Metropolitan Council.

During our teleconference meeting of May 18, 2006, we accepted the loan offer from the Honesdale National Bank.

The following facts are excerpted from the commitment letter and included here:

1. Amount of loan: \$1,700,000.00.
2. Purpose of loan: The Orthodox Church in America Summary of Outstanding Debts as of April 4, 2006:
  - \$500,000.00 Commerce Bank Line of Credit.
  - \$42,880.00 FOS endowments.
  - \$85,000.00 Other endowments – Smith Barney Main Acct.
  - \$30,000.00 Chechen relief.

**Acting Treasurer to 27**

Detroit conference participants listen to lecture on the whys and hows of bringing the faith to the wider community [below] while Fr. Moses Berry, who spoke at the Detroit and New Jersey conferences, pauses for photo in front of an icon of his patron, St. Moses the Black [right].



**A** two-year dialogue between the pastor of a Baptist congregation and the rector of an Orthodox Church in America parish culminated in a public conference, “Ancient Christianity: Rediscovering Our African Christian Heritage,” at Deliverance Evangelistic Center, Newark, NJ, June 2-3, 2006.

Coordinating the conference were the Rev. Brian D. Rawls Sr., pastor of Newark’s Higher Life Fellowship of Christians, and the Very Rev. Joseph Lickwar, rector of Saints Peter and Saint Paul Church, Jersey City, NJ, and chancellor of the OCA Diocese of Washington and New Jersey.

Higher Life Fellowship is in “catechetical dialogue” with Saints Peter and Paul parish in “the earnest hope of being received into the Orthodox Church,” the Rev. Rawls said.

In his keynote address, Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko, dean emeritus of Saint Vladimir’s Seminary, Crestwood, NY, highlighted the similarities between the suffering of African-American Christians under slavery and plight of Orthodox Christians under the oppression of the Ottoman Turks and Soviet Communism.

“Although we’re different, we share an incredible unity of spirit, mind, and soul,

## REDISCOVERING AFRICA’S ANCIENT CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

Conferences in New Jersey, Michigan, explore ways to bring Orthodox Christianity to the African-American community

once you go past the forms,” Father Hopko said.

The theme was further developed by Albert Raboteau, Ph.D., Princeton University professor of religion, who addressed the “convergences” that exist between the African-American religious tradition and Orthodox Christianity in a paper titled “African-American Slaves, Christianity, and the Legacy of Suffering.”

Mother Katherine Weston of Saint Xenia Monastic Community of the Serbian Orthodox Metropolitanate spoke on “Traditions of the Healing Church,” while the Rev. Paisius Altshul, director of Reconciliation Ministries, Kansas City, MO, shared accounts of the lives of numerous African

saints. A highlight of the conference was a moving account by the Rev. Moses Berry, president of the Brotherhood of Saint Moses the Black, founder of the Ozarks African American Heritage Museum, and rector of the OCA’s Theotokos “Unexpected Joy” Mission, Ash Grove, MO.

Conference goers also enjoyed musical selections performed by the New Jersey-based Spirit of Orthodoxy Choir, soprano Ethel Beatty Barnes, the Joshua Nelson Singers, and the Rev. Hilton Rawls, Jr., who sang spirituals.

“The conference was born out of a desire to reach inner-city Christians, particularly African-American pastors and congregations, with true post-apostolic, pre-Ref-



ormation Church history,” said the Rev. Rawls. “Many critical points of this history involve Africans. Hopefully, attendees left the conference having learned not just that Africans are ‘included’ in Church history, but that Africans and Asians were cardinal exemplars of the ancient faith.”

**T**hree weeks later, on June 22-25, about 100 African-American clergy, scholars, and lay leaders, many of the Orthodox faith, gathered in Detroit, MI for a conference exploring Christianity’s ancient African roots, titled “Forgiveness: Bridging Racial Barriers to Achieve Christ.”

“Reconnecting with the Orthodox tradition connects us with the earliest Christian traditions,” Father Moses Berry told the enthusiastic Detroit audience. “It means that, when our ancestors were brought here as slaves, they didn’t arrive here with just a collection of tribal religions. They didn’t all discover Christianity here. In fact, many Africans already were part of the ancient Christian Church.”

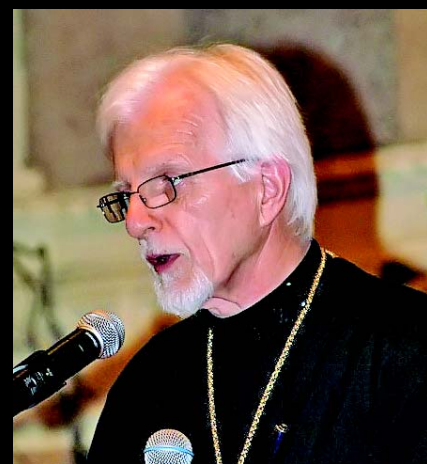
Originally a Protestant minister – a family tradition dating back to the 1800s –

Father Moses related how after visiting an Orthodox parish in Atlanta in 1983, he was so moved that he embraced Orthodox Christianity and was ordained to the priesthood. He also helped to organize the coalition of clergy, scholars, and lay leaders that gathered in Detroit.

“I discovered Orthodoxy while I was on the internet in 2001, and I was so drawn to it that I had to attend a Liturgy,” said Robert Aaron Mitchell, a Detroit resident who represents a growing number of African-Americans joining Orthodox parishes. “I felt like I was finally coming home.”

The Detroit conference was sponsored by the Brotherhood of Saint Moses the Black in conjunction with the Council of Orthodox Christian Churches of Metro Detroit and Saint Andrew House. Other speakers included the Very Revs. Roman Star and Michael Simerick; the Revs. Jerome Sanderson, Paisius Altschul, and Antonio Perdomo; Dr. Raboteau; Mother Katherine; and Photius Meirthew. ■

Contributors: *Michael Redmond, Dean Calvert, Fr. Joseph Lickwar*



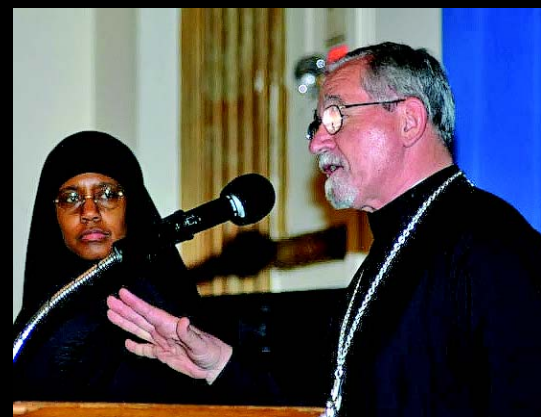
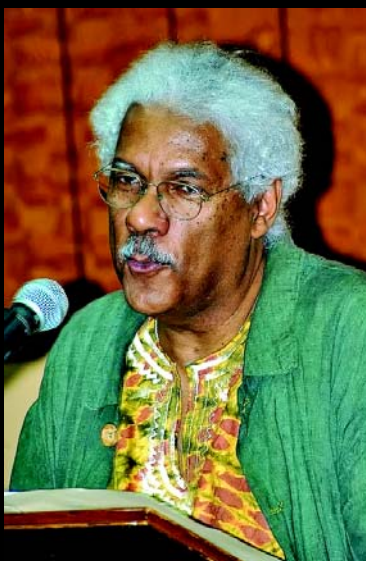
The Rev. Rawls and Fr. Lickwar address NJ conference participants [above]. For two years, the Rev. Rawls' Higher Life Fellowship has been engaged in “catechetical dialogue” with Fr. Lickwar's parish “with the earnest hope of being received into the Orthodox Church.”

Dr. Albert Raboteau of Princeton University [left] shares his “journey to Orthodoxy” with NJ conference goers.

Fr. Hopko draws parallels between Orthodox Christianity's experience and that of African Americans [below].



Nearly 100 faithful considered a variety of issues at the three-day Detroit conference [above, below].





# Six decades of ministry

## Remembering Metropolitan Leonty

Alexis Liberovsky

**T**his year marks the 130th anniversary of the birth of Metropolitan Leonty and the 100th anniversary of the beginning of his ministry to the Church in America – service that was to continue for nearly six decades until his repose in 1965.

Born in Volhynia on August 8, 1876, and ordained in 1905, Father Leonid Turkevich was appointed rector of the newly-opened theological seminary and pastor of Saint Mary Church in Minneapolis, MN by Saint Archbishop Tikhon of the Aleutians and North America in August 2006. On October 27 of the same year, Father Leonid and his wife Anna finally arrived in Minnesota, where he immediately began to devote himself to the formation of the future pastors for the North American flock and shepherding the parish that had been brought into Orthodoxy some 15 years earlier by Saint Alexis Toth.

Father Leonid's bright intellect and strong ecclesiastical erudition, molded by his upbringing in a priestly family and schooling at the Kyiv Theological Academy, quickly brought him to the forefront of North American clergy. As one of Saint Tikhon's closest advisors, he was elected chairman of the First All-American *Sobor*, held in Mayfield, PA in 1907. At this and subsequent *sobors*, his leadership guided the gradual formulation of the Church's ongoing missionary vision in North America.

When the seminary was relocated to Tenafly, NJ in 1912, Father Leonid moved east, continuing his work at the seminary and eventually succeeding Saint Alexander Hotovitzky as dean of New York City's Saint Nicholas Cathedral and editor of the *American Orthodox Messenger*, the Church's official periodical.

Father Leonid was one of two priests selected to join Archbishop Evdokim in representing the North American Diocese

at the All-Russian Council in Moscow in 1917-1918, at which he championed the restoration of the patriarchal system of Church governance abolished by Tsar Peter the Great two centuries earlier.

After the council, Father Leonid returned to America via Siberia, witnessing along the way the horrors the newly-established Bolshevik regime was inflicting on the Church and her faithful. Back in America, Father Leonid's experiences at the council clearly filled him with a vision and model for subsequent All-American *Sobors* and Church life.

When Father Leonid was widowed in 1925, elevation to the episcopacy was proposed to him almost immediately. Initially, he rejected this out of concern for the continued upbringing of his five children. But in 1933, he accepted monastic tonsure with the name Leonty, and was consecrated Bishop of Chicago. While he had been a hierarch for scarcely more than one year

**History to 30**



Metropolitan Leonty in the early 1960s with [seated, from left] Bulgarian Metropolitan Andrey, Antiochian Metropolitan Antony, and Greek Metropolitan Germanos and [standing, from left] Bishop John of San Francisco, Bishop Irene, and Bishop Kiprian.

Love for others was a hallmark of Metropolitan Leonty's life, whether it revealed itself in sharing candy with children or feeding New York's bowery homeless.





## Christian Witness & Service

# Helping hands, loving hearts

## SF's Raphael House reaches out to the homeless

Father Thomas Moore

If you find yourself visiting San Francisco on a tight budget, *don't* book a taxi at the airport after the city's public transit system shuts down at 11:30 p.m. A taxi costs about \$50.00. And, after discovering that a car rented at the airport costs \$100.00 more per week than one booked in town, my wife and I stood dejectedly, weighing our options.

Apparently, we looked *so* dejected that a woman working at the rental counter said, "I get off work in a few minutes, and I'll give you a ride into town" – an offer too good to pass up! After loading our luggage into her trunk, we gratefully listened as she explained why she never picks up strangers – except for us! – and shared stories about her family and her mother's recent death. As we approached the city, she asked us where we would like to be dropped off. When we told her Raphael House on Sutter Street, we could see her face light up as she related a tale of how she and her daughter, down on their luck when they first arrived in the city, had been given shelter at Raphael House. She went on to describe how, after she got an apartment, she worked in the shelter's restaurant, and eventually got a better job at the car rental agency where we had met her. She was overjoyed to give us a ride, which she saw as a way to repay Raphael House for the kindness that had been extended to her.

Founded in 1971, Raphael House is a homeless shelter for families with children. Over the years, its staff and volunteers have helped over 10,000 families achieve stability. I was blessed to live and work there for 10 years. When I left in 1987, Father David Lowell took over the direct care of the resident families and, four years later, became executive director.

During my recent visit, I met many volunteers helping on the rooftop playground, serving in the dining room, and tutoring in the after-school program. I was especially happy to find that the shelter's Synaxis of the Archangels Orthodox chapel offers a

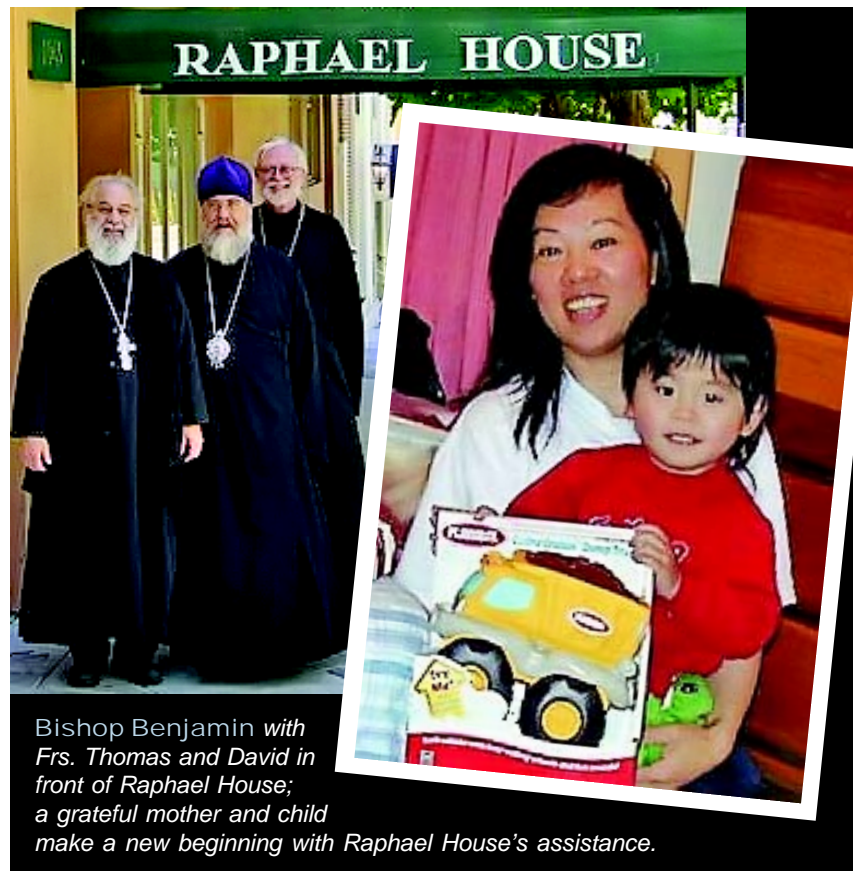
regular cycle of liturgical services and prayers.

Throughout our week-long visit to Raphael House, Veronica, a young woman who worked at the front desk, greeted me daily. We developed a curious instant rapport as she slowly revealed that in 1987, when she was just three years old, she and her mother found shelter at Raphael House until they became self-sufficient. For years thereafter, her mother continued to volunteer at the shelter – a family tradition Virginia was happy to continue.

Just before I left, Father David and I realized that Virginia and her mother were the first family to whom we had ministered together years ago, and we laughed heartily as Virginia shared her memories of the warmth and security she experienced as a three year old during her time with us. She especially remembered the prayers, songs, and evening rituals which are still a part of "bed time" at Raphael House.

There is so much more to share about the good work being done at Raphael House. In this time of controversies, how many people know of the work that has been steadily done there in the name of Our Lord? How many know what a witness Raphael House is to Orthodox Christian charity in a world that needs it? How many know that Father David and his wife

and others have raised their families and shared their lives day in and day out with homeless families? How many know that His Grace, Bishop Benjamin of Berkeley, lives and works there also? What a glorious sight to see a bishop laughing with the



children and working with staff and volunteers! How many know that Orthodox young adults can volunteer at Raphael House through the Orthodox Christian Fellowship's "Real Break" program, or spend a summer or a year gaining valuable supervised social service experience?

Raphael House provides an overwhelming Orthodox Christian witness to God's love for homeless pilgrims. I would encourage anyone who can do so to offer their time and talents ministering to those who benefit physically, morally, and spiritually from its unique ministry.

For further information on Raphael House visit [www.raphaelhouse.org](http://www.raphaelhouse.org) or write to Father David at [dlowell@raphael.org](mailto:dlowell@raphael.org). ■

Fr. Moore is rector of Holy Apostles Church, Columbia, SC, and a member of the OCA Department of Christian Witness and Service.

## Evangelization

# Scaling the walls

## Why your church shouldn't be "a mighty fortress"

Father Eric Tosi

In the last issue, we looked at things that are crucial to welcoming – and inspiring – the visitors and enquirers who enter the doors of our churches. In this issue, we will look at obstacles that visitors can – but shouldn't have to – face.

Beware the gatekeeper! "Gatekeepers" are persons who see their "job" as "screening" – sometimes unconsciously – those who walk through the door, especially "outsiders." At best, they hardly inspire visitors to return; at worst, they judge, question, block, and, in some cases, boot out people. They need to be reigned in, lest they render the parish as unapproachable as a yard with a "beware of the pit bull" sign posted on its fence.

While, of course, gatekeepers need to be treated with love, attempts must be made

to enlighten them to the fact that such behavior is inappropriate, especially when dealing with visitors and enquirers. Making attitudinal changes can be very difficult, sometimes impossible. Nevertheless, a parish cannot blind itself to those who can unilaterally destroy its efforts to embrace those who "come and see" – especially if what they've found encourages them to "never return."

Don't single out people. A few visitors are spotted at the Liturgy. The priest announces, "We have some visitors," at which point every head turns to look – or, in the case of the gatekeepers, to glare – at them. Terribly embarrassed, the visitors pray the floor opens to swallow them.

While welcoming visitors in such a public way is indeed a well intentioned act, it can backfire. Many people detest being the focus of attention in a group of

people whom they have never met! Most visitors, especially first-time visitors, came to observe, not to be observed. So, while it is important to be welcoming, it is wise to allow visitors to explore the community at their own pace. They should be made to feel comfortable in what is likely to be new territory, not "put on display." A simple "we'd like to welcome those who have joined us for worship, and we invite them to join us for fellowship" provides a warm, yet hardly threatening, welcome.

Forget the hard sell. Visitors want to observe; they are not interested in "buying" something, so there's no need to try to convince them immediately that what they had just experienced is "the fullness of truth in action." They wouldn't step through the front door if they weren't seeking truth in the first place. They may already be experiencing conflicting emotions and thoughts about their visit, so there is no reason to add to the angst.

At all costs, avoid polemical arguments, outlandish and unkind criticisms of other faiths, and anything that could be seen as negative. Instead, let visitors and enquirers discover the truth in our worship, our actions, and our love. Be open to their questions, and answer them clearly and in terms they will readily understand. In every instance, avoid giving the appearance of "sealing the deal" before they leave, or you may discover that they may never return.

Welcome families and children. It is a fact that growth takes place in parishes in which children are given an active role in Church life. Visiting families relate to active families with children who want to share and grow in the faith. In other words, families attract families.

Sadly, some parishes are anything but "kid friendly." And there are those faithful who see children as a distraction, yet who complain that "we're losing our youth." As an old adage says, "a quiet church is a dead church." Nothing keeps visiting families away like snarls and glares from parishioners who find the presence of children an assault on their peace and quiet.

Welcome families and children. Make them a part of the services. Teach them to love the faith and educate them with love on proper behavior, while recognizing the fact that two-year-olds do what they do precisely because they're two years old!

## Missions: Apply now for a planting grant

The OCA Department of Evangelization is accepting applications from missions wishing to receive a 2007 Church Planting Grant.

Planting grants are given to a limited number of missions based on the generosity of the faithful to the OCA's annual Mission Appeal. Each granted mission receives \$15,000.00 per year, for a maximum of three years, and must match this amount. Grants must be used exclusively to fund full-time resident mission priests.

"Experience has shown that missions with full-time priests develop into parishes much more quickly," said the Rev. Eric Tosi, department chairman. "The grant allows

mission priests to devote all of their time and energy to 'growing' their missions."

To date, nearly 20 grants have been awarded.

Applications are available on the OCA web site at <http://www.o.ca.org/PDF/Evangelization/2005churchplantinggrant.pdf>; by calling 702/898-4800; or by e-mail at [evangelization@oca.org](mailto:evangelization@oca.org). ■

Established in 2000, St. Herman of Alaska Mission, Port Townsend, WA, has grown rapidly with the help of a grant. Under the guidance of Fr. Nicholas Kime, the mission recently completed installation of its iconostasis.





# MISSION possible!

## Bringing Orthodoxy to Phoenix's Hispanic community

**PHOENIX, AZ** – Saints Peter and Paul parish here was founded in 1951. Over the years, the neighborhood had become largely Hispanic, to the point that by 2005, the Diocese of the West's dean of missions asked the parish to consider establishing a Spanish-language mission. At once, the faithful embraced the idea, generously offering the use of their parish facilities. And two parishioners spearheaded the refurbishing of a house on the property for a mission priest and his family.

In July 2005, Isidor Mayol was ordained by His Grace, Bishop Benjamin of Berkeley, to establish the mission.

"Phoenix in summer is no cake walk," said Father Isidor, who set about the task at hand despite the 116 degree temperature! "But we threw ourselves into the task immediately by visiting people in the neighborhood, making signs, and advertising the Spanish-language services at the church."

At first, Father Isidor held weeknight services, but attendance was poor. "People were tired, and the neighborhood can be tough at night," he said. Celebrating services on Saturdays, however, greatly improved attendance and interest.

"Then one day a young girl came to me for a blessing and instruction for her *quinceañera*," Father Isidor continued. "This is a 'coming of age' tradition observed by 15-year old girls, and it is a serious matter, in which moral and religious formation is just as important as the celebration itself. Soon the girl's family began attending classes, then their friends, and then their friends! Once people started attending, the beauty of the services, the icons, the church building, and life of the Church 'took over' – very congenial and appealing."

Father Isidor's wife Elaine reads the Epistle and, with the

"Take down that wall!" There are some parishes that have no connection with the communities in which they exist. They sport tall gates and fences that can give the impression that the sheep should be locked out, rather than brought in. "Curb appeal" can make a difference in whether an enquirer perceives he or she will find an open door, be forced to scale a wall, or simply seek greener pastures.

There are also parishes that, while not involved in their communities, are still noticed by the neighbors – for the wrong reasons. Neighborhood kids are summarily booted off parish property. Parishioners block neighbors' driveways. Requests to use the parish hall are routinely rejected.

Such parishes marginalize themselves by their own actions, language, or culture, giving the appearance of being a "drive in" church for folks who live elsewhere. Often, their members are baffled by the total lack of visitors – who would have to scale the 12-foot high fence surrounding the parish property! – blinding themselves to the signals they send to the public.

Yet, right outside every parish's doors are people who are looking for Christ, for meaning, for something to fill a "spiritual void" in their lives. Welcome the neighbors. Involve them in the life of the parish, and get involved in the life and experience of the broader community. Host and participate in community events, send-



Outreach bears fruit Fr. Isidor Mayol celebrates a baptism at Phoenix's growing Hispanic mission.

help of a parishioner, leads the liturgical singing in Spanish. Their nine-year-old son Karel also helps in many ways.

"Everyone loves it," Father Isidor said. "People stay for classes after the services, eagerly receiving instruction!"

People quickly realized that the Orthodox Church is not a sect, but the authentic catholic Church.

"As more people visited, they called in their elders to for the 'seal of approval,'" Father Isidor said. "Early this year, one family's patriarch drove five hours from LA to look things over. He liked everything – especially the priest facing the altar – and gave his enthusiastic approval. His only regret was that he lived too far away to attend more often."

Still in its infancy, the mission is in deed of a great deal of assistance. Father Isidor receives a small mission stipend, so he and his wife work full-time to support themselves.

"While the mission's growth has been dramatic, it will be years before these very hard working yet very poor people can support a priest," Father Isidore observed. "But we are so thankful to Saints Peter and Paul parish for sharing its resources, and for the personal daily involvement of its parishioners." ■

ing a loud and visible signal that "this is our neighborhood, and this faith community is fully dedicated to it." And ultimately, "love your neighbor as you love yourself!"

By engaging the community, even and especially those experiencing urban decay, a parish says – actually, shouts loudly – that it is not abandoning "outsiders" to the world, but rather that it is informing the world that "no one is a stranger here." In time, the community will respect the parish, embrace it, and in some cases, want to become a part of it. ■

Fr. Tosi is rector of St. Paul Church, Las Vegas, NV, and co-chairperson of the OCA Department of Evangelization.

## RESOURCES

### Christian ed, youth departments to host skills building conference September 30

**S**aint Tikhon's Monastery and Seminary, South Canaan, PA, will be the site of a skills building conference, "Equipping the Saints: Building Skills for Education and Youth Ministries," on Saturday, September 30, 2006.

Cosponsored with the blessing of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, by the OCA Departments of Christian Education and Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministries, in partnership with the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, the conference is geared specifically for teachers, youth ministers, clergy, and lay persons.

Presenters and workshop leaders will include Mrs. Valerie Zahirsky, Mrs. Myra Kovalak, and other DCE members; Deacon Joseph Matusiak, Youth Department director; the Very Rev. David Mahaffey; and other department members.

In addition to keynote presentations on the conference theme, several individual workshop sessions will be offered. Topics will include ways to develop parish youth ministries "from scratch," the "welcoming classroom," making the distinction between youth ministry and youth activity, curriculum resources and planning, and discerning effective teaching methods.

A variety of displays highlighting the many educational resources available for parish use will also be available.

The \$10.00 registration fee covers all conference events and materials and lunch. Checks should be made payable to the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania.

Special rates for out-of-town participants desiring overnight accommodations are available by contacting the Comfort Inn, Hamlin, PA, at 570/689-4148; fax 570/689-3043. [Mention Saint Tikhon's Seminary when making reservations.]

To register, contact Maria Proch at smile9561@juno.com or 1107 Sunset Drive, Clarks Summit, PA 18411 or log on to the DCE web site at dce.o.ca.org. Deadline for registration is September 22. ■

# BECOME what you are!

## We are not our sins!

Father David Subu

**I**n the last issue, we looked at how fear limits us and keeps us from becoming the person God created us to be. Fear limits us from returning to who we were created to be, since God created us good, in His image and likeness, and each one of us has lost that likeness because of our sins.

One of the most powerful ways fear and sin work together in us is through the devil's deception. He attempts to convince us that we are not images of God, that we are *inherently* evil, worthless beings. How so?

Simple. For a person to live a sinful life-style with no desire to change or repent, he or she first must believe that change is impossible, that sin is more than just a superficial aspect of life, that it is the very thing that defines him or her. The drug addict, the alcoholic, the over-eater all need to accept the fact that their habits have taken control of their lives to such an extent that they could not function, or even exist, without them. The sinner does the same. Our world is so corrupt and our lives so filled with sin that the good and holy things in our lives can seem irrevocably tainted. Even when we perform works of charity – read Matthew 25 – a part of us looks for praise, while judging others for not doing as well. It seems inescapable; in reality, without God, it *is* inescapable.

When God enters into our lives – rather, when we realize His presence in our lives and we begin to trust in Him – He reveals to us that we no longer need to identify with our sins. In Him, we have the choice to become free, rather than feeling like we need to sin in order to survive, to get by, to feel loved or "fulfilled" or whatever other motivation the devil uses to deceive us. Instead, we find true love, hope, and fulfillment in God, as we realize that *we are not our sins!*

This is why repentance is so important. Repentance involves more than saying "I'm sorry" or "I'll try harder next time." It involves changing our core beliefs about who we are. If we don't repent, we are telling God, "I'm sorry, but I can't change. This is just who I am." We define who we are by what we do rather than on what we could become with God's help. Likewise, when we believe the lie that we have no choice but to give into our sins, our relationships with family and friends, as well as with God, unravel. And in the end, it is we who reject God and others, who make a hell for ourselves, regardless of our "good intentions."

But sin will not stand in the Lord's presence: "If anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him – the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" [John 12:47-48].

Flee from sin. Resist the devil and his lies. Listen to Our Lord, Who never ceases speaking to us through His word! ■

## food for thought...

- 1 What habits do I have that I should change, but feel I cannot? When I am about to give in to them, how do I justify them in my mind?
- 2 Imagine a world without sin. What things would have to change in order to make this possible? What would it require of me?
- 3 What are my core beliefs about who I am? How do they compare to what Our Lord teaches? How would truly believing God's word while rejecting the devil's deception change me? My relationships? Others? The world?



# Youth, Young Adult & Campus Ministry

## How I spent my summer vacation

### Youth adults take advantage of summer programs

**O**rthodox Christian teens and young adults participated in a variety of opportunities this summer designed to strengthen their faith and expand their knowledge of the Church.

In addition to participating in numer-

ous OCA camps across the US and Canada, over 30 teens participated in the annual Crossroad Program, a career and vocational interest project funded by the Lilly Foundation in conjunction with Hellenic College/Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School

of Theology, Brookline, MA.

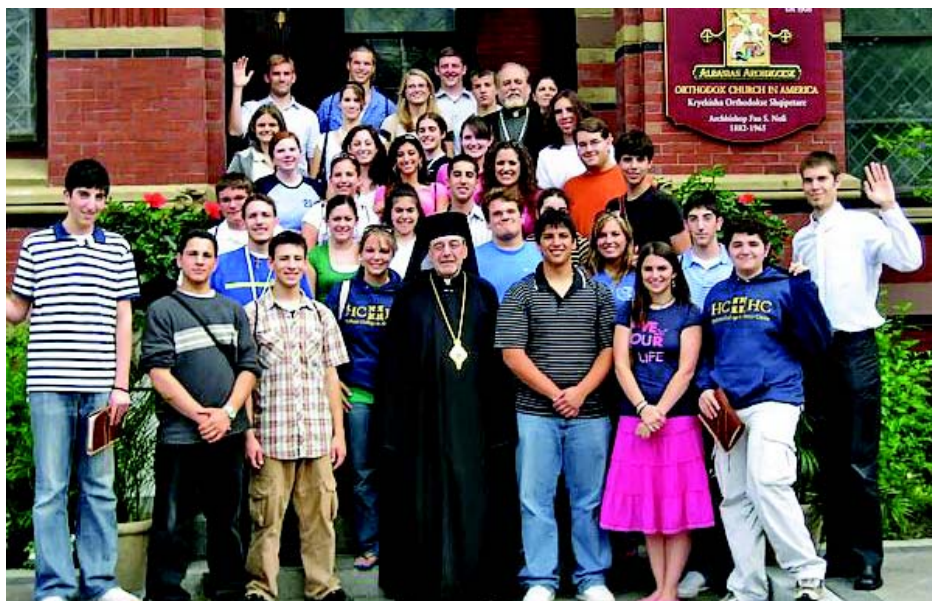
Crossroad participants visited Saint George Cathedral, Boston, MA, the "Mother Church" of the OCA's Albanian Archdiocese, where they were warmly welcomed by His Grace, Bishop Nikon of Boston, New England, and the Albanian Archdiocese, on June 26, 2006. The teens learned of the history of the archdiocese and its founder, Archbishop Theophan Noli, during their visit.

During their 10-day program, the teens also worshipped at several other Boston area parishes, explored and studied various aspects of the Church, and participated in community outreach and social service projects.

Several high school seniors also participated in the special youth program conducted in conjunction with the annual Summer Liturgical Institute at Saint Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY June 24-30.

While the participants attended lectures and worshipped with the institute's clergy and lay attendees, they enjoyed a separate program that included field trips to local parishes, service projects, discussions, and opportunities to meet members of the seminary faculty and student body.

A highlight of the institute was a visit to the OCA Archives in Syosset, NY, during which Mr. Alexis Liberovsky, archivist, provided a rare glimpse of many valuable historical documents and artifacts. The teens also toured the OCA Chancery and prayed in Saint Sergius of Radonezh Chapel, where they received the blessing of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman. ■



*Bishop Nikon welcomes participants in the annual Crossroad Program to Boston's St. George Cathedral.*

*OCA archivist Alexis Liberovsky displays a bottle that contained Holy Chrism, brought to America by Bishop Innocent [Pustynsky] of Alaska in 1904, to participants in the SVS youth institute during their tour of the OCA Archives.*

John Mindala



## TAKE NOTE

### Send us your camp photos!

**S**end us photos from your summer camp and we'll share them with others in the next issue of *The Orthodox Church* and on the OCA youth web site.

Simply attach your photos to an e-mail and send them to [info@oca.org](mailto:info@oca.org), along with a brief article – we'll take it from there! ■

## Christian Education

# And your point is...

## Adding a little pizzazz to story time!

Valerie Zahirsky

**E**very Church school teacher tells stories in class. They may be from the Bible or from the treasury of saints' lives, or they may be accounts of important events in the history of the Church. Clearly, stories form an essential part of our Christian heritage.

Our Lord was a master storyteller. His parables weave elements of daily life with the deepest truths. He spoke of fishing and farming, tenants and landlords, vines and vine dressers, health and illness, flowers and animals. With these simple things, He presented a vivid picture of the Kingdom of God while revealing to His hearers what was essential if they hoped to inherit that Kingdom.

So as teachers, it is good for us to polish our ability to tell the stories that reveal the truths of our faith in an exciting and engaging manner, ensuring that the students will not only remember the stories we tell, but identify the truths the stories contain. Here are some suggestions.

If you're telling or reading a Bible story, hold an open Bible, even if you are actually telling or reading the story from some other source, such as a curriculum textbook. Many teachers do this by putting the textbook or a copy of the text into the open Bible. If using an illustrated text, hold the picture pages up at the appropriate places in the story.

Practice makes perfect! Even with a story you know well, it is important to practice what you'll be reading so that you can *tell*, rather than merely *read*, the story. This is especially important if your listeners are children under the age of six

or seven. But even with older students, it's important to punctuate your reading with personal insights and eye contact. Practice the story several times with a patient spouse or family member, or use a mirror. This helps you to devise some variations

moral dilemma for His hearers to think about. The two men who failed to help the wounded traveler weren't just "too busy;" they would have been putting themselves in danger by pausing on this particular road, creating a genuine moral tension with regard to putting themselves in danger in order to help a stranger.

**Make connections.** Help students age 12 years and older look for connections in stories. For example, the deacon Stephen's words of forgiveness in

Acts 7:60 paraphrase the words of Our Lord on the cross. Stephen offers an example of someone who takes the teachings of Christ seriously. An effective contrast is the sobering story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5: 1-11. This couple dies, not because God is vengeful, but because they chose to mock the principles of the new Christian community and to "tempt the Spirit of the Lord," as the apostle Peter says.

Another example of a connection for older students can be made with the stories of the Good Samaritan and the Samaritan woman in John 4. Students can be asked to consider why Jesus chose a Samaritan as the "hero" of the story of the injured traveler, and why He chose to reveal His divinity to a Samaritan woman – much to the consternation of His own disciples. Of course, the connection is found in the fact that these stories reveal that Our Lord came for the salvation of *all* people, not just the believers in Israel. But for older students they are valuable in another way: they remind them that the Bible is not always predictable, and that there is always more to learn and more by which to be surprised – a good point to make as you share these stories with our sometimes jaded young people!

In future issues, we'll take a look at ideas for teaching and relating the lives of the saints and survey a number of methods for presenting stories. ■



*When "acting out" is okay! Acting out – when it involves making a story come to life, that is – can perk up any lesson!*

in tone and inflection and include a few hand gestures. These need not be dramatic – this could detract from the story – but a few well-placed personal "touches" can be helpful in holding the students' attention. It's also a good idea to practice keeping your voice from dropping at the ends of sentences to avoid a "sing-song" pattern. Plan – and practice – occasional pauses that effectively add emphasis and variety.

**Set the stage.** When appropriate, "set the stage" for the story. For example, when telling the story of the Good Samaritan, show younger students a picture of a road with people traveling on foot or riding animals, as found in Jesus' time. With older students, you might want to show Jericho and Jerusalem on a map. With teens, use the map, but add that the road between Jericho and Jerusalem was a notoriously dangerous one, infested with robbers who preyed on travelers. Older students are ready to understand that Jesus set the story on this particular road to create a kind of



## Metropolitan from 14

efforts to resolve our administrative differences – particularly following the Fourteenth All-American Council – were unsuccessful. I perceived that my administrative directives were treated as opinion, especially as I attempted with the acting treasurer to chart a new course of financial management of the central administration of the Church. The initial financial guidelines that were to serve as the basis of the financial management for this triennium were challenged.

I informed the members of the Administrative Committee that, due to my dissatisfaction with the manner in which the chancellor's conduct related to a number of areas of concern – especially after receiving a letter from the chancellor's personal attorney on the eve of the meeting – and after careful and prayerful consideration, as well as a sleepless night, I found it necessary to terminate him from his duties as chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America. I also announced that, after careful consideration and wise counsel, I chose to engage the law firm of Proskauer Rose, on behalf of the Church, to initiate a full investigation of various matters related to our central administration, particularly as they relate to all financial allegations that could be identified from various sources.

Since the accounting firm of Lambrides, Lamos and Multhroup already had been engaged to conduct an independent audit of our 2004-2005 financial records – an ongoing process that began in January 2006 – I asked them to coordinate their work with the attorneys from Proskauer Rose. As requested by the members of the Holy Synod of Bishops, I also authorized that all financial transactions related to special and annual appeals conducted under the auspices of the central administration of the Church from 2001 to 2005 be audited. As a cost saving measure, it was agreed that the activity of the auditors would be used to supply the law firm with any and all data that they needed to conduct a complete and thorough investigation.

As reported to the Lesser Synod of Bishops at its meeting of April 28, 2006, questions were raised by the independent auditors about funds distributed in years past, not only internationally, but domestically, without supporting documentation. It was further reported that, for a number of years before the current independent audit, only compilation reports for each year, which were audited by the internal auditors of the Church elected by the All-American Council, were available. Though these may be considered as audits by some, all will recognize that they are the least reliable for any organization.

Though the work leading to an independent certified audit for 2004 is nearly complete, it is not yet known if the auditors can actually certify the audit at this time. From 2005 and thereafter, however, with all procedures in the recently adopted "Best Practices" fully opera-

tive, an annual independent audit will be produced.

Restoring our financial integrity. I also reported at that time that creditors were rightfully demanding payment for goods and services rendered and that following the 2005 fall session of the Metropolitan Council, acting treasurer, Archpriest Paul Kucynda, began to search for an appropriate lender in earnest. After his efforts came to naught, I contacted the Honesdale National Bank in Honesdale, PA. On May 3, 2006, they offered a letter of commitment in the amount of \$1,700,000.00 without penalty for prepayment, 20 years in duration, and at the rate of 7.97% for the first 48 months. As you know, during the extraordinary teleconference meeting of the Metropolitan Council of nearly two hours in duration on May 18, 2006, the commitment from the Honesdale National Bank was accepted.

At this point I must emphasize that, as the Primate of the Orthodox Church in America and, in light of the fact that I have taken full responsibility for all that has happened and is now happening, I will not be apologetic for exercising the leadership prerogatives afforded to the Primate as described in the *Statute of the Orthodox Church in America*. As I noted in my letter to the faithful on the fourth Sunday of Great Lent, not everyone will be pleased by my decisions – this includes even some among us gathered here. But the time to act had arrived. It had become clear to me that only an investigation of our finances and financial practices, appropriate audits and reviews, would enable us to determine the facts regarding these issues and hopefully bring closure to this dark period in our history.

Our differing opinions made public. What initially had been a series of longstanding, serious concerns with regard to finances has, unfortunately, brought a number of other issues to the surface, not the least of which is the unfortunate impression that the Holy Synod of Bishops is divided internally, that we inhabit a house divided against itself. This impression, to be frank, has been evident in countless postings on the internet, on a number of web sites of questionable nature, and in a variety of public internet forums and lists. Letters and other documents intended to be confidential in nature, especially between hierarchs, have been subject to posting, judgment, editorialization, and worse. Specifically, the writings of His Grace, Bishop Tikhon of San Francisco, Los Angeles, and the West, not only questioning my position as Primate of the Church and challenging decisions I made in an effort to address the mounting issues we face collectively, but also calling for my retirement and even deposition, have only complicated an already complex situation. If questions of financial practices, past and present, have served to polarize many of our clergy and faithful, the slanderous statements, demands, "revelations," and other venom that has appeared on the internet

have only served to plant further distrust and disenchantment. This was especially evident during the season of Great Lent, as the rhetoric intensified and internet postings multiplied dramatically. I have categorically stated that as Primate of the Church, I take full responsibility for all decisions I have made related to the issues we are attempting to address and resolve. I have no intention of retiring or resigning. To do so would not only hamper the investigation of our finances that has been undertaken, but would create further confusion and lack of trust among the clergy and faithful.

A reflection on competing ecclesiologies. It is becoming clear that there are somewhat different ecclesiologies operating within our Church. This phenomenon is not limited to the Orthodox Church in America, nor to recent years, as we increasingly hear of the role of "democracy" in the Church. This merely serves to call the hierarchical principle that stands at the center of Orthodox Christian ecclesiology into question, to create a "we/they" divide, and to reduce the Orthodox Church in America to a collection of autocephalous dioceses, each operating independently of one another with no central oversight and administration.

Naturally, in a culture such as ours, where one continually hears about the "right to know" and "freedom of information" and "majority rule," the Church's hierarchal principle and fundamental ecclesiology is bound to be challenged and questioned as inconsistent with "democracy." But the fact of the matter is that the Church is not a democracy, even though it exists within a democracy. Nor is the Church a corporation that, rejecting its fundamental nature and ecclesiology, must conform to an exclusively secular business model. If we truly believe that we are guided by the Holy Spirit, then we must uphold the hierarchical principle upon which our ecclesiology is based, even to the point of defending it in the face of those who would replace it with a "by the people and for the people" model.

The conflicting ecclesiologies that have surfaced have had an impact on our clergy and faithful, especially on the parish level. Polarization, the "taking of sides," fear, and confusion have infected the life of our Church. I have spoken with numerous clergy who are, pure and simple, afraid that their otherwise stable parishes and missions have become preoccupied with politics, "Synod-watching," finger pointing, and the darker aspects of the crises we are facing. It is imperative that we not only clearly state our ecclesiology, but that we apply it and live it, even in instances in which the Primate must make a decision on behalf of all for the good of the Church. This is especially so in instances in which the Holy Synod of Bishops and/or the Metropolitan Council must act with a unified voice, with one heart and mind, as a model and example of consensus. If we fail to acknow-

**Metropolitan to 26**

## Metropolitan from 25

ledge this need, I fear that we face even darker days, especially on the parish level.

The implications of our financial condition. With regard to the current financial status of the Orthodox Church in America, Father Kucynda, as acting treasurer, together with Fathers Stavros Strikis, John Dresko, and Eugene Vansuch, will offer detailed reports. At this time, however, I wish to note that in general, income from the "fair share" continues to be received from all dioceses. "Fair share" income is no longer being withheld by the Diocese of the West.

Unfortunately, the response to date to February's Mission Appeal generated less than half of the \$120,000.00 goal required to provide planting grants to five mission communities and maintain other missionary initiatives. This is but one matter that we must review with the utmost seriousness, as the planting grant program is crucial in maintaining and expanding our fundamental mission as the Orthodox Church in America – namely the proclamation of the Gospel and the planting of new communities, especially in regions with little or no Orthodox Christian presence and witness.

The Chancery staff. With regard to the Chancery offices, I have had a number of meetings, both individual and collective, with the other members of the Chancery staff. Archpriests David Brum and Joseph Fester both requested a blessing to seek new assignments. Effective July 1, 2006, Father Brum will be released from duties as secretary to the Metropolitan to serve a parish in the Diocese of the West, while Father Fester will be released effective August 15, 2006 to serve in the Diocese of the South. The remaining members of the Chancery staff continue to perform their duties in a responsible manner.

I have asked Fathers Kucynda and Dresko to gather the necessary factual information that will lead to a review of the management chart as well as individual job descriptions for all staff members, including the duties fulfilled by Fathers Brum and Fester. With assistance, I will review this information to determine the skills required and the best use of present staff members, as well as to give consideration to additional staff if necessary. In some instances, tasks being done by staff may be outsourced if it is determined that this is the most efficient way to proceed.

I have increased my presence at the Chancery, and will continue to do so, in an effort to improve and promote better communications with the staff, as well as make every effort to keep the essential services of the central administration functioning as smoothly as possible during this period of transition.

The ministries of the Church. One of the most important responsibilities associated with the central administration of the Church is to encourage and offer moral support and financial resources to the many members of the Church who participate in a genuine labor of love.

With regard to our numerous departments, offices, boards, and commissions, much continues to be accomplished with the excellent coordination efforts of Matushka Michelle Jannakos, Church Ministries coordinating secretary. Every effort must be made to support the good work of all departments.

While our finances at this time are primarily limited to income from diocesan fair share contributions, it is my hope that as trust and confidence is restored, all who in the past have supported the Fellowship of Stewards of the Orthodox Church in America and the annual and special appeals will resume their ministry of generosity. As a final word in this matter, after money from the loan is used to restore all designated funds to their proper levels, the designated funds will be distributed in a timely manner.

In conclusion, we must acknowledge, with one mind, that the Orthodox Church in America is at a crossroad in its 212 year history. And I have no doubt that this session of the Metropolitan Council will be a pivotal one, not only in dealing with our past and present, but in charting the course for our future. There are a growing number of issues that need our undivided attention and require not only a consensus, but a commitment to maintain a consensus after our session has ended. At no time in my experience can I remember such an intense need for unity, for wise and objective leadership, and for the laying aside of our personal concerns, wants,

and needs for the overall good of the Church.

I exhort you, as brothers and sisters in Christ, to allow the Holy Spirit to work in our midst, to guide us in addressing, once and for all, the issues we face, so that, as Saint Paul exhorts us, "everything may be done properly and in order." I will not deny that this may indeed be a painful process, but it is a necessary one if we are to remain faithful to the vision of the Church we have inherited. As good stewards, we must cherish this gift, give thanks to God for His mercy and love, and use it to bring glory to His Name.

Clearly, if we fail to confront all that currently confronts us, we will not only fail to restore trust to the faithful of the Church, but we will be dishonoring the calling which members of the Metropolitan Council have been given.

Finally, I offer my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the members of the Holy Synod of Bishops, the Metropolitan Council, the Chancery staff, the members of our departments, offices, boards, and commissions, and everyone who has sacrificed so much in offering their time, talents, and treasures for the good of the Church. May God bless everyone for their support and dedicated service to Our Lord and to His People.

Through the intercessions of our Father among the Saints, Herman of Alaska, and of all the Saints of North America, may this session of the Metropolitan Council assist in bringing about a new beginning in the life of our Church now and in the days, months, and years to come! ■

## Statement from 11

# Metropolitan Council statement

"2. We are implementing the standard protocol of 'Best Practices' for financial management for non-profits, which is posted on the OCA web site.

"3. We have approved a loan of \$1.7 million to pay our creditors and to restore any and all monies borrowed from earmarked funds. This loan is being secured by the properties on Martin Drive and our headquarters in Syosset, and will be serviced out of operating funds.

"4. We have requested that His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman create a special financial oversight committee to work with the treasurer and administration to assess and carefully manage all current funds, and to make the necessary interim decisions to assure a balanced budget for 2006.

"5. We pledge to take appropriate action relative to the findings and recommendations of the auditors.

"It is our commitment to do our best to rectify the mistakes of the past, to be fiscally responsible in the present, and to create an atmosphere of trust that

will ensure confidence among the faithful of the Church in the future.

"We also ask the following from you, the faithful of the Church:

"1. That you remain patient.

"2. That you pray for us and for all concerned in these matters.

"3. That you continue to support the Church.

"Most of us went to the Metropolitan Council meeting seeking answers to the financial and ethical questions that are facing our Church. It was also our desire to take responsibility for the duties entrusted to us by our respective dioceses and the Church at large. We also believe that you, the faithful, want and deserve the same answers, and that you want us to do all that is necessary to make things right. It is our commitment to you to do just that, and to communicate clearly with you as to how this is happening. We acknowledge your genuine love for the well being of the Church and we feel assured of your prayers and support." ■



## Acting Treasurer from 15

- \$13,000.00 Medical assistance for clergy.
- \$140,000.00 Outstanding All-American Council expenses.
- \$287,000.00 Outstanding invoices.
- \$87,560.00 Mission Appeal.
- \$151,940.00 Seminary Appeal.
- \$41,750.00 Charity Appeal.
- \$16,600.00 Christmas Stocking Project.
- \$90,590.00 9/11 emergency funds.
- \$34,640.00 Beslan relief.
- \$13,920.00 Florida hurricane relief.
- \$3,300.00 IOCC Appeal.
- \$27,500.00 Publication reserve.
- \$52,800.00 Academic Fellowship Fund.
- \$7,960.00 Seminary Internship Fund.
- \$270.00 Military Chaplain Reserve.
- \$25,000.00 Earmarked funds: Four Russian orphanages.
- \$47,490.00 Closing expenses/miscellaneous expenses.

Other information concerning the rate of interest, terms of payment, maturity, prepayment privilege and security which were contained in the letter were the following:

3. The rate of interest will be 7.97% for the first 48 months of the mortgage from the closing date. It will have an interest rate floor of 7%.

4. Repayment will be made in monthly installments of \$14,300.00 applied first to interest and then to principle. On the 49th month, the rate of interest may change to the following: A New York Prime interest rate plus .25% for the next 12 month period and a new payment shall be calculated to amortize the balance over the remaining term and shall readjust every 12th month thereafter for the term of the loan.

5. The loan shall mature on the 240th month following the date of the closing, at which time all outstanding principal plus interest, if any, shall be due and payable and any amount then due and owing.

6. The Borrower shall have the privilege on any installment payment date to prepay the unpaid principal indebtedness in whole or in part without payment of premium or penalty; no such prepayment to alter the amount of the aforesaid monthly installments.

7. The loan shall be secured with first mortgages on the two properties owned free and clear by the Orthodox Church in America, namely the Chancery building and property and the home owned by the Church, both of which are in Syosset.

The anticipated date for closing on the loan is on or before July 3, 2006. Once the appraisals of the properties are made in conjunction with the loan, they will become a part of the independently audited financial report for the year 2006.

Record keeping. In the 1980s, at a time when computers and computer programs were much more costly than they are today, a

used computer was purchased for use by the central Church administration from Saint Vladimir's Seminary when they were upgrading their equipment. The data base program that was written for the seminary's use that came with the computer was adjusted to assist with the financial record keeping needs of the central Church administration. In 1984, near the end of my first term as treasurer, at the suggestion of the Lambrides, Lamos, and Moulthrop accounting firm, I proposed the purchase a financial management program titled *Great Plains Software*, which was designed specifically for not-for-profit organizations and which was the best of three programs in use by them and their other clients. This proposal was rejected by management. As a result, to this day, though some reports can be generated directly from the current software program, many reports must be prepared by taking information from the data base and then creating a report.

Appropriate software designed for use by not-for-profit organizations must be purchased and in place before January 1, 2007 if we are to maintain our financial records in conformity with currently accepted professional standards.

Since our relationship will continue with the Lambrides, Lamos, and Moulthrop accounting firm for the foreseeable future, such a program will make it possible for them to review our financial activity regularly, on a quarterly or monthly basis.

Confidentiality. In conjunction with our teleconference meeting, I authored a cover letter concerning confidentiality in matters that pertain to the Metropolitan Council. By some, this has been interpreted as an attempt on my part to "cover up" or "keep information a secret." It is a normal practice of the Metropolitan Council to disclose decisions *after they are made*, but public circulation before a responsible body such as this Metropolitan Council makes their decision is seldom, if ever, divulged *beyond the membership* of those who are to act in behalf of others *until* a decision is made.

As a point of information, confidential material related to the loan was made available on the internet on a web site that clearly states that they are not officially a part of the Orthodox Church in America, but are in some cases circulating "confidential" information.

Since the purpose of the loan contained in the commitment letter was distributed to the members of the Metropolitan Council *after* this public posting of the inaccurate information, it is reasonable to assume that information that existed *before* the commitment letter was finalized was *illegally* taken from within this building, divulged, made public, and presented as fact. This, however, was not the only breach of confidentiality that appears to be motivated by an effort to injure the Church and cast doubt on the credibility of those who seek to serve her.

During this past week, you received an e-mail which included a number of questions posed

to me in preparation for this meeting. One of the questions, for the purpose of my report, I will identify as question #5. Question #5 concerns a loan of \$50,000.00 that was offered and received at this time by my office so that current obligations of the Church could be paid. The text of Question #5 supports the conclusion that the author of the question was *only* able to pose their question on the basis of confidential information available to a very limited number of staff working within this building.

In Matthew 6:3 and 4, Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is quoted as saying, "But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your alms may be in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret will repay you."

The member of our Metropolitan Council who revealed the identity of a faithful member of our Orthodox Church in America – a member of the Church who wished to confer a benefit on the Church and, in keeping with Christ's mandate, requested to remain anonymous – gave their *personal* agenda priority over Christ's commandment. What could possibly justify the violation of one of the basic tenets of the Holy Scriptures and, in this case, a mandate from Christ Himself?

As members of the Metropolitan Council, we have a sacred duty to serve the Church and, through her, honor those who seek the Kingdom of God and strive to be faithful to Christ and His commandments. The members of this council are entitled to hear how such an act by a staff member and a member of this council can be reconciled with that sacred duty.

Public disclosure of current financial activity. Assuming that the loan is finalized as anticipated and all funds as identified in the commitment letter are restored, disclosure of financial information available at that time – in conformity with "Best Practices" and the most current federal legislation governing financial disclosure by religious and other not-for-profit organizations – will be made public.

I would like to thank His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman for his trust and encouragement as I have attempted to approach all of my assignments with integrity and whatever talents I have that can be used to serve the Church. I would also like to thank those of you and others who have offered prayerful support to me since I began my service as acting treasurer nearly a year ago.

May the Holy Spirit "come and abide in us, cleanse us from every impurity, save our souls," and permit us to experience the everlasting joy of the eternal Kingdom of God. Every time we are gathered together as brothers and sisters, with Jesus Christ in our midst, may we give thanks to our Heavenly Father who, in spite of our unworthiness, continues to love us and be patient with us as we live as sojourners upon the earth. ■

## Official from 2

and appointed priest-in-charge of St. Michael the Archangel Cathedral, Sitka, AK/ June 15, 2006.

**LICKWAR, The V. Rev. Joseph** is appointed chancellor of the Diocese of Washington and New York/ May 16, 2006. He is released as dean of the New Jersey Deanery, but remains rector of SS. Peter and Paul Church, Jersey City, NJ and chancellor of the Diocese of Washington and New York/ June 16, 2006.

**MATUSIAK, Dn. Joseph** is appointed director of the Department of Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministry/ June 6, 2006.

**MELITKOV, The Rev. Nikolay** is attached to Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY/ May 20, 2006.

**MOSHER, The Rev. Joshua** is released from Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY, and from the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman; transferred to the omophorion of Bishop Nikon; attached to the Diocese of New England; and appointed acting rector of SS. Peter and Paul Church, Meriden, CT/ July 1, 2006.

**NEUMANN, Dn. William John** is attached to Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY/ October 16, 2005.

**NEYTCHEV, The V. Rev. Dimitre** is released from SS. Cyril and Methodius Mission, Washington, DC and granted a leave of absence/ June 20, 2006.

**ORLOV, The V. Rev. Michael**, who was suspended, has had his suspension lifted/ June 6, 2006.

**ROSTCHECK, Dn. David** is attached to the Nativity of the Virgin Church, Monongahela, PA/ April 30, 2006.

**RUIZ-GOMAR, The Rev. Juan Pablo** is attached to St. Seraphim Church, Rawdon, QC, Canada, and will also serve as a deanery supply priest/ April 29, 2006.

**SARAFIN, Dn. Christopher** is assigned to Protection of the Virgin Church, Merrillville, IN/ March 11, 2006.

**VALLENS, Dn. Alexander** is released from St. Tikhon Monastery Church, So. Canaan, PA, and from the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman; transferred to the omophorion of Bishop Tikhon of San Francisco, Los Angeles, and the West; and attached to the Diocese of the West, where he awaits assignment/ June 8, 2006.

**VANSUCH, The Rev. Jason** is assigned acting rector of St. Nicholas Church, Norwich, CT/ June 17, 2006.

**VERNAK, Dn. Stephen** is attached to St. Tikhon Monastery Church, So. Canaan, PA/ June 24, 2006.

**ZABINKO, The V. Rev. John** is released from St. Michael the Archangel Cathedral, Sitka, AK and as dean of the Sitka Deanery and appointed dean of St. Innocent Cathedral, Anchorage, AK and dean of the Anchorage Deanery/ July 1, 2006.

## LEAVES OF ABSENCE

**NEYTCHEV, The V. Rev. Dimitre** is granted a leave of absence/ June 20, 2006.

## RELEASED

**BULANNIKOV, The Rev. Valerii** is released from the Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church, Menlo Park, CA, and the Diocese of the West; transferred to the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman; and further released from the Orthodox Church in America to Archbishop Ioann of Belgorod and Starooskolski, Russia/ May 20, 2006.

**ORLOV, The V. Rev. Michael** is released from the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman and from the ranks of clergy of the Orthodox Church in America to

# WorldBriefs



*Patriarch Aleksy II greets Metropolitan Herman, Archimandrite Zacchaeus, during World Summit of Religious Leaders in Moscow.*

## RUSSIA

## OCA represented at World Summit of Religious Leaders

**H**is Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, headed the delegation from the Orthodox Church in America at the World Summit of Religious Leaders held in Moscow during the first week of July 2006.

Other members of the delegation included Archimandrite Zacchaeus, OCA representative in Moscow, and Archdeacon Alexei Klimitchev. Also attending as a representative of the World Conference of Religions for Peace was the Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky, a member of the OCA Office of External Affairs and Inter-Church Relations.

At the gathering, sponsored by the Russian Orthodox Church and the Interfaith Council of the Russian Federation, representatives of various faiths from numerous countries spoke on the role of faith and religion in modern society; responsible

the omophorion of Archbishop Simon of Brussels and Belgium of the Moscow Patriarchate/ June 26, 2006.

**[SILVER]**, Riasaphor Monk James, is released from monastic obedience to the Primate of the Orthodox Church in America, from attachment to St. Sergius Chapel, Oyster Bay Cove, NY, and from the Orthodox Church in America/ July 24, 2006.

## REMOVED

**BLEAHU, The Rev. Remus**, who was suspended, has had his suspension lifted and, at his own request, is removed from the ranks of clergy of the Orthodox Church

protection and assertion of spiritual and moral values in modern society; ways of overcoming terrorism and extremism; education; the need for fostering the values of family, human life, and equality of the sexes; morality in economics; overcoming poverty; and many related topics. ■

## BRAZIL

## Ecumenical Patriarch leads ecological symposium

**M**ore than 200 delegates traveled up Brazil's Amazon River with His All-Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I July 13-20, 2006, to explore the interplay between faith and caring for the earth. The delegation constitutes the sixth symposium of international religious leaders, environmentalists, and policymakers that he has led since 1995.

"We have come to listen to [the Amazon River's] stories, to learn from its history, to admire its fragile beauty, and to gain hope for the entire world from its resilience," Patriarch Bartholomew said in his opening symposium remarks.

Delegates aboard the 10 boats visited the port city of Santarem and discussed deforestation and the loss of biodiversity in the Amazon. Over the years, the symposium has sailed the Baltic, Adriatic, Black, and Aegean Seas and the Danube River.

Patriarch Bartholomew first organized the "Religion, Science, and the Environment" symposium in 1995 to "provide common ground among the worlds of religion, science, and the environment in the interest of protecting the environment," says the symposium's web site. ■

in America by the Holy Synod/ May 24, 2006.

## PARISHES

**DIOCESE OF ALASKA/ Name Change.** St. Nicholas Chapel, Nikolai, AK is renamed St. Peter the Apostle Church/ June 1, 2006.

**BULGARIAN DIOCESE/ New Status.** St. Mary Magdalene Mission, Fenton, MI is granted parish status/ June 20, 2006.

**DIOCESE OF THE WEST/ New Location.** St. Innocent Mission, Fremont, CA is now located in Livermore, CA/ June 22, 2006. ■



## Clergy survey yields interesting results

In early 2006, the Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute, Berkeley, CA, surveyed all active clergy in the OCA Dioceses of the West and Midwest and the Greek Orthodox Metropolises of Chicago and San Francisco. With 112 OCA clergy and 113 GOA clergy responding, the survey yielded some interesting results.

When asked, "what are the biggest problems clergy face," more GOA than OCA priests reported "overwork" as their greatest problem, while more OCA clergy are challenged with providing financially for their families. Twice as many GOA priests listed "apathy among parishioners" as their greatest concern.

When asked, "what should the Church be talking about," both OCA and GOA priests said that youth leaving the Church is their top concern. Family problems and clergy divorce, and remarriage of divorced clergy are much more urgent concerns for GOA than OCA priests, while the process of selecting bishops raises more questions among OCA than GOA clergy.

Complete survey results may be found on the Institute's web site at [www.orthodoxinstitute.org](http://www.orthodoxinstitute.org). ■

**Albania from 13**

## Bishop Nikon

In addition, Bishop Nikon visited the Home of Hope foster home and orphanage, a project of the Church of Albania and the UN's Development Program.

His Eminence, Metropolitan John hosted Bishop Nikon in the Diocese of Korçe, where they concelebrated the Divine Liturgy and toured the icon museum, the historic 10th century church in Mborja, and outlying 17th century churches in Pogradec and Boboshtica – the ancestral village of Bishop Nikon's family.

Bishop Nikon also met with US missionary teams sponsored by the Orthodox Christian Mission Center and leaders of the country's other faith traditions.

The semi-official visit was funded by the OCA's Albanian Archdiocese. ■

# NorthAmerica

## Court refuses to intervene in Greek Archdiocese dispute

### NY Supreme Court Appellate Division unanimously dismisses suit against Archdiocese

On July 6, 2006, the NY Appellate Division, First Department, unanimously affirmed the decision of Justice Ira Gamerman dismissing a lawsuit against the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America by several individuals concerning the granting of the Archdiocese's 2003 Charter.

"It must be dismissed," the Court wrote referring to the lawsuit, "because it involves a question of internal governance of a hierarchical Church." The ruling of this Appellate case firmly supports long-established decisions and is consistent with recent judgments on the Orthodox Church's hierarchical nature by appellate courts in Pennsylvania and Texas.

The Court ruled that the First Amendment of the US Constitution prohibits courts from interfering with doctrinal and ecclesiastical affairs of a hierarchical Church, including matters of internal Church governance. The Court relied on two US

Supreme Court decisions, *Serbian Eastern Orthodox Diocese of the USA. v. Milivojevic*, 426 US 696 (1976), and *Maryland and Virginia Eldership of the Churches of God v. Church of God at Sharnsburg*, 396 U.S. 367 (1970). The Court reasoned that if the suit were allowed to continue, the trial court would be required to decide whether the Ecumenical Patriarch had the authority unilaterally to grant the Charter, which is "clearly a religious matter."

The Court further stated, "on the very basis of the Charter on which the plaintiffs rely, they cannot successfully dispute the hierarchical character of the Greek Orthodox Church."

The complaint was originally brought against the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America on September 16, 2004. The archdiocese has incurred costs in excess of \$320,000.00 for its legal defense. ■

Source: Greek Archdiocese

## SVS opens search for new dean

At their May 2006 meeting, members of the board of trustees of Saint Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY, opened the search for a successor to the seminary's dean, the Rev. John Erickson, whose five-year term ends June 30, 2007.

Father Erickson will continue in his position as the Peter N. Gramovich Professor of Church History.

As the school's chief executive officer, the dean supervises the seminary's spiritual, educational, financial, and legal activities and represents the school before ecclesiastical, educational, religious, and civil agencies.

Candidates should possess the qualifications for a tenured faculty position and demonstrate sufficient ability and

experience to provide effective leadership, communicate the school's vision, and interact with the seminary community and its supporters, donors, and constituencies.

Applications should be sent by September 15, 2006, to the Search Committee, Mrs. Alexandra Safchuk, Administrative Secretary, 7126 River Rd., Bethesda, MD 20817.

The search committee includes the Very Rev. John Dresko, trustee, chair; the Very Rev. Paul Nadim Tarazi, professor of Old Testament; the Rev. Alexander Rentel, assistant professor of Canon Law and Byzantine Studies; and trustees Protodeacon Peter Danilchick and Ms. Anne Van den Berg. ■

## Council from 12

# Metropolitan Council meets

formed during the episcopacy of His Eminence, Archbishop Gregory, now retired. At that time, it was decided that funds would be divided between the Diocese of Alaska, Saint Herman's Seminary, and the Orthodox Church in America. Bishop Nikolai changed this form of administration of Church lands in the Diocese of Alaska. Instead of this form of support for the Central Church Administration, the diocese now tithes to the OCA, providing more than would be available through land income. Father Isidore further reported that the total amount of land is less than 1,000 acres, divided principally between two villages.

Metropolitan Herman noted that this had previously been a source of income for the OCA, but that Bishop Nikolai changed this provision on his own authority. This was brought to the attention of the Holy Synod of Bishops, although no further action was taken. At this time, Bishop Nikolai, as diocesan bishop, maintains direct oversight of the Church's lands in Alaska.

Presentation of Dr. Skordinski. Dr. Faith Skordinski facilitated a discussion titled "Where Do We Go From Here?" She observed that no single member of the Metropolitan Council has all the answers to this question and encouraged council members to devise a map or blueprint for the Church's future.

After dividing the council members into two groups, Dr. Skordinski asked them to (1) name three positive aspects about the Metropolitan Council, and name three aspects of the Metropolitan Council that can be improved; (2) name three concrete actions that the Metropolitan Council can take to regain trust among the faithful; (3) name three concrete actions that might be asked of the faithful during these extraordinary times; and (4) list, based on everything reported at the meeting, three things for which the Metropolitan Council needed to prepare in the future.

The council members reviewed their groups' reactions to Dr. Skordinski's suggested themes. Both groups arrived at similar conclusions, which included the need for more frequent meetings of the Metropolitan Council; the need for more complete and accurate reports; the need to produce press releases concerning the latest developments in a timely manner; the need for issuing more frequent financial reports, both to the Metropolitan Council and the Church at large; the need for more clarity concerning the relationship between the Metropolitan Council and the Holy Synod of Bishops; the need for clarification concerning the role of the Administrative Committee, and the need for patience as the current issues continue to be addressed.

Statement of behalf of the Metropolitan Council. In order to convey to the faithful, as well as the broader public, the unity that had evolved at the meeting and to summarize the decisions made during the two-day meeting, Father Matthew Tate was authorized to draft a release on behalf of the Metropolitan Council. *[The text is found on page 11.]*

Two additional meetings in 2006. Prior to adjourning the meeting, Metropolitan Herman stated that consideration will be given to convening more frequent meetings of the Metropolitan Council. He noted that the next regular meeting will be held on November 10, 2006, although an additional meeting has been scheduled tentatively for September 28-29, 2006.

Council members participating in the meeting included the Very Rev. Vladimir Berzonsky, the Very Rev. Theodore Boback,

the Very Rev. Sergei Bouteneff, Archimandrite Isidore [Brittain], Mr. Daniel Crosby, Mr. Michael Gregory, the Very Rev. George Hasenecz, Ms. Minadora Jacobs, Mr. Robert Kornafel, the Very Rev. John Onofrey, Mr. Gary Popovich, the Very Rev. Philip Reese, the Very Rev. Gregory Safchuk, Mr. Richard Schneider, Dr. John Schultz, Ms. Eleana Silk, Dr. Faith Skordinski, the Very Rev. Igor Soroka, the Very Rev. Matthew Tate, the Very Rev. John Tkachuk, Dr. Richard West, the Very Rev. Michael Westerberg, the Very Rev. Constantine White, Dr. Alice Woog, and Mr. John Zoranski. The Very Rev. David Brum served as secretary to the meeting. ■

Visit the Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards link at [www.oca.org](http://www.oca.org) to learn how you and your parish can help expand the work of the OCA's departments!



## History from 18

# Remembering Metropolitan Leonty

when the Fifth All-American *Sobor* was convened in November 1934 to elect a successor to the late Metropolitan Platon, many considered Bishop Leonty as the most viable candidate. However, when the sobor's delegates debated the proper procedure for electing a Primate, Bishop Leonty suggested that they simply acknowledge the senior hierarch, Archbishop Theophilus, as Primate. To this suggestion, the delegates responded with a resounding cry of "Axios," electing Archbishop Theophilus.

Until 1950, Bishop Leonty continued shepherding his Midwest flock, while serving as Metropolitan Theophilus' foremost assistant in guiding the Church through World War II, a decade-long period of ecclesiastical synergy and peace with ROCOR, the reopening of theological seminaries in America, and a failed attempt of ending estrangement from the Church in Russia.

By the time Metropolitan Theophilus died in 1950, the clergy and faithful knew that only one hierarch could be the next Metropolitan of All America and Canada. At the Eighth All-American *Sobor* in December 1950, Archbishop Leonty was elected Primate by a nearly unanimous vote. During his tenure, structure was given to the Church through the adoption of a governing Statute in 1955. With his blessing, the first English-language parishes were established; various pan-Orthodox initiatives, including the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas and the Orthodox Christian Education Commission, were initiated; and preliminary steps were taken to the heal the rift with the Russian Church, ultimately paving the way to autocephaly for the Orthodox Church in America.

After 15 years of service as Primate, Metropolitan Leonty peacefully fell asleep in the Lord at his residence in Syosset, NY, on May 14, 1965, and was interred at Saint Tikhon Monastery, South Canaan, PA.

Those who were blessed to have known Metropolitan Leonty cherish his humility, prayerfulness, meekness, dignity, kindness, generosity, forbearance, thoughtfulness, sense of humor, vision, erudition and wisdom. ■

Alexis Liberovsky is archivist of the Orthodox Church in America.



## Communities

### NJ priest, family, visit Alaska

**KODIAK, AK –** In what they describe as “the trip of a lifetime,” Fr. Gary and Matushka Mary Breton and their family of Brick, NJ, traveled to St. Herman’s Seminary here in May to attend commencement ceremonies.

The Bretons “adopted” one of the graduates, Fr. Alexander Larson, three years earlier through Outreach Alaska’s “Adopt a Seminarian” program.

“When we arrived in Kodiak, we were finally able to meet Fr. Alexander and his family in person after three years of correspondence and exchanging pictures and videos,” said Matushka Mary. “How wonderful it was – especially since two of the Larson’s children are the same age as our children! We were warmly welcomed into the seminary community!”

While in Alaska, the Bretons visited Spruce Island, where St. Herman of Alaska spent much of his life, in addition to attending the commencement and banquet that followed.

“Our pilgrimage provided us, from the ‘lower 48,’ with a much closer look at native Alaskan culture and life-style,” Matushka Mary added. “At the seminary, the families are very close and, in fact, many are related to each other. We learned about life in the villages, in the ‘bush,’ compared with city life in Kodiak.”

In order to pursue their studies, many seminarians left jobs in the villages, which supplemented their “subsistence” life-style and culture, by which they need to catch, prepare, and store sufficient food to eat during the long, dark winter.

“Because subsistence living is prevalent in the villages where many of the newly ordained clergy are assigned, and because many are late vocations with the families to support, there is no cash infrastructure in place to provide graduates with the means to repay education loans,” said Matushka Mary, who was recently nominated as a seminary trustee. “In order to address this reality, Bishop Nikolai and the seminary board of trustees have extended free tuition, room, book, and board scholarships to entering seminarians. A positive result of this is that the native clergy do not have to add the responsibility of repaying loans to the huge challenge of living in Alaska. A negative result is the reliance of the seminary on donations to fund 100% of its budget.”

A current goal of the board calls for continuation of the school’s scholarship policy by expanding the seminary’s support base, implementing a capital campaign to build additional housing, and developing an endowment fund. ■



*The Bretons, standing on either side of the Larsons, at SHS commencement. The Bretons sponsored the Larsons through the Alaskan Diocese’s “Outreach Alaska” program.*

### Canadian parish helps Chinese Orthodox missions

**HAMILTON, ON, CANADA –** Bishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada joined area clergy and some 60 members of All Saints of North America Church here at the parish’s first annual dinner to support Orthodox missions in China June 24, 2006.

CN\$3,000.00 was raised to support the Boston-based Chinese Orthodox Translations Project and to help provide seminary training for Orthodox missionaries in Hong Kong and Moscow, said Fr. Geoffrey Korz, All Saints’ rector.

Prior to the dinner, which featured delicious Chinese fare, Bishop Seraphim led the faithful in the celebration of the Akathistos Hymn honoring China’s Orthodox martyrs. ■



### Bulgarian Diocese meets

**BURTON, MI –** Clergy and lay representatives from parishes of the OCA’s Toledo-based Bulgarian Diocese held their 44th diocesan conference at Saint Nicholas Church here June 24-25, 2006.

Archbishop Kyrill of Pittsburgh, Western Pennsylvania, and the Bulgarian Diocese, opened the gathering with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy for the feast of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist.

The years 2006 and 2007 mark the 30th anniversary of the diocese’s entrance into the Orthodox Church in America and the 42nd year of Archbishop Kyrill’s tenure as the diocese’s ruling hierarch. ■

*Bishop Seraphim addresses faithful attending dinner to raise funds for Orthodox missionary efforts in China.*

## Communities

Send photos and news to TOC Communities,  
One Wheaton Center 912, Wheaton, IL 60187 or to  
info@oca.org.

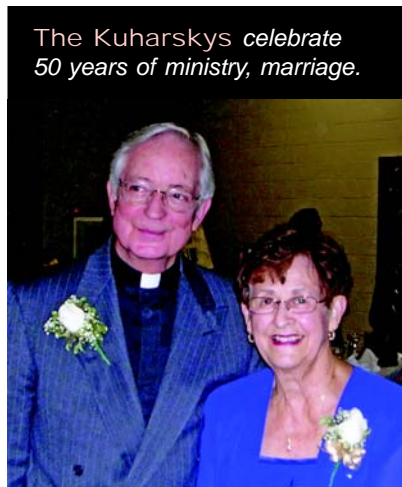
### The Kuharskys celebrate two 50th anniversaries

**SOUTH RIVER, NJ** – Fr. Sergius and Faith Kuharsky recently celebrated the 50th anniversaries of their wedding and Fr. Sergius' ordination to the priesthood.

On Sunday, February 19, 2006, Fr. Sergius celebrated the Divine Liturgy at SS. Peter and Paul Church, South River, NJ, which he had served for many years until the time of his retirement and appointment as pastor emeritus. Fr. David Garretson, rector, led the faithful in a Service of Thanksgiving and presented the Kuharskys with a citation on behalf of Metropolitan Herman and the Holy Synod of Bishops.

Later, the Kuharskys were honored at a dinner party held at Daria Hall at St. Vladimir Church, Trenton, NJ. Their entire family, with the exception of two grown grandchildren, attended. All of the couple's four children – Andrew of Greenville, SC; Gallia of Ojai, CA; Sergei of Princeton

Junction, NJ; and Paul of Nashville, TN – spoke at the dinner, as did longtime friend, Fr. Daniel Hubiak, former OCA chancellor. Other speakers included Joseph Baldowski, former president of the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America, who spoke about Fr. Sergius' tenure as FOCA spiritual advisor, and Fr. Joseph Lickwar, dean of the New Jersey



*The Kuharskys celebrate 50 years of ministry, marriage.*



### 500 faithful anointed at Canadian monastery

**DEWDNEY, BC, CANADA** – A reported 503 faithful gathered in the shadow of the majestic mountains surrounding All Saints of North America Monastery here on Sunday, June 18, 2006, for the annual celebration of the sacrament of Holy Unction. Archbishop Lazar, former archbishop of Ottawa, and Bishop Varlaam, former bishop of Vancouver, concelebrated the service with nine priests representing OCA parishes in British Columbia's lower mainland.

Later the same day, the monastery's new cedar entrance gate was blessed, after which the pilgrims enjoyed a festive banquet. ■

Deanery. Fr. Joseph received a standing ovation for his speech, which traced Fr. Sergius' life and service to the Orthodox Church, from his childhood as a priest's son in Pennsylvania to his studies at Columbia University and St. Vladimir's Seminary, through the three parishes he served – Holy Trinity Church, New Britain, CT; St. Theodosius Cathedral, Cleveland, OH; and SS. Peter and Paul, South River, NJ – all of which celebrated their 100th anniversaries during his lifetime.

Fr. Sergius is currently attached to Holy Annunciation Church, Brick, NJ. ■