

The Orthodox Church

Volume 46 ■ Spring/Summer 2011

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA



The grace of the Holy Spirit assembles us

The 16th All-American Council
October 31-November 4, 2011

Orthodoxy today: Ideology or faith?

Archpriest Leonid Kishkovsky

American society today is being confronted by numerous difficult and divisive challenges – economic, political, cultural, and moral. What is the role and task of Orthodox Christians in this context?

Most of us avoid the difficult challenges, preferring to pray in church and at home, take care of our families, pay our bills, and simply go about our business. In other words, many do not have the time or energy to devote to the “big questions.” Still others are simply confounded by the complexity of the issues that confront us, seeking answers from diverse sources, which can create further confusion.

The current debates and controversies in our society increasingly impact the life of the Orthodox Church, as we endeavor to find the right way to witness to our faith in our complex times and our complex society.

We welcome and appreciate having access to an incredible abundance and variety of information. However, forming ideas on the basis of current controversies and politics, without serious reference to the foundations of our faith, results in distorted thinking. Ideas based on information and pseudo-information, received from diverse, even questionable, sources, result in ideologies that may appear to be attractive and ethical, but actually are not connected to the authentic Orthodox Christian tradition.

One of the perspectives that ideologies offer us today is that of the “culture wars.” Whatever the issue – economic or political, moral or social – we are led to “answers” that are ideological in nature. An ideology is a set of fixed ideas felt to be “infallible.” Often, these ideological answers are garbed in religious language.

Yet there is a qualitative difference between *ideology* and *theology*, ideological thinking and thinking based on the Gospel. Our salvation will never be gained through ideology. Our salvation will be gained through adherence to the Gospel of Christ: “What man of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent?” [Matthew 7:9-10].

The calling of Orthodox Christians is to resist ideology, whether the ideology comes from the left or the right, from liberals or conservatives. Ideology gives ready-made answers and pre-packaged solutions. Today, human beings do indeed ask for bread and fish. If we respond by offering ideology, we are giving a stone instead of bread, and a serpent instead of fish.

It is obvious that much of American culture today is imbued with the spirit of relativism – all truths are equal and interchangeable, truth is a matter of perception and point of view. It is also obvious that the characteristic American way of rejecting relativism is one form or another of fundamentalism.

It should be obvious to Orthodox Christians that neither relativism nor fundamentalism gives expression to the Orthodox faith and to the Orthodox way of life. To choose between relativism and fundamentalism is to be trapped in the framework of false choices in American culture. In our society, relativism and fundamentalism are the default positions. The worldviews they represent do not encourage reflection and thoughtfulness. Rather, they encourage acrimony and stereotyping.

The Orthodox faith seeks to give expression to catholicity – the continuing tradition in the Church as taught by the apostles in the New Testament. In this, we follow the teachings enunciated in the writings of the New Testament and exemplified in the lives of saints throughout the centuries. The catholicity of the apostolic faith is the only proper and effective antidote to both relativism and fundamentalism. This worldview encourages a way of life in which truth is affirmed with humility.

The Gospel of Christ, the Christian faith, theological and spiritual depth – all these place us into a relationship with the living God. Ideology leads us into a dead end. The choice is ours to make.

Let me suggest – rather, let me insist – that our vocation as Orthodox Christians is to witness to the fullness of the Good News of Christ handed on to us in the life of the Church. The Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom speaks of “those who have fallen asleep in the faith: ancestors, fathers, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, preachers, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, ascetics, and every righteous spirit made perfect in faith... especially... our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.”

Let us join this great company of faithful witnesses, imitating them in handing on the Good News of Christ. ■

The Orthodox Church [ISSN 0048-2269] is published quarterly by the Orthodox Church in America, PO Box 675, Syosset, NY 11791-0675.

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IMPORTANT NOTE

While printing of *The Orthodox Church* has resumed, finances do not permit the mailing of copies to individual homes, as had been done for over four decades. The current budget allows for the printing and bulk distribution of approximately 9,500 copies, rather than the former 26,000 individually mailed copies. Every parish will continue to receive a packet of copies in bulk for distribution locally. The number of copies a given parish receives may not correspond to its actual reported membership.

Individual subscriptions are available. Please see page 26 of this issue for additional information and a subscription form.

The Christian's Best Friend

Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.

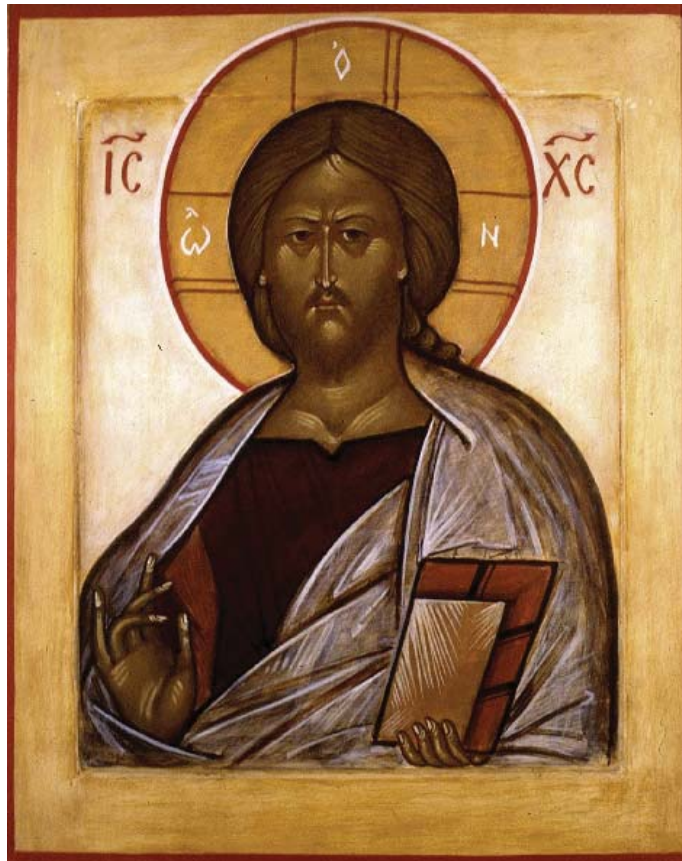
The last words of Christ in St. Matthew's Gospel

This glorious promise is found in the last words of Jesus Christ recorded in the Gospel of Saint Matthew. All who are baptized in His name shall never be alone. This guarantee gives meaning to the theology of covenant. In a Gospel written by a Jew about a Jew, the message is to the Jew and Gentile alike. Whether you grasp the meaning or not, nevertheless, it is something you can rely on. The loving Lord never will impose His will upon those who want nothing to do with Him; but for those who do, here is the ultimate insight.

It is possible to shut God out of your life and do it "your way," just as it is possible to lock the door of your heart, even in times of grief, confusion and alienation from others and yourself. Yet, you are still *His* guest on the earth

He created, enjoying the very life you assume, which *He* goes on giving to you. But if – or when – you realize that something is missing in the deepest part of your existence, you may discover that all true meanings come through accepting Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and surrendering your whole self to Him totally. You will come to know God as a friend.

Why, then, ignore His constant presence and intention to find you and make you His own? I've encountered those who feel that all religion is for the immature. They feel themselves above and beyond the "need" for a personal deity. Once, when Napoleon asked Pierre-Simon Laplace why there is no reference to God in his treatise on the universe, the renowned scientist said, "I have no need of that hypothesis." Atheists like Laplace are called *humanists*. In general terms, they believe that humans have evolved intellectually in progressive stages – at first, by magic, they thought to control what they feared, then by prayer and sacrifice they appealed to the deities, and finally they graduated to atheism, an awareness that there are no gods, nothing beyond human consciousness. It's not 20th, or even 19th, century science; it's thousands of years old. To convince



them under their conditions, from a purely scientific perspective, *is* possible, but it's difficult and challenging. Like the doubting Saint Thomas, they will believe only by *sight*, not by *insight*. It begins by proving that they have a soul – not from *beyond*, but from *within*.

Why, if God loves them as He does us, doesn't He *prove* He exists? The answer lies in freedom. Even to believers, God is present incognito. He waits to be found, welcomed, and received into our hearts. He never imposes. He understands how and why we ignore His ever-presence. We must first find our true selves before we find the Lord. He recognizes the instinct to discover who we are by separating ourselves from all who we are not, including parents, siblings, relatives and friends – at least for a while.

Before we surrender ourselves to God, we must take possession of our true selves. If we are connected to others, to fantasies, and to illusions and sin, we have no true self to offer Him. Watch a toddler squeeze fat fingers from a parent's hand and wobble off away – it's a basic instinct. We all do it in other ways through stages of growth.

Our culture stresses the importance of taking pride in our individuality. We cherish our independence. In our schools we are trained to assume nothing, to believe nothing without testing, and to challenge tradition. We reflect on all relationships. In an interesting irony, we are obsessed with love in all forms. We insist that each of us has the right to fall in love with whomever we please, even contradicting what is considered by traditional religions as unnatural. Many demand that the government endorse the experiments in pseudo-love that humanists consider moral, while true believers insist these to be contrary to instincts of affection and aberrations of traditional values of a normal society blessed by the Almighty.

And all the while, Jesus is waiting to be received into the hearts of believers and humanists alike. ■



Developing Christ-centered, healthy, and growing parishes is the top priority of the Strategic Plan.

“Where there is no vision, the

As widely reported, delegates to the 16th All-American Council will review and act on the Strategic Plan for the Church’s ongoing ministry in North America. In this interview, Father John Vitko, who chairs the committee charged with formulating the Plan, offers insights into the Plan and its vision for the years to come.

Father John, could you give some background on the Strategic Plan. When was the need for such a plan determined? Who determined the need? What is the overall goal of the Strategic Plan?

FJ: The initial impetus for the strategic plan came as a response to the administrative difficulties that had been troubling the central Church. Seeking to avoid such difficulties in the future, in 2008 the Special Investigative Committee recommended the development of a long-term strategic plan to review the relative roles of the different Church organs and institutions, e.g. the Metropolitan, the Holy Synod, the Metropolitan Council, the Chancery, and the role of the dioceses and the central administration. This recommendation was approved by delegates to the 15th All-American Council in Pittsburgh in 2008 and blessed by the Holy Synod of Bishops.

By the time I joined the Strategic Planning Committee, it was realized that this examination had to be done within the

broader context of a vision and plan for the Church's ministry in North America – and that in formulating this vision and plan we should reach out as broadly as possible to the entire Church. The overwhelming feedback we received was that the Plan should focus on priorities for ministries in the Church, rather than on organizational change.

Hearing this feedback from the broader Church, the Metropolitan Council approved and the Holy Synod blessed this shift in emphasis. Specifically, the revised Plan now addresses three critical questions:

1. Who are we and where are we going?
2. What should our ministry priorities be for the coming decade?
3. How do the Central Administration, the dioceses, the deaneries, the parishes and the individual parishioners work together to establish and continue these ministry priorities?

How was the Plan developed? How were those charged with developing the Plan selected?

FJ: According to the *Statute of the Orthodox Church in America*, it is the function of the Metropolitan Council to implement the decisions of the All American Council. Therefore, the Metropolitan Council established a Strategic Planning Committee [SPC] to lead the development of a strategic plan, reaching out as broadly as possible to the entire Church. Any member of the Metropolitan Council who wished to serve on the SPC was welcomed to do so. In addition to myself, there are currently 10 other members – Archpriests Theodore Boback, David Mahaffey, and Michael Oleksa; Priest Robert Dick; Protodeacon Peter Danilchick; Deacon John Zarras;

people perish"

and Mr. David Grier, Dr. Eleana Silk, Dr. Dmitri Solodow, and Dr. Paul Witek – as well as two former SPC members, Archpriests Robert Arida and Alexis Vinogradov, who serve as consultants. Like all Metropolitan Council committees, the SPC has a Holy Synod liaison and a Chancery liaison – His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah and Archpriest Eric Tosi, OCA Secretary, respectively.

What steps have been taken to develop and refine the Plan? How has the broadest possible Church-wide input been solicited?

FJ: The SPC has sought to reach out in ever-widening circles to the broader Church for input. We began by discussions with Metropolitan Jonah and by reviewing written materials provided by him. We combined these with our own thoughts, created an initial draft Plan, and then reviewed that Plan successively with the Lesser Synod, the Holy Synod, and the Metropolitan Council – at each stage revising the prior draft Plan.

In July 2010, we felt that we had enough of a beginning to take the emerging Plan out to the broader Church. That version of the Plan contained an extended discussion of the organization of the Church and a top-level description of ministry priorities. The draft was posted on the OCA web site, discussed with the OCA department heads and representatives of the seminaries, and presented and discussed at many of the diocesan assemblies.

Three dominant themes emerged from the feedback we received.

1. The Plan needed to contain a clearer statement of the OCA's autocephaly.
2. The Plan should not address organizational change.
3. The Plan should focus on our ministry priorities, seeking to make them more concrete and actionable without being overly proscriptive.

The SPC then sought and obtained the approval of the Metropolitan Council and the blessing of Holy Synod to focus on ministry priorities. To accomplish this, the SPC formed 10 Church-wide working groups. Each group focused on one of the 10 top-level ministry goals enumerated in the Plan to review and revise these goals as necessary and to offer concrete examples of how these goals could be implemented, so as to serve as the basis for further discussion. A typical working group involved 5-8 individuals – some with previous experience in the area – such as individuals from existing OCA departments – and others new to the area but with a keen interest in it. Each working group elected its own chair and produced a several page summary.

Based on these significant new inputs from across the Church, the SPC recently completed a major revision of the draft Strategic Plan, which appears on the OCA web site for comment. Of the 25 pages in this draft, about 20 are new, or significantly revised. Major changes include

1. the statement of the Holy Synod of Bishops on the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in America.
2. removal of any discussion about the organization of the Church; and
3. an extended discussion of recommended ministry priorities for the next 10 years and some concrete steps for actualizing them.

With that said, it is important to emphasize that even this revised version is a *draft* document – everything in it is open to discussion at all levels of the Church. In fact, such discussions of the ministry priorities for the Church are considered to be a very important product of the Strategic Plan – that is why the current draft is posted on the internet and will be a major focus of the 16th All-American Council.

What are the key elements of the Strategic Plan?

FJ: The Strategic Plan is divided into two main sections.

The first discusses who we are and where we are going: “As the Body of Christ, the Orthodox Church in America is committed to bringing the Gospel to all the people of North America – embracing all languages, cultures and races.” This

Interview to 6

Interview from 5

has been the Church's mission since 1794, when the first Orthodox Christian missionaries arrived in Kodiak, Alaska to bring the Gospel to the Native people, and this will always be our mission. In 1970, the Russian Orthodox Church granted us self-governance (autocephaly) in a document called the *Tomos of Autocephaly*. As recently affirmed by the Holy Synod of Bishops, "we believe that the autocephaly given to us will be fully realized when the promise of Orthodox unity in North America is fulfilled, and the Orthodox Church in America together with all the Orthodox faithful in North America become one united Autocephalous Church in America, recognized by all other Orthodox Churches."

The second section discusses what should be our highest priority ministries for the next decade as we strive to fulfill this commitment to bringing the Gospel to all the people of North America. [See box to the right.]

How will the Plan be presented at the 16th All-American Council? What will be expected of delegates with regard to the Plan?

FJ: Discussions of the Strategic Plan will be a major focus of the upcoming Council, with four of the its eight sessions devoted in full or in large part to discussions of the Plan. The first of these sessions will provide an overview of the Plan. The next two sessions will be working sessions, in which delegates will have the opportunity to discuss and evolve the Plan. The final session will summarize the output of the working sessions and seek the Council's approval of the Plan as a general roadmap for the next decade.

The two working sessions will form the core of these discussions. In these working sessions, delegates and observers will divide into 10 working groups, each focusing on one of the top level goals. Delegates and observers are being asked to indicate which goal they want to work on, based on their review of the draft Strategic Plan posted on the OCA web site, their interests, and the interests and concerns of their parishes. They will remain in the same working group, pursuing the same goal, for both sessions. Delegates will receive an additional study paper on the goal they will be working on and will have the opportunity to network with other members of their working group prior to the Council.

In addition, parishes are encouraged to discuss the draft Plan prior to the Council, so that their delegates might be able to more fully reflect input from their parishes.

A concern one often hears is that, while numerous resolutions and programs are adopted and embraced at All-American Councils, there is often little follow-up in terms of implementation. What kind of follow-up will be available to ensure that the Plan, or elements thereof, are actually utilized after the Council?

FJ: This is an excellent question, and one to which the SPC has given significant attention.

The Strategic Plan's Top Ten List

1. **Parish Development:** Developing Christ-centered, healthy, growing parishes.
2. **Diocesan Relationships:** Revitalizing our diocese-parish relationships.
3. **Young Adults:** Involving more fully our high school and college age members in the life of the Church.
4. **Leadership and Management:** Improving the leadership and management skills at all levels in the Church.
5. **Theological Education:** Establishing a vision for theological education for the Orthodox Church in America.
6. **Continuing Education:** Providing for the ongoing education of clergy and laity.
7. **Inter-Orthodox Relations:** Nurturing strong inter-Orthodox relations.
8. **Funding:** Transitioning to a sounder way of funding the Church.
9. **Evangelization:** Equipping our Church for the ministry of Evangelization.
10. **Contemporary Issues:** Addressing contemporary cultural/moral/social issues. ■

We believe there are four major factors that will be critical to turning the Plan into reality.

1. Bringing together the people interested in making a particular goal happen and forming the human network do so – the working sessions at the Council are designed to be a major step in doing just that.
2. The formation of a Post-Conciliar Committee to oversee the implementation of the Strategic Plan to provide encouragement when needed, help mitigate and reduce barriers, and monitor progress.
3. The use of modern communications technology to allow people with similar interests from around the continent to work together remotely, effectively, and at a greatly reduced cost. We are hoping that through the aspects of this Strategic Plan people will start using technology in more effective ways to build relationships, provide creative new strategies for Church ministries, and encourage one another in the ministry of the Church.
4. Relying on the pent-up needs, desires, and energy of our parishioners to grow spiritually and to reach out to others, even beyond the confines of their communities.

How do SPC members envision the Plan making an impact on the parish, diocesan, and Church-wide levels? In recent years, we've

heard of the importance of “making a difference,” but how will the Plan actually accomplish this?

FJ: The Church is the Body of Christ. In it, we are connected to one another. What one of us does affects all of us, so that what goes on in the parish is intimately connected to what goes on in the diocese and at the Church-wide level, and vice versa. By having the Church as a whole focus on these ministries that are critical to bringing the Gospel to all the people of North America, by the grace of God, we will experience further internal spiritual renewal and growth, so that we may more effectively radiate the light of Christ to all those around us.

Of course, as in the human body, each member of the Body of Christ possesses unique functions and talents that can be employed in addressing the Plan’s goals. For example, when the Plan addresses the importance of involving our high school and college age members in the life of the Church, it looks to the development of resource materials with input from diocesan youth leaders, which in turn the dioceses and parishes can tailor to meet their particular local or regional needs. For other goals, the relative roles of the parish, diocese and central administration may be different. An important part of the working group discussions at the Council will be to further discuss these relative roles for each of the goals.

The goals themselves address a broad range of ministries critical to the life of the Church. Most of these reflect long-recognized and still unmet needs. Think about what a difference there would be in our Church if we even successfully

addressed half of them! Left to our own human efforts, the goals may seem daunting, but with God’s help all things are possible!

Could you offer a few examples of how fulfillment of the Strategic Plan can positively impact Church life?

FJ: Gladly! Let me give two examples taken from the first two goals in the Plan.

The first goal is to “develop Christ-centered, healthy and growing parishes.” It is in the parish, in the celebration of the Eucharist, that we become the Body of Christ. We are equipped with all that is necessary to work out our salvation in and through Christ, and to bring this salvation to the world. This goal focuses on making healthy parishes healthier and on renewing ailing parishes. Among the suggested steps are committing to a Gospel-centered vision of our parishes, celebrating vibrant worship, providing tools to help with parish development and revitalization, supporting personal and family formation, and actively reaching out to those in need.

The second example is from the goal to “revitalize our diocese-parish relationships.” The Holy Fathers provide the image of the Church as the bishop surrounded by his clergy and people, united in Christ, and ministering to the particular needs of a given geographic area. This assumes and requires the existence of an intimate relationship between the bishop, his clergy, and his people. All too often, the “demands of the day” and vast geographic distances have produced less than desired interactions. Parishes and their clergy sometimes can develop a sense of isolation, of being “on their own.” To overcome this, we recommend more frequent interaction at all levels – clergy/clergy and bishop/clergy/lay – through liturgical celebrations, fellowship gatherings, and participation in diocesan-level outreach ministries. While a number of steps are suggested, the two most critical seem to be establishing the need for ongoing face-to-face gatherings of clergy (beyond formal meetings) as a fundamental principal of diocesan life, and developing a closer relationship of trust between bishop, clergy and laity, also as a fundamental principal of diocesan life. The only cost associated with such efforts might involve funding for travel – and even these could be minimized with some ingenuity. The most important factor in realizing this goal is the simple commitment to do so!

In closing, let me again emphasize that everything in the current draft of the Strategic Plan is still open to discussion at all levels of the Church. We want people to read it and provide their comments, feedback and ideas. The discussion around these goals is as important as the suggested action steps themselves. How wonderful it would be for the Church if we spent our time discussing how we could better pursue these ministries. We invite everyone to download a copy of Strategic Plan from the OCA web site [<http://oca.org>], to read it, and to provide feedback. Those without internet access may contact Archpriest Eric G. Tosi, PO Box 675, Syosset, NY 11791-0675 for a hard copy. ■

Continuing education for clergy and laity alike is crucial in establishing and expanding ministry.



Identity and directions: Setting the stage

The Strategic Plan's opening chapter challenges us to ask "who are we" and "where are we going?"

Who are we? The Orthodox Church in America is a local, autocephalous [self-governing] Church of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church established by Jesus Christ and faithfully transmitted through her Scriptures, worship, and prayer life and the teachings of the Holy Fathers. The Church makes known the Kingdom of God which, while yet to come, is already among us, supremely proclaimed and revealed in the Divine Liturgy. It is in this Eucharistic concelebration that the gathering of bishops, priests, deacons and laity are transformed by the Holy Spirit into the living body of Christ. Within this Eucharistic context, the Orthodox Church in America strives to be both *hierarchical*, with authority rooted in mutual love, and *conciliar*, with clergy and laity working together for the life of the world and its salvation.

The Church's North American mission began in 1794 when the first Orthodox monks arrived in Alaska to bring the Gospel to the Native people. This mission – to "Go and make disciples" – must always be our mission. The Gospel is to be spread throughout North America in a conciliar Church that includes bishops, priests, deacons, and laity working together to plan for the future. This conciliarity is part of the heritage the Orthodox Church in America, received from its Mother Church, the Russian Orthodox Church, and the Church Council of 1917-1918. In 1970, the Russian Orthodox Church granted us self-governance [autocephaly] in a document called the *Tomos of Autocephaly*.

In reflecting on the intervening 40 years since we have been granted autocephaly, the Holy Synod of Bishops has affirmed the following principles.

1. We understand ourselves to be an indigenous, multi-ethnic, missionary Church, laboring to bring Orthodox Christianity to all citizens of this continent.
2. We affirm that our historical reality derives from the Russian Orthodox Church and that we have humbly received and faithfully maintain the inheritance of the Russian Mission of 1794, the Diocese of Kamchatka, the Kurile and Aleutian Islands in 1840; the Diocese of the Aleutians and Alaska in 1870 and its relocation to San Francisco in 1872; the Diocese

of the Aleutians and North America in 1900 and its relocation to New York in 1905; and the Autocephaly of 1970.

3. As directed by the *Tomos*, we live as other self-governing Churches do: electing our own bishops and Primate, without confirmation by any other Synod, maintaining inter-Church relationships with all other Churches; and consecrating our own Chrism.
4. As envisioned in the *Tomos*, we believe that the autocephaly given to us will be fully realized when the promise of Orthodox unity in North America is fulfilled, and the Orthodox Church in America, together with all the Orthodox faithful in North America, become one united Autocephalous Church of America, recognized by all other Orthodox Churches.
5. We commit ourselves to work within the Episcopal Assembly in order to realize the goal of unity.

Where are we going? As we move into the future, we will focus on

- internal spiritual renewal and growth, so that we may radiate the life in Christ and be seen and known by all those
- Identity to 20

Three critical questions

The **Strategic Plan** is intended to **address all aspects of the Church's life**, ranging from **internal spiritual growth** to **mission and outreach** to all.

Specifically it addresses **three critical questions**:

1. **Who are we and where are we going?**
2. **What should be our ministry priorities** for the coming decade?
3. **How** do the Central Administration, the dioceses, the deaneries, the parishes and the individual parishioners **work together** to establish and continue these ministry priorities?

It is important to ask and answer these questions so we can be "that faithful and wise steward" [Luke 12:42] called to watch over God's household in North America.

The Strategic Plan **does not reflect traditional corporate strategic plans** with numbers, statistics, membership numbers or budgets. The Church is not an **institution**. It is a **sacramental mystery** that **unites us to Christ** to transform our lives, and by our witness to transform those around us. It is this inner spiritual transformation and the resulting efforts to reach out to others that are **the focus of this Plan**. If we follow Christ in this, then **everything** will follow. ■

Archpriest Stephen Kostoff

A Ruptured Rapture

Those fundamentalist Christians who anticipated the “Rapture” on May 21, 2011 must have been shocked when they woke up the next day and discovered that they – along with everyone else on Planet Earth – had been left behind!

Even the self-appointed preacher who predicted the event admitted that he was “flabbergasted,” only to predict yet another date – October 21, 2011.

As an Orthodox Christian, I am perfectly indifferent to any and all dates that one might propose with regard to the so-called “Rapture,” for the simple yet important reason that Orthodox Christianity holds no such position. This is a teaching – or belief – that has never been a part of the Church’s Tradition, and it could well be a “heresy,” a false teaching contrary to Scripture and the ongoing Tradition of the Church.

The Rapture teaching appeared in the 19th century, and is credited to a certain John Darby. It is a part of what is further termed “dispensationalism.” With the publication a few years ago of the best-selling, monumental 12 volume (!) *Left Behind* series by Tim LeHaye and Jerry Jenkins, “Rapture theology” was popularized. It is based on a misreading of a few biblical texts – Matthew 24:40-41, Matthew 29:39-42, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, and John 14:1-2. Regardless of their sincerity, the



Thy Kingdom come.... An 18th century Dutch artist's illustration of Matthew 24:40-41, which is often used to support belief in the *Rapture* – the idea that Jesus will take the righteous out of the world before subjecting the wicked to a time of tribulation.

authors ironically became multi-millionaires writing about the end of the world and the final judgment. [One might as well enjoy oneself and come to terms with “mammon” while waiting for Jesus to sweep up one out of this world of tribulation and sorrow!] While the series’ popularity has dimmed in recent years, fascination with “the end” continues.

Another irony is that many biblical literalists fail to support their claims from the Scriptures. For

example, the word “rapture” does not appear in the Bible! It is an artificial construction, based upon cutting and pasting together the biblical passages mentioned above. For those blissfully ignorant of Rapture theology, perhaps a short description may be helpful. The “Rapture” claims that Jesus will descend from heaven and take up true-believing Christians into the air with Him – hence, the “Rapture” (from the Latin *raptio*, “to snatch”). Christ then will essentially “turn around” and “return” to heaven with these true believers, who will be

Rapture to 10

Rapture from 9

spared the seven years of horrible tribulation unleashed upon the earth before He returns again in a definitive manner to inaugurate the end of the world and the last judgment. The result is a two-part Second Coming of Christ, devoid of biblical and creedal support. This scenario offers the false hope that Christians will not have to share the sufferings of the world with their fellow human beings – legitimately prophesied in the Scriptures for the “end of the world” – in blatant contradiction to what is revealed in Scripture (see Matthew 25:21-22).

As Orthodox Christians, we believe in the Second Coming of Christ – “He will come again to judge the living and the dead,” as we profess in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. But Orthodox theologians do not attempt to calculate the time of the Second Coming of Christ, nor do they attempt to describe what is essentially indescribable. *Vigilance* and *preparedness* are essential virtues according to the teaching of Christ. Our own deaths will come soon enough, and these will serve as our “personal judgments” before the Final Judgment, for which we pray to have a “good defense.” There is more than enough there to occupy us in the interval. As a Serbian proverb reads, “Work as if you will live to be 100, and pray as if you will die tomorrow.”

Another dreary effect of unfulfilled Rapture predictions is that they open the way for the media and non-believers to mock Christians and Christianity for making much to do about these unfulfilled prophecies. With gleeful chatter and cynicism, web sites ridiculing the May 21 predictions began to spring up, and “rapture parties” became popular in some circles. Christianity remains, in some minds to this day, preoccupied with “Judgment Day” and the fear of God’s wrath – deservedly, one could argue. But this keeps the Gospel on the defensive and sends very confusing signals as to what various Christians believe. Focus is deflected from the love of God, expressed so powerfully in the Incarnation, Death and Resurrection of Christ; in the sacramental life of the Church; in a life of serious prayer, fasting, and almsgiving; and in the joy that fills the hearts of believers who trust in the further fulfillment of the promises of God.

Finally, if anyone had been “left behind,” it was the deeply disappointed, disenchanted, confused, and bewildered individuals who actually believed they would be “raptured” on May 21. Many of them had distributed their assets and now face a bleak future of readjustment to life in the world. How many will abandon – or already have abandoned – their faith in Christ, Who seemingly “let them down?” One can only empathize with these people and hope they can put their lives back together on a solid footing, with their basic Christian faith intact and a greater capacity for true discernment of the Scriptures.

Ultimately, *when* Christ will come again has not been revealed to us, nor should we speculate on the matter. What *has* been revealed to us, most clearly, is what we should do *in the meantime!* ■

Fr. Stephen is rector of Christ the Savior-Holy Spirit Church, Cincinnati, OH, and frequent TOC contributor.

What Jesus didn't say

Nowhere did Jesus ever say that He would return secretly to rapture the elect

The word “rapture” is not found in Scripture, but hearkens to 1 Thessalonians 4:17, where Saint Paul says that when the Lord comes again, “we who are alive... shall be caught up... in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.” This “being caught up... in the clouds” – *arpagisometha* in Greek – is translated by some as “raptured.” The word itself is not found in Orthodox theology.

The notion of a Rapture in which Christ comes unseen to take believers away secretly, and only later comes back again for everyone else publicly – this whole teaching is quite novel. It was almost unheard of until John Nelson Darby formulated it in the 1800s as part of a new approach to the Bible, sometimes called “dispensationalism.”

The purpose of the “Rapture” is to protect the elect from the tribulations of the end times. Yet Jesus said nothing about sparing anyone from tribulation. In fact, He said, “In the world you have tribulation, but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.” Nowhere did Jesus ever say that He would return secretly to rapture the elect. Rather, He promised to be with His elect in all tribulations. “Lo, I am with you always. I will never leave you or forsake you.” He even had something good to say about being persecuted: “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” [Matthew 5:10]. Those who espouse the Rapture claim that Matthew 24:40-41 refers clearly to the rapture of the just: “Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.” The entire passage, however, refers to Christ’s Second Coming, where He will judge the living and the dead and separate the just from the unjust.

Darby taught as dogma that when the Scriptures reveal that the Lord will reign on earth for a thousand years [Revelation 20:4], this figure is to be taken literally, rather than as a symbol for eternity as we believe. The Council of Ephesus in AD 431 condemned as heresy this teaching, which is called *chiliasm* (millenarianism or 1000 years). In fact, the Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787 AD), in which the essential truths of the Christian faith were defined, never mention a rapture. Yet evangelical Christians and Pentecostals keep using obscure passages of the book of Revelation which purport to give a detailed timetable of what will happen at the end of the world, despite the fact that Jesus Himself warned that no man knows either the day or the hour when the Son of Man shall return....

I can think of no better words to conclude than those of Jesus when He speaks of the one and only “Rapture,” the Second Coming: “Be on guard. Be alert! You do not know when that time will come... keep watch... if He comes suddenly, do not let Him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: Watch!” [Mark 13:32-37]. ■

Excerpted from an editorial by the noted author, Fr. Anthony Coniaris of Minneapolis, MN, titled “The Rapture: Why the Orthodox Don’t Preach It.”



The Consecration of Bishop Matthias

Archimandrite Matthias [Moriak] was consecrated to the episcopacy during the Divine Liturgy at Chicago's Christ the Savior Church on Saturday, April 30, 2011.

Selected from a slate of three candidates nominated at an assembly of Midwest Diocesan clergy and laity in Minneapolis in the fall of 2010, Archimandrite Matthias subsequently was elected to the episcopacy by the Holy Synod of Bishops. He succeeds His Eminence, the late Archbishop Job [Osacky], who had overseen the diocese from the early 1990s until his unexpected repose in December 2009.

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah, presided at the consecration Liturgy. Concelebrating were His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel; His Grace, Bishop Nikon; His Grace, Bishop Tikhon; His Grace, Bishop Benjamin; His Grace, Bishop

Alejo; His Grace, Bishop Melchisedek; His Grace, Bishop Michael; His Grace, Bishop Mark; and His Grace, Bishop Irene. Also concelebrating was His Eminence, Archbishop Nicolae of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas. In attendance were His Grace, Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago, and His Grace, Bishop Peter of Cleveland, Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.

On the eve of the consecration, Archimandrite Matthias made his profession of faith before members of the Holy Synod during the celebration of Vespers.

Two choirs sang the liturgical responses antiphonally as clergy and faithful from across the Diocese of the Midwest and beyond anticipated the moment in which the hierarchs would place their hands on the head of Archimandrite Matthias, consecrating him to the episcopacy. As the newly consecrated Bishop Matthias was vested, the clergy and faithful responded with heartfelt cries of "Axios – He is worthy!"

During the Liturgy, Bishop Matthias ordained Subdeacon Nicholas Hubbard to the diaconate.

A special joy for Bishop Matthias was the presence of his son and daughter and their families. His son, Priest Matthew D. Moriak, and his wife and two children live in Manville, NJ, where they serve Holy Ghost Church. His daughter, Rachel Sumner, her husband, and their two children of Charlestown, WV, also were in attendance. Father Matthew and Rachel offered moving addresses during the consecration banquet that followed the Divine Liturgy. Also attending were nuns from



Bishop Matthias with Metropolitan Jonah, members of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America.

Hogar Rafael Ayau Orphanage in Guatemala, at which Bishop Matthias has ministered many times over the years.

Chicago's historic Holy Trinity Cathedral was the site of Bishop Matthias' installation as Bishop of Chicago and the Midwest at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy the following

Consecration to 12

Consecration from 11

Bishop Matthias

morning. Metropolitan Jonah presented Bishop Matthias with the archpastoral staff as he invoked God's blessing upon him and his ministry.

During the Liturgy, Bishop Matthias ordained Subdeacon Gregory Ealy to the diaconate.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1949, Bishop Matthias served parishes in New York and Pennsylvania after his ordination to the priesthood in 1972. He also served as prefect of and associate professor at Christ the Savior Seminary, Johnstown, PA. A married priest with two children, he was widowed in 1997, when his wife Jeannette succumbed to leukemia.

His election followed a lengthy search process overseen by a special diocesan committee, the members of which considered nearly 30 potential candidates. In August 2010, the committee and the diocesan council had settled on three candidates. On a second round of balloting, Assembly delegates nominated Archimandrite Matthias.

His consecration was the first to be held by the OCA in Chicago since the late 1970s. ■

Major renovations underway at St. Tikhon's Seminary

Renovations to the administrative building at Saint Tikhon's Seminary, South Canaan, PA, got underway during the last week of July 2011.

The building's entrances are undergoing a long-awaited "facelift," while other major interior and exterior renovations and improvements are in the offing.

As reported on the seminary web site at www.stots.edu in late January 2011, a private gift in the amount of \$339,649.46 had been received from Mrs. Mona Marich Hanford to fund renovations to the administration building, purchase a van for use by the traveling student choir, and replace the furnace for the monastery church. Mrs. Hanford's gift

was offered in memory of her father, Frederick Marich, and her grandfather, His Eminence, the late Archbishop Amvrossy [Merejko].

The renovations are slated to be completed in the fall. ■



Seminary entrance undergoes major facelift!

Archimandrite Alexander greets faithful at Congress-Sobor.



Bulgarian Diocese nominates Archimandrite Alexander [Golitzin]

Archimandrite Alexander [Golitzin] was nominated as candidate for Bishop of Toledo and the Bulgarian Diocese at the diocese's Fifth Congress-Sobor in Fort Wayne, IN June 9, 2011.

In June 2010, the Diocese initiated its search for a successor to His Eminence, the late Archbishop Kirill. The Episcopal Search Committee reviewed the names of 22 possible candidates. After a thorough review and discussion, the list was reduced to six names. Subsequently, the names of two candidates – Archimandrite Alexander and Archpriest Paul Gassios, dean of the diocese's Saint George Cathedral, Toledo, OH – were presented to Congress-Sobor delegates.

Raised at Saint Innocent Church, Tarzana, CA, Father Alexander received a BA in English from the University of California at Berkeley and a Master of Divinity degree from Saint Vladimir's Seminary. He spent seven years pursuing doctoral studies at Oxford University under His Eminence, Metropolitan Kallistos [Ware]. He also spent one year at Simonos Petras Monastery on Mount Athos.

After receiving his doctorate in 1980, Father Alexander returned to the US, where he was ordained to the diaconate in January 1982 and to the priesthood two years later. In 1986, he was tonsured to monastic orders. He served missions in California and headed the Diocese of the West's mission committee. In 1989, he accepted a teaching position at Milwaukee's Marquette University in the Theology Department – a position which he still holds.

Father Alexander's name will be formally presented to the Holy Synod of Bishops for canonical election.

The Congress-Sobor was preceded by the diocese's 48th annual conference. His Grace, Bishop Melchisedek of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania, Locum Tenens of the Bulgarian Diocese, presided at both events.

The Bulgarian Diocese includes 19 parishes and missions and one monastery. ■

Over 150 volunteers build homes for needy in Mexico in memory of Archbishop Job

Over 200 people, including His Grace, Bishop Matthias of Chicago and the Midwest, some 150 volunteers from across the country, staff members, site leaders, interns, and others, gathered at Project Mexico's Saint Innocent Orphanage in Tijuana, Mexico July 12-18, 2011, to build seven homes in memory of His Eminence, the late Archbishop Job of Chicago and the Midwest.

"Volunteer missionaries from New York, California, Florida, and Kentucky joined participants from across the Midwest Diocese to build the homes – the most ever built by a week-long Project Mexico 'Orthodox Basic Training' team," said Matushka Ruth Yavornitzky of Rochester, MI, who organized the project. "We worked, ate, worshiped, laughed, cried, and made lasting friendships that could only happen by doing God's work."

During the Sunday Divine Liturgy, Bishop Matthias blessed five new boys entering Saint Innocent's and celebrated a Memorial for the repose of Archbishop Job's soul.

Matushka Ruth initiated plans for the trip in early 2010.

"We wanted to provide a 'living tribute' to our late archpastor," explained Matushka Ruth. "After considering a number of options, it was decided to organize the pilgrimage to Project Mexico to build homes for those in need. At first we weren't sure how many we would be able to build, but as the registration forms kept coming in, it became

clear that we'd have enough hands to build several.

Volunteers "put their faith into action" building one of seven new homes.

"Participants were responsible for raising their own funds, while in February 2011, an appeal to parishes successfully raised additional funds for the trip," Matushka Ruth continued. "If not for the generosity of so many people and parishes from across the Midwest and beyond, the trip would not have been possible."

"For all of us, this was the trip of a lifetime," Matushka Ruth concluded. "It was so moving, so life changing, bringing everyone closer to Christ and to each other while ministering to those who otherwise might be forgotten. From the missionaries



Volunteers pause for group photo during their week-long project.

and participants and myself, we thank everyone who made the trip possible!" ■

"Operation Buffalo" breathes new life into an old parish

Bishop Michael with "Operation Buffalo" volunteers.



The first two weeks of August 2011 saw a flurry of activity at Saints Peter and Paul Church, Buffalo, NY, as volunteers from across the Diocese of New York and New Jersey began renovations and repairs to the parish's temple and rectory.

"Established in 1894, Saints Peter and Paul's, like many other older parishes across the 'rust belt,' had been affected by a dwindling population and lack of work," said Archpriest K. James Stavrevsky of Rochester, NY. "Restoring the parish's beautiful church building and other properties is but a first step in revitalizing the community."

The second step will take place as a new rector is assigned by His Grace, Bishop Michael of New York and New Jersey, who spent a few days in Buffalo helping the volunteers. ■

After nearly a year in the works, the OCA's new web site makes its debut

With excitement and gratitude, the oca.org web team unveiled a major refresh to the site July 11, 2011. “Due to the dedication of the web team members who preceded us, we inherited an amazing library of content,” comments managing editor and project manager Ginny Nieuwsma. “Yet technical demands and visitor expectations had both changed dramatically since the website’s inception. The time had come for a major overhaul.”

While a new web site had been promised at the 15th All-American Council in 2008, it wasn’t until January 2011, after a six-month due diligence process that evaluated content management systems, that Mrs. Nieuwsma; Ryan Platte, technical manager; and Priest John Schroedel of Inoa Technologies, developer, were hired to make the site a reality.

“We chose ExpressionEngine for its flexibility and power as a publishing platform,” says Mrs. Nieuwsma. “The designers at Simple Focus then guided the team through a series of exercises aimed at defining the site’s goals. Just how *should* an Orthodox site with worldwide impact look and function in 2011?”

Orthodox aesthetic. Notes J. D. Graffam of Simple Focus, “When designing for the Orthodox Church in America, there’s a richness and depth that’s literally sacred. Our task was to find a way to balance the depth of information with the richness and history of the OCA. We didn’t have all the answers – so that meant asking difficult questions about what content is valuable to everyone, simplifying the choices and exploring design choices that were unique and different. In the end, we were able to design a site that’s full of valuable content, but is also beautiful and simple to navigate.”

The web team vetted multiple artistic palettes and page layouts. Hiring prominent logo expert and OCA parishioner John Burns to refine and upgrade the logo was an important first step.

For the banner, the team chose a hero image and text box that could rotate with images depicting feasts and fasts and major events in the life of the Church.

Accessible. “One of the most immediate and tangible benefits to our visitors will be that they can find things!” says Mrs. Nieuwsma. On the right side of the home page, a feature column provides easy entry to the ever-popular liturgical resources, and will spotlight OCA-related outreach, media and events.

The main menu breaks the site into four subsections, each featuring colorful landing pages with banners:

- **About the OCA** – view the up-to-date Synod pages, the new history subsection, the new central administration landing page.
- **The Orthodox Faith** – find easy entry to Scripture readings, books and articles about the Faith, prayers, and the site’s unique Q & A section. The new “footer” also provides a

second entry point for inquirers.

- **Directories** – find everyone’s address, website, parish information, monastery listing, and helpful maps too. The banner will rotate, featuring images of parishes throughout the OCA. Note: parish entries no longer include fields for ministry groups and upcoming events.

- **Work of the Church** – what’s going on in the OCA right now? Here, find the newest journals and magazines, browse a completely revamped media section, read recent **Resource Handbook** articles or the latest issue of *The Orthodox Church*.

The site’s interior pages help guide users through the site’s rich content.

Technologically sound. The web team also recognized that the site must be easy to access via mobile devices. Mr. Graffam explains, “For the OCA redesign, we used a responsive design approach in order to deliver the web site to users in a way that’s a pleasure to use and read, no matter what device they are using. With responsive design, we decide what content is relevant to all users, then we deliver it to their device so they can consume it and navigate the site easily and quickly. It doesn’t matter if you use a small or large monitor, an iPhone, an Android or an iPad – it just works.”

Behind the scenes, the team is using a new ticket system to track requests and technical glitches reported by users. Response time varies from one hour to one day. Mr. Platte and Father Schroedel together set up a new server environment that is cost-effective and secure. Over the coming months the entire site will have migrated off of the 90’s-era Windows server, improving site reliability a great deal.

Both Mrs. Nieuwsma and Mr. Platte credit the support and vision of the OCA Chancery and Synod. Says Mr. Platte, “Members of the Holy Synod, Metropolitan Council, and the Chancery staff have been unanimous in their support of an ambitious approach to this project. With the substantial and energetic support they’ve given us, we’ve fit a site reorganization, complete design overhaul, rethinking of content strategy, security improvements, hosting service changes, and a complete rewrite of all of the site’s programming into a fixed budget.”

Adds Mrs. Nieuwsma, “Our task would have been impossible without the hours of hands-on Chancery input we’ve received from Archpriest Eric Tosi, Jessica Linke, Greg Sulich, Protodeacon Joseph Matusiak, and Alex Liberovsky. While we worked hard backstage, Father John Matusiak, a web team member since the site made its initial debut in 1996, was working hard to keep the site current, managing the day-to-day news postings to the site and finding appropriate photos and other graphics to illustrate press releases and other areas of the site.

“Some of the web team’s projects for the remainder of 2011 include expansion of the photo galleries and the media section, addition of historical resources in Archivist Alexis Liberovsky’s section, and an upgrade to the Feasts and Saints and Scripture Readings sections to new, more reliable systems,” adds Mrs. Nieuwsma.

The OCA web site has been recognized in the recent past. In 2010, it was named the best jurisdictional web site by the Orthodox Web Awards. ■

Our bodies: “Precious vessels of the priceless grace of God”

He made thy body into a throne,
and thy womb He made more spacious than the heavens!

Hymn to the Theotokos at the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great

All of Creation rejoices in the Mother of God. This woman, full of the grace of God, shows us through her silence and humility what great glory is laid up for those who do not shut the doors of their hearts to this grace. On the Great Feast of the Transfiguration, we stood with the disciples, falling to the ground with them as we beheld the flesh of Christ radiant with this glory on Mount Tabor. On the Great Feast of the Dormition, in her accustomed modesty, the Mother of God veils the glory she shares with Christ, concealing it by the death which she also shares with Him. Yet through faith in the Church’s witness, we know that as she partook of Christ’s death, so also she partook of His resurrection, for death could have no power over her who bore our Life; and that body, from which God Himself borrowed human flesh, could not see corruption in the grave.

All of us baptized and chrismated Orthodox Christians are stewards of God’s grace [cf. 1 Peter 4:10], and in the Mother of God we possess a flawless icon of this stewardship. Though the height of her unmitigated dedication to God is unique, still we must make a daily, unrelenting effort to offer more of ourselves than we did the day before. We must give of ourselves, our lives, our goods, our money, and – as we see so beautifully in this feast – our *bodies*. The Holy Virgin shows us how deserving of care and respect is the human body. She perfectly fulfills the Apostle’s words: “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body” [1 Corinthians 6:19–20].

Our culture places very high demands on our bodies. On the one hand, the pursuit of physical health can become an end in itself, independent of the goal of glorifying God in our body; and the drive to retain the allure of youth long into adulthood fills many with an ascetic zeal that would be far more worthwhile if poured out in desire for God. On the other hand, so often our culture cheapens the body by treating it as a mere vehicle for pleasure, to be altered or disposed of at will when it no longer gratifies the passions. And, ironically, such exploitation goes



hand-in-hand with the fashionable courting of non-Christian forms of mysticism, which dismiss the body as irrelevant or illusory.

This attitude is a grave symptom of the deep self-loathing that grips much of Western society. But a healthy respect for our bodies, born of the knowledge that “we are not our own,” can help us become more aware of our true human dignity and worth – a dignity wholly dependent upon God, for it is God’s free and irrevocable gift in the bestowal of His divine image upon our nature. Christ alone is the key to this dignity; therefore it is our task, as the members of his Body, to cultivate awareness of this in our own lives and to share it with those around us in our ailing society.

We do this by manifesting our bodies – both in life and in death – as precious

vessels of the priceless grace of God. In life: by our honest and godly labor; by chastity, either in holy celibacy or godly marriage; by modest appearance free from distracting dress or bodily disfigurement; by avoiding activities or substances harmful to our health; by fasting and vigil; by decorous speech; and by custody of the senses. And also in death: by giving proper love and attention to the bodies of the newly-departed, preparing them for honorable burial in a way that clearly reveals the intimacy of the Church community that bridges the gap between life and death. Such was the care the Apostles showed for the Mother of their Savior.

Ultimately, the dignity of the human body is fully realized in the Resurrection of Christ – in the very flesh He shares with us. He has already translated His Mother to the glory of this Resurrection, but our bodies too will be imbued with this glory after His second and glorious Coming. As we celebrate this joyful summer Pascha of the Mother of God, let us anticipate our own coming resurrection – with fear, with faith, and with love, knowing that we are stewards of a great mystery.

I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your rational worship [Romans 12:1]. The Mother of God is praying for us that we may come to entrust our whole lives to the loving care of her Son. ■

His Eminence, the Most Reverend Dmitri, 87, retired Archbishop of Dallas and the Diocese of the South, fell asleep in the Lord at his home in Dallas, TX at 2:00 a.m. Sunday, August 28, 2011.

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah, and many clergy and faithful had kept vigil at the Archbishop's residence and the adjacent Saint Seraphim Cathedral during his final days. The Metropolitan was to have traveled to the Czech Republic with a delegation from the Orthodox Church in America, but remained in Dallas to be with the Archbishop.

Archbishop Dmitri was born Robert R. Royster into a Baptist family in Teague, TX on November 2, 1923. He often credited his mother with providing him and his sister with a strong, initial faith in Christ. After discovering Orthodox Christianity as teens, he and his sister asked their mother for a blessing to convert, whereupon she asked one basic yet predictive question: "Does the Orthodox Church believe in Christ as Lord and Savior?" Having received their desired blessing, he and his sister were received into the faith at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Dallas, in 1941. It was at that point that the



Metropolitan Jonah with Archbishop Dmitri shortly before the Archbishop's repose.

two received the names Dmitri and Dimitra.

Dmitri was drafted into the US Army in 1943, after which he underwent intensive training in Japanese and linguistics in Ann Arbor, MI, and the Military Intelligence Service Language School in Fort Snelling, MN. He later served as a Japanese interpreter at the rank of Second Lieutenant on the staff of General Douglas MacArthur. He was required to undergo the usual training given to all soldiers and was recognized, interestingly enough, as an expert marksman. He was blessed with a strong constitution and good physical abilities; as a teenager, he represented his high school in the state tennis semi-finals. Later, as hierarch, he would comment that good health and physical strength should also be used in service to

Christ. Following his own advice, he pushed himself physically. For years, he drove from one end of his 14-state diocese to the other, visiting parishes and founding missions.

After his discharge, he completed his education, receiving a Bachelor's Degree from the (now) University of North Texas in Denton, and a Master's Degree in Spanish from Southern Methodist University in 1949. He also completed two years of post graduate studies at Tulane University, where he also taught.

In 1954, as a subdeacon with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church under Constantinople, he worked with the Mexican Orthodox Community of Our Lady of San Juan de Los Lagos and began translating the liturgical services into Spanish. In April 1954, Subdeacon Dmitri, his sister Dimitra, and their priest, Father Rangel sought a blessing from His Grace, Bishop Bogdan, to establish an English-language Orthodox mission in Dallas – the future Saint Seraphim Cathedral. He was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood later that year and assigned rector of Saint Seraphim's.

In 1958, permission was sought and given to receive Father Dmitri and the parish into the Metropolia, as the Orthodox Church

Concerning this issue...

As this issue of The Orthodox Church was in the final stages of production, the staff was informed of the repose of Archbishop Dmitri. In order to include this tribute to him in this issue, the regular OCA News, Notes & Notices section was eliminated. The most recent and current news may be found on the OCA's new web site at <http://oca.org>.

In addition, we apologize for any delays in the printing and mailing of hard copies of this issue, due to complications as a result of Hurricane Irene. Our printer is on Long Island, which was severely affected by the storm.

The repose of Archbishop Dmitri

Ordained to the priesthood in 1954 and consecrated to the episcopacy in 1969, Archbishop Dmitri's ministry spanned 57 remarkable years

in America was known at that time. He taught Spanish at Southern Methodist University – a position he held for a number of years.

During the early years of Saint Seraphim's history, Father Dmitri continued his missionary activities among Mexican Americans, and was intent on developing the new community placed in his care. As a direct result of his desire that people from all walks of life hear the message of Orthodox Christianity, the cathedral remains to this day a multi-cultural, diverse parish of life-long Orthodox Christians as well as converts.

While functioning as a priest and university instructor, Father Dmitri also found time to help his sister with her restaurant. As children, responsibilities in the family restaurant provided an appreciation for the art of cooking, and the two came to be regarded as gourmet chefs. Not surprisingly, celebrations at the Archbishop's home in honor of religious holidays were awaited with great anticipation by members of the cathedral and local Dallas clergy. Following the teaching of Saint Paul, he was genuinely "hospitable" [1 Timothy 3:2]. At such gatherings, the Archbishop sometimes would recall certain struggles of the Depression, indicating that the experience of doing without, of laboring to put food on the table, was never far from his consciousness. He lived modestly and was generous to a fault, not only giving beyond the tithe to his cathedral, but donating to seminaries, charities, missions, and persons in need.

Father Dmitri found time to print his own original articles in a weekly bulletin. In the 1950s and 60s, Orthodox theological works in English were sparse, especially on a popular reading level. He saw a need and addressed it. Later, the curriculum for catechumens he used at Saint Seraphim's would be published by the OCA's Department of Christian Education with the title, *Orthodox Christian Teaching*. Meanwhile, the Dallas community grew steadily, in part due to his unique gift for relating to all people, young and old alike, as a loving father.

In 1966 and 1967, Father Dmitri studied at Saint Vladimir's Seminary, while teaching Spanish at Fordham University. He studied with such luminaries as Protopresbyters Alexander Schmemmann and John Meyendorff and Professor Serge Verhovskoy. In 1969, he was elected to the episcopate and consecrated Bishop of Berkeley, CA, as Auxiliary to His Eminence, Archbishop John [Shahovskoy] of San Francisco on June 22 of that year. His consecration is regarded by some historians as the first consecration of a convert to the episcopate in America. [Another individual, Ignatius Nichols, had been consecrated in 1932, but subsequently left the Church.] In 1970, he was named Bishop of Washington and Auxiliary to His Beatitude, Metropolitan Ireney. He would later recall the helpful training he received from under Archbishop John and Metropolitan Ireney, especially the many hours of instruction in Church Slavonic that they provided.

On October 19, 1971, Bishop Dmitri was elected Bishop of Hartford and New England. In 1972, the Holy Synod of Bishops brought Mexico under the auspices of the Orthodox Church in America, which had received its autocephaly in 1970 from the Moscow Patriarchate. Given his knowledge of and fondness for Mexican culture and the Spanish language, Bishop Dmitri was given additional responsibilities by the Holy Synod as Exarch of Mexico. He was as much beloved by the Mexican people as by those in his own Diocese.

In 1977, at the Fifth All-American Council in Montreal, Bishop Dmitri received a majority of popular votes in the election for a successor to the retired Metropolitan Ireney. For the sake of continuity – at that time, a life-long Orthodox Christian occupying the Office of Primate was seen as more in keeping with the challenges of a young territorial Church – the Holy Synod chose instead His Grace, Bishop Theodosius [Lazor] of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania, who became an advocate and supporter of missionary work in the southern United States.

In 1978, the Synod of Bishops took the important step of creating the Diocese of Dallas and the South. Bishop Dmitri became its first ruling hierarch, taking Saint Seraphim Church Archbishop Dmitri to 27

Clergy and laity accompany the body of Archbishop Dmitri's as it is brought from his residence to St. Seraphim Cathedral, Dallas, on Monday, August 29, 2011.



Priest Alexis Tinker

West Hempstead, NY – Priest Alexis Tinker, retired, fell asleep in the Lord on August 26, 2011.

Born on March 23, 1930, he was ordained to the priesthood at Saint Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral, Brooklyn, NY in 1965. He served as the cathedral's assistant priest. From 1982 through 1984, after serving as interim pastor of Holy Trinity Church, East Meadow, NY, he served as pastor of Saint Andrew Church, Dix Hills, NY, overseeing the first stage in the construction of the parish's present church.

In addition to his pastoral ministry, he also was employed as a full-time secondary school teacher in East New York.

He is survived by his beloved Matushka Laurice.

Funeral services were celebrated at Holy Trinity Church, East Meadow, NY, with interment at Saint Charles Cemetery, Farmingdale, NY.

May Father Alexis' memory be eternal! ■

Preoteasa Eleonora Lazar

Farmington Hills, MI – Preoteasa Eleonora Lazar, 96, fell asleep in the Lord peacefully on August 15, 2011 – the Great Feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God.

Born in Sharon, PA on November 7, 1914 to Ioan and Anna Banceu, she had two sisters – her twin Elizabeth, and Victoria – and a brother, Aurel. She was a 1932 graduate of Newton Falls [OH] High School and, later, Warren Business College.

On July 1, 1939, she married Eugene Lazar, a theological graduate from Youngstown, OH, who was ordained to the priesthood three days later. The Lazars were blessed with two children, Eugenia [Dr. Virgil] Tirmonia, and Archpriest Laurence [Preoteasa Anita] Lazar, six grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

Preoteasa and Father Eugene, who fell asleep in 1978, served parishes in South Saint Paul, MN; Detroit, MI; Gary, IN; and Akron and Youngstown, OH. She was part of that very small, dedicated generation of pioneers in parish religious education who established Saturday and Sunday Schools. She adapted, translated, and created lessons for which Orthodox resources, especially in English, were extremely rare. For her efforts, the Holy Synod of Bishops expressed its appreciation in 1996.

With Father Eugene, she coordinated programs for children, teens and married couples; organized cultural events; taught the Romanian language; chaired banquets and bazaars; and sang in the choir. She served as President of ARFORA and as a member of its national board.

She was an example of charity, always sharing what her family had. She also chaired festivals for the International Institute, volunteered for the International American Red Cross, and counseled bereaved families as a hospital volunteer. For a period of time, she was employed as a live-in counselor, monitoring troubled juveniles.

In the 1950's, Archbishop Valerian [Trifa] chose her to serve as Director of Camp Vatra. Working with him, and later with Archbishop Nathaniel, was her most beloved ministry for over 25 years. She planned menus, taught classes, and hugged away the loneliness of many a child.

Funeral services were held at Saint George Cathedral, Southfield, MI, where her son, Father Lawrence, is dean, with interment at Vatra Romaneasca.

May Preoteasa Eleonora's memory be eternal! ■

Popadia Marina Eleonora Dimitroff

West Toledo, OH – Popadia Marina Eleonora Dimitroff, 83, fell asleep in the Lord at her home here on July 26, 2011.

Born November 29, 1927, in Istanbul, Turkey, the daughter of the

late Francesco Veneziani and Cassiani Maria, she married Venseslav Dimitroff in November 1955. After her husband's ordination to the priesthood in March 1961, the couple served Istanbul's Bulgarian community. In August 1975, they immigrated to the US, where Father Venseslav was assigned to Saint George Church, Toledo, OH, where they served until Father's retirement in August 1995.

Popadia Marina worked as a finisher at Toledo Furs for 18 years, retiring in 1988. She was also fluent in six languages: Italian, Turkish, Bulgarian, Greek, French and English. She was a very kind and gentle person, a special angel of the Lord who will always be remembered for her hospitality, patience, hard work and dedication.

Preceded in death by her husband, she is survived by her daughter, Kathy, and cousins in Italy.

Funeral services were celebrated at Saint George Cathedral.

May Popadia Marina's memory be eternal! ■

Protodeacon Nicholas Dzubay



Barron, WI – Protodeacon Dr. Nicholas S. Dzubay, 84, fell asleep in the Lord on July 17, 2011 following an accidental fall while recuperating from heart surgery.

The youngest of eight children, he was born on September 26, 1926, in Vance Creek, WI, to Steven and Mary [Roman] Dzubay. In 1944, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps and was trained as a military policeman. He served in Germany and England during the liberation and was honorably discharged. He earned a

Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine and a Masters in Public Health from the University of Minnesota. In addition to operating a veterinary practice for 11 years, he was variously employed by Abbott's Dairy and the US Department of Agriculture. He operated a boarding kennel until shortly before his repose. He entered semi-retirement in 1991.

He married the former Shirley A. Beyl on September 9, 1950, at Holy Trinity Church, Clayton, WI, of which he was a life-long member.

In 1973, he was ordained to the diaconate by Archbishop John of Chicago and assigned to Holy Trinity Church. Earlier, he had served on the parish council, directed the choir for over 30 years, and active in various parish and deanery ministries. His faith was the center of his life, as he continually focused on the words of Our Lord, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God." He also served on the Barron City Council for 13 years and was a member of the Barron County Barbershop Chorus.

In addition to his wife Shirley, Protodeacon Nicholas is survived by daughters, Alexa [Boris] Geeza and Paula McDaniels; son, Steven [Susan]; one sister, Olga [Robert] Mommsen; and grandchildren Anne and Mary McDaniels, Masha and Nick Geeza, and Ella and Isaac Dzubay.

Funeral services were celebrated at Holy Trinity Church, with interment in the parish cemetery.

May Protodeacon Nicholas' memory be eternal! ■

Archpriest Simeon Oskolkoff

Anchorage, AK – Archpriest Simeon Oskolkoff, 81, fell asleep in the Lord here on Wednesday, June 22, 2011.

Father Simeon served several parishes across Alaska during his 40-year priestly ministry. Ordained by the late Archbishop Amvrossy in 1962, he concelebrated at Saint Alexis Toth Church during his final years.

He is survived by his wife, Matushka Lubova [Gregorieff], son Gregory, and daughter Anna-Marie.

Funeral services were celebrated at Saint Innocent Cathedral, Anchorage, on June 27, with the Divine Liturgy and interment the following morning at Holy Transfiguration Church, Ninilchik, AK.

May Father Simeon's memory be eternal! ■

Archpriest Victor Runcanu

Ridgewood, NY – Archpriest Victor Runcanu, 86, parish priest of Three Hierarchs Church here, fell asleep in the Lord on June 22, 2011.

Born in Miculesti, Gorj, Romania on January 14, 1925, he graduated from the Theological University in Sibiu. On May 1, 1949, he married the former Ileana Celea. He was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood in August 1949, after which he served parishes in the Metropolitanate of Oltenia. From 1979 until 1986, he served Saint Nicholas parish in Craiova.

After immigrating to the US in 1987, he served parishes in Los Angeles, CA, and Portland, OR. In October 1988, he was transferred to Three Hierarchs Church, Ridgewood, NY.

Survivors include his wife, Preoteasa Ileana, and children Mariana and Dumitru.

Funeral services were held at the Descent of the Holy Spirit Church, Ridgewood, NY. According to Father Victor's wishes, interment took place in his native village in Romania.

May Father Victor's memory be eternal! ■

Matushka Anna Timpko Voytilla

Steubenville, OH – Matushka Anna Voytilla fell asleep in the Lord at her home here on June 1, 2011 – her 73rd birthday.

Born in Centralia, PA, the eldest daughter of Helen and the late Nicholas Timpko, "Mother Anna," as she was affectionately known, was married to the late Archpriest John J. Voytilla for over 50 years. She ministered alongside her husband with joy and grace, a faithful servant of the Church who truly loved her vocation.

She is survived by her mother, Helen; brothers Archpriest Nicholas Timpko [Anastasia], Priest Frank Timpko [Janet], and Charlie [Patricia]; sisters, Helen Mehalshick [Andrew] and Mary Suda [Archpriest Paul]; and sons John [Enid] and Nicholas [Cindy]. Another son, Andrew, predeceased her in 1982. She also is survived by two grandsons, Alexander and Jonathan Voytilla, and several nieces, nephews, and godchildren.

Funeral services were celebrated at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Steubenville, OH, with interment at Saint John the Baptist Cemetery, Campbell, OH.

May Matushka Anna's memory be eternal! ■



Zoran and Annette Milkovich

Hackensack, NJ – Mr. Zoran Milkovich, founder and first president of Saint Vladimir's Theological Foundation and long-time member of the seminary's Board of Trustees, fell asleep in the Lord on May 20, 2011. Funeral services were held at Saint Sava Serbian Orthodox Cathedral, New York, NY, with interment at Saint Tikhon's Monastery Cemetery, South Canaan, PA.

On April 10, 2011, his wife of 60 years, Annette, fell asleep in the Lord. The daughter of Archpriest Michael and Matushka Anna Dziana, she was a long-time member of the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America. Funeral services were held at Saint Sava Cathedral, with interment at Saint Tikhon's Monastery Cemetery.

The Milkoviches are survived by one daughter, Lisa Madara, and grandchildren Nicholas, Daniel, Anthony and Erika.

May Zoran and Annette's memory be eternal! ■

Protodeacon Wilhelm Friesen

Saskatoon, SK, Canada – Protodeacon Wilhelm Friesen of Holy Resurrection Sobor here fell asleep in the Lord on May 11, 2011, after a lengthy battle with leukemia.

Born into a Mennonite family in Fraser Lake, BC, Canada April 9, 1944, he was a graduate of the Miller Bible School, Pambrun, SK. He was employed in the construction field prior to his retirement.

After his conversion to Orthodoxy, he was ordained to the diaconate by Bishop Antoun of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese. In 2004, he was received into the Orthodox Church in America and assigned to Holy Resurrection Sobor. The following year, he was elevated to the rank of Protodeacon. Throughout his illness, he and his family always kept their hearts focused on the Lord. He never complained about his suffering, bearing it with grace.

He is survived by his wife, the former Agnes Phillipy, and three children, Mary, Gabriel, and Anna.

Funeral services were celebrated at Holy Resurrection Sobor, with interment at Hillcrest Cemetery, Saskatoon.

May Protodeacon Wilhelm's memory be eternal! ■

Deacon Michael Savko

Oxnard, CA – Deacon Michael Savko of Saint Herman Church here fell asleep in the Lord on Tuesday, April 12, 2011. He had waged a valiant battle with cancer.

The Divine Liturgy and Funeral were celebrated at Saint Innocent Church, Tarzana, CA.

May Deacon Michael's memory be eternal! ■

Archpriest Joseph Nelson

Talihina, OK – Archpriest Joseph Andrew Nelson fell asleep in the Lord at the Veterans' Home here on May 4, 2011, after a lengthy illness.

While Father Joseph has no surviving relatives, he was much loved by his parishioners, the staff at the Veterans home, and brother clergy.

Prior to his ordination to the priesthood, he served in the Air Force in Vietnam from 1964 to 1968, with the rank of Sergeant. He later graduated from Palm Beach Atlantic College, Palm Beach, FL, with a degree in police science, after which he served on the Palm Beach Police Department from 1973 until 1983.

He was ordained to the diaconate of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese on February 22, 1981, and to the priesthood of the Orthodox Church in America on July 19, 1986. He served Christ the Saviour Cathedral, Miami, FL until he was reassigned to Saint Seraphim Cathedral, Dallas, TX in 1992. Four years later, he was reassigned to Saints Cyril and Methodius Church Hartshorne, OK, where he served until 2009. He also served as Chancellor of the Diocese of the South from 1989 until 1995.

He was preceded in death by his adoptive parents Joseph Michael Jacobs and Marie B. Krajnicks.

Funeral services were celebrated at Saints Cyril and Methodius Church, Hartshorne, OK, on May 9, with interment at the National Cemetery, Fort Smith, AR.

May Father Joseph's memory be eternal! ■

Matushka Olga Hubiak Kovach

Lititz, PA – Matushka Olga Hubiak Kovach, 87, fell asleep in the Lord at the Moravian Manor here on Tuesday, March 8, 2011. She was the wife of wife of Archpriest Dr. Michael Kovach, in retirement attached to Christ the Saviour Church, Harrisburg, PA.

Born in Czechoslovakia, the daughter of the late Archpriest Afanasy and Matushka Susan Wanchisen Hubiak, she grew up in Akron, OH. After graduating from Millersville [PA] State University, she worked as an executive secretary at Hamilton Watch Company. She was a member of Christ the Savior Church and its Altar Guild Society, the Millersville University Book Club, the University Campus Club, and the Clisophic Society. Her hobbies were cooking, sewing, arts and

In Memoriam to 20

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crafts, gardening and reading.

In addition to her husband of 67 years, Father Michael, she is survived by her daughter, Helene Dmochowski and her son, Ivan [Jane], and their children, Oliver and Penelope; and her daughter, Sasha. Others surviving include her brother, Archpriest Daniel Hubiak [Dunia]; her sister, Matushka Sophie Soroka [Archpriest Theodore]; her sisters-in-law Matushka Eva Hubiak, Ann Hubiak, and Verna Papinchak; her brother-in-law, Steve Kovach [Jean]; and several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were celebrated at Christ the Savior Church, Harrisburg, PA, with interment at Saint Tikhon's Monastery Cemetery, South Canaan, PA.

May Matushka Olga's memory be eternal! ■

Archpriest David J. Shank

Milwaukie, OR – Archpriest David Jonathan Shank, 58, fell asleep in the Lord at his home after a lengthy battle with cancer on March 3, 2011.

Born in Independence, MO, on November 21, 1952 and raised in Missouri, where his father was a Baptist pastor, he earned a degree in English and Physics at the University of Missouri. He held a number of positions as a technical writer. In 1995, he and his wife Connie, whom he married a decade earlier, were received into the Orthodox Church.

He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Tikhon of San Francisco, Los Angeles and the West in 1995 and assigned associate pastor of the Church of the Annunciation, Milwaukie, OR. He also served mission parishes in Ashland, Poulsbo, and Redmond, WA.

After being diagnosed with cancer in 1996, he strove to love and serve his family and flock with greater fervor, especially during the final weeks of his life.

Father David is survived by his wife, Matushka Connie; children Gabriel and Maria; mother, Marybelle; brother, Walter; sisters, Mary Aslin and Martha Moore; and many nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were celebrated at the Church of the Annunciation, Milwaukie, OR, with interment in Molalla.

May Father David's memory be eternal! ■

Priest Lawrence Zalikowski

Titusville, FL – Priest Lawrence Zalikowski, who in retirement was attached to Saint Simeon Church here, fell asleep in the Lord on Monday, January 3, 2011.

Born Richard Zalikowski in Buffalo, NY on August 10, 1927, he spent much of his childhood and adolescence in foster homes and an orphanage operated by Polish Roman Catholic nuns. He served in the US Navy during World War II, after which he entered the Benedictine Order at Saint Leo's Abbey, where he remained for 16 years.

After settling in Norfolk, VA in the early 1980s, he converted to Orthodox Christianity at the Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos, taking the name Lawrence. In 1985, he moved to Orlando, where he became a member of Saint Nicholas Church. He was ordained to the diaconate by then-Bishop Dmitri of Dallas and the South in May 1986 and attached to Saint Simeon Church, Titusville. He was ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Dmitri at Saint Stephen Church, Longwood/Orlando, FL, in November 1996. He served as priest-in-charge of Saint Simeon Church until his retirement in 2003.

Funeral services were celebrated at Saint Simeon Church, Titusville, FL.

May Father Lawrence's memory be eternal! ■

Identity and directions

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around us. They will see that we live in peace, joy, and the love of the Lord;

- reaching out to others to fulfill the Savior's commandment to love one another as He has loved us [John 13:34] as we draw near to the other who is hungry, thirsty, naked or in prison [Matthew 25]; and
- actively cooperating and participating in the formation and establishment of a fully united territorial and autocephalous Orthodox Church in North America, embracing all Orthodox Christians, with one Synod of Bishops.

In doing so, we will be guided by

- the belief that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is lived and conveyed by the Church through the Holy Spirit. The Church is the living body of Christ and its life and Tradition continue to develop in and through the Holy Spirit.
- the belief that the Church administers itself by the irreducible principle of hierarchy/conciliarity rooted in the Holy Trinity, which involves the participation of its entire people to the highest degree possible and which manifests itself in love, obedience, trust, integrity, sacrifice, humility, and commitment.
- the belief that all men and women are created in the image of God, each with their own unique gifts to be used for the greater glory of God and the building up of His Holy Church.
- the belief that God created the world in all its goodness and that as a result of sin it has fallen. Through the incarnation of God the Word, Christ is restoring creation to its proper relation to Himself.
- the belief that its unity is expressed through the diversity of the gifts of the Holy Spirit given to the faithful and through the participation of the faithful in the sacramental life of the Church.
- the belief that the membership of the Church is multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multilingual and that members of Christ's Body are, as the Apostle Paul, prepared to be "all things to all men" [1 Corinthians 9:22], so that "Christ can be all and in all" [Colossians 3:11].
- the belief that missionary and charitable works are essential to the life of the Church.
- the belief that the spiritual fruit of an ascetic life of all the faithful contributes to the building up of life in the Church.
- the belief that both monasticism and "life *in*, but not *of*, the world" are integral parts of the life of the Church.
- the belief that the work of the Church should be conducted in an open and transparent manner in accordance with the highest ethical and moral precepts, the civil laws of the land within which it exists, and with the consent of its people. ■

The complete text of the Strategic Plan may be downloaded in PDF format at <http://oca.org/PDF/NEWS/2011-0519-studyplanstratplan.pdf>.

Turning tears into joy!

Remembering the forgotten children buried at site of former PA school

While the blessing of graves usually is not newsworthy, history was made recently as Priest Timothy Hojnicky, Archpriest Daniel Ressetar, and the faithful of Holy Apostles Mission, Mechanicsburg, PA, traveled to the US War College in Carlisle, PA, to honor the memory of Orthodox Christian children buried in the cemetery of what was once the Carlisle Indian Industrial School.

"The school operated from 1879 until 1918," explained Father Timothy. "In its cemetery are the graves of 186 children who died while in its care – ten of whom have been identified as Orthodox Christians and who are believed to have never received a proper Orthodox Christian burial."

Father Timothy and his parishioners knew nothing of the school and its cemetery until Archpriest Michael Oleksa, Chancellor of the Diocese of Alaska, visited Holy Apostles' Mission in September 2010.

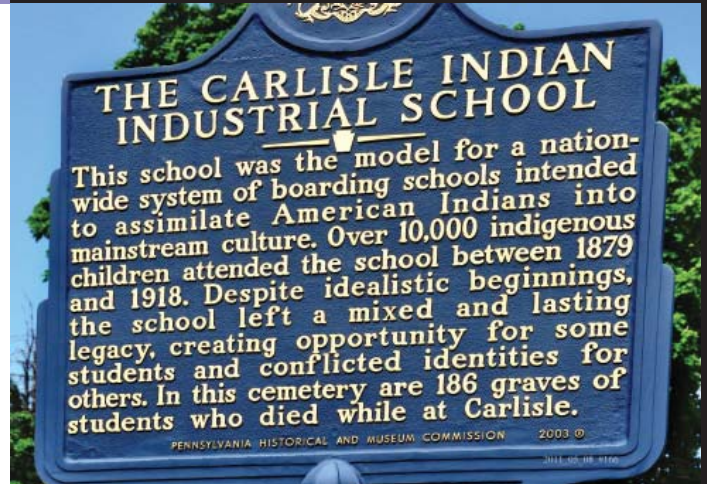
"Through his research, Father Michael had learned that the school was established at a time when Native American children were removed from their homes and placed in Carlisle and similar institutions," Father Timothy said. As the historical marker at the site sheepishly testifies, however, the school – "a model for a nationwide system of boarding schools intended to assimilate American Indians into mainstream culture" – failed to accomplish its goal, thereby "creating opportunity for some students and conflicted identities for others."

"Some of the children sent to Carlisle were taken from Alaska and, with names like *Tatiana*, *Anastasia*, and *Paraskeva*, they obviously were from Orthodox homes.

"Father Michael made me promise that, during the Paschal season, we would organize a visit from our parish – the closest one to Carlisle – to bless the children's graves. After much red tape, we obtained permission to celebrate a Memorial and bless the graves amidst heavy security – it was the weekend after Osama Bin Laden was killed!"

By way of background. Over 10,000 children attended the Carlisle school – "the first of many Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding schools founded by the federal government," according to Father Michael. "The philosophy that brought them into existence insisted that the forcible assimilation of Native Americans into Anglo-culture would 'save' them from a 'barbaric and uncivilized lifestyle.'"

"Given the options offered in earlier times – extermination between 1600 and 1800 and the ethnic cleansing of reservations between 1800 and 1880 – assimilation, not unlike that



Historical marker reveals the school's failed policies.



"Memory eternal" is chanted as Fathers Timothy and Daniel bless the graves of the ten Orthodox Christian students who died at the Carlisle School.

experienced by immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe at the time, seemed a logical and more humane approach to the 'Indian Problem,' Father Michael explained. "The difference was that the immigrants had freely chosen to come to America and wanted their kids to 'fit in,' while the survival of their ancestral language and culture was guaranteed in the homeland. For Native Americans, however, the policy was imposed on them without their consent; submission to it meant the extinction of their language and culture."

In the mid-1800s, Dr. Sheldon Jackson brought this new federal policy to Alaska – and applied it with a vengeance – when he became Commissioner of Education. In a 1980

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occasional paper, *Conflicting Visions in Alaskan Education*, Dr. Richard Dauenhauer wrote extensively on this subject, contrasting the multilingual, multicultural Orthodox schools with the government-funded assimilationist schools.

“One enhanced and blessed the Alaska Native cultures, while the others, dedicated to eradicating them, suppressed it,” observed Father Michael, who presents this tragic story in his own book, *Conflicting Landscapes* [www.kuskokwim.com/spotlight/conflicting-landscapes].

According to Father Michael, “it all started in Moravia, when Saint Prince Rastislav invited the eastern Byzantines to bring ‘civilization’ to his Slavic people in their own language, and Saints Cyril and Methodius arrived with books freshly translated into Slavonic.

“Scandalized, the western Bavarian missionaries protested,” Father Michael noted, “as they were convinced that one could not ‘civilize’ a barbarian tribe in a barbarian language, and that Christians could only use Latin, Hebrew or Greek, since those were the languages employed by Pontius Pilate in devising the sign he had placed above Christ’s head on the cross.”

Eventually, the western missionaries prevailed – numerous invasions helped them make their point! – and the use of Slavonic in the region was suppressed in favor of Latin.

“The Slavonic texts were, however, then used when Saint Vladimir decided to settle down and ‘get civilized’ a century

later,” Father Michael added. “The Eastern approach – multilingual and multicultural – spread eastward, while the western, Latin approach went west.”

A thousand years later, the two philosophies and policies toward minority languages and cultures clashed again, exactly 180 degrees from Moravia – in Sitka, Alaska!

“The school established there by Saint Innocent was on the same street as Jackson’s school, and the clash experienced in Moravia in AD 860 once again surfaced in the 1860s,” said Father Michael. “In both cases, violence and power won, as children were forcibly removed from their homes and homelands to far away schools, in the hope that they would never return.”

In the end, however, the vast majority of the children did return home – confused, frustrated, angry, bitter and alienated, as sheepishly acknowledged in the historical marker – “creating the social problems that plague Native Americans everywhere – nihilism, anti-social and self-destructive behaviors such as drug and alcohol addiction, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, violent crime and suicide,” Father Michael added.

“It’s a great but tragic chapter in American history,” Father Michael concluded, “marking the radical difference between the Alaskan experience and that of more recent immigrants.”

Given this background, the blessing of the ten Orthodox children’s graves was indeed an historic event – one that Father Timothy and the faithful of Holy Apostles Mission plan to repeat annually in the years to come, just as they had promised! ■

ReViews

Models for living

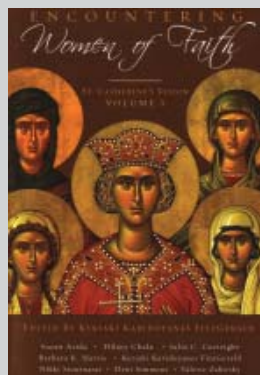
Drawing inspiration from the lives of women saints

Marilyn Rouvelas

With joy and gratitude, members of Saint Catherine’s Vision celebrated the release of their organization’s latest book, *Encountering Women of Faith, Vol. 2*, during a summer conference at Saint Vladimir’s Seminary, Crestwood, NY, June 17, 2011.

The new volume is a companion to the popular *Encountering Women of Faith, Vol. I*, which is now in its third printing.

The authors – Susan Arida, Hilary Chala, Julia C. Curtright, Kyriaki Karidoyanes FitzGerald, Barbara K. Harris, Valerie Karras, Eleni Simmons, Nikki Stournaras, Stefanie Yova Yazge, and Valerie Zahirsky – are members of Saint Catherine’s Vision, a group founded by women graduates of Orthodox theological schools who “seek to study and support the many ways in which the people of God are called to contribute toward the building up of the body of Christ through education, spiritual



renewal and Orthodox unity.” They worked collaboratively on the book through a series of retreats and e-mails.

Encountering Women of Faith, Vol. II, tells the stories of 11 women saints in separate chapters. Each chapter uses a unique three-part format: a well-researched history of the saint and her service to God and community, a candid consideration by each author on how the saint’s witness touched her own life, and reflection and discussion questions

suitable for the individual reader and/or group discussion. Within this format, one meets real women of the past who are relevant to real women and men of today – all of whom seek ways to live meaningful lives as they grow closer to God in image and love.

For example, author Nikki Stournaras writes about Saint Anna the Prophetess, who waited for the Messiah for 84 years while fasting and praying in the temple in Jerusalem. Her patience was rewarded when she was blessed with being present at the Meeting of Our Lord, when the Theotokos and Saint Joseph brought Him to the temple 40 forty days after His birth. While we might consider Saint Anna’s life extreme, Ms. Stournaras explains that the example of piety and silence may be helpful for us today. “My mind is filled with noise

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That extra step

Helping children when they have “trouble with God”

Valerie Zahirsky

A girl of seven lingered after the rest of the the Church school students had left the classroom. Something was clearly bothering her, and she wanted to tell her teacher about it. The teacher put down the papers she had gathered up in preparation for leaving, and gave the child her full attention.

“I’m having trouble with God,” the girl said. “Why did He let my dad lose his job and make my family so sad?”

How can we help children who are having “trouble with God?”

Finding out what’s on their minds. Activities like the following can help discover what children are thinking about, particularly if you suspect that one or more are worried about something.

- **Hands Up.** Ask children to raise their hands if they agree with a statement like, “People get sick because they have done something bad.”

- **Finish the Sentence.** Have children complete a sentence, such as, “I get scared when...” or “I wonder why....”

- **Draw a Feeling.** Have children draw faces to match emotions you suggest.

These activities should generate discussion, and may offer valuable insights to help guide children. For example, a child who writes, “I wonder why my big sister gets to go to bed later than I do” is expressing normal sibling complaints. But if a child writes, “I wonder why people die from thirst like the kids I saw on television,” there is a deeper issue, a deeper disturbance, to be addressed.

A teacher who had asked his students to draw a face showing “surprise” noted that one child had drawn what looked like terror. He was able to talk with her about a nighttime break-in at her home a few years earlier. It was still bothering the child, though the family had assumed she was “over it.”

Another way of finding out what children are feeling and thinking is to give them means of identifying with and expressing emotions. Have children look at the icon of Christ on the cross, and ask what the other people in the icon are feeling. Establish that the people (and even the angels) are sad because Jesus is suffering, and He is their beloved friend. Children can

then talk about their own experiences of loss and, perhaps, of seeing people they love suffer. Stories can help, too. Ask children to talk about how the father felt when his prodigal son returned. Remind them that, like that father, God is always ready to forgive us and welcome us back when we are sorry for the bad things we do that take us away from Him.

Being of real help. Here are some ideas that will prove helpful in such situations.

- **Choose your words carefully.** Don’t say, “God needed a good singer in heaven, so He took your grandmother because she had such a beautiful voice.” Rather, assure the child that he or she will see grandmother again in God’s Kingdom, so that he or she will not be led to believe that God is an enemy who takes away the people and things we love most. In the same vein, don’t tell a child that seeing grandma again will only happen “if you are good.” Offer reassurance.

- **Let grieving happen naturally.** After major loss, children need time to grieve, and it’s better to be sympathetic than to try to “jolly them” out of sadness, or to encourage them to smile when they may not be ready to do so. Realize, too, that a child may need to revisit and retell the sad event. Talking about it a single time might not be enough.

- **Share some of your own experiences** of having “trouble with God.” Knowing that you pray and have faith when you have doubted or felt unsure of God’s presence will help children to do likewise.

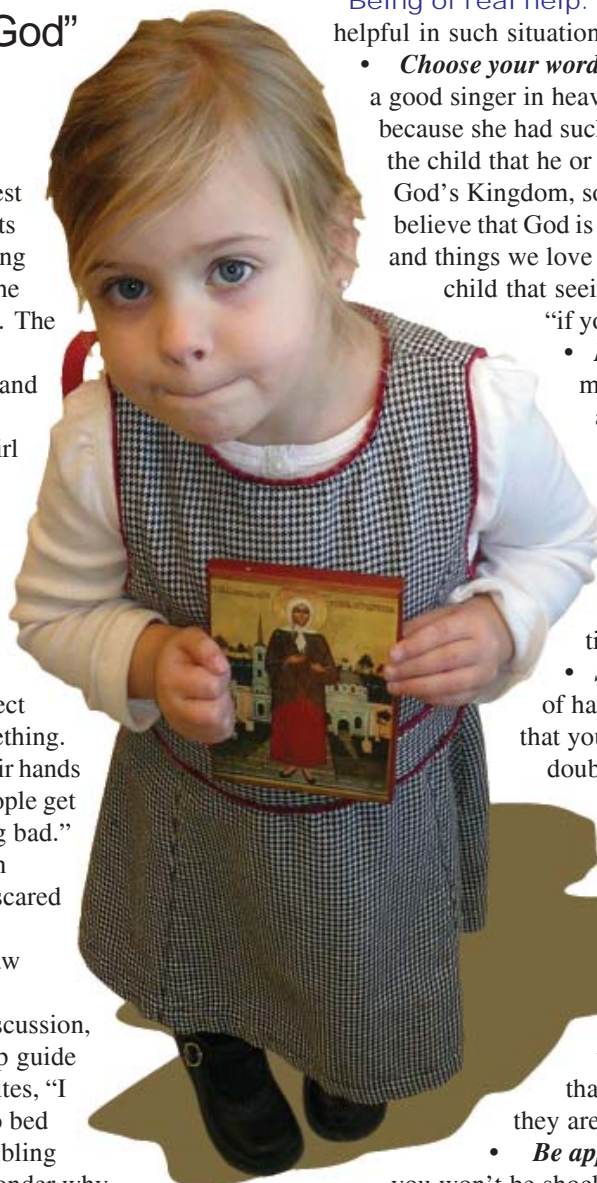
- **Prayer.** Encourage troubled children to pray during the day.

Basic to our Tradition is “Lord, have mercy.” Assure them that you are praying for them. If

possible, get in touch with them during the week to remind them that you are praying, and that you hope they are praying, too.

- **Be approachable.** Let children know that you won’t be shocked or turned off by anything they want to tell you. The teacher of the seven-year-old who was having trouble with God was like this. As a result, the teacher was able to give comfort and to say that we can trust God even when we don’t understand things. The adult’s willingness to listen was a model of God’s care and trust for that student.
- **“Listen and repeat!”** Tell children over and over again that God loves them, no matter what. We will never “get” everything that happens in life – as children or as adults – but He knows everything and is always working for our good. That is His promise, and it is our sure hope. ■

Valerie Zahirsky chairs the OCA’s Department of Christian Education.



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pollution. I jump to conclusions. I rush,” she writes. “Saint Anna was a woman who knew how to wait for God through silence... she directs me to remain vigilant and aware that Christ is in our midst.”

The book connects the reader with many more such examples relating to the lives of Saints Christina of Tyre, Thekla, Juliana, Perpetua, Felicitas, Anna, Paula, Poplia, Mother Maria Skobtsova, Mary of Egypt, and others.

The conference at which the book made its debut brought together women serving in a wide variety of ministries – theological studies, education, chaplaincy, prison ministry, hospice, pastoral counseling, spiritual direction, philanthropy, publications, and missions.

Edited by Kyriaki Karidoyanes FitzGerald and published by Holy Cross Orthodox Press, *Encountering Orthodox Women of Faith* is available at www.holycrossbookstore.com. ■

Marilyn Rouvelas is a consultant to St. Catherine's Vision.

New titles, journal released

Virginia Nieuwsma

Saint Vladimir's Seminary Press recently released two books on the spiritual life.

Reflections on a Spiritual Journey by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah, is the first in the Press' "Orthodox Christian Profiles Series." In his reflections, Metropolitan Jonah touches on a number of topics, from the nature of the Church to the path of spiritual healing.

The Profile Series is designed to acquaint the reader on an intimate level with Orthodox figures who have shaped the direction of the Church in areas of mission, ascetical and liturgical theology, scholarly and pastoral endeavors, and various other professional disciplines. Most of the people highlighted in the series remain active in shaping the life of the Church today.

The second book, *Mystery of Faith: An Introduction to the Teaching and Spirituality of the Orthodox Church* by His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion [Alfeyev] of Volokolamsk, Russia, draws on ancient and patristic writings and contemporary sources to provide a clear exposition of the central doctrines of the Holy Trinity, the meaning and purpose of creation, the nature of the Church, and the central place of prayer and the sacraments in the life of the faithful.

In other publishing news, Priest Oliver Herbel of the OCA's Holy Resurrection Mission, Fargo, ND, recently announced that the Society for Orthodox Christian History in the Americas has just released the first edition of its affiliated academic publication, the "Journal of American Orthodox Church History." It features articles, reviews, and translations of historically significant texts. The first edition is available at <http://prairieparishpress.com> for \$10.00. ■

Virginia Nieuwsma manages the OCA's new web site at <http://oca.org>.

Atlas of American Orthodox Christian Churches released

The well known researcher of American Orthodoxy, Alexei Krindatch, is the author of a new and comprehensive volume that includes data on all Orthodox Churches (including Oriental) in the US.

Packed with a wealth of information, the *Atlas of American Orthodox Christian Churches* was published by Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Brookline, MA, and cosponsored by the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America and the Virginia Farah Foundation. In addition to full coverage of all American jurisdictions, the volume includes an additional chapter that profiles monastic communities.

The *Atlas* provides a "snapshot" of the Orthodox Christian Churches in the US. It features numerous maps detailing the historical development and present territorial patterns of Orthodox Church life in America. The book's essays tell the story of the Orthodox Christian past and present in the US.

Valuable as the *Atlas* is, one could argue that it seems somewhat preoccupied with "who came first" with regard to Orthodox Christianity's appearance in North America. Except in the author's statistical analysis, little mention is made of the Alaskan Mission. If one factors Alaska into the historical text, then the first multilingual and multicultural Orthodox parishes began much earlier than the *Atlas* records – and they still exist. (For example, Three Saints Church, Old Harbor, AK, recently celebrated the 227th anniversary of its founding by Siberian and Russian colonists and Alaska Native converts, while the first American-born priest, Saint Jacob Netsvetov, was born on Saint George Island in 1802.)

Also absent in the work is any mention of the Alaskan Mission's dedication to bringing Orthodoxy to "the Americans," as the Valaam monks called the Aleuts. The Kodiak parish began worshipping in Alutiiq and Slavonic in 1806, while it is known that the children trained at the Church's school would sing the Lord's Prayer in their own language at Liturgy. The fruit of this "mission in America, for Americans" is obvious today, and many would contend that this matters far more than "who came first." Half of the North American saints are associated with Alaska – a testimony to the ultimate "purpose" of the Church: the pursuit of holiness. From the very beginning, the intent of the Alaskan missionaries and those who continued their legacy was to bring the Gospel to the people of North America in their own languages – Aleut, Lingit, and Yup'ik Eskimo, all of which are authentic American languages – rather than "transplanting" Russian Orthodoxy to another land. In fact, the missionaries flatly renounced such an agenda as a matter of policy.

Nevertheless, Krindatch's research is, to be sure, invaluable – so much so that he has been invited to address delegates and observers at the 16th All-American Council in Bellevue, WA October 31-November 4, 2011.

The *Atlas* is available at <http://store.holycrossbookstore.com/h3stofamorch.html>, while sample pages in PDF format are available at <http://www.hartfordinstitute.org/research/AtlasAmericanOrthodoxChurchesSample.pdf>. ■

The repose of Metropolitan Nicholas

His Eminence, Metropolitan Nicholas [Smisko], 75, spiritual leader of the Johnstown, PA-based American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of the USA, fell asleep in the Lord on Sunday, March 13, 2011, after a courageous battle with cancer.

Metropolitan Nicholas was born on February 23, 1936, the son of the late Anna [Totin] and Andrew Smisko of Perth Amboy, NJ. After graduating from Christ the Saviour Seminary, Johnstown, PA, he was ordained by His Excellency, Bishop Orestes [Chornock] on January 11, 1959. He served as pastor of Saints Peter and Paul Church, Windber, PA, where he served until 1962.

A new phase of his life began when he embarked on a year's study at the renowned Patriarchal Theological Academy at Halki, Constantinople. During his stay in the city, he was assigned by the late Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras to serve the spiritual needs of the large Orthodox Slavic community in Istanbul's Galata section. He also traveled extensively throughout Europe and the Middle East, visiting the sacred sites of the Holy Land and living for a time on Mount Athos.

After his return to the US, he resumed studies at the University of Youngstown, OH, and the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. He was then assigned Prefect of Discipline at Christ the Saviour Seminary while serving several area parishes. In 1971, he assumed the pastorate of Saint Nicholas Church, New York, NY.

He was elevated to the rank of Archimandrite in 1976, elected by the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate as Auxiliary Bishop for the Ukrainian Orthodox Diocese of America, and consecrated to the episcopacy on March 13, 1983.

After the death of His Excellency, Bishop John [Martin] in September 1984, Bishop Nicholas was chosen as the third ruling hierarch of the Carpatho-Russian Diocese and enthroned in Christ the Saviour Cathedral, Johnstown, PA, by His Eminence, Archbishop Iakovos on April 19, 1985.

He was elevated to the rank of Metropolitan by His All-Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I on November 24, 1997.

Metropolitan Nicholas was awarded the Order of Saints Cyril and Methodius by the Orthodox Church of Czechoslovakia and the Order of Saint Sava by His Holiness, Patriarch



Pavle of Serbia. He also received an honorary Doctorate of Divinity from Holy Cross School of Theology, Brookline, MA.

Metropolitan Nicholas was well known for his love for his flock the liturgical services of the Church, and his devotion to the Ecumenical Patriarchate. He was well-respected in Orthodox and ecumenical circles as a promoter of peace and mutual understanding among all Christ-loving people. True to his patron, Saint Nicholas of Myra, he was perhaps best known and respected for his pastoral sensitivity and his generous spirit and compassion for the sick, suffering and less fortunate.

Archbishop Demetrios of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America presided at funeral services at Christ the Saviour Cathedral. Interment was in Saint John the Baptist Cemetery, Perth Amboy, NJ.

May Metropolitan Nicholas' memory be eternal! ■

Assembly of Bishops holds second meeting

The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America met in Chicago May 25-27, 2011. A total of 45 bishops in attendance representing the Ecumenical Patriarchate [the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, and the Albanian Orthodox Diocese]; the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese; the Patriarchate of Moscow [including the Russian Orthodox Church in the USA and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia]; the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of the Americas; the Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church; and the Orthodox Church in America. Not represented were the Carpatho-Russian Diocese, due to the repose of His Eminence, the late Metropolitan Nicholas; the Georgian Orthodox Church, whose bishop resides in Georgia; and most of the bishops of Canada and Mexico, as the Canadian bishops anticipate their own assembly, as do those of Mexico and Central America, who have requested to join the Assembly of South America. The Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church also did not participate as they were attending their Assembly of Bishops in Belgrade.

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, Assembly chair, opened the meeting on Wednesday. The agenda for the meeting and the minutes of the last Assembly, held in May 2010, were unanimously approved. The Archbishop delivered his address, in which he remembered the three member bishops who had fallen asleep in the Lord since the last Assembly: Metropolitan Christopher, Metropolitan Nicholas, and Metropolitan Epiphanius. He welcomed the new members: His Grace, Bishop John of Caracas, who was appointed by ROCOR to oversee its Old Believer parishes in the USA, and His Grace, Bishop Matthias of the OCA, and noted the retirement of His

Assembly to 26



The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America.

Eminence, Metropolitan John of Winnipeg, head of the Ukrainian Church in Canada, and the election of his successor, His Eminence, Metropolitan Yuri.

At the conclusion of his address, Archbishop Demetrios invited the first Vice-Chairman, His Eminence, Metropolitan Philip [Antiochian], and the second Vice-Chairman, His Eminence, Archbishop Justinian [Moscow Patriarchate], to address the Assembly. Both hierarchs stressed the need for increased cooperation among all the bishops through the agency of the Assembly.

The Assembly Treasurer, His Eminence, Archbishop Antony [Ukrainian], reported on financial resources available to the Assembly. Each of the churches contributed funds for the work of the Assembly's 13 committees. The cost of the Assembly meeting itself, it was noted, was not funded from these contributions, but was covered by the contributions of individual donors.

His Grace, Bishop Basil [Antiochian], Secretary, reported on the work of the Secretariat, which includes bishops, priests, deacons, laypersons, and monastics, and the creation of the Assembly's web site.

The hierarchs also heard reports from each of its 13 committees, nearly all of which had met at least once. In the absence of the Secretariat's Coordinator for Committees, His Grace, Bishop Maxim [Serbian], the reports were presented by Bishop Basil and the respective committee chairs.

The hierarchs expressed their desire to define more carefully the Assembly's relationship to the agencies and endorsed organizations which it inherited from the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas [SCOBA]. It was felt that the bishops should do more to enable the success of these ministries, and they agreed that the guidelines previously used by SCOBA were not adequate for the Assembly. These guidelines will be revised by the Secretariat's Coordinator for Agencies and Endorsed Organizations, together with the liaison bishops for the various agencies, to allow the Assembly to play a more active role in supporting them.

The hierarchs also agreed on the important role played by Orthodox Christian military chaplains. They decided to develop clear guidelines for chaplains and to create a single, unified endorsing agency with the Department of Defense. In addition,

the Assembly will organize a gathering of all active Orthodox Christian military chaplains in the future.

Youth ministry was also discussed, with the hierarchs endorsing three projected conferences for youth ministers in an effort to encourage them in their ministry, eliminate redundancy and divided resources, and create a common vision for youth ministry across North America.

The hierarchs decided to move ahead with incorporation of the Assembly as a legal entity. They also reaffirmed their 2010 petition to the Mother Churches to establish Canada as a separate region while placing Mexico and Central America in the South American region.

Before adjourning, the hierarchs issued an official message, the text of which is posted on-line at www.assemblyofbishops.org/news/documents/assembly-message-2011. ■

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Archbishop Dmitri from 17

as his Episcopal See. Christ the Saviour Church, Miami, FL, a prominent community in the South, became the second cathedral of the newly formed diocese. Archpriest George Gladky, a veteran missionary and rector of Christ the Saviour, was named Chancellor. He and Bishop Dmitri worked tirelessly with others to establish churches and teach the faith in a region in which Orthodoxy was relatively unknown. Miami was the site of the first Assembly of the Diocese of the South in August 1978.

In 1993, the Holy Synod elevated Bishop Dmitri to the dignity of Archbishop. At various points he chaired several OCA departments, including the Department of Religious Education. Early on, he was instrumental in the dialogue with representatives of the Evangelical Orthodox Church [EOC] who, at that time, were seeking entrance into canonical Orthodoxy. His understanding of the centrality of Christ helped guide these initial discussions. It is related how,

at one point early on in the dialogue, when some EOC members wanted to focus on details of worship, the Archbishop offered words of caution: "Let's first discuss our approach to Jesus Christ, since everything that we have in Orthodoxy proceeds from that core set of teachings."

On September 4, 2008, following the retirement of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, the Holy Synod named Archbishop Dmitri Locum Tenens of the Orthodox Church in America, a position he held until the election of His Grace, Bishop Jonah [Paffhausen] of Fort Worth as Metropolitan. On March 22, 2009, he requested retirement from active ministry, effective March 31, 2009. Under his leadership, the diocese grew from a dozen communities to over 70 parishes and missions.

After his retirement, Archbishop Dmitri lived peacefully at his home, writing, making occasional visits to diocesan communities, and maintaining a quiet involvement with the life of Saint Seraphim Cathedral. Until the very moment of his repose, he was blessed to have many parishioners visit and care for him at home 24 hours a day, as well as medical professionals who came to his bedside to treat and evaluate his condition. The community in turn received a great blessing from the love and courage with which the Archbishop welcomed them and approached his declining health. He remained courteous, hospitable and dignified throughout, even attending Church when his strength allowed. His unexpected visits to the cathedral were sources of joy and inspiration to the faithful.

For his former Diocese and the Orthodox Church in America, Archbishop Dmitri leaves a progressive vision of evangelism and ecclesial life, a solid foundation upon which to develop future communities and schools. He leaves the faithful the experience of having had a compassionate father whose enthusiasm was contagious, inspiring many to look profoundly at their own vocations in the Church.

Archbishop Dmitri's greatest joys – as well as sorrows – were connected to his episcopal ministry. The establishment of new missions, the ordinations of men to the priesthood or diaconate, and the reception of others into the faith were

continual sources of delight. He patiently dealt with clergy and laypersons who needed correction. In fact, it would be difficult to recall an instance in which he strongly reprimanded anyone, at least publicly. Private, gentle advice when needed was more "his style." At times, his approach confused and frustrated those who felt that his manner of oversight should be stricter, or that he should be more demanding in his expectations. But this was never his way. It was not in his character to remind people bluntly of their responsibilities. He chose to lead by example, not by decree. Mere suggestions were readily received as directives because of people's fondness for him. More than once, the comment was made, "you cannot buy that kind of authority" – authority that proceeds from integrity and proven dedication, from a loving relationship between a father and his children.

As stated, Archbishop Dmitri's episcopacy was strongly characterized by a single-minded devotion to the person and work of Jesus Christ. He would later recall that an Orthodox clergyman and mentor had advised him early

on in his priesthood to include always the name of Christ in every conversation, to make Him the focus of every sermon. This carried into his publications, which stand as a testimony to his dedication. Among his books are *The Sermon on the Mount*, *The Parables of Christ*, *The Miracles of Christ*, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Romans and to the Hebrews*, *The Epistle of St. James*, and *The Gospel of St. John*. His works also include *A Layman's Handbook on The Doctrine of Christ*. Many of his works have been translated into other languages, enthusiastically received as instructional tools by the faithful abroad. When asked to document his personal thoughts concerning evangelism or American Orthodoxy, the Archbishop consistently hesitated, preferring instead to dwell on the teachings of the Fathers regarding Scripture and Church doctrine.

For many years, Archbishop Dmitri served as editor of the first diocesan newspaper in the Orthodox Church in America, *The Dawn*. This modest publication was a primary means of education and an instrument of unity among members of a diocese that spanned over one million square miles. One full page of each issue featured his Spanish-language translations. Later, he included a page in Russian to minister to the needs of new immigrants.

The dignity that Archbishop Dmitri brought to his episcopacy was well known. People commented on his bearing, the way he carried himself as a Bishop of the Orthodox Church. Some found it surprising that such an august figure possessed great love and respect for others, and that he presented himself as one of the people. Without exaggeration, it can be said that he was a rarity, a unique combination of faith, talent, intelligence and charisma. For the Diocese of the South – indeed, for the Orthodox Church in America – he was "the right person at the right time." Throughout the 42 years of his episcopal ministry, every day was offered in service to Christ, with Whom he now enjoys the blessedness of the Kingdom. We pray for his continued prayers, and we thank the Lord for having given His flock the gift of Archbishop Dmitri.

May Archbishop Dmitri's memory be eternal! ■

Visit the new OCA web site at <http://oca.org> for additional articles on Archbishop Dmitri and galleries from his funeral.

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