

# The Orthodox Church

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## The Diocese of Mexico

**Celebrating forty years of ministry and growth!**

# Remembering Father John Meyendorff

**Archpriest Leonid Kishkovsky**

**J**uly 22, 2012, will mark the 20th anniversary of Father John Meyendorff's death. A better way to speak of Father John's repose would be to say that he died "in hope of the resurrection." These words are used in Orthodox prayers for the departed. Father John's theological vision, in accord with the great Christian theologians, affirmed and celebrated the dynamism of our life and our movement toward the resurrection.

In remembering Father John and reflecting on his life and ministry, it is clear that he was a theologian of depth and a teacher of excellence. In this he witnessed to Christ, to the Gospel, to the Orthodox Faith. He exemplified intellectual integrity and seriousness and was allergic to untruth in any form. Theology and teaching were not "academic" endeavors for Father John. He placed his intellect and his teaching in the service of the Church. In this sense, he was as much a pastor as he was a theologian and teacher. During the years of his labors as theologian and historian, teacher and lecturer, Father John achieved respect and recognition around the world in the Orthodox Church, in the ecumenical world, and in academia. Among the Orthodox Churches, his voice articulated the vision of the Orthodox Church in America, affirming the imperative need for unity and mission. In the ecumenical and academic worlds, he articulated and bore witness to the Orthodox vision of God's creation and the meaning and content of human life in light of the biblical teaching on the image and likeness of God in each human person.

As editor of *The Orthodox Church* newspaper for 20 years, Father John made a major contribution to public discussion of the challenges facing the Orthodox Church in America and around the world. He saw his service as editor as a continuation of his task as teacher of theology and history. He knew that an educated and informed clergy and laity were necessary for a healthy Church. His birth and education in France were no obstacle to his love for America. On the contrary, he entered fully into the experience of American Orthodoxy, understanding its challenges and appreciating its gifts and possibilities.

In the story of the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in America, Father John was more than a teacher and scholar. He played a key role in the negotiations which led to the granting of autocephaly, working closely with Father Alexander Schmemmann and the other members of the team charged by the Holy Synod with the responsibility for dialogue and negotiation with the Russian Orthodox Church.

A central aspect of Father John's thought and teaching was the calling of the Orthodox Church to overcome the limitations of national, ethnic Orthodoxy through a proper vision and experience of the unity and universality of the Orthodox Church. This did not mean for him that the national and ethnic realities should be despised or rejected. It did mean that the true vocation of the Orthodox Church cannot be confined to the boundaries of ethnic and national identities. This insight guided the "creators" of the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in America, and still guides our vision of Orthodox mission in America.

The various aspects of Father John's life and ministry were complementary. Scholar and



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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.**

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# “He’s Coming Back!”

They returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God.

LUKE 24:53

**T**he frenzy created by those who predicted that the world would come to an end on May 21, 2011 – and, when that didn’t happen, October 21 – seems to have subsided. But now a new date, December 21, 2012, has been proposed, this time based on an ancient Central American calendar.

It’s easy to dismiss such predictions, especially after they fail to materialize as some expected. This has, in fact, been the case on numerous occasions throughout history. Some groups that exist to this day were actually founded *around* such predictions.

Yet this doesn’t mean there’s not something to be gained from prognostication. If even for a moment, we entertained the thought that there might be a hint of truth to the impending judgment of God, a spiritual purpose will have been served. This is certainly consistent with the Scriptures and teaching of the Church Fathers, who encourage us to ceaselessly pray for one more day, one more hour, even one more breath in order to repent.

This is also a lesson easily applied to our present, post-Paschal liturgical life. Forty days after His glorious resurrection, Christ ascended in glory from the Mount of Olives. As for the apostles, “they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God” [Luke 24:53]. This is how the Gospel of Saint Luke ends. The apostles return to the Temple – just a good stone’s throw away – and continually praise and bless God with great joy.

Now, really, how joyful could they have been?! The crucified and risen Christ, for Whom they had forsaken everything in life and with Whom they had experienced so much, had virtually disappeared in a radiant cloud to return to His Father. Is this something that would provoke in them “great joy?”

How is it, then that virtually every prayer, reading, hymn, and even mention of the Ascension in the Church relates that the disciples had such “great joy?” We would think they would have been filled with sadness and despair, alone and abandoned. But no – they’re full of “great joy!”

Some 2000 years later, we perhaps sense a bit of sadness at the Ascension, don’t we? The past months of pre-Lent, Lent, Holy Week, and Pascha have been so profound, inspiring, and rejuvenating for us. How can we bring ourselves to muster “great joy” at the Ascension, when it seems we now return to a



“more ‘ordinary’ time” in our worship? The answer can be found in the Acts of the Apostles. “While they were gazing into heaven as He [Jesus] went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, Who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven’” [Acts 1:11].

The “two men” referred to are angels. Whenever angels appear in the Scriptures or in the world, extraordinary things happen. They exist to serve God and to be His messengers. So it was not only the promise of Christ’s return, but it’s confirmation by the holy angels at the Ascension, that brought great joy to the disciples. What was that promise again? That Christ will indeed return – in the same manner as He had left.

This is one of the fundamental teachings of our faith. In the Creed, we profess that “He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, Whose Kingdom shall have no end.”

Did we ever consider this article of faith to be a source of “great joy” for us? It certainly was for the disciples and the early Church! They could hardly wait for Christ’s return! He promised it, and they were expecting Him to fulfill His promise. And the point is, so do we! This is a cause for incredible joy!

“In my Father’s house are many rooms,” Christ said in John 14. “If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.”

What great consolation, comfort, and encouragement are wrapped in these inspiring words! What hope they bring to our hectic and often troubled lives – that not only is Our Lord always mystically present with us, especially in the sacraments and fellowship of His Church, but that His love extends from generation to generation, from everlasting to everlasting – that there is a room reserved for us in His eternal Kingdom. How desperately we need such hope in our fallen world!

This is the expectation, the anticipation, the great joy experienced by Christ’s disciples at the Ascension. But this is also characteristic of our expectation, our anticipation, and our great joy in the Church to this day, until Christ’s glorious return!

**That’s the Spirit to 31**

## Evangelization is for every Christian!

“God is good!” “All the time!” These words are so common in the cultural and Christian memory of the US South. It is a call and response akin to “Christ is risen!” “Indeed, He is risen!” And this call-and-response reminds each of us to reflect on reminds each of us to reflect on God’s goodness and mercy, grace and forgiveness in our lives, and to respond in two ways. The first is to give God thanks for such gifts. The second is to bear witness to such grace and goodness in our thoughts, words, and deeds. The former is prayer and worship. The latter is evangelization.

Have you ever heard someone say, “He who loves what he does will never work a day in his life?” For those who love God and wish to honor Him in their daily lives, being a witness to Him will be natural, however unnoticed it may be to themselves. They simply wish to thank God and to tell others about it. This, I believe, we can see in the words of the disciples when Jesus said, “When I was sick, you visited me... when I was naked you clothed me...,” and they replied, bewildered, “when did we do such things to You?” Of course, we know the answer: when you did them to “the least of the brethren,” you did them to me.

The disciples were not looking for an “almsgiving program.” They simply fed the hungry. Nor were they attempting to organize a “visitation committee” – it was in their Christian nature to visit the shut-in. Herein we find the very essence of missions and evangelization: “He who loves God and bears witness to Him in his daily life will be a missionary without ever thinking about it.”

Evangelization is an attitude more than anything else. It is not a “strategy,” although we must have one. It is not a “plan,” although we must organize our efforts. It is not a “program,” although lectures and books and *how-to-do-its* are important. Evangelization – or, more simply, *evangelism* – is an attitude, a vocation common to *all* Christians. If you take nothing else

away from this essay, take this: *evangelism is a vocation, an attitude, a way of looking at and living the Christian life.*

While Scripture is clear in revealing that some individuals have been given a very specific spiritual gift called “evangelist” – see Ephesians 4:11 – *each and every Christian* is called to be a “bearer of the Good News,” and has a specific, personal task to bear witness to God in his or her life.

**Hospitality vs. hostility!** Evangelization cannot be reduced to “being nice.” But evangelism *does* begin with a smile and an outwardly good example of Christian character. A dear monastic friend of mine was told by his spiritual father, “do not look glum in the daytime. Smile, be joyful, share the love of God. At night, in the privacy of your cell, you can do your repenting and express your sadness or dismay. This you share with God privately, while His love and mercy and joy you share publicly.” These are good words – and if each of us would put them into practice, how many souls would find the love of God?!

In a parish, evangelization – when “folks are coming to us” – starts with *philoxenia*. “philo” is from the Greek “to love,” while “xenia” is from the Greek word for “stranger.” Hence, *philoxenia* means “the love of strangers” – in English, “hospitality.”

We must welcome visitors with open arms, smiles, handshakes, and gestures of kindness. We must not interrogate





Photo:  
John Mindala

visitors and enquirers with “What are *you* doing here?” or “What do *you* want?” – questions that are more appropriate from a border patrol agent! Rather, we must rephrase such “opening lines” in welcoming ways: “How did you learn about our community?” or simply “Thank you for joining us for worship and fellowship this morning.” These statements display an interest in visitors and enquirers, and put them at ease in what may very well be intimidating territory.

I recently heard a story about a fellow who moved from our area to another state. He desperately needs the love of God – we had been working with him here. I gave him the address of a parish in his new place of residence. I called the priest in advance to give him a “heads-up.” Excited to visit his new parish, he arrived well ahead of the service – so much so that the church doors were still locked. So he parked his car and sat on the steps of the church. His “welcome” came from the individual who arrived with the keys, who shouted, “Hey! *You* can’t park there! What are you doing here?” Would we be surprised had he decided not to return? How would you feel with this welcome? Did it reflect the love of the father of the prodigal son?

Nor can we expect Orthodox Christian behavior, dress, and customs from those who are unfamiliar with them. If this scandalizes you, speak to me: God doesn’t care about dresses

and headscarves, especially from those who are drawing near to Him for the first time. Whatever our inner traditions are for Christians, let’s reserve those for the catechumens who are learning them, and from the Christians who adopt and embrace them. Welcome the stranger in your midst as he or she is.

Evangelism also requires longsuffering and patience – things that are hardly foreign to Orthodox Christians. In the first instance, God is the Font of longsuffering and patience. It is “what He does” endlessly for you and for me. When was the last time, for example, that you went and confessed your sins to God before the priest, and went away unforgiven? If you repented, you have *never* gone away unforgiven. Why would we treat others any differently? God *long-suffers* you. He is patient with me. He shows mercy on you. He forgives me. Evangelism – the sharing of the Good News – is grounded in thanking God for this, and then sharing the same, exact gift with those whom God has placed in our path.

**A common union.** Evangelism is also found in the community aspects of our parishes. Human beings seek meaning and community instinctively. It is the Church comprised of Christians, who will be known by “how they love one another” – the “common union” upon which community is built.

Evangelism is rooted in extending the invitation to others to

**Evangelization to 7**



# Our common calling

**A**t the beginning of His public ministry, Jesus Christ revealed Himself as the One of Whom Isaiah spoke, as recorded in Luke 4:16–21: “And [Jesus] came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and He went to the synagogue, as His custom was, on the sabbath day. And He stood up to read; and there was given to Him the book of the Prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it was written, ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.’ And He closed the book, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’”

Jesus “went on through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the Good News of the Kingdom of God” [Luke 8:1].

Jesus Christ assumed our human nature so that we might “become partakers of the divine nature” [2 Peter 1:4]. He accomplishes this by His resurrection, that singular victory that makes mankind’s resurrection possible by destroying, once and for all, the wedge sin had driven between God and His People.

*This is the Good News Jesus Christ came to proclaim.*

*This is the Good news the apostle Peter proclaimed on the day of Pentecost. “Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through Him in your midst... This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, [was] crucified and killed.... But God raised Him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for Him to be held by it.... This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured out this which you see and hear.... God has made Him both Lord and Christ” [Acts 2:22–24, 32, 33, 36].*

And *this is the Good News the Church, some 2000 years later, continues to proclaim.*

Sharing good news is second nature to us. When we discover

a new restaurant or a terrific sale, we tell others about it. In such instances, a type of *evangelization* takes place. The resurrection of Christ, however, is the *greatest news* the world has ever known. It is news that, by its very nature, those who call themselves by the name of Christ – *Christians* – *must* proclaim.

When the women disciples first discovered the empty tomb of Christ, the angel told them two things: That the Lord is risen, and that His resurrection should be publicly announced. And when the apostles invited Matthias to take the place of Judas amongst the twelve, their invitation was clear: “Become with us a witness to His resurrection” [Acts 1:22].

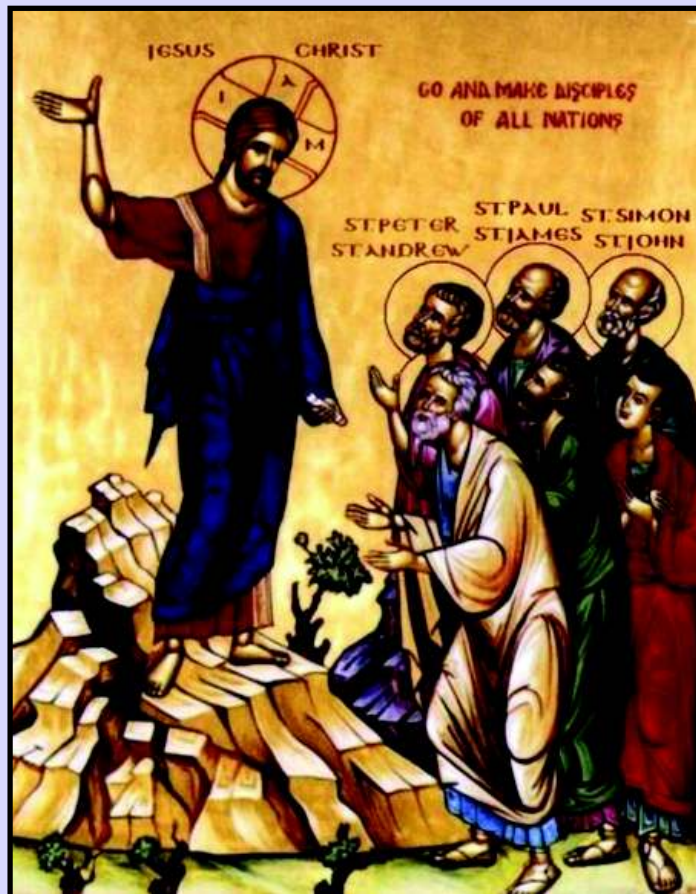
The invitation extended to Matthias is extended to every member of the Body of Christ. Concerning this, Saint Ignatius of Antioch wrote, “We are of the fruit of His divinely blessed passion, so that by means of His resurrection He might raise aloft

a banner for His saints and believers in every age, whether among the Jews or among the gentiles, united into a single body in His Church.” Echoing this, Saint Clement of Rome wrote, “After receiving their instructions and being fully assured by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, as well as confirmed in faith by the Word of God, they [the apostles] went forth, equipped with the fullness of the Holy Spirit, to preach the Good News that the Kingdom of God is close at hand.”

Proclaiming the Good News – *evangelization* – is at the heart Our Lord’s command to “go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age”

[Matthew 28:19, 20]. It is not “something Protestants do,” nor is it “the job of the clergy” or a means of increasing parish membership “so we can better meet our expenses.” To the contrary, evangelization is the sharing of the Good News of the risen Christ with all who would receive it and the use of our time, talents and treasures for the building up of the Body of Christ, the Church.

In the words of Saint Athanasius the Great, “let us note that the very tradition, teaching, and faith of the Church which the Lord gave us was, from the beginning, preached by the apostles and preserved by the Fathers. On this the Church was founded.... The Lord sent out the apostles and commanded them to make this the foundation of the Church by saying, ‘Go out and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.’” ■



## Evangelization from 5

“come and see,” to share our common life – the life of the worship of God, the repentance and forgiveness of sins, and outdoing one another in showing charity, to paraphrase the New Testament. Do our parish events demonstrate our love for one another? How about our parish council meetings? Coffee hour? Do we break off into cliques and speak only with those whom we know? Evangelism involves approaching the person standing alone and saying, “Hello! Welcome!” Evangelism is saying, “let me introduce you to some of our other parishioners.” Evangelism is “would you join us for lunch?”

Some of this does not come easily. And for some, it may seem constitutionally impossible. It is, however, vital. It is an ascetic effort. It takes practice. It requires leaving comfort zones. Would we want differently for ourselves if we were that visitor? Would we want to be left by ourselves, staring into a cup of coffee alone while others laugh and visit and catch up?

Many of the above principles are common to all facets of our lives, but are also specific with regard to “what we should do” when visitors and enquirers cross our thresholds. And indeed, God does bless us when He sends folks *to* us!

**“Sent ones.”** But more biblically speaking, we are “sent ones” – *apostles*. Jesus’ Great Commission was not, “Wait in your Churches and welcome those who show up” – although we cannot neglect this reality. The Great Commission is “Go!” Jesus’ last words to His disciples were, “Go therefore and *make disciples* of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age” [Matthew 28:18ff].

Where are we to go? To our neighbors. To the store. To the office and the town square and the supermarket and the dormitory and the PTA meeting. Where did the apostles *not* go?! Every non-Orthodox Christian person on planet Earth lacks something in his or her “toolkit for life.” If you and I have been graced with the *complete* tool-kit, yet we keep it to ourselves, we would do well to re-read the parable of the man who buried his talent in the earth.

It is never easy to know what to do with statistics, and it is probably complicated at best to equate “goes to church” with “Christian”, but in the USA (one survey says), 8% of folks never go to church. If you are a churchgoer, someone within 8 houses of your house is not a Christian, statistically. In Canada, the statistic is much higher, where 38% never, or almost never, go. If you go to church, one neighbor on either side of your house does not. God does call some to the proverbial African jungle. But let’s not overlook Main Street USA, Canada, and Mexico. And if we are concerned with the fullness of faith, the chances are that no one else in your neighborhood is an Orthodox Christian. In a town of 10,000, statistically speaking, there are 100 or less Orthodox Christians. That means, depending on our strategy, there are up to 9,900 folks who *need* Orthodox Christianity – who do not know the fullness of Christ. How big is your town?

Biblically speaking, we might organize our efforts according to Acts 1. Again just before His Ascension, Jesus instructed His followers – us! – to go and wait on the coming-and-promised-Comforter: the Holy Spirit. And He noted, “you shall receive

power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth” [Acts 1:8]. “Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, ends of the earth.” We can take these to be like ever-extending ripples in a pond. Jerusalem: where we are. Judea: the surrounding area. Samaria: a long way away. Ends of the earth: a foreign land. Some take it in this way: my city, my state, my country, foreign missions. Some indeed are called to go a long distance to bear witness to Jesus Christ. Some are called to stay at home. Some are called to go and come back. “To where?” and “when” are the good questions. “Me?” is not a question. *Every* Christian is called to be a witness to Jesus Christ. The questions are where, how, when?

**To be a missionary or evangelist** – a witness to Jesus Christ in one place or another – really requires very little. What *does* it require?

1. To have encountered God.
2. To be conforming one’s life to God’s.
3. To reflect on God’s work in one’s life.
4. To thank God for this regularly, formally, and informally.
5. To share this story, using words when necessary, with those God sends to us or to whom God sends us.

Of course, it will benefit us greatly to know the Scriptures, the saints, the history of the Church, how Orthodoxy fulfills all religions, etc. But the personal knowledge of the Saving God is the bedrock of one’s evangelistic foundation.

Two biblical examples come to mind: The woman at the well, and the Gerasene demoniac. Jesus drew near to the “half-breed” Samaritan woman and, if that scandal wasn’t enough, He knew every detail of her life – not to expose or shame her, but to heal her by pointing her to true life: Himself. She left the well “and went away into the city, and said to the people, ‘Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?’” [John 4:28]. The principle here is simple: *Go. Tell. Invite. Point to Christ.*

The Gerasene demoniac had already been consigned to the unclean existence of living in the land of the dead, chained to death, and away from his community. He was completely cleansed from the demons who inhabited him. “And as [Jesus] was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged Him that he might be with Him. But He refused, and said to him, ‘Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how He has had mercy on you.’ And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; and all men marveled” [Mark 5:18ff]. *Go. Tell. Point to Christ!*

God is good to His People – to the righteous and the unrighteous, to outcasts, to the sick and suffering, to you and to me. Evangelization is proclaiming God’s truth by sharing how He has worked in our lives, thanking Him, and spreading His love to others. Everyone, from the baptized infant to the nonagenarian, can thank God for His mercy and bear witness to this in their lives. This is God’s command. This is our response in gratitude and in love. ■

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## The Road to Emmaus

### Pilgrimage as a way of life

**E**ach of the stories about Christ's resurrection is a challenge to the rational part of ourselves. Dead people are dead, period.

There is the account in Saint John's Gospel of Mary Magdalene's encounter with Him near the empty tomb. Until He speaks to her by name, she thinks he must be the gardener. Once she realizes Who He is, Jesus tells her not to touch Him. Why? There are many guesses, but in fact we don't know.

Though risen from the dead, Christ still bears the wounds that caused His death. Thomas, the apostle who was the most reluctant to make a leap of faith, becomes the only man to touch the wounds of the risen Christ. Why isn't Jesus fully healed? We don't know.

Soon after, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus – a man freed from mortality – joins His friends in eating fish cooked over an open fire. Why is He Who has become deathless still hungry? We don't know.

Finally the resurrected Christ ascends into heaven. Where would that be? Why didn't He stay on earth? Why didn't He reveal His resurrection to crowds of people? We don't know.

We *do* know that Christ rose from the dead, and we are familiar with the stories the Gospel preserves for us of encounters people had with Him before the ascension, but the mystery of His resurrection is far beyond our intellectual reach.

**Perhaps the most accessible** of the resurrection narratives concerns the risen Christ's short pilgrimage with two disciples to Emmaus, a village described as being seven miles – less than a two-hour walk – from Jerusalem.

Two friends are escaping from a tragedy in Jerusalem, and



perhaps also running from possible personal danger. It wasn't at all clear that Jesus' disciples weren't next in line for execution. The two were not only mourners, but disillusioned mourners. Jesus had failed to meet their expectations. The person they fervently believed would become the new king of Israel, heir to David's throne, not only isn't ruling Israel, but is in His grave. The candle of their messianic hopes has been snuffed out. His closest followers were in hiding. Their homeland was still ruled

by Romans, undergirded by a second tier of well-rewarded Jewish collaborators. The Kingdom of God that Jesus had said was already present now seemed infinitely distant.

Conversation would not have been easy. Deep grief is rarely a talkative condition. The words they hewed out of silence were confused, bitter, angry. Their beloved teacher was dead and buried. Everything that mattered had turned to dust. The world had no center. Life's axis had crumbled. Death once again had proven itself life's defining event. Existence had no meaning, no pattern. People of virtue perish while their persecutors feast. How could one speak of a merciful and all-powerful God? Ruthless power, corruption, betrayal and the triumph of the grave – this was Good Friday's bitter message.

What person old enough to have attended a funeral of a deeply loved person, whose life was cut short in its prime, hasn't known a similar rage, numbness and despair?

Walking side by side, breathing dust, the two friends are joined by a stranger who appears without a word of description. He doesn't impress the two men as being somehow familiar. They fail to notice His wounded hands. Without apology, He joins



their conversation. He wonders why they are so downcast. They are amazed at the stranger's ignorance. One of the men, Cleopas, asks the stranger how is it possible that He doesn't know what has happened in Jerusalem in recent days. Could anyone share in this particular Passover and be unaware of what happened to Jesus of Nazareth? Only a week earlier, Jesus had entered the city in triumph, joyful crowds putting palms in His path and shouting *hosannas* and calling Him king of Israel. And now the man Who should have redeemed Israel had been condemned by the high priests, renounced by the very crowds that had cheered Him, and sentenced to public execution under the authority of Rome's agent, Pontius Pilate. Finally, He had been ritually murdered while soldiers threw dice for His clothing. Jesus' followers had dared to hope for a miracle, even when Jesus was taken away to Golgotha – after all, He had raised Lazarus from death – but the man Who had been able to bring others back to life proved powerless to save Himself. Yes, the two men had heard the wild tale told earlier in the day by a few grief-stricken women – angels, an empty tomb, Jesus alive again – but truly, it was an unbelievable tale.

The stranger listened patiently. At last He responded, “O foolish men, so slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?” Then, starting with Moses and going on to all the prophets, He explained all the scriptural texts concerning the Messiah.

By this time, they had reached the outskirts of Emmaus, apparently the place where the two friends planned to end their journey or at least spend the night. The stranger appeared to be going further, but they were so taken with His authoritative explanations of the prophecies of scripture that they appealed to Him to join them for a meal in the local inn. “Stay with us,” they said, “for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.”

Even when they sat down to eat, the stranger was still nameless and unrecognized, yet it was He Who presided at the table, taking bread, blessing it, breaking it and giving it to them. It's at this point in Saint Luke's Gospel that we get one of the most breathtaking sentences in the New Testament: “And their eyes were opened and they recognized Him” [Luke 24:31].

Perhaps they recognized Him because, at last, they noticed His wounded hands as He blessed and broke the bread. In their moment of realization, Jesus “vanished from their sight.” Perhaps he actually disappeared – as we have seen in other resurrection stories, the risen Christ doesn't seem subject to the rules of physics. Or perhaps He chose that moment to leave the table in order to continue his journey, but His departure was unseen because the two disciples, weeping with joy, were momentarily blinded by their tears. We don't know. All we are sure of is that the stranger was Jesus and that the two friends finally knew with Whom they had been talking on their way to Emmaus, and Who it was that blessed the bread and broke it.

They said to each other, “Didn't our hearts burn within us while He talked to us on the road, while He opened to us the scriptures?”

Forgetting their exhaustion and hunger, the two friends reversed their journey, hurrying back to Jerusalem in order to report what they had witnessed. But by now, they discovered,

Pilgrimage is not getting from point A to point B on the map while counting the miles. The distances covered are incidental. What matters is being on the road to Emmaus – the road of discovering Christ in the Other. Pilgrimage was, and still is, the great adventure of becoming unblinded. We discover it is impossible *not* to be in the presence of God. God is with us all the time, only we don't notice. It is a blindness not caused by physical damage but by deeply rooted fears, the imprisonment of self-absorption, and ideological obsessions.

it wasn't only the women who had proclaimed the resurrection. “The Lord has risen indeed,” they were told, “and has appeared to Simon!”

What happened on the road to Emmaus – and finally in Emmaus itself – was the first Christian pilgrimage. Every pilgrimage, whether to a local park or to some distant place at the end of a well-trodden pilgrim road thick with miracles, is in its roots a journey to Emmaus, and every pilgrimage is animated with a similar hope: to meet the risen Christ along the way.

***It's a hope one hardly dares to mention.*** Yet something like the Emmaus story occurs in many lives. Again and again, we meet strangers along the way who speak with unexpected clarity about things that really matter. In such encounters, do we not find our hearts aflame within us? This is a person we're in no hurry to part from, whose words and presence are water in the desert. The stranger is someone we would eagerly invite to eat with us, even if we had little money to spare, someone with whom we are eager to break bread.

At the heart of the Emmaus story is the stranger. Had the two disciples failed to make room for Him in their journey, the New Testament would be missing one of its most illuminating stories.

Pilgrimage is not possible if it excludes unexpected people found along the way. Perhaps it's only for an hour or a day. A hesitant conversation takes wing. A reluctant tongue becomes fluent. Finally, we eat together. By now, the stranger has become a named person. Sooner or later we part, but we remember that encounter as a shining moment. We didn't literally meet Jesus risen from the dead, and yet, in this brief communion with a stranger, Jesus became present and traveled with us. A chance encounter became a eucharistic event. Ideas about Jesus were replaced with an experience of Jesus.

The details of such encounters vary infinitely. No two God-revealing encounters are the same. Each of us is unique, and each of us experiences conversion in unique ways, even though we recognize something of our own conversion in all the conversion stories we happen to hear. Conversion means a

**Emmaus to 29**

## Diocese of Mexico celebrates 40 years!

**F**aithful arrived early at Mexico City's Cathedral of the Ascension on Sunday, January 8, 2012, as His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah presided at the Divine Liturgy marking the diocese's 40th anniversary.

Concelebrating with Metropolitan Jonah were His Grace, Bishop Alejo of Mexico; diocesan clergy from as far as Monterrey and Guadalajara; priests from the US who offer assistance to the diocese, including Archpriest Ernesto Rios of Port St. Lucie, FL and Priest Antonio Perdomo of McAllen, TX; a priest of the Patriarchate of Moscow; and Protodeacon Joseph Matusiak.

In early April 2012, Metropolitan Jonah returned to Mexico for a week-long visit to several missions and to ascertain ways of providing additional assistance to Bishop Alejo in the diocese's mission efforts. Traveling with Metropolitan Jonah was Priest John Parker, chairman of the OCA Department of Evangelization. A detailed reflection on their visit, "The Fields are Ripe," is available on the OCA web site at <http://oca.org/cdn/PDFs/evangelization/2012-0405-mexico-evangelization.pdf>.

The origin today's Diocese of Mexico of the Orthodox Church in America were may be traced to the early 20th century, curiously through a group known as the Mexican National Catholic Church, a body distinct from the nation's Roman Catholic Church. It was during the Revolution that antagonisms against the Roman Catholic Church were aroused by its historic

association with the Spanish colonialists. Some of the first laws of the new Mexican Republic were antireligious. In 1917, Church properties were nationalized and many churches were closed. Monasteries were abolished and the communities dispersed, while clergy were required to obtain licenses to function. Several attempts were made to establish an independent "national church."

In 1926, a Roman Catholic priest, with government support, was made head of the Independent Old Catholic Church of North America, and the Mexican National Catholic Church was born.

The community thrived under government patronage and extended its jurisdiction to Mexican communities in Texas. The National Church continued as an Old Catholic community until Father José Cortes y Olmos was appointed its bishop in 1961. He and his clergy gradually became convinced through their studies that the Old Catholic ecclesiological principles did not conform to the criteria of the One, True, Catholic Church. They came to identify with Orthodox Holy Tradition, and adopted the designation "Orthodox," adopting the name "Iglesia Ortodoxa Catolica en Mexico" – Orthodox Church in Mexico.

In 1965, Bishop José and his clergy contacted the then-rector of Saint Seraphim Church in Dallas, TX, Father Dmitri Royster, who had been instrumental in converting many Mexicans to Orthodoxy and was translating Orthodox liturgical services into Spanish. After Father Dimitri's consecration to the episcopacy in 1969 and the granting of autocephaly the following year, Bishop Dmitri presented the case of the Orthodox Church in Mexico to the hierarchy of the Orthodox Church in America. After a number of exchanges and visits, the Holy Synod sent Bishop Dmitri to visit Mexico officially and to report on his findings. This report was studied by the OCA's Department of Canonical Affairs, which recommended acceptance of the Mexican communities into the Orthodox Church.

In 1971, Bishop José petitioned for the acceptance of his community into the Orthodox Church in America. He and other priests of his community were received in their Roman Catholic ranks, while upwards of 20,000 faithful were also received into the Church. Father José studied at Saint Vladimir's Seminary prior to his consecration as Bishop of Mexico City, which took place at Holy Virgin Protection Cathedral, New York, NY, on April 22, 1972. Despite countless obstacles, what had become the Exarchate of Mexico continued to grow through the establishment of additional missions and conversions.

After Bishop José's repose on January 28, 1983, Archbishop Dmitri continued to oversee the life of the Exarchate until 2005, when a successor to Bishop José was found. On May 28 of that year, in services celebrated at Saint Tikhon's Monastery, South Canaan, PA, Archimandrite Alejo [Pacheco-Vera] was consecrated an auxiliary to Archbishop Dmitri. On October 16, 2008, he was elected ruling bishop of the Mexican Exarchate. Metropolitan Jonah, presided at his installation at Mexico City's Ascension Cathedral on January 18, 2009. The Exarchate subsequently was granted full diocesan status.

Additional information on the Diocese of Mexico may be found on the diocese's upgraded web site at <http://ocamexico.org>. ■







**The laying on of hands.** Metropolitan Jonah and concelebrating hierarchs consecrate Archimandrite Alexander to the episcopacy.

## The Consecration of Bishop Alexander

**A**rchimandrite Alexander [Golitzin] was consecrated to the episcopacy during the Divine Liturgy at Saint George Cathedral, Toledo, OH, on Saturday, May 5, 2012. He was enthroned as Bishop of Toledo and the Bulgarian Diocese of the Orthodox Church in America on Sunday, May 6.

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah, presided at the consecration Divine Liturgy. Concelebrants included His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel; His Grace, Bishop Nikon; His Grace, Bishop Tikhon; His Grace, Bishop Benjamin; His Grace, Bishop Melchisedek, who served as Locum Tenens of the diocese; His Grace, Bishop Michael; His Grace, Bishop Matthias; His Grace, Bishop Irineu; His Grace, Bishop Mark; and His Grace, Bishop Irene.

Joining members of the Bulgarian Diocese were clergy and faithful from sister OCA dioceses, other Toledo-area Orthodox parishes, monastics from Saint John of Shanghai Monastery in

Manton, CA, Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Elwood City, PA, and Holy Dormition Monastery in Rives Junction, MI, together with representatives from Saint Vladimir's Seminary, including seminary Dean, Archpriest John Behr, and a number of Bishop Alexander's former students from the US and Canada.

A special guest taking part in the consecration was Bishop Alexander's brother, Protodeacon George Golitzin, who represented Bishop Alexander's family. Also in attendance were representatives from the Theology Department of Marquette University. Another special guest at Friday evening's service was Bishop Leonard Blair, Roman Catholic Bishop of Toledo.

A choir including singers from parishes throughout the Bulgarian Diocese and guests from other OCA parishes sang the liturgical responses.

During the Liturgy, Bishop Alexander ordained Subdeacon Basil Frenchek to the diaconate.

On the evening of Friday, May 4, prior to celebrating Great Vespers, Bishop-elect Alexander made his public acceptance of his election. In his address he stated that, "when standing before the holy altar at the anaphora, the bishop images forth the one and unique High Priest, Christ, Who acts through His celebrant." He then added that, "while it is true that our Lord Jesus is true God and true King, it is also true that He did not come to us, His creatures, with the pomp and splendor of the King, attended by the legions of heaven, but rather in humility He emptied Himself and was found in the likeness of a servant.

"They are very different images, the first set revelatory of the splendor of heaven, and the second of the humility, long-suffering, and charity of our Lord's life and ministry," Bishop elect Alexander continued. "My first conclusion is that I must keep this difference firmly in mind throughout my life as bishop, by which I mean the glory of the liturgical iconography should have no place in my office and day-to-day demeanor. My actions, my patterns of speech, my service in short, is to be determined by the example given us by God the Word Himself."

In June 2010, the Bulgarian Diocese initiated a search for a successor to His Eminence, Archbishop Kirill [Yonchev], who headed the diocese from 1964 until his repose in 2007. It was he who brought the diocese into the Orthodox Church in America in 1976.

**Consecration to 26**



## The 16th All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America

The proceedings of the 16th All-American Council were highlighted daily on the Orthodox Church in America web site, together with extensive photo galleries and related resources.

- **Approved minutes** of the Council are posted on the OCA web site in PDF format at <http://oca.org/PDF/16thAAC/16thaac-minutes.pdf>.
- **Powerpoint presentations** used at the Council may be accessed at <http://oca.org/PDF/16thAAC/16thaac-powerpoints.pdf>.
- **Metropolitan Jonah's address** to the Council may be read on-line at <http://oca.org/holy-synod/statements/metropolitan-jonah/address-to-the-16th-all-american-council-of-the-orthodox-church>.
- **A list of related resources** may be found at <http://oca.org/history-archives/aacs/the-16th-all-american-council>.

## Off the drawing board

### AAC overwhelmingly approves implementation of Strategic Plan

**T**he draft Strategic Plan for the Orthodox Church in America was a major focus of the recent 16th All-American Council. Four of the eight plenary sessions focused totally or in part on the Strategic Plan's elements. The heart of these activities were two three-hour long workshops focused on each of the 10 top priority goals – with participants having the opportunity to further develop the goals and to identify initial projects that they, the participants, networked together could do to help achieve the goal.

The Strategic Planning workshops were very well received and productive. Approximately 400 of the 600 delegates and observers participated in the workshops. Participants were actively engaged, in some cases forgoing breaks to continue working on their goal and projects. Lots of good, new ideas emerged from the workshops, including modifications to the existing draft plan and the identification of over 30 potential initial projects that the participants networked together could accomplish. In fact, more than 150 of the participants signed up to continue working on the implementation of these projects beyond the AAC.

In the final strategic planning wrap-up session, an informal,

non-binding vote on three specific recommendations was taken, namely

- that the OCA proceed with implementing the general directions of the Strategic Plan.
- that the Metropolitan Council form a Post-Conciliar Committee to oversee implementation of that Plan.
- that the Metropolitan Council pursue alternate funding sources to support the resulting initiatives.

Each of these recommendations received an overwhelming vote of approval from the AAC delegates.

Based on that overwhelming vote of approval, the strategic planning transitioned into an implementation phase. The draft Strategic Plan was revised to reflect the inputs from the AAC delegates.

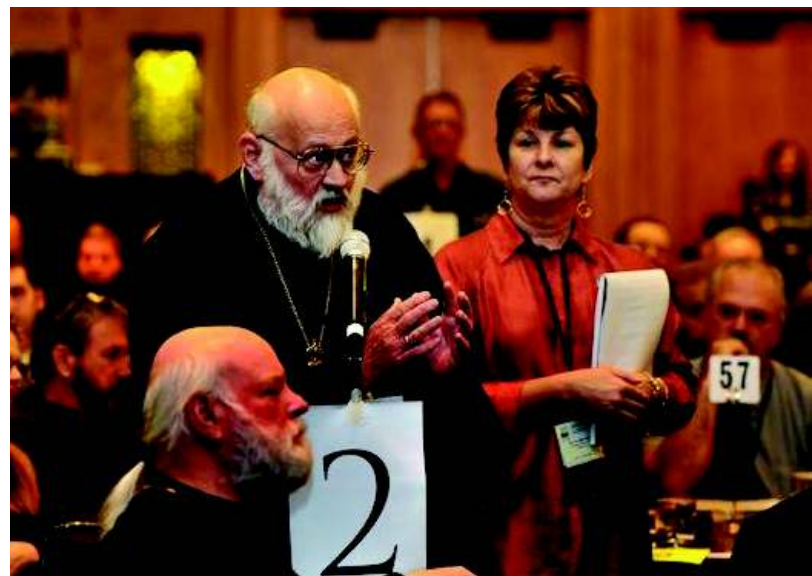
Subsequently, at their meeting at the Chancery February 22-23, 2012, the members of the Orthodox Church in America's Metropolitan Council unanimously approved proceeding with the implementation of the "Strategic Plan for the Orthodox Church in America: A Comprehensive Action Plan for the Next Decade." [The text of the updated Plan may be accessed in PDF format on the OCA web site at <http://oca.org/PDF/NEWS/2011/2011-1221-strategic-plan-draft-v6.1.pdf>.

According to Priest John Vitko, who chairs the committee charged with implementing the Plan, the Metropolitan Council's approval is subject to "considering input that might be submitted by the Metropolitan Council and the Holy Synod over the next month." Council members "did not commit to any costs at this time, beyond those covered by funds currently allocated for the Strategic Plan in the 2012 budget or those that can be raised from other funding sources.

"At the 16th All-American Council, participants in the Strategic Planning workshops identified promising first steps/projects for actualizing the goals of the Plan," Father John said. "Since then, implementation facilitation teams have been working to develop the means to implement the initial projects presented for review and approval to the Metropolitan Council at its February 2012 meeting.

"These plans define 'milestones' indicating what needs to be done, by when, and by whom, along with required resources," Father John continued. "They also identify the roles parishes, deaneries, dioceses, and the Central Administration will play in implementing specific projects."

Father John added that "the projects span the development







*Planning workshops punctuated Strategic Plan presentations at 16th All-American Council.*

of training materials to present Orthodox Christianity within the context of North America's varied cultural landscape to the identification and production of resource materials for parish priests and lay leaders and the development of social networking sites to better connect with our young adults."

Parts of the Plan, according to Father John, "will be applicable to most parishes.

"For example, struggling parishes might find the projects on evangelization and parish development, leadership and management, and more fully involving youth and young adults in the life of the parish particularly helpful," he said. "Different parishes, deaneries and dioceses will be interested in different portions of the Plan – not only is this alright, but it is how the Plan is supposed to work.

"With the Metropolitan Council's approval, we can move on to implementing these projects," Father John concluded.

Implementation plans were presented for several goals/projects, as listed below. Those interested in becoming part of a team are invited to contact the appropriate facilitator as noted.

- **Evangelization and Parish Development:** Archpriest John Reeves – frjohnr@gmail.com.
- **Leadership and Management:** Archpriest David Lowell – fr.davidlowell@gmail.com.
- **Revitalizing Diocesan Relations:** Mrs. Donna Karabin – dkarabin@aol.com.
- **Inter-Orthodox Relations:** Matushka Wendy Cwiklinski – matushka@cox.net.
- **Contemporary Issues:** Priest Caleb Abetti – abetti@gmail.com.
- **Continuing Education:** Archpriest Ian Pac-Urar – pacurar@zips.uakron.edu.
- **Youth and Young Adults:** Priest Christopher Rowe – frchris@att.net.

The goals on Funding and Theological Education were moved to the Financial Committee and the Board of Theological Education, respectively, for implementation.

The presentations given at the Metropolitan Council meeting are available in PDF format on the OCA web site at <http://oca.org/PDF/NEWS/2012/2012-0228-pocc-powerpoints.pdf>. ■

## Financial moves

In light of AAC assessment discussion, diocesan chancellors, treasurers urge adoption of "proportional" giving

**A**t a meeting described by one participant as "unprecedented and very frank," the chancellors and treasurers of eight of the Orthodox Church in America's dioceses met with His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah; Archpriest John Jillions, Chancellor; Archpriest Eric Tosi, Secretary; Melanie Ringa, Treasurer; and Priest Gleb McFatter, chair of the Metropolitan Council Finance Committee, at the Chancery in mid-January 2012.

"The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and move forward on the resolution on assessments passed at the 16th All-American Council in November 2011," said Father Eric.

The resolution, which called for a reduction of the OCA "per capita" assessment to \$50.00 – the text may be found in the Council Minutes available on the OCA web site at <http://oca.org/PDF/16thAAC/16thaac-minutes.pdf> – generated lengthy discussion and debate at the Council.

After initial remarks by and encouragement from Metropolitan Jonah, Fathers John and Eric and Mrs. Ringa presented a number of critical concerns, including budgetary matters, restructuring, and accountability, and opened discussion on steps that need to be taken in light of the Council's resolutions.

Offering the chancellors and treasurers an overview of the work of the Church's ministries, the OCA's department chairs outlined current and pending projects and discussed methods of interaction and cooperation between their respective departments and their counterparts on the diocesan level.

"Each diocesan representative was then given a chance to present an overview of his or her diocese's current ministries, financial status, and concerns," Father Eric said. "They also shared the challenges they face and major issues in parishes.

"In the process of reviewing a number of possible methods for securing an appropriate level of funding for the Church, it was clear that, while maintaining the work of the Central Church administration is critical, equally critical is the need to lighten the financial burdens being faced on the diocesan and parish levels," Father Eric continued. "A frank discussion was held on per capita assessment methods and the move toward proportional giving on the parish and diocesan levels.

"It was clearly noted that the process will require creativity, especially in light of each diocese's unique circumstances and history," Father Eric added. "While it is obvious that some dioceses will take longer than others in embracing proportional giving, the chancellors and treasurers are committed to reforming the assessment methodology over the next triennium and will continue their work together."

**Finances to 14**

## Proportional giving

A statement issued at the conclusion of the two-day meeting reads in part that “the OCA Central Administration is currently doing a commendable job with the current resources. Past financial difficulties are still being paid for and have a significant impact on the budget. The All-American Council resolution on proportionally reducing the assessment in the next triennium still referenced a *per capita* approach to decreasing the Central Church Assessment. Moving away from a *per capita* assessment will be a challenge for some dioceses.”

Acknowledging that “the current system of revenue is dysfunctional and will not support the OCA in the future,” the statement presents pending actions.

“The OCA Treasurer will refine the 2013 assessment formula based on diocesan projections to reduce the assessments and introduce proportional giving. Dioceses will pursue collecting parish financial data for their own use. The Diocese of the West and the Diocese of the South will make proposals as to the percentage of their budgets they will contribute to the OCA to fund the OCA at the current dollar level for 2013.” The statement notes that these dioceses “do a form of percentage giving from the parishes to support the dioceses. One diocese does not do a *per capita* count to determine the dollar amount to send to the OCA.”

The statement concludes with participants expressing their “hope that any funds returned from the Central Church Assessment to the dioceses by lowering the assessment will be invested by each diocese in its parishes and missions to promote growth.”

[The text of the statement may be read at <http://oca.org/PDF/NEWS/2012/2012-0119-finance-statement.pdf>.]

Attending the meeting were Archpriest John Kowalczyk and Priest Raymond Browne, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania; Archpriest John Zdinak, Diocese of the Midwest; John Skrobat, Diocese of New England; Archpriest Joseph Lickwar and Matushka Mary Buletza-Breton, Diocese of New York and New Jersey; Archpriest Marcus Burch and Milos Konjevich, Diocese of the South; Archpriest Gregory Safchuk and Michael Hydock, Archdiocese of Washington, DC; Archpriest Ian MacKinnon and Mary Caetta, Diocese of the West; and Archpriests Paul Ziatyk and Dennis Hendershot, Diocese of Western Pennsylvania. ■

## Synopsis: Holy Synod fall, spring sessions

**His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah**, chaired the **fall session** of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America **October 4-6, 2011**, during which

- **Archimandrite Alexander [Golitzin]** was elected Bishop of Toledo and Bulgarian Diocese. [See related story on page 11.]

- **His Grace, Bishop Melchisedek**, Acting Chancellor, spoke of the ongoing work of the **Chancery**, reported on the work of the **Sexual Misconduct Policy Advisory Committee [SMPAC]**, and addressed a variety of **pastoral issues**.

- **SMPAC members Archpriest Michael Matsko, Proto-deacon Peter Danilchick, Dr. Nikita Eike, and Thaddeus Wojcik, Esq.**, OCA General Counsel, provided an update on **policy revisions**, which will be reworked for approval.

- **Archpriest Leonid Kishkovsky** offered a detailed report on **External Affairs, inter-Church relations**, and other issues for future consideration.

- **Archpriest Eric Tosi**, OCA Secretary, reported on an array of administrative matters, including the work of the Church's **committees, boards and commissions**. He also reported on

**personnel issues** under consideration and the **new OCA web site**.

- **Melanie Ringa**, OCA Treasurer, offered a thorough review of **2011 finances** to date and the **2010 external audit** and presented the **2012 Budget**.

There was extensive discussion on the final issues of the audit and an in-depth discussion of proposed 2012 budget recommendations received from the Metropolitan Council.

- a final report on the **16th All-American Council** and the **Preconciliar Commission** was given. The agenda and other issues were discussed.

- Mr. Wojcik reported on various **legal matters** in an executive session.

- the hierarchs announced the **appointment of a new Chancellor**, whose name will be released pending the candidate's acceptance of the position. The Holy Synod received the nomination from the Metropolitan Council, accepting and approving him as the candidate.

After the celebration of the **Divine Liturgy** on October 6, the hierarchs offered prayers for **His**

**Eminence, the late Archbishop Dmitri** on the 40th day of his repose.

The hierarchs then

- reviewed a number of **clergy cases** in executive session.

- gave their blessing for distribution of **Guidelines for Clergy Use of Online Social Networking**, the text of which is found on the OCA web site at <http://oca.org/holy-synod/statements/holy-synod/guidelines-for-clergy-use-of-online-social-networking>.

- approved the **Service for Consolation of Families of Suicides** for distribution.

- reaffirmed the **1992 Synodal Affirmations on Marriage, Family, Sexuality and the Sanctity of Life**.

- received an update from the **Synodal Investigation Commission** and blessed its ongoing work.

- heard the report of the **Board of Theological Education**. The hierarchs approved **psychological testing for all candidates for ordination**, clarified ordination procedures, and blessed the Board's ongoing work in drafting a formal policy document.

**Metropolitan Jonah** also chaired the **spring session** of the Holy Synod at the



**Monastery of the Holy Dormition of the Mother of God, Rives Junction, MI, May 7-10, 2012.**

The hierarchs participated in the monastery's daily services, including the Divine Liturgy, which provided an essential spiritual context to their work. They also visited the **Ascension of the Lord Monastery, Clinton, MI**, and the **Vatra**, the headquarters of the OCA's Romanian Episcopate, Grass Lake, MI.

In his address to his fellow hierarchs, **Metropolitan Jonah** offered a detailed overview of his activities and ministries. The Holy Synod also approved his travel schedule as presented.

Highlights of the session include the following.

- **Father John Jillions**, Chancellor, spoke of the good working relationship he maintains with Metropolitan Jonah, and cited the professionalism of the other officers and members of Chancery staffers. He then summarized the work of a number of committees and updated the hierarchs on a number of other current issues.

**Father Eric Tosi**, Secretary, updated the hierarchs on staff changes, developing job descriptions for department chairs, and the Orthodox Health Plan.

- In a detailed report,



*Members of the Holy Synod of Bishops during an informal moment at The Vatra.*

**Melanie Ringa**, Treasurer, noted that a surplus was realized at the end of the first quarter of 2012. She also reported that, with the approval of the Metropolitan Council, a bequest was used to pay down the Honesdale National Bank loan. Further, she updated the hierarchs with regard to an estate that had been left to the OCA.

- **Father Leonid Kishkovsky** reported on recent developments in the Orthodox world.

- **His Grace, Bishop Alexander** was named chair of the **Department of External Affairs**, while **His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel** was named chair of the **Canonical and Canonization Commissions**.

- The Holy Synod reaffirmed that all **candidates for ordination and clergy wishing to transfer into the OCA** must undergo the approved battery of **psychological evaluations**. They

also recommended that any Bishop who does not have direct access to the services offered at the seminaries should retain the services of local psychologists. Each Bishop is also encouraged to solicit mental health professionals to assist in interpreting results. It was further decided that the OCA **Clergy Guidelines and Policies, Standards and Procedures for Sexual Misconduct** be translated into Spanish, Russian and French.

- The hierarchs reaffirmed their earlier decision to discourage OCA clergy from being placed "on loan" to other jurisdictions, especially in long-term cases.

- **Protodeacon Peter Danilchick** and **Eric Namee** of the Secretariat of the **Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in North and Central America**, offered a presentation on the Assembly's work, emphasizing the importance of inter-Orthodox efforts on the

grass roots level and fielding questions ranging from organizational concerns to the endorsement of Orthodox military chaplains. Counsel **Thaddeus Wojcik** offered comments on the Assembly's articles of incorporation and by-laws.

- The hierarchs reaffirmed their previous decision that **non-Chalcedonian Christians** are received into the Church through the sacraments of Confession and Communion. However, should they later return to their own Church, they no longer would be admitted to communion in the Orthodox Church.

- The hierarchs reaffirmed that **antimensia** should contain relics of martyrs, although relics of Confessors are acceptable. Antimensia may be replaced by a new bishop, who may also update them by placing his signature under that of the previous bishop.

- In response to a proposal of **Metro-**

**politan Jonah**, diocesan bishops with five years' tenure will be elevated to the dignity of Archbishop. Hence, **His Grace, Bishop Nikon**; **His Grace, Bishop Tikhon**; **His Grace, Bishop Benjamin**; and **His Grace, Bishop Alejo** were congratulated on their elevations.

- The hierarchs formally noted that May 6, 2012 marked the **10th anniversary** of the repose of **Bishop Innocent [Gula]**. May his memory be eternal!
- Each diocesan hierarch offered a report on the life of his respective diocese. In closed sessions, the hierarchs addressed a number of legal and related matters.

The members of the Holy Synod expressed their deep gratitude to **Archbishop Nathaniel**; **His Grace, Bishop Ireneu**; **Abbess Gabriella** and the nuns of Holy Dormition Monastery; the monks of Holy Ascension Monastery; and the Vatra staff for their hospitality in hosting the hierarchs' visits. ■

## Chancellor completes course on dealing with clergy abuse

**Archpriest John Jillions**, Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America, completed a course, "Leadership Training: Responding to Clergy Misconduct," in San Diego, CA March 18-20, 2012.

The course was offered by the Faith Trust Institute, which has been addressing sexual and domestic violence and clergy abuse since the late 1970s. Based at Seattle's University of Washington, the Institute provides training, consultation and resources.

"All churches are having to face the challenge of dealing with clergy sexual misconduct, and the OCA is no exception," said Father John, who is responsible for the OCA's Office of Review of Sexual Misconduct Allegations. "We are committed to addressing this at every level of Church life through training, prevention, and creating an environment in which victims can come forward knowing that their complaints will be taken seriously and be thoroughly investigated."

"At the February 2012 Lesser Synod and Metropolitan Council meetings, much of the time was spent on addressing misconduct issues,"

Father John added. "The Metropolitan Council has taken the bold step of setting aside additional funds to hire professionals to investigate allegations and coordinate the OCA's response and training efforts."

The course was facilitated by the Rev. Dr. Marie M. Fortune,

the Institute's founder, who has served as an advisor to the US Department of Justice and the US Department of Defense. She edited *The Journal on Religion and Abuse* from 2000 until 2008. Joining her was M. L. Daniel, who holds degrees in law and theology and who, as a practicing lawyer of 20 years, has vast experience working with faith communities and as a prosecuting attorney. ■

## Metropolitan Jonah consecrates Holy Chrism

For the first time since his election as OCA Primate, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah presided at the consecration of Holy Chrism at Saint Tikhon Monastery, South Canaan, PA during Holy Week 2012.

Preparation of the Chrism – a mixture of dozens of oils, herbs, and fragrances – began on Holy Monday morning, April 9, with the final consecration rites celebrated during the Vespers Liturgy on Holy Thursday. In the interim, clergy stirred the Chrism and read Scripture around the clock.

Concelebrating were His Grace, Bishop [now Archbishop] Tikhon of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania and His Grace, Bishop Michael of New York and New Jersey.

A photo gallery of the consecration may be viewed on the OCA web site at <http://oca.org/media/photos/metropolitan-jonah-presides-at-the-consecration-of-holy-chrism>. ■



## Fr. John Jillions named Chancellor

On Friday, October 21, 2011, Archpriest Eric G. Tosi, Secretary of the Orthodox Church in America, announced that Archpriest John A. Jillions had accepted the position of Chancellor.

Selected from a slate of several applicants, Father John was confirmed by the Holy Synod of Bishops upon the recommendation of the Metropolitan Council at their fall 2011 sessions.

A life-long member of the OCA, Father John was born in Montreal, Quebec, Canada in 1955. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics from McGill University. In 1980, he received the Master of Divinity degree from Saint Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY, from which he also received the Doctor of Ministry degree in 2005. In 2002, he received a Ph.D. in New Testament from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

After ordination to the diaconate and priesthood in 1981 and 1984 respectively, he served Holy Virgin Protection Cathedral, New York, NY; Annunciation Church, Brisbane, Australia; Holy Trinity Church, Rahway, NJ; Saint George Church, Thessaloniki, Greece; and Saint Ephraim the Syrian Church, Cambridge, UK, before returning to Canada in 2003. He was a founding director of the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies in Cambridge and served as its first Principal from 1999 until 2002. Previously, he served as administrator of Saints Cosmas and Damian Adult Home, Staten Island, NY. In the early 1990s, he served briefly as a Chaplain (Captain) in the US Air Force Reserve.

Since 2003, Father John served as an Associate Professor with the Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies at Ottawa's Saint Paul University, where he taught in the areas of 20th century Orthodox Christian thought, New Testament, ecumenism, and practical theology. Concurrently, he served as Dean of Ottawa's Annunciation Cathedral until 2009, at which time he was attached to the cathedral while serving "on loan" to the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto. He also has been a contributor to the "Ask the Religion Experts" column of *The Ottawa Citizen*, and served as a vice-president of the Canadian Council of Churches.

He and his wife, Denise Melligon, have three grown sons – Andrew [Alice], Alex [Meaghan], and Anthony.

As the fifth Chancellor of the OCA since the granting of autocephaly in 1970, Father John succeeds Archpriest Alexander Garklavs, who returned to parish ministry. ■



# A Spirit of “Sobornost”

An interview with Archpriest John Jillions, Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America

**S**ince assuming duties as Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America in October 2011, Archpriest John Jillions has had to wear many hats as a new chapter in the life of the Church begins to unfold.

Recently, Father John was asked to reflect on his experience to date.

**Tell us about your first few months as Chancellor. What has surprised or challenged or delighted you so far?**

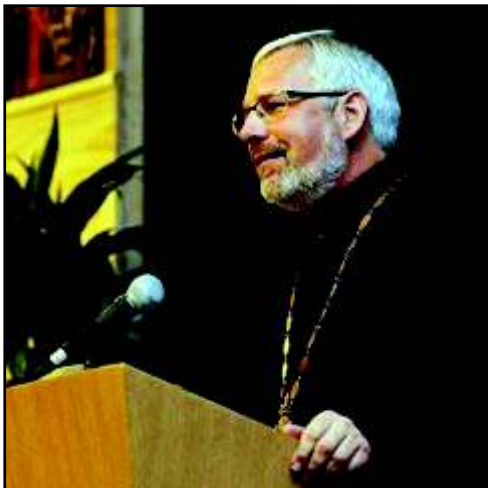
I've been surprised by how much I enjoy the job, being part of a team, working with good people at every level.

There is a collaborative, good-humored spirit of “sobornost.”

I've worked closely with His Beatitude and the Holy Synod of Bishops, the Metropolitan Council, and with the officers and staff of the Chancery and the seminary boards. I have worked intensively with the General Counsel and the Legal Committee, the Crisis Management Committee, and the Sexual Misconduct Policy Advisory Committee. I want to build a good working relationship with diocesan leaders, and I was very happy to attend the Assemblies of the Dioceses of the South and West. I also have met with the West's Diocesan Council in San Francisco and with the diocesan chancellors and treasurers – a first – that overlapped with a meeting of the OCA's department chairpersons. We have so many excellent people committed to working voluntarily for the Church, giving of themselves. And that is inspiring and motivating.

To be completely honest, however, I've also been surprised by how much attention has to be given to a very small handful of cases of alleged clergy misconduct. Much of this remains confidential, as it should, and does not at all reflect the full life of the OCA. But this is obviously a disturbing crucial area, and we will need to be doing much more in terms of training of seminarians, clergy, parishes and diocesan leaders.

But back to “delight.” I love going into Saint Sergius Chapel at the Chancery, surrounded by the relics of the saints of North America, Saint Seraphim and Saint Elizabeth the New Martyr. For now, the Chancery remains in Syosset (whether it stays here or moves in the future will be an administrative decision that needs to be taken carefully and rationally), but the chapel is a jewel and has been important in the life of my own family. It's where I began my priesthood, inasmuch as Metropolitan Theodosius served a molieben when I was being sent off to serve a parish in Australia with my wife Denise and infant son Andrew. It's where my late sister Alla Wheeler and her family went to church, where she was anointed, and celebrated her last Pascha in this life. It's where I baptized two nephews. It's a privilege and



a surprise to now be there everyday.

**Your resume is diverse – degrees from McGill, Saint Vladimir's, and Aristotle University; priest, chaplain, dean; founder of Cambridge's Orthodox Institute and professor; administrator. How do you hope to draw from this background in your new position?**

I have to say that the role of Chancellor is calling upon every single bit of that education and experience, and a lot more! It is by far the most challenging job I've ever had. But by

God's grace, the diversity of the job fits well with the diversity of my life, and so I feel quite at home swimming in a variety of waters. And as Bishop Benjamin told me recently, the Chancellor is meant to be a kind of grease, helping the various parts of the Church function well together. That's a fairly humble form of labor that should go largely unseen if the machine is working properly. But it helps to be comfortable in many different pastoral, administrative, educational, inter-church and ecumenical environments. I will be especially grateful if my experience of both Russian and Greek Church life can help with the OCA's contribution to forming a united Orthodox Church in North America.

**It's generally acknowledged that the OCA has had its share of challenges in recent years, yet every cloud has its silver lining. Describe the chief obstacles and opportunities you see in the next chapter of the OCA's history.**

The “silver lining,” in my opinion, is that the OCA has learned to live its life collaboratively. It has been forced to discover what it means in practice to be both hierarchical and sobornal. And so there is a healthy working relationship that is being hammered out at every level: between the Metropolitan and the bishops, the bishops and Metropolitan Council, the Central Church and the dioceses, the dioceses and parishes. Part of this process has been the painful and public facing of internal issues. But this is a badge of honor. One of my friends, an Eastern Catholic, followed broadcasts of the recent All-American Council and told me he was in awe of our process, “discussing these issues about the functioning and future of the Church with such candor, not just to your fellow delegates, but with the entire world listening.... I know of no other apostolic Church, Catholic or Orthodox, that comes within a thousand miles of having this kind of frank and open discussion.” We need to hold on to this and embrace it, not be embarrassed by it.

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St. Vladimir's Seminary Commencement



St. Tikhon's Seminary Commencement

## “Go forth”

### Commencement at OCA seminaries

**T**he Orthodox Church in America's three seminaries – Saint Vladimir's, Crestwood, NY; Saint Tikhon's, South Canaan, PA; and Saint Herman's, Kodiak, AK – held commencement exercises at the end of May.

**Twenty-two graduates** of Saint Vladimir's Seminary were honored at ceremonies May 19. Two Masters of Theology, 16 Masters of Divinity, and four Masters of Arts degrees were conferred. Thirteen graduates represented the OCA.

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah, the seminary's President and Chair of its Board of Trustees, conferred degrees upon the graduates. In his closing remarks, he encouraged the graduates to “bear the Good News with joy,” to “practice asceticism with a smile,” and to “remember always to bear the responsibility for building up the Church and the seminary.”

His Grace, Bishop Alexander [Golitzin], newly consecrated Bishop of Toledo and the OCA's Bulgarian Diocese, a seminary alumnus and former adjunct faculty member, delivered the commencement address, in which he distinguished between the sacramental and royal priesthoods. He added that an ordained clergyman has the “peculiar” role to “occupy the place of the High Priest [Jesus Christ]... and to offer himself up and give himself back to his people, his flock, as food and drink.”

Class valedictorian was Igumen Gerasim [Eliei], while second-year seminarian Harrison Basil Russin was salutatorian.

Also present were His Grace, Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania; His Grace, Bishop Michael of New York and New York and New Jersey; and His Eminence, Archbishop Mor Titus Teldho, Patriarchal Vicar of the Malankara Archdiocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church in North America.

**One week later**, on Saturday, May 26, Saint Tikhon's Seminary held its 70th annual commencement exercises.

Metropolitan Jonah presided at the opening Divine Liturgy in the monastery church, during which Deacon Benjamin Huggins was ordained to the priesthood and Brother Konstantin [Kasovac], Class of 2012, was ordained to the diaconate.

Leading the graduation procession was the miraculous myrrh-streaming Iveron Icon of the Mother of God from Hawaii, which was present throughout the monastery pilgrimage that weekend.

His Grace, Bishop John of Worcester and New England of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, gave a moving commencement address on human nature and the freedom of mankind to embody – or reject – Godly principles.

Fourteen graduates received Masters of Divinity degrees, while Certificates in Diaconal Formation were awarded to 11 individuals. Class valedictorian was Andrew Temple.

Also present were Archbishop Tikhon and Bishop Michael; His Eminence, Metropolitan Nikolaos of the North American Diocese of the Syrian Malankara Orthodox Church; and Archpriest Dr. Alexander Atty, dean.

Following commencement exercises, the graduates were feted at a traditional dinner held in their honor at Saint Michael Center, East Jermyn, PA.

**On Sunday, May 27**, Priest Michael Nicolai and Deacon Andrew Wasillie were honored at commencement exercises at Saint Herman's Seminary, Kodiak, AK.

His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin presented the graduates with Diplomas in Orthodox Theological Studies and certificates from the Kodiak Area Native Association for their field work in substance abuse counselling. In addition, Archbishop Benjamin awarded Reader's Certificates to five additional individuals.

Archpriest Stephan Heckman, dean of the Yukon Deanery and rector of Transfiguration of Our Lord Church, Pilot Station, AK, delivered the commencement address. His words concerning parish ministry and service to God's people in Alaska were both eloquent and heartfelt.

Mary Ann Khoury of “Outreach Alaska,” who for many years has coordinated support for the seminary and other projects in the Diocese, presented gifts to the graduates from their sponsoring churches. ■





# In Memoriam

## Priest Raymond J. Samoila

**North Canton, OH** – Priest Raymond J. Samoila, 97, fell asleep in the Lord on Friday, May 18, 2012.

Father Raymond was born on January 30, 1915, in Newark, OH, the son of Joseph and Paraschiva [Mihu] Samoila. A graduate of Alba Iulia High School in Romania, he attended the University of King Carol I in Bucharest. He also attended Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh, before graduating from Cleveland's Case-Western Reserve University with a degree in Criminal Investigation.

For many years, Father Raymond served as parish priest of Saint Nicholas Church, Alliance, OH and Saint Elias Church, Ellwood City, PA.

He was preceded in death by his loving wife of 71 years, Preoteasa Mary [Cristia]. Survivors include two sons; three granddaughters; four great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were celebrated at Saint George Church, Canton, OH, followed by interment in North Lawn Cemetery.

May Father Raymond's memory be eternal! ■

## Deacon John Zarras

**Sherman, CT** – Deacon John Zarras, 72, fell asleep in the Lord on Sunday afternoon, April 1, 2012, after waging a valiant battle against carcinoid/neuroendocrine cancer.

Born in Brooklyn, NY September 1, 1939, son of the late Constantine and Mary [Nanos] Zarras, he received engineering degrees from Pratt Institute and New York University. In November 2000, he retired as Vice-President of North America from Emery Worldwide.

Deacon John was well known for his devotion to the Church on the parish, regional, and national levels. He served as a Church School teacher, parish council member, and choir member at Saint Paraskevi Greek Orthodox Church, Greenlawn, NY; Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Bridgeport, CT; Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Indianapolis, IN; and Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, Dayton, OH. In 1997, he became a member of Christ the Savior Church [OCA], Southbury, CT, where he served after his ordination to the diaconate on February 2, 2003.

Deacon John received a Master of Divinity degree from Saint Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY, in 2006. He served as President of the Saint Vladimir's Theological Foundation and as a member of the school's Board of Trustees. In 1998, he chaired the seminary's Strategic Planning Steering Committee. From 2006 until 2011, he was a member of the Metropolitan Council of the Orthodox Church in America. He was a key member of the OCA's Reorganization Task Force. He also served as a representative to the Fellowship of Orthodox Churches of Connecticut.

Deacon John is survived by his loving wife of 49 years, Evangeline; four children; and 11 grandchildren.

Funeral services were celebrated at Christ the Savior Church, Southbury, CT, with interment at Saint John Cemetery, Monroe.

May Deacon John's memory be eternal! ■

## Archpriest Andrey Somow

**Vancouver, BC, Canada** – Archpriest Andrey Somow, 89, retired rector of Holy Resurrection Sobor here, fell asleep in the Lord on March 28, 2012.

He was born in 1923 in Constantinople, to which his parents, Ivan Y. Musatov, a lieutenant in the White Army, and the former Tatiana Bourda, had fled after their evacuation with Denikin's army from Crimea in 1920. He was raised in France and Czechoslovakia and was adopted by his stepfather Pavel Somow.

He studied engineering, architecture and town planning at the Technical University in Bratislava. With the establishment of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia, his aspirations to ministry were postponed, and he pursued a career in architecture.

In 1968, he and his family were granted political asylum in Austria. As refugees, they were granted "landed immigrant" status and settled

in Ottawa, Canada, where he worked at the University of Ottawa, and later with Federal Government's Department of Indian Affairs.

The Somows were members of Ottawa's Holy Trinity Sobor. In 1974, he was ordained to the diaconate. Later that year, he was transferred by the Federal Government to Vancouver, BC, and attached to Holy Resurrection Church. In 1989, he was elevated to the rank of Protodeacon. In 1992, he was ordained to the priesthood. The following year, he was appointed interim rector of Holy Resurrection Church. Confirmed rector in 1994, he served the parish until his retirement in 1999. In 2005, he was elevated to the rank of Archpriest.

Funeral services were celebrated at Holy Resurrection Sobor.

May Father Andrey's memory be eternal! ■

## Matushka Lubova Oskolkoff

**Anchorage, AK** – Matushka Lubova Oskolkoff, 71, fell asleep in the Lord on March 15, 2012 at the Alaska Native Medical Center here.

Born Donna Lee Gregorieff in Elemar, AK on June 29, 1940, she was raised primarily by her grandparents Elizabeth and Philip Borodkin and her sister Sylvia Allen in Tatitlek Village, AK. She is remembered as being "the Best Sunday School Teacher." In 1962, she married her husband of 49 years, the late Archpriest Simeon Oskolkoff.

Matushka Lubova was widely known for the love she displayed to her children and her extended family across Alaska. She was a quiet but strong Native leader. Having faced her family's health issues, as well as her own, she made a point of visiting Elders, those in the hospital, and in nursing homes. She was always ready to help people through their difficult circumstances by listening. She didn't preach, but always offered words of comfort or had a shoulder to lean on.

She is survived by two children and two sisters, in addition to the many of the loved ones she and Father Simeon had the pleasure to serve.

Funeral services were held at Saint Innocent Cathedral, Anchorage, and Holy Transfiguration of Our Lord Church, Ninilchik.

May Matushka Lubova's memory be eternal! ■

## Matushka Ruth Kuchta

**Joliet, IL** – Matushka Ruth Kuchta, 77, fell asleep in the Lord at home on March 4, 2012, surrounded by her family, after a lengthy illness. She was the beloved wife of Archpriest John Elias Kuchta, retired long-time rector of Saint Nicholas Church here.

Matushka Ruth was secretary at the Joliet Junior College Library for 35 years prior to her retirement. She also was an officer of the Saint Nicholas Ladies' Aid and Altar Circle, a Sunday School teacher, and a member of the Saint Nicholas Church Choir.

In addition to her beloved husband of 56 years, Father John, she is survived by three children, Archpriest Alexander [Natalie] Kuchta, Rebecca [Gregory] Grabavoy, and Charissa Holwey; seven grandchildren; one sister and two brothers; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were celebrated at Saint Nicholas Church, Joliet, with interment at Woodlawn Cemetery.

May Matushka Ruth's memory be eternal! ■

## Matushka Natalie Breyan

**Spring Hill, FL** – Matushka Natalie Breyan, wife of the late Archpriest George Breyan, fell asleep in the Lord here on February 28, 2012.

The daughter of the late Archpriest Theodosius and Matushka Eugenia Kiryluk, she and her husband served parishes in Manville, NJ; Hollywood, FL; Lakewood, OH; Marblehead, OH; and Detroit, MI.

After Father George's retirement in 1999, they served Saint Raphael of

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Brooklyn Mission, Inverness, FL, where they were instrumental in erecting a church building. At the time of her repose, she was a member of Saint Andrew Church, New Port Richie, FL. The Breyans celebrated their 50th anniversary in 2008.

Matushka Natalie was a long-time member of the Federated Russian Orthodox Clubs/Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America. For 27 years, she served as associate editor of the *Orthodox Christian Journal* and as editor of the FROC/FOCA's widely distributed cookbook. Her other writings appeared in a variety of publications.

In addition to Father George and her parents, she was preceded in death by her brother, Archpriest Nicholas Kiryluk, who is widely remembered as the first Orthodox Christian US Air Force chaplain.

Funeral services and interment were celebrated at Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery Church, South Canaan, PA.

May Matushka Natalie's memory be eternal! ■

## Matushka Jeanne M. Homik

**Perrysburg, OH** – Matushka Jeanne M. [Timm] Homik, 78, wife of the late Protodeacon Peter Homik, fell asleep in the Lord February 12, 2012.

Born in Cleveland, she graduated from the Fairview Park School of Nursing and was employed as a registered nurse for over 55 years. She and her husband were married in 1969 at Saint Theodosius Cathedral, Cleveland, where she was a life-long member. She was active in the Cathedral R Club, FOCA Chapter 7, and a member of Saint Mary's Altar Society. After her husband's ordination to the diaconate in 1997, she engaged in a variety of parish ministries.

She is survived by three sons, two grandchildren, and one brother.

Funeral services were celebrated at Saint Theodosius Cathedral, followed by interment at Saint Theodosius Cemetery.

May Matushka Jeanne's memory be eternal! ■

## Archpriest Theodore Soroka

**Miami, FL** – Archpriest Theodore Soroka, 89, fell asleep in the Lord February 8, 2012.

Born on September 22, 1922 in Belle Vernon, PA, a son of Theodore and Irene Pawlack Soroka, he was a graduate of Saint Tikhon's Seminary. On July 21, 1957, he married the former Sophia Hubiak, daughter of Archpriest Afanasy and Susan Wanchisen Hubiak. He was ordained to the diaconate by His Eminence, Archbishop Dmitri [Magan] on August 31, 1957, and to the priesthood the following day.

From 1957 until 1965, he served Saint John the Baptist Church, Black Lick, PA; Saint John Chrysostom Church, Grand Rapids, MI; and Holy Transfiguration Church, Steubenville, OH. In 1964, he was assigned pastor of Saints Peter and Paul Church, Miami, FL, which he served until his retirement in 1995. In retirement, he remained attached to Saints Peter and Paul Church.

In addition to his beloved wife, Matushka Sophia, he is survived by five sisters and several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were celebrated at Saints Peter and Paul Church, Miami, and Holy Resurrection Church, Belle Vernon, PA, with interment at Belle Vernon Cemetery.

May Father Theodore's memory be eternal! ■

## Protopresbyter Joseph Kreta

**Mesa, AZ** – Protopresbyter Joseph P. Kreta, 84, fell asleep in the Lord February 2, 2012, surrounded by his beloved wife, Matushka Marie, and the members of his family.

Father Joseph was well known for his efforts in the Diocese of Alaska, where he established Saint Herman's Seminary, Kodiak, AK.

He was born on May 15, 1927 in Clifton, NJ, the son of the Mitred Archpriest Peter and Matushka Anna Kreta. Much of his childhood was

spent in McKeesport, PA, where he was active in the life of the parish to which his father had been assigned. At the age of 17, he entered the US Navy during the later stages of World War II, serving throughout the Pacific. In September 1948, he enrolled in Saint Tikhon's Seminary.

On August 5, 1951, he married the former Marie Gambal of Old Forge, PA. Having completed his seminary studies, he petitioned to be ordained, hoping to serve a small parish in Juneau, AK. On May 30, 1952, he was ordained to the diaconate; the following day, he was ordained to the priesthood at Holy Virgin Protection Cathedral, New York, NY, to which he was assigned to celebrate the English language services at Saint Innocent Chapel. During this time, Father Joseph and Matushka Marie became the parents of their first son, Peter. Four years later, they became parents of twins, John and Stephen.

Shortly thereafter, Father Joseph was given a blessing to establish Saint John Chrysostom Mission, Queens, NY. After meeting for several years in a rented storefront, the parishioners built a church building and distinguished themselves as the east coast's first English language parish. Three years later, Father Joseph and Matushka Marie became the parents of a daughter, Maria.

In 1971, he traveled to Alaska to determine the situation of the "Mother Diocese" of the Church in North America, which had been experiencing severe financial difficulties. The following year, the Holy Synod of Bishops assigned him as temporary administrator of the Diocese of Alaska and rector of Sitka's historic Archangel Michael Cathedral. What was to have been a one year assignment lasted for three decades. At the time, there were only a dozen or so priests in Alaska, serving nearly 100 far-flung parishes, some of which had not seen a priest in many years.

The following year, Father Joseph and his family moved to Kenai, where he was instrumental in establishing Saint Herman's Pastoral School. As the school's founding dean, he was instrumental in training over 65 priests, deacons, readers, and Church School teachers to serve the faithful of Alaska. At the time of his retirement, Saint Herman's offered a four-year program leading to an accredited Bachelor's Degree in Sacred Theology.

In 1973, His Grace, Bishop Gregory [Afonsky] was assigned to oversee the Diocese of Alaska. He appointed Father Joseph to serve as diocesan chancellor. The same year, he was assigned rector of Kodiak Island's Holy Resurrection Church. Eventually, the Saint Herman's Seminary was relocated to Kodiak, and Father Joseph quickly worked to erect buildings for student housing, classrooms, a refectory, and a small chapel.

During Father Joseph's tenure as seminary dean, the Saint Innocent Veniaminov Research Institute was established to preserve the rich history of the Alaskan Church. And, in 1993, Saint Herman's Chapel was built as a replica of the original church erected in 1795 – one year after the arrival of Saint Herman and his seven missionary companions.

In an effort to ascertain the exact number of churches in the state, Archbishop Gregory and Father Joseph visited and documented each parish they could find – and in at least one case, they discovered one church only because they spotted it from the airplane in which they were traveling en route to an even more remote village! Through their efforts, 51 churches were nominated to – and 29 were soon listed in – the National Register of Historical Landmarks.

Father Joseph received numerous awards and commendations, including the Alaska Governor's Award in 1982 and the Alaska Historic Society's Evangeline Atwood Award in 1994. He also received numerous ecclesiastical awards. In 1990, the Holy Synod of Bishops elevated him to the rarely bestowed rank of Protopresbyter.

Father Joseph also served as a member of the OCA's Metropolitan Council; a member of the Board of Trustees of Saint Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary, South Canaan, PA; dean of the New



**Fr. Joseph Kreta**



York City Deanery; and chair of the OCA Statute Committee. He served as treasurer of the Eastern Orthodox Commission on Scouting, member of the New York-New Jersey Diocesan Council, and member of the OCA Canonical Commission. He retired from ministry in 1995.

Father Joseph was preceded in death by his eldest son, Archpriest Peter Kreta. In addition to his beloved wife, Matushka Marie, he is survived by two sons, Archpriest John [Matushka Evelyn] and his twin brother Stephen [Angela]; his daughter Maria; his daughter-in-law, Matushka Marilyn Kreta [the late Father Peter]; one sister; 10 grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

Funeral services were celebrated at Saint George Antiochian Orthodox Church, Phoenix, AZ and Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery Church, South Canaan, PA, followed by interment at the monastery cemetery.

May Father Joseph's memory be eternal! ■

## Protodeacon Blagoy E. Nicoloff

**Lorain, OH** – Protodeacon Blagoy E. Nicoloff, 88, of Saints Cyril and Methodius Church here, fell asleep in the Lord on January 25, 2012.

Born in Lorain on June 15, 1923, he entered the Army after his graduation from Lorain High School in 1941. During World War II, he participated in the African, Rome-Arno, Southern France, Rhineland and Central European Campaigns. He earned the European African Middle Eastern Service Medal with Four Bronze Stars and a Bronze Arrowhead, as well as a Good Conduct Medal.

He was employed by a number of concerns and by US Steel Lorain Works until his retirement in 1976. He served as a Lorain Civil Service Commissioner during the 1970s.

He served as choir director at Saints Cyril and Methodius Church for over 50 years and as a member and president of the parish board. Music was one of his passions, and he and his brothers had a Macedonian band.

In 2002, he was ordained to the diaconate by His Eminence, the late Archbishop Kyrill of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania and the Bulgarian Diocese. He was elevated to the rank of Protodeacon in 2009.

He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Diakonissa Raisa Nicoloff [née Lysak]; son Dr. Nicola [Michele] Nicoloff, daughters Dr. Catherine Loboda and Ellen [Sam] D'Fantis, nine grandchildren, and three great grandchildren.

Funeral services were celebrated at Saints Cyril and Methodius Church, Lorain, with interment at Elmwood Cemetery.

May Protodeacon Blagoy's memory be eternal! ■

## Matushka Eleanor Kosko Krell

**Wilkes-Barre, PA** – Matushka Eleanor Kosko Krell, 85, wife of the late Archpriest Adam Jacob Krell, fell asleep in the Lord on January 19, 2012.

Born February 7, 1926 in Wilkes-Barre, the daughter of the late Joseph and Olga Zevan Kosko, she graduated from Plains Memorial High School, Plains, PA, in 1943. She and Father Adam served numerous parishes, including Saint Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, Allison Park, PA; Saint Michael Church, Portage, PA; Saint Nicholas Church, Bethlehem, PA; Holy Ascension Church, Lykens, PA; and Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery Church, South Canaan, PA.

Prior to her retirement, she enjoyed working at the business office at Cove Haven Resort, Lakeville, PA. She was a member of the Crime Watch Unit of the Wilkes-Barre Police Department. She also volunteered for many years at Wilkes-Barre's Geisinger Medical Center.

In addition to her husband, Father Adam, she was predeceased by her son, David Adam Krell. Survivors include one son and one daughter, two sisters, one grandson, three great grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were celebrated at Holy Resurrection Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre, with interment at Saint Tikhon's Monastery Cemetery, South Canaan, PA.

May Matushka Eleanor's memory be eternal! ■

## Matushka Joanna Pianovich

**Scranton, PA** – Matushka Joanna Pianovich, 86, fell asleep in the Lord on January 14, 2012. She was the beloved wife of Archpriest Eugene Pianovich, to whom she had been married for 60 years.

Born in Olyphant, PA, the daughter of John and Martha Russin Sweda, she graduated from the former Olyphant High School and Lackawanna Business College. She was employed by International Correspondence School, Scranton, PA, as well as several charity groups.

She was very active at Saints Peter and Paul Church, Springfield, MA, where her husband served as pastor for 45 years before retiring in 2002. She was a member of Saint Nicholas Church, Olyphant.

In addition to her husband, Father Eugene, she is survived by three daughters, Myra [Archpriest Daniel] Kovalak, Eugenia [Archpriest John] Perich, and Joanna [Priest John] Bohush; one son, Mark [Valerie]; three sisters; nine grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by a sister, Myra.

Funeral services were held at Saint Nicholas Church, Olyphant, with interment at Saint Tikhon's Monastery Cemetery, South Canaan, PA.

May Matushka Joanna's memory be eternal! ■

## Matushka Barbara Pavelchak

**Cohoes, NY** – Matushka Barbara Pavelchak, 75, wife of Archpriest Daniel Pavelchak, fell asleep in the Lord on January 6, 2012, embraced by her loving family.

Born in Wilkes-Barre, PA, the daughter of the late John and Pauline Kosko Gurka, she relocated to the NYS Capital District in 1971. She graduated from Hudson Valley Community College and received her associate's degree in medical records. She enjoyed a long and fulfilling career as manager of medical records at the Hospital Association of New York State in Albany, retiring in 1999.

Matushka Barbara was very active in Saint Nicholas Church, Cohoes, NY, where she was a member of the R Club. She served as the parish's choir director, and also directed the youth choir at Saint Basil Church, Watervliet, NY. She had a lifelong love of music and was an accomplished pianist. Her true enjoyment came from the endless love of her family. She also was an ardent and relentless advocate for the Humane Society's mission of assisting animals in need.

In addition to her husband, Father Daniel, she is survived by two sons and one daughter, four grandchildren, one sister and one brother, and several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her brother Theodore Gurka.

Funeral services were celebrated at Saint Nicholas Church, Cohoes, NY, with interment at the parish cemetery.

May Matushka Barbara's memory be eternal! ■

## Archpriest Michael Romanchak

**Bethlehem, PA** – Archpriest Michael Romanchak, 98, fell asleep in the Lord on Sunday, January 1, 2012.

Born in Warrior Run, PA, the son of the late Stefan and Paraskeva [Fedok] Romanchak, Father Michael graduated from Saint Tikhon's Seminary. After his marriage to the former Julia Knapp in 1952, he was ordained to the priesthood and served in Syracuse, NY. In 1954, he was assigned to Holy Trinity Church, Catsauqua, PA, which he faithfully served until his retirement in 1986. He served until the time of his death at Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral, Bethlehem, PA.

Father Michael also volunteered as a chaplain at Allentown State Hospital for 15 years and as President of the region's Brotherhood of Orthodox Priests. He was honored by the United Fund for his service to the community. For 15 years he delivered Meals on Wheels. He also published numerous articles in newspapers and religious journals.

In addition to his wife, Matushka Julia, he is survived by one son and one daughter; three grandchildren; one nephew, Archpriest Stefan

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[Larissa] Romanchak and their family; several other nieces and nephews; and a grandnephew Matthew Romanchak, a novice at Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, NY.

Funeral services were celebrated at Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral, Bethlehem, with interment at Saint Tikhon's Monastery Cemetery.

May Father Michael's memory be eternal! ■

## Prifteresha Mary Page

**Worcester, MA** – Prifteresha Mary Page, 85, beloved wife of Archpriest Spero L. Page, fell asleep in the Lord on Sunday, November 13, 2011.

Born in Pontiac, MI, the daughter of Clement and Vasilica [Rapo] DeQuis, she was a longtime Church School teacher and actively ministered with her husband for many years.

In addition to Father Spero, she is also survived by three sons, two brothers, two sisters, and one grandson.

Funeral services were celebrated at Saint Mary's Assumption Church, Worcester, with interment at Hope Cemetery.

May Prifteresha Mary's memory be eternal! ■

## Igumen Simeon [Weare]

**Spencerville, ON, Canada** – Igumen Simeon [Weare], 83, of the Monastic Community of Saint Silouan the Athonite here fell asleep in the Lord after a lengthy battle with cancer on October 17, 2011.

Born Edward Albert Weare in 1928, he graduated with distinction from Emmanuel-Saint Chad Anglican Seminary, Saskatoon, SK, and ordained to the Anglican priesthood, serving parishes in Quebec, Ontario, and Alberta for 11 years. He served as chaplain at the University of Alberta, and founded the Society of the Common Life, an Anglican monastic community.

In 1991, he was received into the Orthodox faith at Saint Herman Church, Surrey, BC, tonsured an Orthodox monastic with the name Simeon, and ordained to the priesthood. He was instrumental in establishing Saint Nicholas Mission, Kamloops, BC, while continuing his ministry to street people, cancer victims and others.

Funeral services were celebrated at All Saints Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Kamloops, BC.

May Father Simeon's memory be eternal! ■

## Armand Allen Scala

**Arlington, VA** – Armand Allen Scala, a prominent member of the Orthodox Church in America's Romanian Episcopate, fell asleep in the Lord on October 5, 2011.

Born in 1941 in Alberta, Canada of Romanian parents – his father was a priest – he and his family moved over the next 20 years to various parishes in Nebraska, Michigan and Massachusetts. In 1960, they moved to Washington, DC, where his father was the founding priest at Holy Cross Church, Alexandria, VA. A 1965 graduate of American University with a BA in Government and Political Science, he undertook post-graduate studies in International Finance, which which he pursued a successful career in finance and investment and started his own firm in 1982.

He founded the Congress of Romanian Americans [CORA] in 1991 to assist with the country's integration into the Western alliance. As CORA president, he was successful in pressing Congress and the Clinton and Bush administrations to support Romania's admission to NATO. He also was a cofounder of the Central and Eastern European Coalition and served as vice president of the Romanian American Chamber of Commerce. For his untiring efforts, he received numerous awards, including the National Order of Merit, rank of Commander, from the President of Romania in 2004.

Throughout his life he was a passionate supporter of the Orthodox community in Washington, DC. He was a founding member in 1987 of Saint Mary Church in Falls Church, VA, serving for many years as council president. He sang with the parish's choir and the Pan-Orthodox Madrigal Choir of Washington, which performed at the White House, Kennedy Center, and Supreme Court. In 1975, he was founder and president of the Festival of Choirs, representing 25 Orthodox parishes. During the past 20 years, he brought numerous Romanian choirs and other cultural groups to the US. In all of his endeavors, his generosity of spirit, sense of diplomacy, and good humor came through and endeared him to many.

Mr. Scala is survived by his wife of 45 years, Christina Y. Scala; their son, Armand A. Scala II; one sister, one stepbrother, and nephew and niece.

Funeral services were celebrated Saint Mary Church, Falls Church, with interment at Columbia Gardens Cemetery in Arlington.

May Armand's memory be eternal! ■

## Matushka Pauline Warnecke

**Princeton, NJ** – Matushka Pauline Warnecke, 89, fell asleep in the Lord on September 2, 2011, after a brief illness. She was the wife of the late Protopresbyter Alexander Warnecke, long-time pastor of Saint Peter and Paul Church, Syracuse, NY.

Born Pauline Stepanovna Shafran to Stephan and Rosalia Shafran in Olyphant, PA on July 2, 1922, she and her twin brother, Archpriest Paul Shafran, Trenton, NJ, were the youngest of the family's five children. Their sisters, Olga Dakunchak and Matushka Sonia Labowsky, and their brother Emilian Shifron [sic], predeceased her.

She married seminarian Alexander Warnecke at All Saints Church, Olyphant, on September 4, 1948. After his ordination in 1950, she and Father Alexander began their life-long ministry at Saints Peter and Paul Church, Syracuse, NY, until his repose in July 2001.

She graduated from Saint James Hospital School of Nursing, Newark, NJ, in 1943, and from Mount Carmel-Mercy Hospital School for Anesthesia, Detroit, MI, in 1948. She worked for over 40 years as a nurse anesthetist at the VA Hospital in Syracuse, NY. After retiring in her mid-70s, she continued to volunteer at the VA until relocating to Monroe, NJ in 2001. She was a pioneer in her field; she and a few other women of her time paved the way for opportunities for women in mid-level health care positions. She helped many parishioners and immigrants in Syracuse and elsewhere navigate healthcare options and sought out medical pro-bono services for those in need.

Matushka Pauline was well known as a hospitable and gracious hostess, welcoming parishioners, friends, acquaintances, and strangers into her home, especially for dinners. She helped provide housing and comfort for many through the years. Her love was not only extended to other persons, but to animals, which she loved. Throughout her adult life, she rescued and adopted numerous dogs and cats from shelters. She was known for her love of Russian culture, and she supported local linguistic, cultural, and artistic happenings in the Syracuse and New York City areas. She maintained an extensive collection of Russian art, icons, and artifacts.

After moving to New Jersey, she became a parishioner of Saints Peter and Paul Church, South River, before moving to Saints Cosmas and Damian Adult Home, Staten Island, NY, where she attended services at Saint Irenaeus Chapel. She was much beloved by the staff and her fellow residents, with whom she enjoyed many activities.

In addition to her twin brother, Father Paul, and Matushka Mary Shafran, she is survived by two daughters, Daria York and Argyra Lapchuk; her sister-in-law Elizabeth Youngblood; eight nieces and nephews; and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were celebrated at Saints Peter and Paul Church, South River, NJ.

May Matushka Pauline's memory be eternal! ■



## Summer reading

Three new books of interest for children, parents, and teachers

Valerie Zahirsky

With the lazy days of summer upon us, there's plenty of time to catch up on reading – especially since the beginning of the Church School year is only a few months off. We'd like to recommend three books that offer a variety of insights into Scripture, teen involvement, and fostering – or destroying – children's imaginations.

**Children's Bible Reader.** Published by the Greek Bible Society and available on-line through the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North America's "Orthodox Marketplace" at [www.store.goarch.org](http://www.store.goarch.org), this book of Old and New Testament stories will help young readers get the "gist" of each story it contains, through words that are clear and understandable. It's an Orthodox Christian publication, and so there are opportunities to relate words in the text to our worship. In the account of the Resurrection, the words "Why are you looking for the living among the dead?" can remind children of the words we sing during Paschal services. Similarly, the words of the hymn we sing on Holy Saturday are part of the

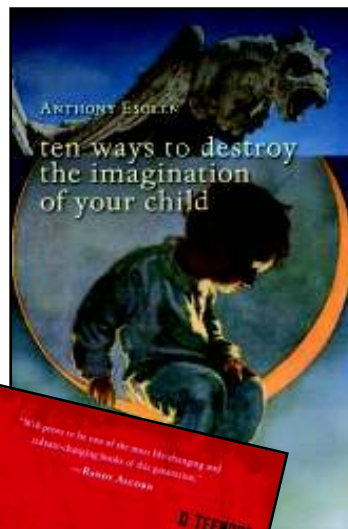
book's description of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea.

The illustrations, mostly iconographic in style, give readers the opportunity to connect the stories to their icons. Many of the non-iconographic illustrations are visually engaging and will capture children's interest and attention.

Colorful, detailed maps add to the book's appeal. As with all simplified translations, though, it is important to introduce children to the poetry of the Bible. In addition to a book

like this one, children should hear the words of Scripture from a traditional Bible.

**Do Hard Things: A Teenage Rebellion Against Low Expectations**, was written by teenaged brothers Alex and Brett Harris as a "call to action" challenging their peers to "rebel" against society's low expectations by taking on



meaningful projects. Some are very personal, such as keeping a rule of prayer. Others are "hard" because they are not necessarily enjoyable, such as regularly washing the dinner dishes.

Then there are bigger public projects, such as coordinating an international poll of teenagers and disseminating the results. Like the more personal ones, descriptions are given with inspiring Biblical passages and examples.

A follow-up book, *Start*

*Here*, offers 100 project suggestions and includes answers to frequently asked questions. Published by Multnomah Books, *Do Hard Things* may be ordered on-line at [www.therebelution.com](http://www.therebelution.com).

### **Ten Ways to Destroy the Imagination of Your Child.**

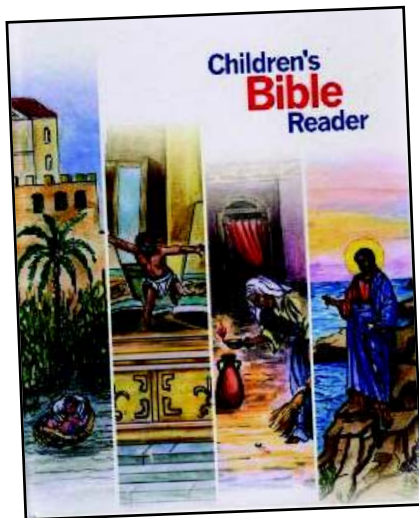
Parents and teachers will find plenty of food for thought in this book by Providence College Professor Anthony Esolen, which relates how society, schools, and sometimes families stifle and deaden children's imaginations. "Keep Your Children Indoors

as Much as Possible" and "Reduce All Talk of Love to Narcissism and Sex" are two of the 10 ways, each discussed in a chapter of the book that suggests the means of achieving the chapter's negative goal, in the style of C. S. Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters*.

In a chapter titled "Cast Aspersions upon the Heroic and Patriotic," the author writes, "Washington's indomitable courage we overlook, but we do note that he was only a fair tactician, and that he owned slaves." Insights like these can be very helpful, and in reminding us to pay attention to the kind of teaching going on in our schools, though not every reader will agree entirely with the author's conservative views.

The book, available on-line from ISI Books at [www.isi.org/books/bookdetail.aspx?id=bb314511-0f9e-40ce-a4ce-98bf96dd9eab](http://www.isi.org/books/bookdetail.aspx?id=bb314511-0f9e-40ce-a4ce-98bf96dd9eab), is filled with quotations from the Bible and classical works of literature. These, just by themselves, are a treasure chest of gems to share with children and young people. But the book is also well-written, and fine writing is always worth reading, especially when its subject is the well-being and spiritual health of our children. ■

**Matushka Valerie** chairs the Orthodox Church in America's Department of Christian Education.



# Going green

## Ecological projects every parish can adopt!

Elizabeth Perdomo

**W**ith energy costs rising daily and the environment a growing concern, we might ask, “What can we as Orthodox Christians do?” The answer: “Our part” – and there are countless ways to tweak parish attitudes and behavior that in the end can produce tremendous change!

**Change buying habits.** Styrofoam is the “common denominator” at most parish coffee hours, dinners and feasts. Yet styrofoam virtually never disintegrates; if burned, it releases highly toxic fumes. Here are some simple suggestions to effect a change in this arena.

- As a parish, make a commitment to purchase *only* non-styrofoam disposables – paper coffee cups, plates, bowls etc. They cost slightly more, but ecologically, they save all of us plenty in the end. Even *plastic* cold drink cups are better than styrofoam.
- If plastic cups *are* used for cold drinks, provide several waterproof markers for participants to use in writing their names on their cups, thereby discouraging them from grabbing a new cup each time they want a sip of water or juice.
- Think about “*real*” coffee mugs! One parish I know of had a large, prominently hung board with cup hooks on it so that parishioners could hang their own cups – and be responsible for washing them as well. They were then hung up for use the next time.
- What about “*real*” *everything*? Yes, I know that means dishes to wash, but many parishes have dishwashers, while those that don’t may just discover that washing dishes makes a great “team effort” and can actually be enjoyable!

**Recycle.** How many aluminum cans are simply thrown into trash cans and hauled off to local landfills each week? The number is staggering. And there’s not a church in the land that doesn’t have more than its share of aluminum cans that easily can be recycled.

- Label and place aluminum can repositories in visible places in your church hall or festival grounds. Perhaps the youth group would want to collect these and cash them in, using the funds for a special project or summer camp.
- When possible, buy large, rather than individual sized, non-recyclable plastic soft drinks and water. Or mix up some lemonade in a five-gallon cooler or pitchers. Not only will you spend less keeping everyone hydrated, but you’ll cut down on the volume of trash.

**Turn it down, or turn it off.** When office machines, kitchen appliances or media equipment are not being used, turn them off. This can reduce energy costs by 25%, while turning off computers at the end of the day can save an

additional 50%. When rooms or parts of a facility are not in use, turn off the lights and adjust the air conditioning and/or heat. Timed controls for larger facilities can help save considerably on unnecessary utility usage.

### **Reduce, recycle, and reuse.**

Churches are notorious for churning out printed bulletins, mailings, announcements, and other “disposeable” media. A few basic steps can ensure that the amount of waste in this regard is minimized.

- Print drafts of documents on the back of used paper to “recycle” the other side. And print out drafts in “draft” to conserve expensive ink and toner.

Use both sides of paper when possible, especially when printing materials to distribute, for phone messages and memos, etc.

- Buy and use only recycled printer paper, in bulk.
- Whenever possible, encourage parish communications by e-mail or social networking media, including news, event notices, and newsletters. There is nothing more wasteful than publishing a 24-page weekly bulletin with more white space and clip art than information!

**Watch those costly leaks.** Running toilets, dripping faucets and leaky spigots can waste more water than one can imagine. A simple repair is often all that is needed. One water drop per second wastes 10,000 litres of water per year.

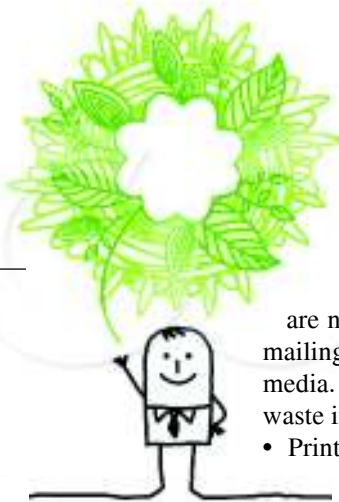
**Fan away the heat.** Whether your parish occupies an older facility, you’re considering renovations, or you’re contemplating building an entirely new structure, ceiling fans can help reduce the need for more costly air conditioning. The liberal addition of relatively inexpensive ceiling fans can distribute the cool air generated by air conditioning, making a room feel much more comfortable at less cost and energy use. Likewise in winter, fans set on low speed help distribute heat.

**Let there be light.** Where possible, retrofit newer fluorescent light bulbs to replace energy-costly incandescent bulbs. If renovating space or building a new facility, plan both fluorescent lighting and skylights to allow natural light into rooms.

**Explore alternative energy sources.** We think about adding good insulation, double paned windows, energy-efficient heat and air conditioning sources and appliances when we build and/or renovate our homes. Why not consider the same things in your church and hall? The choice of better energy-efficient building materials and insulation are readily available. More hard-core additions, such as solar panels and wind-powered generators should at least be explored when new structures are being planned.

Let’s plan for the future, not only for our parish facilities, but also for the good earth on which God has placed us as stewards and caretakers. ■

**Matushka Elizabeth** is a member of St. George Church, Pharr, TX, where her husband, Fr. Antonio, is rector. In addition to writing, she is highly involved in youth and community outreach ministries. This article was adapted from a longer article that originally appeared in the OCA Resource Handbook at <http://oca.org/resource-handbook/stewardeducation/ten-green-projects-any-parish-can-adopt>.





# And a sword shall pierce your soul

## A word to mothers

Lillian Lupu

On the fortieth day of Christ's life, His Mother, the Theotokos, brought Him to the temple, as was the custom of the day. There she met an old priest, Simeon, who long before was a translator of the Scriptures. When he correctly translated Isaiah 7:14 – “the virgin shall conceive” – he doubted this could happen. He was then promised by an angel that he would see the Christ child before he died. Thus, on that day, when he saw the child and heard His name, “Jesus,” Simeon took the baby and said, “Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.”

Equally significant are the words of Simeon as he handed the Christ child back to His Mother: “A sword shall pierce your soul also” [Luke 2:35]. Mary did not know the future God had for her only son. Simeon may have foretold the sword that was to pierce Christ's side, but a sword was also to pierce the Virgin's heart.

Mothers wince at Simeon's words to Mary, for nothing pierces a mother's heart as much as her child's pain. One might ask, “Why has God given mothers such sensitive hearts?” They are not only soft, but very vulnerable – because they are connected to their children. We share our flesh and blood with our children and feel their pain as if it were our own. Psalm 139:13 says, “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.” There is no doubt that mothers feel a deep closeness to their children that is unmatched in any other relationship. Even in the animal kingdom, we see the maternal instinct that God has given for the survival of the young. A mother will fight for her young.

The great connection and will for a child's well-being is intrinsic to all mothers. We see it in the account of the two women who fought over a baby each claimed as her own [1 Kings 3:16-28]. They brought the child to King Solomon and asked him for a decision. His decision was to cut the child in two, and give each a half. The woman whose son it was, deeply moved out

of love for her son, cried out to the king, “Please my lord, give her the living baby! Don't kill him!” But the other woman said, “Neither I nor you shall have him. Cut him in two!” Solomon kept the child alive and gave it to the woman who wanted it alive, even if he would be with another mother. It was the love of a mother that saved the boy's life, and revealed her as the real mother. It was more important for her to see him alive than for her to have him in her arms.

Why would God put this sensitivity in a mother? We can

look to the Theotokos for an answer. God had bestowed such a joyful event on her, a young woman. He conceived in her a Child that was greeted by angels, kings and shepherds. He was unlike any other child. Likewise, He knew what pain was in store for her as a result of her son's suffering. He also knew that she would endure it and carry the burden God had given to her on that terrible day of Christ's crucifixion. God chose her to be that special mother of a special son. Yet God gives all mothers the strength and sensitivity to stand by their children and help them endure their sufferings.

This is a great responsibility. The reason for these gifts of a mother is to teach her children virtue and to bring them to salvation. It's never easy. Yet God chooses each one of us mothers to be special and to endure the joys and sufferings of

our children. I have only spoken of sufferings in this article, because that is what is the hardest. We endure the joys with ease. No one needs to comfort us when our children are happy and comfortable. But we need help especially when there is pain in our hearts. That is when we need to seek the Theotokos' help. She has experienced more pain than we could imagine and knows how we feel. She once walked the same journey as mothers do today. She can be our strength.

There is a statue in the Vatican, sculpted by Michelangelo, called the *Pieta*. It depicts the Virgin holding the body of her crucified son. Whenever I see this statue, I have to turn away, because the pain I imagine the Virgin felt is too intense for me. Our Holy Theotokos knows pain and hears us when we call to her. She is the hope of mothers and the assurance of those who pray in their distress. And she will stand by us and deliver us from our sorrows. She is the “Protecting Veil” that shelters the children of the Church, and so we mothers should turn to her. ■

**Preoteasa Lillian** is a member of the *Nativity of the Ever-Virgin Mary Church, Calgary, AB, Canada*, where her husband, Father Michael, is rector.



## **Bishop Alexander**

“Of 22 possible candidates reviewed in the first phase of the search, after an intensive review process, two candidates were presented to the diocese’s Fifth Congress-Sobor in June 2011,” noted the diocesan Consecration Committee Chair, Archpriest Andrew Jarmus. “Bishop Alexander was the candidate elected by the Congress-Sobor’s delegates.”

In October 2011, the members of the OCA’s Holy Synod of Bishops elected Archimandrite Alexander Bishop of Toledo and the Bulgarian Diocese.

Raised at Saint Innocent Church, Tarzana, CA, Bishop Alexander received a Bachelor of Arts degree 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 in England under His Eminence, Metropolitan Kallistos [Ware]. During this time, he also spent two years in Greece, including one year at Simonos Petras Monastery on Mount Athos.

After receiving his D.Phil. in 1980, he returned to the US. 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 northern California and headed the Diocese of the West’s mission committee.

In 1989, he began teaching in the Theology Department at Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI, a position which he left at the end of April this year. Concurrently, he was attached to Milwaukee’s Saints Cyril and Methodius Church, where he served and taught for 22 years. He also helped attract a dozen Orthodox Christian students to doctoral work in theology at Marquette.

Bishop Alexander becomes the second Bishop of Toledo and the Bulgarian Diocese, which includes 19 parishes and missions and one monastery. ■

## **Editorial** from 2

## **Remembering Fr. John Meyendorff**

priest, teacher and educator, dedicated to the Orthodox Church in America, and honored around the world as a theologian, articulate voice for Orthodoxy in the ecumenical context – all of these dimensions were integrated and harmonious, and all were at the service of the Good News of Christ and the Church of Christ.

When Father John received the Sacrament of Unction not long before his death, he said one word – “Eucharist.” When the Eucharistic Liturgy is celebrated at Saint Vladimir’s Seminary Chapel, the icon behind the altar table is the icon of Christ giving Communion to the Apostles. Father John’s vision and experience of the Church was deeply Eucharistic. As he approached the hour of his death, the Eucharist stood at the center of his vision. The life and ministry of Father John, as well as his sickness and death, were full of the hope of the resurrection. And this joyful hope is fulfilled in the Eucharist given to us by Christ. ■

# **Assembly of Bishops begins new year**

**I**n a detailed report issued recently, the hierarchs of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America offered a review of their activities during 2011.

The report noted that

- the “Episcopal Assembly” was formally incorporated as the “Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America [ACOB],” on October 18, 2011.

- the Secretariat’s second annual meeting was held in Riverside, CA in January 2012. During the meeting, “Conversations With Our Bishops,” a series of audio interviews of the Assembly’s 53 member hierarchs providing perspectives to the Church-at-large on the significance and work of the Assembly, received special attention. Nearly two dozen interviews are now available on the Assembly’s web site at [www.assemblyofbishops.org](http://www.assemblyofbishops.org). Secretariat members also considered encouraging all ACOB agencies – International Orthodox Christian Charities, Orthodox Christian Mission Center, Orthodox Christian Fellowship, etc. – to hold their annual meetings at the same venue as the Assembly’s annual meeting, in conjunction with a major youth event and a concelebrated Liturgy as a means of demonstrating “a unity of purpose for Orthodox Christians.”

- five ACOB committees – Financial Affairs, Youth, Pastoral Practice, Canonical Regional Planning, and Clergy Affairs – met recently. By developing models for cooperative youth activities and programs, the Committee hopes to maximize participation by our youth in the full life of the Church.

- positive responses were received as a result of ACOB’s “Record of Protest Against the Infringement of Religious Liberty by the Department of Health and Human Services,” issued in reaction to HHS’s ruling to require religious hospitals, educational institutions, and other organizations to pay for the full cost of contraceptives (including some abortion-inducing drugs) and sterilizations for their employees, regardless of the religious convictions of the employers.

- a priority issue in 2012 is the formal adoption of by-laws, which are currently under review. All member hierarchs will be given the opportunity to comment on them.

- a process for endorsing Orthodox organizations is under development. A “statement of principles” is also being created to define the relationship between the Assembly and endorsed organizations.

- a series of public “town hall meetings” is being planned to provide an opportunity for clergy and laity to ask questions about the Assembly and the work of its committees.

The Assembly of Bishops is a council of all active, canonical Orthodox bishops of North America. Its purpose is to deepen the ties of brotherhood among the bishops, give them a common and united voice, and create a greater unity of action among all the Orthodox faithful of North America. Additional information may be found at on ACOB’s web site at [www.assemblyofbishops.org](http://www.assemblyofbishops.org). ■



## The repose of Metropolitan Constantine

**H**is Eminence, Metropolitan Constantine [Buggan], 75, spiritual leader of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA [UOCUSA], fell asleep in the Lord on Monday, May 21, 2012 – one day after celebrating the 40th anniversary of his archpastoral ministry.

According to a press release issued by the Consistory Office of Public Relations, Metropolitan Constantine had taken ill a few weeks earlier and was released from the hospital three days before his repose. The anniversary celebration took place in McKees Rocks, PA on Sunday, May 20.

A native of Pittsburgh, Metropolitan Constantine was born Theodore Buggan July 29, 1936. In 1955, he began studies at Saint Andrew College, the Seminary of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada, Winnipeg, MB. After his graduation, he continued his studies at Saint Vladimir's Seminary, New York, NY. In 1965, he graduated from Duquesne University, Pittsburgh. The following year, he was ordained to the priesthood by His Eminence, Metropolitan John [Theodorovich], and assigned assistant pastor of Chicago's Saint Vladimir Cathedral. He was transferred to Saint Nicholas Church, Troy, NY, in 1968.

In May 7, 1972, he was consecrated to the episcopacy at Saint Vladimir Cathedral, Philadelphia, becoming the UOCUSA's first American-born hierarch. While he served as Bishop of Chicago, he also visited parishes throughout the US, Europe, Australia and South America. He was especially devoted to the Church's youth as the future of the Church and conducted numerous youth retreats in conjunction with the Education Commission of the Ukrainian Orthodox League. He continually reminded the faithful to pay attention to their children and to bear their responsibility as parents to raise them in the faith while serving as loving examples for them.

He was also instrumental in the establishment of Saint Sophia Seminary, Bound Brook, NJ, in 1975. He was elevated to the dignity of Archbishop and later Metropolitan in 1987 and 1992 respectively.

After the repose of His Eminence, Metropolitan Mystyslav [Skrypnyk] in 1993, he was elected Metropolitan of the UOCUSA, which shortly thereafter was received into the Ecumenical Patriarchate. In 1996, he presided over the unification of the



**Metropolitan Constantine**

Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America and the UOCUSA. He represented his Church at meetings of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops and the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in North and Central America, serving as chair of the latter's Commission on Liturgy.

Funeral services were celebrated at Saint Vladimir Church, Pittsburgh, on May 25, with interment the following day at the parish cemetery.

May Metropolitan Constantine's memory be eternal! ■

## Up from the ashes: Rebuilding St. Nicholas Church at Ground Zero

**A**fter numerous delays, reconstruction of Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church – the only house of worship destroyed during the September 11, 2001 attack on New York's World Trade Center, is "back on track."

"The new World Trade Center will not be whole and complete until the Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church is rebuilt," Patrick J. Foye, Executive Director of the Port Authority, told His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North America and representatives of Saint Nicholas parish during a recent meeting held at the offices of the Director for the WTC construction, Steven Plate. At the meeting, a comprehensive presentation of the planning and construction underway in the World Trade Center was reviewed. The future site of Saint Nicholas Church was a significant part of the presentation through architectural plans and virtual reality renderings.

**WTC to 28**



**Archbishop Demetrios at 9/11 site.**

WTC from 27

## Up from ashes

Archbishop Demetrios praised NY Governor Andrew Cuomo for his role in achieving a positive resolution for the church's reconstruction. He also remarked on the important role of New York Senator and Majority Leader Dean Skelos and other individuals.

Mr. Plate and his associates led Archbishop Demetrios and the other participants on a tour through the construction site. They stopped in front of the site where Saint Nicholas Church is to be built at the corner of Liberty and Greenwich streets – the south-east corner of WTC. It is estimated that, once complete, the site will attract some 250,000 passers-by daily.

Following a walk around the Memorial Plaza and the footprint of the fallen towers, the group was offered a panoramic view from the 90th floor of the One World Trade Center Tower (previously known as Freedom Tower), which is still under construction. From that vantage point, Archbishop Demetrios and his entourage were able to view the entire area of the World Trade Center and the extraordinary work accomplished there. Mr. Plate invited Archbishop Demetrios to inscribe a thought on one of the steel columns on the 90th floor. He wrote, "This is a miracle of human creativity, love and courage in defeating hatred and darkness, and in building love, hope and perspective of a bright future for our beautiful America, the place of God's love and blessings. Archbishop Demetrios of America 6.6.12."

For a photo gallery please visit [http://photos.goarch.org/main.php?g2\\_itemId=6241](http://photos.goarch.org/main.php?g2_itemId=6241). ■

## Study reveals five facts about Orthodox America

**T**he Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in North and Central America's research coordinator, Alexei Krindatch, recently released a new 40-page report titled "Five Interesting Facts About Orthodox Church Geography and Demography in the United States."

The amply illustrated report includes sections that survey Orthodox parish membership and attendance, location, the role of ethnic culture, and monastic communities across the US.

Among Mr. Krindatch's findings is that Illinois' Cook County/Chicago has the largest concentration of Orthodox faithful – 48,114 of all canonical jurisdictions – of the nation's reported 797,000 adherents. With regard to attendance, the report reveals that only 26% of all Orthodox faithful in America participate in Church life on a regular basis. Weekly attendance in the Orthodox Church in America, however, was reported at 40%, outpaced only by the Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese and the Bulgarian Patriarchal Diocese, both of which registered 47% weekly attendance. It was also noted that the weekly attendance percentage is far higher in small parishes than large ones.

The study may be downloaded in PDF format at [www.assemblyofbishops.org/files/news/FiveFacts.pdf](http://www.assemblyofbishops.org/files/news/FiveFacts.pdf). ■

## IOCC: Twenty years of humanitarian service

**M**arking its 20th Anniversary in the presence of more than 350 Orthodox Christian faithful and friends, International Orthodox Christian Charities [IOCC] celebrated two decades of delivering humanitarian assistance around the globe with an anniversary gala in Washington, DC May 8, 2012.

IOCC, founded in 1992 as the official humanitarian aid agency of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas [SCOBA], has implemented relief and development programs in more than 40 countries.

The celebration began at the US Capitol with an afternoon Congressional reception at the Rayburn Building. IOCC board members and guests mingled with a number of members of Congress, each of whom praised IOCC for its humanitarian efforts in some of the most volatile places in the world.

A gala reception and dinner followed at the Capital Hilton, attended by His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios, chair of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in North and Central America; His Eminence, Archbishop Nicolae of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas; His Eminence, Metropolitan Nikitas of Dardanellia; and His Grace, Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos. Numerous foreign dignitaries and ambassadors also were in the audience.

Michael S. Homsey, IOCC board chair, introduced a special video presentation, "Respond. Rebuild. Uplift," narrated by IOCC executive director, Constantine M. Triantafilou. The video highlighted IOCC's humble beginnings, the challenges of delivering humanitarian aid under difficult and dangerous conditions, and the organization's vision for the future.

During the banquet, five former IOCC board members received the "Compassion at Work" award for their extraordinary philanthropic contributions to IOCC's mission over the past 20 years. Recipients included Charles R. Ajalat, Andrew A. Athens, Dr. George J. Fahra, George M. Marcus, and John G. Rangos, Sr. All five honorees are honorary IOCC board members.

Attendees also enjoyed a live performance by singer Chris Hillman, a founding member of The Byrds, who performed the hit song, "Turn, Turn, Turn," the lyrics of which are taken from the Book of Ecclesiastes. Joining him on stage were area Orthodox Christian children in ethnic costumes, who carried flags representing the countries IOCC has served since its inception.

At the conclusion of the program, the establishment of the Harry and Liberty Tsakalos Endowment for Agriculture Development and Food Security by Baltimore philanthropists Nicholas and Jeanne Tsakalos, was made. The generous \$100,000.00 gift to the newly established fund will advance programs that provide emergency food assistance to people affected by natural disasters and emergencies, agricultural support and training for farmers, and other initiatives that provide effective and lasting solutions to hunger and life-saving nourishment to vulnerable families around the world. ■



## Pilgrimage as a way of life

deep turning. Each of the conversions I experience shifts the way I see, hear and act. Each conversion is a freeing event. Something I desperately and addictively needed yesterday has become superfluous today. Certain fears with which I previously struggled have been burned away.

There is not one conversion in life. Conversion follows conversion like an ascending ladder. Each rung reveals another. It's a slow process, one that can never be forced or hurried. We are still busy being converted when we die. A good title for any autobiography would be the two-word message a computer occasionally displays when adapting a file from one program format to another: "*Conversion in progress.*"

Conversion isn't something we do entirely on our own. As pilgrims, the main challenge is not to miss Jesus along the way. It requires the recognition that, no matter how alone we are, there are no solitary journeys. Life is a series of meetings. The only question is how deep we allow the meetings to be. The "I" exists only in communion with others.

We interact with other people every day: family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, plus many people we don't know by name, who we meet briefly in shops, on buses and trains, behind counters, beggars on the street. How much real contact we have with someone known by name or an anonymous stranger is partly up to us. Even people living or working under the same roof can be too busy, too irritated, or too fearful for real contact to occur.

But there is always the possibility of conversation that moves beyond the exchange of distance-keeping civilities. To be a pilgrim – to be on the road to Emmaus – is to be open to contact, willing to share stories, willing to talk about the real issues in one's life, willing to listen with undivided attention.

"Our life and our death is with our neighbor," said Saint Anthony the Great, founder of Christian monasticism. "If we win our brother, we win God. If we cause our brother to stumble, we have sinned against Christ" [1].

There is no such thing as finding Christ while avoiding our neighbor. The main thing impeding that encounter is my suffocating fear of the other. As the Orthodox theologian, Metropolitan John Zizioulas, comments, "Communion with the other is not spontaneous; it is built upon fences which protect us from the dangers implicit in the other's presence. We accept the other only insofar as he does not threaten our privacy or insofar as he is useful to our individual happiness.... The essence of sin is the fear of the Other, which is part of the rejection of God. Once the affirmation of the "self" is realized through the rejection and not the acceptance of the Other – this is what Adam chose in his freedom to do – it is only natural and inevitable for the other to become an enemy and a threat. Reconciliation with God is a necessary pre-condition for reconciliation with any 'other'" [2].

That last sentence also works in reverse: Reconciliation with the other is a necessary precondition for reconciliation with God. For as the Gospel author Saint John writes, "He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness still" [1 John 2:9]. The path to heaven leads through the rush-hour traffic of the human race.

**At the heart of pilgrimage** is the struggle not to let my dread of the other prevent meetings with strangers. Just as on the road to Emmaus, it is in the disguise of the stranger that Christ appears.

I often think of a nun who gave me a ride from Louisville to Lexington when I was in Kentucky to give a few lectures. It's now too long ago for me to remember her name, but I will never forget the spirit of welcome that she radiated. Her old, battered car is also not easily forgotten, though it would have been worth little in a used-car lot. In her care it had become a house of hospitality on wheels. As we drove along the highway, the glove compartment door in front of me kept popping open. I closed it repeatedly, each time noticing a pile of maps inside and also a book. The text on the spine of the book caught my eye: "Guests." I pulled it out, discovering page after page of signatures, most of which gave the impression that the person signing was barely literate.

"What is this?" I asked.

"Oh that's my guest book."

"But why keep it in the car?"

"Well, of course, I always pick up hitchhikers, so I need a guest book."

It was very matter-of-fact to her, but I was astonished. Though I had been a hitchhiker myself back in my early twenties, I knew picking up hitchhikers was not without risks, especially for women.

"But isn't that dangerous?" I asked.

"Well, I have had many guests sitting where you are now, most of them men, and I never felt I was in danger."

She went on to explain that when she pulled over to offer a ride, she immediately introduced herself by name. Then she asked, "And what's your name?" The immediate exchange of names, she explained, was a crucial first step in hospitality and one likely to make for safety.

"Once two people entrust their names to each other," she explained, "there is a personal relationship."

The next step was to ask the guest to put his name in writing: "I would be grateful if you would sign my guest book."

She didn't have to explain to me that few of the people to whom she had given rides had ever been regarded as anyone's guests, and fewer still had been invited to sign a guest book.

"I've met many fine people," she told me, "people who have been a blessing to me. I never had any troubles, though you could see that many of them had lived a hard life."

Anyone reading the lives of the saints will notice that life-changing meetings with strangers are not rare events. Pick any century, pick just about any saint, dig carefully enough into the stories that have come down to us, and again and again one finds both pilgrim and stranger. As the life of grace deepens, many saints are no longer willing to wait to meet strangers by chance, but make it their business to do the finding.

Among recent examples of those who each day sought Christ in the poor is Mother Maria Skobtsova, a recently canonized Orthodox nun. She founded a house of hospitality in Paris in 1933. In 1940, when the German army marched into Paris, hospitality became a vocation involving huge risks. Taking in many Jews and finding places of safety for them, Mother Maria

**Emmaus to 30**

## Pilgrimage as a way of life

and her co-workers were well aware they were courting arrest. In the end, she and three others from the same community died in Nazi concentration camps.

At the heart of Mother Maria's countless acts of welcoming strangers was her conviction that each person without exception bears the image of God. As she wrote, "If someone turns with his spiritual world toward the spiritual world of another person, he encounters an awesome and inspiring mystery. He comes into contact with the true image of God in man, with the very icon of God incarnate in the world, with a reflection of the mystery of God's incarnation and divine manhood. And he needs to accept this awesome revelation of God unconditionally, to venerate the image of God in his brother. Only when he senses, perceives and understands it will yet another mystery be revealed to him – one that will demand his most dedicated efforts. He will perceive that the divine image is veiled, distorted and disfigured by the power of evil. And he will want to engage in battle with the devil for the sake of the divine image" [3].

The Russian writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn made the same discovery, in his case while a prisoner in Stalin's archipelago of concentration camps, an environment of profound contempt for life. While witnessing cruelty day after day, Solzhenitsyn found the anger and hatred he felt was gradually replaced by compassion. As religious faith took the place of Marxist ideology, it became more and more evident to him that no human being has ever been born in whom there is no trace of the Creator. Even the most vile person at certain moments reveals some evidence of God. As Solzhenitsyn wrote in *The Gulag Archipelago*: "The line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either – but right through every human heart – and through all human hearts. This line shifts. Inside us, it oscillates with the years. And even within hearts overwhelmed by evil, one small bridgehead of good is retained. And even in the best of hearts, there remains... .. an un-uprooted small corner of evil" [4].

Mainly one learns this only in the crucible of life. It's a truth rarely revealed in movies. In films, those who *do* evil tend to *be* evil. The evil is imbedded in their DNA. They had a pathological twist before they were born. The only cure for such pure evil is death. Thus, killing evil people is an act of a virtue. It's what we think heroes do. Far from wanting to meet such people and search in them for a "small bridgehead of good," we either applaud their executions or, should our awareness of the mercy of Christ protect us from advocating killing as a solution, insist that they be locked up as long and grimly as possible, ideally until claimed by the grave. Seeing how merciless such people have been, we are tempted to think that they deserve no mercy and can never change for the better. In fact we behave toward them in a way that makes our dire expectations all the more likely.

A great problem of thinking along such grim, vindictive lines – imagining we know a person we know only through clippings or movies and resolutely refusing to search for God's image in him – is that we exclude ourselves from walking on the road to Emmaus.

But being a pilgrim is not a naive undertaking. There are, we all know, strangers who are dangerous. Should our fear of violence lead us to avoid all strangers for that reason? Should our fear of death lead us to live cautiously?

But Christian pilgrims have always known that they might die on the way, like countless thousands of pilgrims before them. There are many graves along the roads leading to Jerusalem and Santiago de Compostela. Statistically, unexpected death along the way may be less likely for the modern pilgrim than it was in earlier times, but still accidents happen, grave sicknesses occur, and there are even occasional acts of violence and even murder. The pilgrim's attitude traditionally has been, "Sooner or later I die. If it happens while on pilgrimage, what better way to cross life's final border? Why be afraid?"

Pilgrimage is not getting from point A to point B on the map while counting the miles. The distances covered are incidental. What matters is being on the road to Emmaus – the road of discovering Christ in the Other. Pilgrimage was, and still is, the great adventure of becoming unblinded. We discover it is impossible *not* to be in the presence of God. God is with us all the time, only we don't notice. It's not that we are technically blind. We may be able to read the small print in an insurance contract without glasses and to make out the shape of a high-flying jet, and yet there is so much we don't yet see that we live in a darkness that is not unlike actual blindness. It is a condition not caused by physical damage but by deeply rooted fears, the imprisonment of self-absorption, and ideological obsessions.

Walking the road to Emmaus, as a Christian on permanent pilgrimage, is the great journey into real seeing. It is not only the act of going to one of the places where great miracles have happened or where some event in the life of Jesus occurred. It can be the journey to the front door of your house, opening it with a real welcome. It can be choosing to see an unexpected and seemingly untimely event not as an irritating interruption, but as a potential moment of grace. It can be your caring response to a beggar. It can be the journey to forgiveness in a situation in which forgiveness seemed impossible. It can be the difficult decision to take part in some act of public witness whose objective is to oppose killing, whether in war or by abortion or in an execution chamber.

It's *all* pilgrimage. And we are all on the road to Emmaus. ■

1. Benedicta Ward, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection*; London: Mowbrays; Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications; see Anthony 9.
2. John Zizioulas, "Communion and Otherness," *Orthodox Peace Fellowship Occasional Paper* nr. 19, Summer 1994; <http://incommunion.org/articles/previous-issues/older-issues/communion-and-otherness>.
3. "The Second Gospel Commandment" in *Mother Maria Skobtsova: Essential Writings*, edited by Hélène Arjakovsky-Klépinine, translated from the Russian by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky; Maryknoll: Orbis Books.
4. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, vol. 2, "The Ascent;" translation by Thomas P. Whitney.

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## **OCA Chancellor: A Spirit of “Sobornost”**

As Father Thomas Hopko says, we have to pick up the “cross of collaboration” at every point to build the living temple of God. We Orthodox are at a turning point in our history in North America. We could each turn back to our own various brands of insularity, or we could create a truly united Church that recognizes and builds on the particular gifts of each. For all our posturing as Orthodox, the fact is that we are a tiny and still largely unknown minority on this continent. We have not yet begun to bring the full message of the Orthodox Church to North America. Nor can we if we remain what we are now. We need once again to become a missionary Church, to recognize that there are diverse human needs in our communities – and I don’t just mean our parishes – that we are called to notice and to serve in the name of Christ. This will call forth new types of missionary life, not unlike the early Church that learned how to bring the message of Christ to Jews and to Gentiles, in different ways, becoming all things to all people.

### **Name your top priorities for your first year as Chancellor.**

The first year will especially be about establishing good working relationships on every level – with His Beatitude and the Holy Synod, the Chancery officers and staff, and the leadership in our seminaries, dioceses, military and hospital chaplaincies, and departments. I also would like to get to know my counterparts in the other Orthodox churches in North America. The other priorities include

- seeing to the orderly and calm functioning of Central Church Administration.
- building on the All-American Council and working closely with the dioceses and the Metropolitan Council to move step-by-step toward proportional giving throughout the Church and a careful assessment of what tasks belong to the various levels of Church administration – the Central Church, the dioceses and deaneries, and the parishes.
- working with Bishop Michael and others to reignite and fund OCA-wide ministries and mission.
- ensuring that the OCA is doing everything it can to prevent and address sexual misconduct.

### **If you could offer one message to the clergy and faithful laboring in the communities of the OCA, what would you want to tell them?**

“It’s worth it. Don’t lose heart. Keep looking up. Rejoice!” Church life can bring disappointments, especially if we put too much faith in “princes and sons of men.” But if we hold on to our first love, and remember Who brought us here, then “our youth will be renewed like the eagle’s.” The Lord wants us to cast a fire upon the earth, but that fire has to be in us first. So, before we get carried away with projects, parish, mission and problems, we need to pray daily, read the scriptures, and re-ignite that inner fire that God alone can give.

### **On a personal note, who have been the mentors, writers and/or saints who have most shaped your philosophy of ministry?**

There is a cloud of witnesses who have taught me about ministry, from various times in my life, including relatives,

friends, fellow clergy – too many to name. But the ones who had special influence are Archbishop Sylvester [Haruns], and Fathers Oleg Boldireff, George Hasenecz, and John Tkachuk – all of whom I encountered before going to seminary – and Metropolitan Kallistos [Ware], Fathers Paul Lazor, Thomas Hopko, John Breck, Paul Tarazi, John Meyendorff, and – above all – Father Alexander Schmemmann.

The lives and work of Father Lev Gillet, Nicolas Zernov, “Father Arseny,” Elder Porphyrios, Father Alexander Elchaninov, Mother Maria [Skobtsova] are also noteworthy. Other saints who have left a deep impression on my thinking about ministry include Saints Herman, Innocent, Tikhon of Moscow, Raphael Hawaweeny, Seraphim of Sarov, John of Kronstadt, and John Vianney.

I have also been influenced by aspects of the life and teaching of Frank Buchman (his sense of attentiveness to divine guidance), Billy Graham and Jerry Fallwell (not his “moral majority,” but his determination to be a pastor to the people in his community), and, believe it or not, Theodore Roosevelt.

In the early 1990s, when I was working on a Doctor of Ministry degree at Saint Vladimir’s Seminary, I spent six months on a fieldwork project in Newark, NJ, with Mother Teresa’s “Missionaries of Charity.” The nuns and their work impressed me greatly (and I had the opportunity to meet Mother Teresa). I’m more and more convinced that if we as Orthodox aren’t “missionaries of charity,” if we aren’t looking around to see the needs in our communities and seeking to serve them “out of reverence for Christ,” God will not give us much of a future.

I’m inspired by day-to-day saints I’ve encountered – what Father Michael Plekon calls the “hidden holiness” of unsung people who naturally, unselfconsciously, joyfully love Christ and look to the needs of others – people like the three women who took care of my late mother-in-law for four years as she had Alzheimer’s and her health failed. It is very humbling to be a priest, a life-long Orthodox with lots of education and experience, and to realize how little one really knows about true Christian ministry. I see such examples everywhere.

Still, however, the deepest influence on my approach to ministry is the New Testament, or rather Jesus Christ, and how I have known Him in the pages of the New Testament and in the life of the Church. ■

## **That’s the Spirit** from 3

### **“He’s coming back!”**

When this will happen is anyone’s guess – and many have mistakenly guessed over the centuries. Only God the Father knows. In the meantime, we wait; but we wait *in hope*. As for us as Orthodox Christians, this hope is manifested and expressed in the same manner as the disciples after the Ascension: “They were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.”

That’s how they expressed *their* hope. And that’s how we express ours! ■

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**Walking pilgrims begin 11-mile procession**  
from Mayfield to the Monastery.

ROCOR Eastern American  
Diocese - [www.eadiocese.org](http://www.eadiocese.org)

# The Walking Pilgrims!

Reviving an old tradition,  
celebrating a new spirit of unity!

For 108 years, Orthodox Christian faithful have flocked to Saint Tikhon's Monastery, South Canaan, PA, on Memorial Day weekend for the annual pilgrimage. While hundreds of faithful drove to the the monastery this year, some four-dozen pilgrims – including Archpriest John Jillions, OCA Chancellor – revived a tradition from bygone days: they walked in a 13 mile, four hour procession from Saint John the Baptist Russian Orthodox Cathedral, Mayfield, PA, to Saint Tikhon's "in the footsteps of their forefathers."

According to Protodeacon Joseph Matusiak, who helped coordinate the procession, the tradition died out some three decades ago. The procession route was the same as that used by faithful at the monastery's first pilgrimage in 1905.

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah, with the blessing of His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion, First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, celebrated the Divine Liturgy at Saint John's, after which the Very Reverend Mitred Archpriest John Sorochka, rector, and the cathedral faithful hosted a luncheon. The Liturgy was especially historic inasmuch as it marked the first time since 1982 that an OCA hierarch had served at the cathedral. *[For a detailed historical commentary, visit the cathedral's web site at <http://www.stjohnsmayfield.org/announcements>.]*

Following the celebration of a Service of Prayer, the "walking pilgrims," who ranged in age from four to 55-plus, set out for the monastery. En route, they sang hymns, paused for water – the temperature was well above 80 degrees! – and, at one point, stopped at a house along the way as a man approached them,

wishing to venerate the processional cross.

Metropolitan Jonah and His Grace, Archbishop Tikhon, welcomed the physically weary but spiritually uplifted walking pilgrims at the monastery arch, after which the pilgrims enjoyed a dinner especially prepared in anticipation of their arrival.

A special documentary on the pilgrimage, "Strength in Unity," was recently released by the Media Office of the Eastern American Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. The video, together with photo galleries of the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy in Mayfield and the Memorial Day Liturgy at the monastery and related videos, is available on-line at <http://www.eadiocese.org/News/2012/may/unity.en.htm>. ■



**Metropolitan Jonah**  
welcomes walking pilgrims  
at monastery arch.