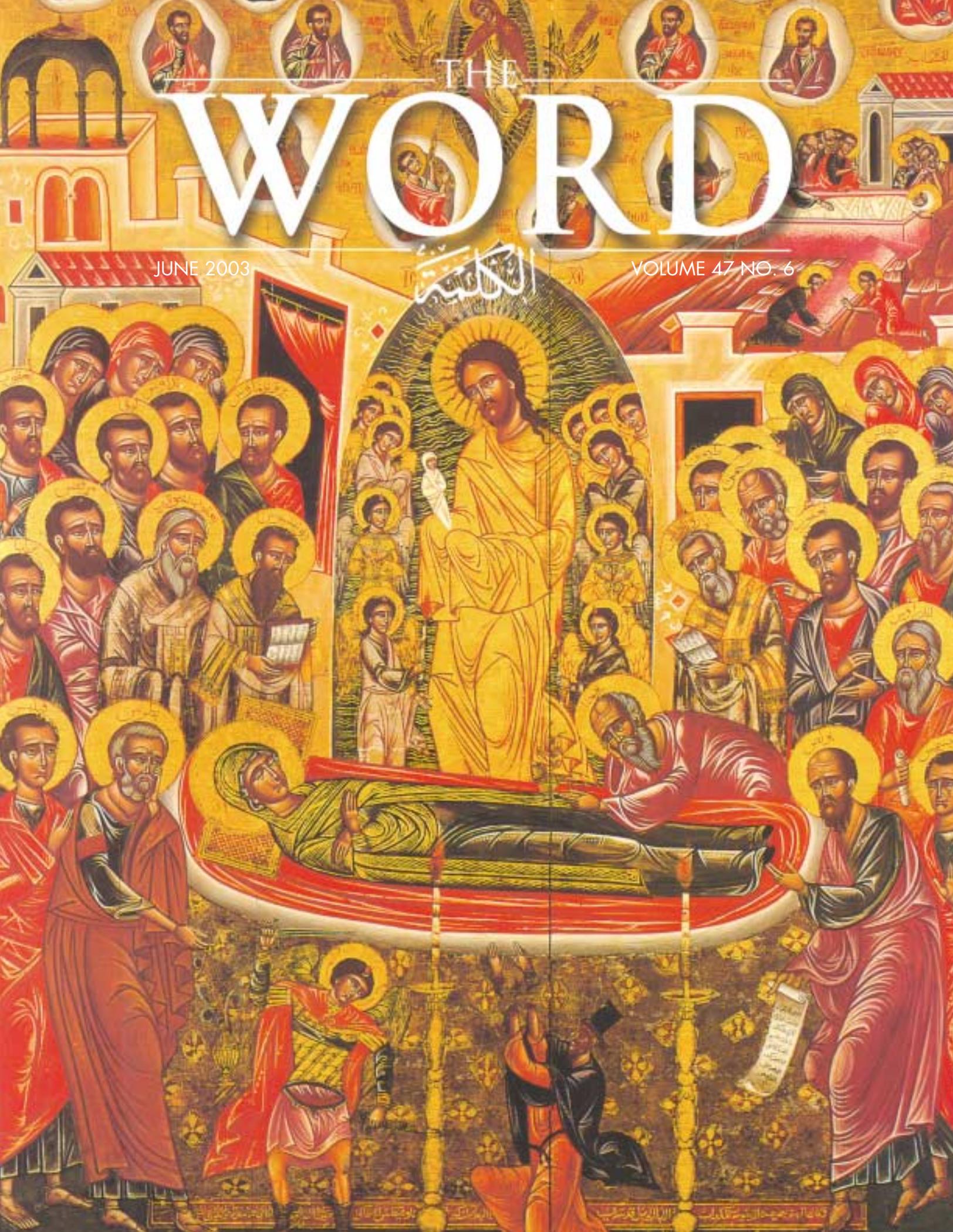


# THE WORD

JUNE 2003

VOLUME 47 NO. 6

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*Editor in Chief*  
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The Associated Church Press  
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Ecumenical News International  
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*Editorial Office:*  
The WORD  
635 Miranda Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15241  
e-mail: WORDMAG@AOL.COM  
FAX: 1-412-831-5554

*Subscription Office:*  
358 Mountain Road  
PO Box 5238  
Englewood, NJ 07631-5238

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**WORD**  
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**THIS 15TH CENTURY ICON OF THE DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS** was done in the Allepan style and is kept in the Monastery of Our Lady of Balamand. In the icon, the events succeed one another under the same heaven. The apostles are transported on clouds toward Jerusalem to show reverence to the Mother of Life. In the center of the scene, Christ holds in His arms a swaddled newborn, and the image of the immaculate soul of His Mother. Elsewhere in the same icon, the iconographer shows the Virgin being placed on a bier. The action culminates in glory: in the midst of a shining mandorla, the Mother of Life is handing her sacred belt to Saint Thomas.

Letters to the editor are welcome and should include the author's full name and parish. Submissions for "Communities in Action" must be approved by the local pastor. Both may be edited for purposes of clarity and space. All submissions, in hard copy, on disk or e-mailed, should be double-spaced for editing purposes.

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# I AM AN AMERICAN



CHRIST IS RISEN!

I AWOKE THIS MORNING TO THE NOW-famous television public service announcement designed to promote tolerance of Americans for one another. You probably know the one I mean — people from many different ethnic backgrounds proclaim their nationality as American. Like the folks appearing in that announcement, I am an American. I was born in Boston, Massachusetts of Lebanese-American parents who also were born in Boston. My father, along with his and my mother’s male siblings, all fought for America during World War II. Like many second-generation Americans, I speak only American-style English, and eat Chinese-American, Greek-American, Arab-American and Mexican-American food. I owe my lifestyle and freedom to the United States of America and am proud to be an American.

However, I also have been blessed to be an Orthodox Christian, and this perspective not known by most Americans is important for America to have in order to make good choices. It is my patriotic duty to America, as an Orthodox Christian, to speak the truth and help America understand some of the complexities of Orthodox Christianity and the Middle East that most of America does not understand. American freedom of speech allows for America to receive such information; indeed, She does better for it.

This year, *The WORD* printed statements of the Patriarchs of Antioch and Moscow, Middle Eastern Religious Leaders, American Middle Eastern Religious Leaders and the World Council of Churches. In these documents, people whose perspectives are based on different life circumstances than those of most Americans, called for America to use diplomacy in the volatile region of the Middle East. In response, letters came to *The WORD* containing strong declarations of differing opinions, and, in some cases, anger: “outrageous,”

“anti-American,” “propaganda,” “How dare you?” Is it outrageous and anti-American to share a view other than that of the President? One reader wrote that our Church must be “against God,” because George W. Bush speaks for America and America speaks for God. According to that reader, Orthodox Americans cannot disagree with the President. I wonder if America was speaking for God when She promoted Saddam Hussein to power, or when She armed and trained Osama Bin-Laden? America’s Middle Eastern policy has never been characterized as fair or consistent; and hindsight reveals that it has not been good for America or for the Middle East.

It is my personal opinion that those Americans who understand complicated and complex social structures throughout the world have a responsibility to share that information with the American leaders and people. I also believe that Orthodox Christians who have worked to stabilize political tensions between Muslims, Christians and Jews have a special responsibility to play today. We must speak truth and teach differing groups about each other. Orthodox Christians have an understanding of both eastern and western religion that no other group has. Orthodoxy also has centuries of experience teaching people of the three major monotheistic groups about each other. Orthodoxy has most often offered a model in which people can communicate and live together. This is why it is important for the United States to hear from Patriarch Ignatius and Metropolitan Philip, as well as from religious leaders of both the Orthodox world and the Middle East.

I acknowledge that not all Orthodox agree as to how and when America should use force to protect innocent people and American interests. *The WORD* does not claim to have special powers, or the ability to speak for God on this matter. We have not endorsed any political party, thought, or

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**EDITORIAL  
BY**  
*Very Rev. John P.  
Abdalah*  
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## WAR AND PEACE

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leadership in America or in the Middle East. *The WORD* does, however, feel a responsibility to share information that is important for America, information that otherwise would not be shared with the majority of its readers.

Speaking the truth and disagreeing with a President is as American as the Constitution of the United States, and *The WORD* stands by its choice to publish information from religious leaders that the American press has ignored. *The WORD* further calls on the American government to be even-handed and honest in its future Middle Eastern policies and actions, for the good of all

peoples in America and in the Middle East. Only fair and diplomatic methods will stabilize the Middle East for the long term and be for the betterment of the people of America and of the Middle East. I do not apologize for giving the readers of *The WORD* a perspective that they would not find elsewhere. It is good to share differing political views. Our American democracy and heritage is built on freedom of expression. As Orthodox Christians we must work to understand God's revelation and to bear witness to the truth. Let us always endeavor to accomplish this mission. ✚

# ORTHODOX TEACHING ABOUT **WAR** *and Peace*

By REV. FR. WILLIAM OLNHAUSEN

(Sermon delivered at Saint Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church — Cedarburg, WI on Sunday, February 2, 2003)

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**W**AR AND PEACE ARE controversial topics today, so I would rather not talk about this at all. However, we are at the edge of war, and the Church's Tradition speaks to the subject. The Orthodox Church is concerned not only with the salvation of souls but with the building of good societies and a just world. Orthodoxy has social and ethical teachings. However, we do not live in an Orthodox country. What is passed off as traditional old-fashioned Christianity in our society is often not traditional Christianity. If you do not hear Orthodox teaching on war and peace here, you probably won't hear it anywhere. So I think I need to do this. Furthermore, it is better to do so before we get into war, because once war begins it is harder to think straight about it, whatever one's opinion. This past week I decided I'd better move fast. Thank God we live in a country where these things can be openly discussed. This topic is particularly relevant to St. Nicholas Church, since one of our young men, Igor Lobanov, is even now in the Persian Gulf. Pray for him, as we

do daily in church.

In what follows, I do not intend to promote partisan politics in any way. If you think I overstep at any point, please tell me. My purpose is to set forth Orthodox principles in historical context, in order to help you (and me) think about the subject in an Orthodox way. How you apply it is up to you. Also, I will try to be objective. However, no one is ever entirely objective, so again, if you think I have failed please let me know. I have drawn especially on the work of Father Stanley Harakas, retired professor of theology at Holy Cross School of Theology in Brookline, MA.

Where did the very early Church stand on war and peace? We know that Mohammed led an army. We know that Jesus did no such thing. When Peter took to violence, Christ told him to put his sword away, saying, "those who live by the sword will die by the sword" (Matthew 26:52). Jesus taught: "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you: Do not resist an evil person. Whoever slaps you on the right

cheek, turn the other to him also ... You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you" (Matthew 5:38-39, 43-44). Whatever one may think of these teachings, they are very clear. A misleading column in the *New York Times* last Tuesday was titled "*The Prince of Peace was a warrior too.*" Yes, He did make war, but on Satan, not on people. Yes, Jesus said He came to bring not peace but a sword, but it is clear He was speaking of the divisions He could cause within families, between those who believed in Him and those who did not. Yes, Jesus drove the money changers out of the temple, but His concern was with the defilement of worship. No, in the wars between nations and peoples, Jesus was not a warrior. The people turned against Jesus precisely because He did not drive out the Roman oppressor, because He who had all power chose to be a noncombatant.



## WAR AND PEACE

It appears the earliest Christians followed Him in this. So far as I know, there is no evidence in the New Testament or from any first or second century source of Christians serving in the military. Justin Martyr wrote that Christians “who formerly killed one another ... refuse to make war on [their] enemies.” Origen wrote that Christians “no longer take up the sword against any nation, nor do we learn the art of war any more. Instead ... we have become sons of peace through Jesus our founder.” There are other similar references. This, of course, was a fairly easy stand to take when the empire was pagan, there was no military draft, and the Church was small and uninvolved in worldly affairs.

Was the early Church pacifist on principle? Some scholars say yes. However, I think the evidence, judging by the Church calendar, is that it was not, or at least not for long. For the Church honors many third and fourth century military men as saints — not because of their military activity, rather because they were executed and became martyrs for refusing to deny Christ. But the point is that, on principle, they saw no conflict between serving in the military and being a Christian. Nor did the early Church disown them for being in the military. After the conversion of the Emperor Constantine it became more common for Christians to serve in the armed forces, defending the Christian empire.

As time went on, eastern and western Christians began to diverge on the subject of war. First, let's take a brief excursion west. In the west in the 5th century, St. Augustine began to teach what came to be called the “just war theory,” that under certain conditions it is acceptable, even a good thing, for Christians to take up arms, that some wars are ordained by God. Soon, a kind of Christian cult of the glory of war began to develop in the west. Remember that the west at that time was being overrun by barbarians from the north. Augustine had seen the fall of Rome. Western-

ers wanted to know: was it morally right for Christians to defend themselves and their society? The Church also wanted to try to apply some standards to war other than “might makes right.” So the just war theory was developed. I repeat: this is not official Orthodox teaching, but it is the source of modern international law, and today people on all sides justify themselves, using its terms perhaps unknowingly. It may help us in our thinking to look at it.

The basic points of the just war theory have varied somewhat over the years but generally it includes these requirements: (1) the war must be authorized by proper authority; (2) the war must be defensive, in defense of territory or

the United Nations need specific UN authorization, or do they not? Who decides these things? The just war theory does not say.

(2) What is defensive war? What is aggression? This principle has been applied very erratically. When Germany and Japan attacked other countries, we rightly called it aggression. However, when western European nations built their empires by military invasion, they called it not aggression but “the white man's burden.” When my ancestors drove native Americans of their lands and confined them to reservations, we described it not as unjust aggression but as “manifest destiny.” When in 1947 the United Nations, led by the United States

...CHRISTIANS “NO LONGER TAKE UP THE SWORD AGAINST ANY NATION, NOR DO WE LEARN THE ART OF WAR ANY MORE. INSTEAD...WE HAVE BECOME SONS OF PEACE THROUGH JESUS OUR FOUNDER.”

of established human rights; wars of aggression are unjust; (3) every effort must be made to avoid civilian casualties on grounds of compassion. Christians are to respect the dignity of all human life, from conception to the grave. Our enemies are human beings, created in the image of God, for whom Christ died — other peoples' children and grandchildren and husbands and wives; (4) there must be a reasonable hope of success in the war; it must not be fought to no purpose, simply to assuage pride or anger. There are sometimes other points, for example that war must be the last resort; all other options must be excluded first. But how to apply the principles of the just war theory? This gets tricky. Consider:

(1) What is proper authority? Once it was clear: the emperor or the pope. Most scholars say that today each nation's laws should be followed. However, the Constitution of the United States seems to require a formal Declaration of War, and no American wars during the past fifty years have been declared. Were they all therefore unjust? Do members of

and Great Britain, established Israel, driving Palestinians from their ancestral homes and lands, the western powers did not call that unjust. However, when Palestinians and their allies tried to defend and recover their land, that was considered unjust by the west. Take a current issue: preemptive (“preventive”) war. By the traditional standard, the attack the United States is now planning against Iraq would be considered aggression and unjust, since Iraq has not attacked us. However, since modern attacks can be launched and completed within a matter of minutes, some moral theologians now argue that a preemptive attack to head off imminent attack by an enemy is justified. But this is a two-edged sword. We now have troops in place to make a preemptive attack on Iraq. Why then would it not be just for Iraq to launch a preemptive attack on us? Furthermore, if many nations follow our lead and launch preemptive wars against their potential enemies, not ruling out nuclear weapons, what will keep the world from quickly being thrown back into pre-



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Christian barbarism? Is the traditional prescription against preventive war correct?

(3) It was easier to avoid civilian casualties in earlier times, when most wars were fought on battlefields outside cities. Beginning with World War II, the great powers generally abandoned this principle. Civilians were intentionally attacked, beginning with Hitler's blitzkrieg of England and other countries, and followed by Allied saturation bombing of German cities and American nuclear bombing of Japanese cities. In the Viet Nam War American bombing killed between 500,000 and 1,000,000 civilians. With modern "precision" bombing we have recently tried to recover the principle of avoiding civilian casualties, but with only limited success because of the immense power and imprecision of our weapons. In the 1991 Iraqi War we killed between 50,000 and 100,000 Iraqis, most of them civilians. Can the requirement of avoiding civilian casualties be fulfilled in any modern war?

The just war theory has had mixed results. It has allowed Christians to defend their homelands without guilt. It justified American intervention in World War II, without which the world might still be living under the Nazi Thousand Year Reich. On the other hand, it led to, for example (let me take something ancient and therefore safer to talk about), the Crusades, which were originally justified by the just war theory. These were to be the good war, properly authorized by the pope, to liberate the Holy Land from Muslim aggressors. But in fact the Crusades did immense unintended harm. Crusaders ravaged Muslims and Christians alike, soldiers and civilians. Crusaders sacked and occupied Constantinople; the Byzantine empire never recovered, and this was the chief cause of its being conquered by the Turks. Crusaders literally caused blood to flow in the streets of Jerusalem, both the blood of Muslim conquerors and that of Christians and Jews. Christians were still in the majority in

Jerusalem before the Crusaders "liberated" it, but never since then. What so-called just wars intend and what they accomplish may be two very different things.

According to Father Harakas, in the east the Church took a different tack. Orthodoxy never developed a just war theory, probably because during the patristic period in the east the empire was usually at peace — enemies were mostly at a distance, and hired mercenaries kept them at bay — so theories about war weren't crucial. In any event, eastern Christians (not ruled by barbarians as in the west) were probably more prone to leave decisions about war and peace to their Orthodox emperors.

The Orthodox Fathers held that war is always an evil. Sometimes wars could be the lesser of evils, but they never taught that war could be good or glorious. Killing in war was seen as a sin, requiring repentance. As late as the tenth century, when the Empire was hard pressed by enemies, Nicephoros II Phocas suggested that men who died in battle against the Muslims be considered as martyrs. The Church refused. (J.M. Hussey: *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire*, pp. 112-113)

While Orthodox laymen could serve in the military, the Church continued its original ideal of nonviolence in the clergy. By canon law clergy were forbidden to serve in the military. In the Byzantine empire clergy were forbidden even to enter military camps. To this day, Orthodox clergy may not engage in combat. According to Orthodox canon law, a man who has killed anyone, even unintentionally, may not be ordained. Orthodox clergy are to be peacemakers, signs of God's peace.

Here is a summary by the British historian Steven Runciman (*A History of the Crusades*, Volume I, Book II, Chapter I):

The Christian citizen has a fundamental problem to face: is he entitled to fight for his country? His religion is a religion of peace; and war means slaughter and destruction. The earlier Christian Fathers had no doubts. To them a war was whole-

sale murder. But after the triumph of the Cross, after the Empire had become Christendom, ought not its citizens to be ready to take up arms for its welfare?

The eastern Church thought not. Its great canonist, Saint Basil, while he realized that the soldier must obey orders, yet maintained that anyone guilty of killing in war should refrain for three years from taking communion as a sign of repentance. This counsel was too strict. The Byzantine soldier was not in fact treated as a murderer. But his profession brought him no glamour. Death in battle was not considered glorious, nor was death in battle against the infidel considered martyrdom; the martyr died armed only with his faith. To fight against the infidel was deplorable, though it might at times be unavoidable; to fight against fellow Christians was doubly bad. Indeed, Byzantine history was remarkably free of wars of aggression. Justinian's campaigns had been undertaken to liberate Romans from heretic barbarian governors, Basil II's against the Bulgars to recover imperial provinces and to remove a danger that menaced Constantinople. Peaceful methods were always preferable, even if they involved tortuous diplomacy or the payment of money. To western historians, accustomed to admire martial valour, the actions of many Byzantine statesmen appear cowardly or sly; but the motive was usually a genuine desire to avoid bloodshed. The princess Anna Comnena, one of the most typical of Byzantines, makes it clear in her history that, deep as was her interest in military questions and much as she appreciated her father's success in battle, she considered war a shameful thing, a last resort when all else had failed, indeed in itself a confession of failure.

The western point of view was less enlightened. Saint Augustine himself had admitted that wars might be waged by the command of God; and the military society that had emerged in the West out of the barbarian invasions inevitably sought to justify this habitual pastime. The



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code of chivalry that was developing, supported by popular epics, gave prestige to the military hero; and the pacifist acquired a disrepute from which he has never recovered. Against this sentiment the Church could do little. It sought, rather, to direct bellicose energy into paths that would lead to its own advantage. The holy war, that is to say, war in the interests of the Church, became permissible, even desirable. Pope Leo IV, in the mid-ninth century, declared that anyone dying in battle for the defense of the Church would receive a heavenly reward. Pope John VIII, a few years later, ranked the victims of a holy war as martyrs; if they died armed in battle their sins would be remitted (pages 83-84).

Anna Comnena was to note with horror that while her Church tried honestly to avoid warfare on holy days, the western knights attacked Constantinople during Holy Week, while their armies were full of armed and fighting priests (page 87).

Father Harakas says that the Orthodox Fathers wrote chiefly not about war but about peace, the conditions that promote and establish and maintain peace, defined not only negatively in the sense of lack of hostilities, but peace in the positive Biblical sense — *shalom, salim*, fullness of life. For Orthodoxy, the priority is peace. Listen to the emphasis on peace in the Divine Liturgy: "In peace, let us pray to the Lord ... For the peace from above and for the salvation of our souls ... For the peace of the whole world, the good estate of the holy churches of God, and the union of all men ... For healthful seasons, abundance of the fruits of the earth and peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord." "The Orthodox servants of God ... that they may have mercy, life, peace, health, salvation ..." "All things good and profitable for our souls and peace for the world ... That we may complete the remaining time of our life in peace and repentance. Grant this, O Lord." "For all civil authorities, and our armed forces; grant them, O Lord, peaceful times, that we in their tranquility may lead a calm and peaceful life in all rever-

ence and godliness." "For the peace and stability of the whole world ..." "Give peace to thy world, to thy churches, to the priests, to the civil authorities, to the armed forces and to all thy people ..." In the Orthodox understanding, peace is the foundation of all else that is good on earth. The peace of God in our hearts leads us to be at peace with other people, peace in the world. Peace in the world provides the stability which makes civilized society possible, allowing people to seek God in peace.

Note, however, that in Orthodox

THE ORTHODOX HELD THAT WAR IS ALWAYS AN EVIL. SOMETIMES WARS COULD BE THE LESSER OF EVILS, BUT THEY NEVER TAUGHT THAT WAR COULD BE GOOD OR GLORIOUS.

worship we also pray often for the armed forces. In the Orthodox understanding, the function of the military is to preserve peace — not to make war but to establish peace. This is expressed perfectly, I think, in the Liturgy of St. Basil: "Be mindful, O Lord, of all civil authorities and of our armed forces; grant them a secure and lasting peace; speak good things in their hearts concerning thy Church and all thy people, that we in their tranquility [i.e. the peace they provide] may lead a calm and peaceful life in all reverence and godliness."

John Chrysostom summed up the Orthodox approach, applying it naturally not only to personal relationships but also to the international scene, since he was patriarch in the imperial city. (Why should Christ's teachings about peace and how we should do good to our enemies not apply also to leaders of nations and how they should deal with their enemies?) Chrysostom wrote:

God is not a God of war and fighting. [Therefore you should] make war and fighting to cease, both that which is against yourself and that which is against your neighbor. Be at peace with all men. Consider how God saves them. 'Blessed are the peace-makers for they shall be called sons of God.' Such [peacemakers]

always imitate the Son of God; you must imitate him too. Be at peace. The more your brother wars against you, so much the more will be your reward. For hear the prophet who says, 'With those who hated peace, I made peace' (Psalm 120). This virtue which is beyond understanding makes us near to God. Nothing so much delights God as [for us] to remember no evil. This sets you free from sins, this looses the charge against you. But if we are fighting and clashing, we come to be far from God: for conflicts produce hatred, and from hatred springs remem-

brance [not of God but] of evil."

Those are the Orthodox principles regarding war and peace. What does all this tell us about the proposed second Iraqi war? How should we apply them? That is for you and me to decide. We do not have to come to the same conclusions. Unlike some other religious groups, the Orthodox Church does not require or expect her members to hold the same political views. Only think about it in a Christian and Orthodox way, and "inform your conscience" as is sometimes said, so that you come to a conclusion which you can justify before God.

I think there are two chief points to be remembered: first, if we go to war, whether we win or not, from the Orthodox point of view it will be a failure. War is always failure, the result of not having done the things (often for many years) that Christ commanded which would have made for peace: love your enemies, do good to those who mistreat you, bless and do not curse them, repay no one evil for evil. Second, the chief work of Orthodox Christians is not negative but positive. We are to do the things that make for peace.

*Fr. William Olmhausen is pastor of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, Cedarburg, WI.*



## A BRIEF PARISH PROGRAM *for Marriage Preparation and/or Enrichment*

By **VERY REV. JOHN ABDALAH**

IT SEEMS THAT EXPERTS ON marriage are telling us what life and marriage are about at every turn. From Doctor Phil to documentaries on the science channels, everyone has free and frequent advice. For myself, I look to the liturgical expression of the Church for direction. The Orthodox Marriage Ceremony offers a valuable perspective on marriage, both for those preparing to be married, and for those already blessed with this pathway to salvation. In my own ministry, I quote the marriage service so often that I have committed much of it to memory. In this brief article, I offer a program that can be used in parishes, based on the wisdom of our Church as gleaned from the text of the marriage ceremony. I suggest pastors lead small groups through three sessions of marriage enrichment, based on the marriage text and using the following outline. Other readers of *The WORD* could benefit from reading what follows and discussing it with family or friends.

### **SESSION I: THE BETROTHAL SERVICE**

Educational goals of the first session are as follows: 1) to identify Christ as the “Priest of the Marriage;” 2) to recognize that Christ is involved in our marriages and works with us as persons in marriage; and 3) to define fidelity and commitment.

Begin by asking couples why and how they chose their partners. It is also helpful for each of them to identify what attracted him or her to the

other. Discuss the Betrothal service line by line, and demonstrate that marriage is God’s action. The Betrothal service is a non-sacramental rite which at one time fulfilled the requirement of legal designation of the Byzantine Empire. It was most often done before dating began, and was not done in the Church. In the Antiochian Archdiocese, the Betrothal service is done in conjunction with the Crowning service.

In the ceremony, each member of the couple is asked: *Have you, N., a good, free, and unconstrained will and a firm intention to take unto yourself to wife this woman N., whom you see here before you?* Bridegroom: *I have.* Priest: *Have you, N., a good, free, and unconstrained will and a firm intention to take unto yourself to husband this man N., whom you see here before you?* Bride: *I have.* The Church has long valued the freedom of the bride and groom to choose to marry or not, and to whom to be married. It is interesting to note that the Church discourages marriage for such purposes as keeping the fortune in the family, merging companies or states or guaranteeing a contract or peace accord. Pregnancies are also generally understood as a constraint of will.

After a brief introduction to the Betrothal service, ask the couples present to identify things they would pray for in the service if they were writing their own ceremony. The instructor will list these prayers on newsprint at the front of the room, to be considered later.

Following these expressions of free will, the presbyter begins the

service with the exclamation, “*Blessed is our God always now and for ever.*” By blessing God, we understand the special relationship we enjoy with God as His people (Exodus 6:7). The congregation responds with “*Amen,*” making this prayer their own. The Great Ektenia follows. This setting forth of petitions further expresses our relationship with God and places us before Him in prayer. The people respond to each petition with “*Lord have mercy,*” expressing the relationship between God and man as merciful master to accepting servant.

“*In Peace let us pray to the Lord*” reveals that it is in Christ, from within His body, that we offer our supplications to the Father. We are reminded that Peace is in Christ, for in Him is the correct and right relationship with God. We have been baptized into Him and it is from within Him and through Him that we offer all prayer.

“*For the Peace from above, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.*” This peace is a peace that comes from God, and is here linked to our salvation. When Christ appeared to His disciples after His crucifixion, He began by offering His Peace. This peace is a gift that comes from God, and affirms His participation in our lives through His own presence and gift of His own life.

“*For the peace of the world, for the good estate of the Holy Churches of God and for the union of all, let us pray to the Lord.*” We pray for the peace of the world, because when the world is at peace, we can respond to God without the distract-



## MARRIAGE PREPARATION

tions of fear and of war. The Church is the model and source of grace and knowledge of God, so when we pray for the building up of the Church, we do well to have the Church as a stronger support for our marriages and lives. "For the union of all men" is understood to refer to the unity of humankind as well as the unity of the Churches of Christ that have been divided throughout the centuries. Again, with the union of the Churches and humankind in the truth that comes from Christ, our lives and marriages are enriched.

"For this holy House, and for those who with faith, reverence, and fear of God enter therein, let us pray to the Lord." We pray for our specific parish church because this parish will directly impact the life of the new married couple and family. It is through their relationships with this parish, with its people of faith and their awe for God, that the couple will learn about marriage and life. When a couple comes to natural impasses and periods of growth, it may be members of the faith community that become the source of help.

"For our Metropolitan N., for the venerable Priesthood, the Diaconate in Christ, for all the clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord." Just as the parish supports the couple, the bishop as overseer and the clergy and people of the Archdiocese

support the parish. We entrust in the person of a bishop in relationship with the diocese, the function of keeping the faith pure and undivided. In this petition, we lift up this source of guidance and of life upon which we will support and build our marriages.

"For the servant of God, N., and for the handmaid of God, N., who now plight each other their troth, and for their salvation, let us pray to the Lord." In Orthodox ceremonies, the use of names is very important, because particular persons are to be recipients of particular graces and gifts from God. We are praying here for the couple by name, as they promise their fidelity

goals and truths that come as gifts from God, and put away sinful biases or distortions through a process of forgiveness and healing, the couple will be able to be blessed by God with a oneness of mind and steadfastness of faith. Even this ability is understood as involving the mercy and action of God with our own cooperation and choice.

"That He will bless them with a blameless life, let us pray to the Lord." In this petition we pray for the grace to avoid adulterating our marriage through temptations of the fallen world. This petition is similar to the request to be delivered from temptation and the works of the Evil One in the Lord's Prayer.

WE ARE REMINDED THAT PEACE IS IN CHRIST, FOR IN HIM IS THE CORRECT AND RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. WE HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED INTO HIM AND IT IS FROM WITHIN HIM AND THROUGH HIM THAT WE OFFER ALL PRAYER.

to God and to each other as they begin to live their lives together as one. They "plight each other their troth," or promise to marry one another, and this promise is linked to the couple's salvation in this petition.

"That He will send down upon them perfect and peaceful love, and His help, let us pray to the Lord." Perfect and peaceful love are gifts from God, and go beyond human expressions of love, which are selfish. This love reflects the unity and love of the Trinity and is understood as a gift. Marriage brings us closer to God by offering us an opportunity to replace human love, which still has a selfish element, with selfless love that reflects God and brings us closer to Him.

"That He will preserve them in oneness of mind, and in steadfastness of faith, let us pray to the Lord." Human understanding is limited by our experiences and interpretations. Disharmony comes from different interpretations and biases based on past experiences and interpreted in consideration of goals and ideals. If two who marry accept the

"That the Lord our God will grant unto them an honorable marriage, let us pray to the Lord." One's name and reputation are of great value. The reputation of a family or marriage, like the reputation of an individual, is very fragile and vulnerable to slander. In this petition, we ask God to protect us from this kind of harm.

"For our deliverance from all tribulation, wrath, danger and necessity, let us pray to the Lord." We ask God to deliver us from tribulation, by which we mean such things as civil unrest; wrath, which some interpret as natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods, earthquakes; danger, which is anything which compromises our safety; and necessity, which includes any needs of life, because neediness distracts us from our relationship with God and with each other.

"Help us; save us; have mercy upon us; and keep us, O God, by thy grace." Again, we affirm God's real action in our lives, and the importance of His grace for our salvation.

"Calling to remembrance our all-





## MARRIAGE PREPARATION

*holy, immaculate, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, with all the Saints, let us commend ourselves and each other, and all our life unto Christ our God.*" By calling to mind the Birth-giver of God, and the saints who in every generation have worshiped and loved her son, we now commend ourselves to the Eternal Word of God. We offer this in contrast with some other image of Christ that may be distorted by our own imaginations; rather we are dedicated to the One who in history took on flesh.

*"For unto thee are due all glory, honor, and worship, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages."* In this exclamation, we affirm the reasonableness to set forth our petitions and gather together as the Church.

After reviewing the petitions, compare the suggested prayers with those contained in the expression of free will, the exclamation and the Great Ektenia as prayed in the Betrothal service. I have never had a prayer suggested that was not included in the text.

The Great Ektenia has set us in our prayerful relationship with God. We have laid before Him our earthly cares, and now are ready to call upon Him as the author of marriage, to offer us His gift of Betrothal:

*Priest: O eternal God, who hast brought into unity those who were sundered, and hast ordained for them an indissoluble bond of love; who didst bless Isaac and Rebecca, and didst make them heirs of thy promise: Bless also these thy servants, guiding them unto every good work. For thou art a merciful God, who lovest mankind and unto thee we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: now and ever and unto ages of ages.*

In this prayer, the participants will be asked to notice that it is the Eternal God who brings separate persons into unity. They will be asked to recall Isaac and Rebecca as

symbols of faithfulness and be asked to recognize that God gives unity and children as an expression of His love and covenant. Discuss how God guides our lives and is active in our relationship and life. We will do well to recognize our need for God and the abundance of His gifts.

Following this Old Testament imagery, the Church calls us to remember the New Testament imagery of Christ and His Church. We continue with a second betrothal prayer:

*O Lord our God, who has espoused the Church as a pure Virgin from among the Gentiles: Bless this Betrothal, and unite and preserve these thy servants in peace and oneness of mind. For unto thee are due all glory, honor and worship, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages.*

It is Christ who is Lord and who espoused the Church as a pure Virgin. This is the One who is asked to bless the betrothal and unite this couple. We call upon Him to keep us in oneness of mind.

Following the second betrothal prayer, the priest takes the ring of the bride, blesses the couple three times in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, then places the ring on the hand of the groom. He then

takes the ring of the groom, again blesses the couple three times and places the ring on the bride. During the following prayer, the couple will exchange their rings:

*Priest: O Lord our God, bless the betrothal of these your servants, N. and N., and confirm the word which they have spoken. Establish them in the holy union which is from thee. For thou, in the beginning, didst make them male and female, and by thee is the woman joined unto the man as a helpmeet. Wherefore, O Lord our God, who hast sent forth thy truth upon thine inheritance, and thy covenant unto thy servants our fathers, even thine elect, from generation to generation: Look thou upon thy servant, N., and upon thy handmaid, N., and establish their betrothal in faith and in oneness of mind, in truth and in love. And, O Lord, our God, do thou now bless this putting-on of rings with thy heavenly benediction: and let thine Angel go before them all the days of their life: For thou art He who blesseth and sanctifieth all things, and unto thee do we ascribe glory; to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy*





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*Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages.*

Some theologians state that, “*The word which they have spoken,*” refers to the many dreams and promises that the couple has established throughout their courting time. Once again, emphasis is placed on the idea that the union being established is from God, who created us to fulfill each other as “helpmeet” from the beginning. The helpmeet fulfills and allows one to be expressed in the other. If indeed we are in the image of the triune God who expresses Himself in love to the Son and Spirit, so too do humans need the other to fulfill one’s self. This prayer makes it clear that Guardian Angels are creatures assigned by God to protect the marriage. Following this discussion, ask the couples to reflect on the significance of rings, and the idea that God, not us, makes marriage a transforming gift.

### SESSION II: THE CROWNING SERVICE

Before going through the Crowning service line by line, discuss marriage as presence in the Kingdom of God. The symbols of procession, wine and crowns, and their significance in the ceremony,

are explored. There are three educational goals of this session: 1) to expand the understanding of heaven and salvation; 2) to show the equality of husband and wife within marriage, with reference to the Genesis creation narrative and Ephesians 5; and 3) to discuss the couple’s vocation of prophet, priest and king.

Verses expressing the themes of marriage are taken from Psalm 128 and sung before the Crowning service begins.

“*Blessed are they that fear the Lord, and walk in His ways.*” Fear or respect of the Lord brings us to follow His commandments. *Blessed* is often translated as “happy” or “content.” Contentment comes from being in a right relationship with God. This relationship is one of awe. God is not a friend or pal, but rather one who is awe-inspiring and respected.

“*Thou shall eat of the fruit of thy labors: O blessed are thou, and happy shalt thou be.*” We can be happy or content when our efforts for our family are successfully completed, and not distorted, misunderstood or negated by others.

“*Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine upon the walls of thy house: thy children like a newly-planted olive orchard round about thy table.*” The grape vine is a symbol of

abundance, growth, life and the Eucharist. When clean water was unavailable, the fruit of the vine gave man water for nourishment. It also prefigures the miracle at Cana. Olive orchards are symbolic of peace, health, knowledge, joy, anointing and hope. At the time of Christ, olives were available only if a country was at peace, since conquerors routinely burned this valuable source of medicine and food. Olive oil was used for light, allowing people to study after dark. Thus, it is a natural symbol of education or truth. It was also used to anoint, thus revealing the covenant between man and God. Because it takes a whole life-time for an olive tree to mature, one only had olives if they had been planted by a parent; therefore, the olive orchard is a symbol of hope.

“*Lo, thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord: The Lord in Zion shall so bless thee, that thou shall see the good things of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.*”

We contend that marriage belongs to Zion, or the Kingdom to come, and that God from heaven makes marriage.

“*Yea thou shall see thy children’s children, and peace upon Israel.*” Marriage belongs to the *kairos*, or “time” of God, in which all things from God are connected in Christ.

The themes revealed in these verses from Psalm 128 can be characterized as such: 1) working in cooperation with God; 2) receiving from God life in Christ; and 3) experiencing in Christ the presence and connection to the Kingdom of God here and to come.

The couple has come to the Church to receive the gift of marriage from God, and we have set forth our petitions, prayed for the betrothal with images from the Old and New Testaments, adorned the couple with rings, and sung the themes of respect for God. Now we are ready to proclaim that our worship will take place in the Kingdom, with our exclamation, “*Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages.*”



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The ensuing petitions begin like the Great Ektenia in the Betrothal service: *“In peace let us pray to the Lord, for the peace from above ... [and] for our Metropolitan...”*

We then pray: *“For the servants of God, N. and N., who are now being united to each other in the community of marriage, and for their salvation.”* Marriage in the Orthodox Church is an action of God, both outside and inside of time and place. There is no pronouncement of husband and wife, rather an understanding that marriage, as a gift of sharing life and responding together to God, is a life-long process. Surely, a couple who has shared fifty years of dreams, challenges and love are “more” married than a couple who has been together a few minutes. Nevertheless, God is uniting the couple who comes to Him to receive this gift or way to salvation.

*“That He will bless this marriage, as He blessed that in Cana of Galilee, let us pray to the Lord.”* God blessed the marriage at Cana by His presence and by taking that which is ordinary, water, and making it something of the Kingdom, wine, i.e., Eucharist. We look for God to be present in the marriage, and to make that which is human a preparation for the Kingdom to come.

*“That He will make them glad with the sight of sons and daughters, let us pray to the Lord.”* Children are understood as a blessing, for they share and magnify the love of the marriage, and they reflect the love of the marriage bed from which they are created.

*“That he will grant to them and to us, all our petitions which are unto salvation.”* Here, we leave room for recognizing that God knows better than we do our needs and what will be beneficial, or not, to us in our lives. We ask God to grant those petitions which are unto our salvation.

Following the typical closing of the ektenia, which is the same as in the Betrothal service, we begin our first marriage prayer.

God is addressed as “the Priest of mystical and pure marriage, the Ordainer of the law of the marriage of the body, the Preserver of immortality and the Provider of good things.” The prayer continues on, acknowledging that God made man to rule the earth and that woman was made from man’s own flesh and able to be a helpmeet. The significance of this is that woman is created from the same essence as man, not from inferior or superior stock. Genesis is quoted: “For this reason shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave unto his wife, and the twain shall be one flesh.” God is then called upon “to send unto [His] servants heavenly grace to allow the wife to please her husband and the man to love and cherish his wife.” By loving and cherishing one another, the couple can live according to God’s will. Noteworthy is the concept that even loving and cherishing each other is a gift that comes from above.

The couple is blessed as God blessed Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Zachariah and Elizabeth. Each of these Old Testament couples was blessed with a child in their old age, and is known for their fidelity and patience toward God. They are held up before the new couple as examples of couples who were faithful.

The couple is further blessed with

images that God preserve them as he preserved Noah in the Ark and the Holy Children from the furnace, whom He preserved for their forbearance and faithfulness as images of salvation. The couple is blessed with the gladness and joy of St. Helena when she found Christ’s cross. St. Helena sought God, and was given joy through her discovery. Images of salvation continue with the image of the Forty Holy Martyrs of Sebaste, who were frozen to death in a lake, while they sang marriage songs as God revealed crowns of martyrdom and victory from the sky. These saints, too, are known for their faithfulness and endurance. The prayer goes on to remember the parents of the bridal couple, recognizing that the prayers of parents will not only support a good marriage, but will also allow the couple to be no longer under their authority but under God’s authority. The witnesses or sponsors are prayed for, recognizing the support of peers as helpful for successful marriages.

Healthy children are prayed for, that they may be exalted like the cedars of Lebanon. The cedars are gigantic trees which the Psalmist David says are praying to the heavens. We also pray that the children will be “like a luxuriant vine, having sufficiency in all things and abounding in every thing that is acceptable to God,” thus living productive and obedient lives. We further pray that the couple will live long lives, “behold[ing] their children’s children, shining as the stars of heaven.”

These themes are repeated in the second prayer, which calls for God Himself to unite the husband and wife in Himself.

The crowns are now placed on the heads of the bride and groom in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They are then exchanged as the priest sings, “O Lord our God, crown them with glory and with honor.”

After examining this section of the Crowning service, ask the class to reflect on the imagery of crowns, victory and martyrdom.

Following this exercise, the class will turn its attention to the Epistle



## MARRIAGE PREPARATION

read at the Marriage service, which should be read from the New Testament in the context of the entire chapter, rather than from the text of the service. In Ephesians 5:20-21, we find that everyone is called to address "one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," and "be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ." It is noteworthy that everyone is subject to everyone else, male and female alike, as we are unto Christ. Only following this does St. Paul go on to ask wives to subject themselves to their husbands as unto the Lord. This giving up of oneself to a trustworthy partner who is loving her as Christ loved the Church, and putting her needs and desires above his own, is beautiful. Following this, the husbands are told to love and cherish their wives as Christ does the Church. This text allows for, and requires, much reflection and discussion.

Next, read the Gospel for the Marriage service together, and ask the couples to share their ideas about miracles today. The group may make a combined statement about the miracle of their marriages in the Church. Then, ask them to reflect on the Lord's Prayer, in which we pray Christ's prayer from inside of Him, in the Kingdom of God. What does it mean to belong to Christ?

Following this, one member of the group should read aloud the prayer of the common cup, which points to the Eucharist. What is the significance of wine that gladdens the hearts of mankind, expresses life and joy? What does it mean for the couple to drink from the same cup?

Then, read the verses for the dance of Isaiah, which offer images of the prophets, martyrs and apostles dancing at the reception of the bridal couple into the Kingdom. Conclude this segment by reading though the dismissal prayers. As prophets, we speak of God's revelations with confidence. As kings, we act as stewards over our share of the world that God has given. As priests, we offer to God that which is from Him, including our lives. From inside Christ's priest-

hood, the Christian husband and wife reveal God's action for their family and the world.

### SESSION III: COMMUNICATION

Educational goals for the couples in the group are the following: 1) to learn effective communication skills; 2) to identify healthy boundaries between nuclear and extended families; 3) to identify issues that should be resolved early in the relationship.

In this session, talk about making a new family and how to relate to families of origin, and practice some communication skills. Under the guidance of the pastor or group leader, practice communicating about difficult subjects like churches, children, discipline and finances. Have each couple speak to one another in front of the entire group. Then, ask the group to question

each of the partners to be sure the listener accurately understood the message of the communicator. The couples may also be asked to role-play family scenarios which involve the discipline of children, dealing with extended families around holiday issues, church attendance and the marital sexual relationship. The couples can be coached to be sure they understand each other, demonstrating "a listening and testing skill" which all can acquire. Each listener will be asked not to respond until he or she can repeat the message of the communicator to the communicator's satisfaction.

When discussing family of origin (the families we were born into) and nuclear family issues, ask the couple to identify their ultimate goals of marriage and life. This wider perspective is helpful. Is our marriage for our salvation? Every family is different, with different styles and rules. Our partner has more experience than we do with his/her own family of origin and may teach us how to interact most successfully for everyone's well-being.

I usually suggest a fourth session with each couple as follow-up for summarizing the work done and making an evaluation of the program.

*Fr. John Abdalah is Pastor of St. George Church in Pittsburgh, PA and holds a Doctor of Ministry in Pastoral Care.*

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# ARCHDIOCESAN OFFICE

**SPRING MEETING OF THE EPARCHIAL SYNOD OF THE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA HELD ON APRIL 30, 2003**

The spring meeting of the Eparchial Synod of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America was held on Wednesday, April 30, 2003 at the Archdiocese Headquarters in Englewood, NJ.

His Eminence Metropolitan Philip, Primate of the Archdiocese, presided. In attendance were the Antiochian Bishops of North America: His Grace Bishop Antoun, His Grace Bishop Joseph, His Grace Bishop Basil, and His Grace Bishop Demetri.

A wide range of important topics were discussed which have impact not only on the Antiochian Archdiocese, but also on Orthodoxy in North America.

Of extreme importance is the status of the detailed work which is being done to finalize the details under which the Autonomous Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America will operate. On November 20-22, 2002, a joint commission with representatives from the Patriarchate of Antioch and the Antiochian Archdiocese of North America met in Geneva, Switzerland, to draft the

final operational details which will govern the Autonomous Archdiocese of North America. The output of this meeting was the Geneva Proposal, which was reviewed in detail by the Eparchial Synod. The Eparchial Synod approved 99% of this document, and expects the remaining details to be addressed without difficulty.

Another matter of extreme impor-

serious issue, and to seek the assistance of Archbishop Demetrios to halt this activity. When a similar activity was undertaken in Australia in 1993 by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople severed communion with the Patriarch of Jerusalem and excommunicated two archbishops on his staff, Archbishops Timotheos and Isychios,

until the activity was halted; a pledge was made that it would not occur again. It is expected that this precedent-setting action of 1993 would be repeated now, given that the circumstances are identical and that well-established Antiochian Churches are being threatened.

The Eparchial Synod also discussed the following matters which

represent important progress on the part of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America:

- The Metropolitan's appeal to all Archdiocese parishes to collect money to assist the children of Iraq who are suffering from years of oppression, as well as the effects of war;
- New procedures for the screening of prospective seminarians and members of clergy to detect possible impediments as early as possible in the process of their education and ministry;
- The need to maintain strong discipline and consistency among the clergy of the Archdiocese. Metropolitan Philip de-



tance which was discussed is the crisis which has been created by the illegal and shameful activities of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in North America. The Patriarchate of Jerusalem has established headquarters in Long Island, NY, under the leadership of Archbishop Damaskinos. They have targeted locations in North America where well-established and stable Antiochian and Greek Orthodox parishes exist, with the express purpose of dividing these parishes through recruitment of parish members. Metropolitan Philip held a meeting with Archbishop Demetrios of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North America to address this



**ARCHDIOCESAN OFFICE**



clared that discipline and consistency have always been, and will continue to be, an important priority of this Archdiocese;

- The tremendous growth of the Order of St. Ignatius, the philanthropic and humanitarian arm of the Antiochian Archdiocese in North America. The Synod made a unanimous pledge to continue its strong support for the recruitment of new members;
- Reports by the Regional Bishops highlighting the tremendous progress in building, expanding, and renovating parishes, and the vital lay ministries of our Teen SOYO, Antiochian Women, and Fellowship of St. John the Divine. The Metropolitan commended the Regional Bishops for their diligent work as loving shepherds;
- The formation of the new Department of Marriage and Family Ministry, headed by Khourieh Maggie Hock of Omaha, NE. This department will develop and deliver programs to insure that the health and well-being of marriages and families within the Archdiocese are being maintained and improved.

It is expected that the next meeting of the Eparchial Synod will be

held in conjunction with the biennial convention of the Archdiocese, which will be held in Miami, FL, July 21-27, 2003.

**ORDAINED**

Deacon **GEORGE AQUARO** to the holy priesthood on March 29, 2003 at St. Timothy Church in Lompoc, CA. He is assigned as the pastor of that church.

Deacon **MICHAEL GILLIS** to the holy priesthood on April 13, 2003 at St. Innocent Church in Everson, WA. he is assigned as the pastor of the new mission in Langley, B.C., Canada.

Deacon **ELIAS EL-FERZLI** to the holy priesthood on Sunday, May 11, 2003 at Our Lady of Balamand Monastery, Balamand, Lebanon.

Sub-deacon **JAMES BRYANT** to the diaconate on October 27, 2002 at St. Paul Church, Brier, WA. He is attached to the St. James Mission, Modesto, CA.

Sub-deacon **FRED PFEIL** to the diaconate on March 23 at St. Mary Church, Wilkes-Barre, PA. He is assigned to that parish while he completes his seminary studies.

Sub-deacon **NABIL FINO** to the diaconate on the Feast of the Annunciation (evening of march 24) at St. Mary Church, Brooklyn, NY.

He is assigned to Virgin Mary Church, Yonkers, NY while he completes his seminary studies.

Sub-deacon **JEAN EL-MURR** to the diaconate on March 30 at St. George Church, Montreal, Quebec. He is assigned to that parish.

**SAVA S. LEIDA** to the diaconate on Sunday, April 6, 2003 at St. George Cathedral in Wichita, KS. He is assigned to St. Thomas Church in Sioux City, IA.

**APPOINTED**

Priest **THOMAS ZELL** as the pastor of the St. James Mission in Modesto, CA, effective March 26, 2003.

**RECEIVED**

The parish of St. Nicholas Mission, Asheville, NC, effective April 11, 2003.

Deacon **MICHAEL DAVENPORT**, effective April 11, 2003. He is attached to St. Nicholas Mission, Asheville, NC.

**REINSTATED**

Priest **JOSEPH HUNEYCUTT** as a priest in the Antiochian Archdiocese, effective April 11, 2003. He is appointed as the pastor of St. Nicholas Mission, Asheville, NC.

**DECEASED**

Priest **JOHN PAUL PRO** on April 19, 2003 in Greensburg, PA. Fr. John served St. George, New Kensington, PA, St. George, Pittsburgh, PA and St. Philip Church, Davie, FL. Fr. John is survived by his wife Katherine.

**RELEASED**

Priest **MICHAEL ROME** to the Orthodox Church in America, Diocese of the West, effective April 1, 2003.

**DEPOSED**

The former priest **ANTHONY CREECH** of Spokane, WA, effective April 22, 2003.

**LAICIZED**

The former priest **MALATIUS HUSSENEY**, effective April 18, 2003.



DAILY DEVOTIONS

JULY, 2003

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. ROMANS 7:14-8:2; MATTHEW 10:9-15             | 17. ROMANS 15:17-29; MATTHEW 12:46-13:3               |
| 2. ROMANS 8:2-13; MATTHEW 10:16-22 (FAST)       | 18. ROMANS 16:1-16; MATTHEW 13:4-9 (FAST)             |
| 3. ROMANS 8:22-27; MATTHEW 10:23-31             | 19. ROMANS 8:14-21; MATTHEW 9:9-13                    |
| 4. ROMANS 9:6-19; MATTHEW 10:32-36, 11:1 (FAST) | 20. JAMES 5:10-20; MATTHEW 8:28-34; 9-1               |
| 5. ROMANS 3:28-4:3; MATTHEW 7:24-8:4            | 21. ROMANS 16:17-24; MATTHEW 13:10-23                 |
| 6. ROMANS 5:1-10; MATTHEW 6:22-33               | 22. 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-9; MATTHEW 13:24-30             |
| 7. ROMANS 9:18-33; MATTHEW 11:2-15              | 23. 1 CORINTHIANS 2:9-3:8; MATTHEW 13:31-36 (FAST)    |
| 8. ROMANS 10:11-11:2; MATTHEW 11:16-20          | 24. 1 CORINTHIANS 3:18-23; MATTHEW 13:36-43           |
| 9. ROMANS 11:2-12; MATTHEW 11:20-26 (FAST)      | 25. 1 CORINTHIANS 4:5-8; MATTHEW 13:44-54 (FAST)      |
| 10. ROMANS 11:13-24; MATTHEW 11:27-30           | 26. ROMANS 9:1-5; MATTHEW 9:18-26                     |
| 11. ROMANS 11:25-36; MATTHEW 12:1-8 (FAST)      | 27. 2 TIMOTHY 2:1-10; MATTHEW 9:1-8                   |
| 12. ROMANS 6:11-17; MATTHEW 8:14-23             | 28. 1 CORINTHIANS 5:9-6:11; MATTHEW 13:54-58          |
| 13. TITUS 3:8-15; MATTHEW 5:14-19               | 29. 1 CORINTHIANS 6:20-7:12; MATTHEW 14:1-13          |
| 14. ROMANS 12:4-5, 15-21; MATTHEW 12:9-13       | 30. 1 CORINTHIANS 7:12-24; MATTHEW 14:35-15:11 (FAST) |
| 15. GALATIANS 1:11-19; JOHN 10:1-9              | 31. 1 CORINTHIANS 7:24-35; MATTHEW 16:12-21           |

by Very Rev. George Alberts

DAILY DEVOTIONS

AUGUST, 2003

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|--|--|
| 1. 1 CORINTHIANS 7:35-8:7 (FAST)   | 16. ROMANS 14:6-9; MATTHEW 15:32-39                |
| 2. ROMANS 12:1-3; MATTHEW 10:37-11:1 (FAST)  | 17. 1 CORINTHIANS 3:9-17; MATTHEW 14:5:22-34       |
| 3. ROMANS 15:1-7; MATTHEW 9:27-35 (FAST)   | 18. 1 CORINTHIANS 15:12-19; MATTHEW 21:18-22       |
| 4. 1 CORINTHIANS 9:13-18; MATTHEW 16:1-6 (FAST)                                      | 19. 1 CORINTHIANS 15:29-38; MATTHEW 21:23-27       |
| 5. 1 CORINTHIANS 10:5-12; MATTHEW 16:6-12 (FAST)                                     | 20. 1 CORINTHIANS 16:4-12; MATTHEW 21:28-32 (FAST) |
| 6. 2 PETER 1:10-19; MATTHEW 17:1-9 (FAST)<br>HOLY TRANSFIGURATION                    | 21. 2 CORINTHIANS 1:1-7; MATTHEW 21:43-46          |
| 7. 1 CORINTHIANS 10:28-11:7; MATTHEW 16:24-28 (FAST)                                 | 22. 2 CORINTHIANS 1:12-20; MATTHEW 22:23-33 (FAST) |
| 8. 1 CORINTHIANS 11:8-22; MATTHEW 17:10-18 (FAST)                                    | 23. ROMANS 15:30-33; MATTHEW 17:24-18:4            |
| 9. ROMANS 13:1-10; MATTHEW 12:30-37 (FAST)   | 24. 1 CORINTHIANS 4:9-16; MATTHEW 17:14-23         |
| 10. 1 CORINTHIANS 1:10-18; MATTHEW 14:14-22 (FAST)                                   | 25. 2 CORINTHIANS 2:4-15; MATTHEW 23:13-22         |
| 11. 1 CORINTHIANS 11:31-12:6; MATTHEW 18:1-11 (FAST)                                 | 26. 2 CORINTHIANS 2:14-3:3; MATTHEW 23:23-28       |
| 12. 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-26; MATTHEW 18:18-22, 19:1-2, 13-15 (FAST)                   | 27. 2 CORINTHIANS 3:4-11; MATTHEW 23:29-39 (FAST)  |
| 13. 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-14:5; MATTHEW 20:1-16 (FAST)                                  | 28. 2 CORINTHIANS 4:1-6; MATTHEW 24:13-28          |
| 14. 1 CORINTHIANS 14:6-19; MATTHEW 20:17-28 (FAST)                                   | 29. ACTS 13:25-32; MARK 6:14-30 (STRICT FAST)      |
| 15. PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11; LUKE 10:38-42, 11:27-28 (FAST)<br>DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS | 30. 1 CORINTHIANS 1:3-9; MATTHEW 19:3-12           |
|  | 31. 1 CORINTHIANS 9:2-12; MATTHEW 18:23-25         |

by Very Rev. George Alberts



ARCHDIOCESAN OFFICE

DAILY DEVOTIONS

SEPTEMBER, 2003

- 1. 2 CORINTHIANS 5:10-15; MARK 1:9-15
2. 2 CORINTHIANS 5:15-21; MARK 1:16-22
3. 2 CORINTHIANS 6:11-16; MARK 1:23-28 (FAST)
...
30. GALATIANS 5:11-21; LUKE 5:12-16

by Very Rev. George Alberts

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PUBLICATIONS DEPARTMENT

358 Mountain Road, Englewood, New Jersey 07631

PHONE: 201-871-1355 FAX: 201-871-7954

# Book List and Order Form 2003-2004

JUNE 2003

ORDER FORM

JUNE 2004

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TITLE	PRICE	QUANTITY	TOTAL COST	FOR OFFICE USE
<b>CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: CHURCH SCHOOL MATERIALS:</b>				
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The Wonder of It All (Teacher)	\$ 8.50			
The Wonder of It All (Student)	7.50			
God, My Friends, and Me (Teacher)	8.50			
God, My Friends, and Me (Student)	7.00			
<b>KINDERGARTEN</b>				
Together with God (Student)	8.00			
Together with God (Teacher/Parent)	9.00			
Birth of Jesus (Flannelgraph)	11.00			
Teaching Pictures (1 Package, 4 Sets)	35.00			
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Making Things Right (Activity Packet)	3.00			
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 Betty J. Farha, Jacksonville, FL ..... 10

**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

On May 14, 2003, the Archdiocese Finance Committee met at the Archdiocese headquarters in Englewood, NJ. The main order of business was to develop the Archdiocese budget for the 2005 fiscal year, which begins Feb. 1, 2004, and ends Jan. 31, 2005. After much animated and sincere discussion

about priorities for this upcoming period, the committee developed an overall budget of \$4.4 million, an increase of approximately 10% over the previous budget. The proposals for funding this increase will be presented to the Archdiocese Board of Trustees for their approval, and ultimately to the General Assembly at the Archdiocesan Convention in Miami in July.



# Come join us for the 4th of July Celebration

**Radisson Hotel Centre  
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SOYO

# THE ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM SEMINARY FUND

*“Train up a child in the way he should go ...” Proverbs 22:6*

ONCE IN A WHILE, SOMEONE has an idea that strikes you in a unique way. You hear it and, immediately, what comes to your mind is, “Yes! that’s it! There it is!” These are some of the things that came to my mind when Alexa Younes, NAC SOYO President, shared with me a vision that she had. She envisioned a SOYO that would plan and save today to ensure the stability of its own future. She envisioned a group of teens that desire so strongly to understand and live the gospel of Christ that they would help prepare their teachers. She envisioned an NAC board of teens who are so concerned with the fruits of the parishes in our beloved Archdiocese that they would set their focus on their greatest need — to be led down the path of Christ, to walk with those who will give them the strength to remain on the path, and to be loved from the onset of the journey! My beloved, this is the St. John Chrysostom Seminary Fund, a fund established by the teens of our Archdiocese to support those who desire to serve them as youth directors.

As I’m sure most of you know, the number of full-time youth directors in our Archdiocese is growing rapidly. As a result of this, the number of parishes that wish to hire someone on a full-time basis is also growing. Unfortunately, many of our highly qualified candidates are studying full-time, or have graduated college and are putting their studies to use. What NAC SOYO hopes to do,

through the St. John Chrysostom Seminary Fund, is to help prepare people for the field of Youth Ministry, so that there will be candi-



dates trained and ready to serve our parishes. Scholarships will be available for men and women who desire to study solely for this great purpose. The teens of NAC SOYO are so grateful for the support of Metropolitan Philip on this vision, and hope to present the intricacies of the project to the regions at their Parish Life Conferences this year.

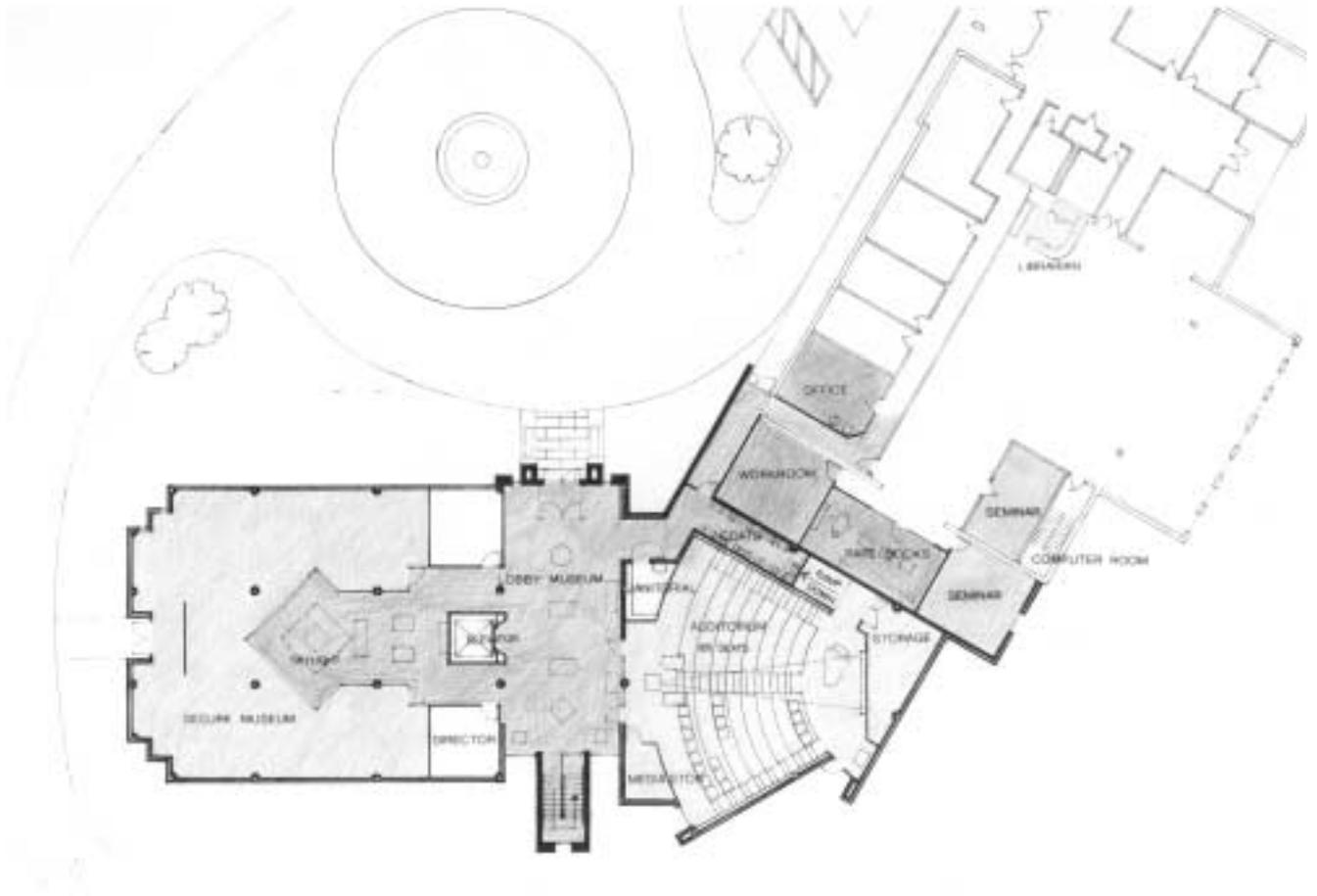
I am so thankful to know many part-time youth workers who have done wonders for the children of their parishes. Although giving any time at all to our youth is a beautiful thing, nothing is more of a blessing than being able to give all your time. There are countless advantages for the full-time youth director, that extend to the children. Not only

does the youth worker have the time to plan multiple week-night events, but he/she, more importantly, has the time to establish one-on-one connections. Whether it’s lunch after school, tutoring, or just a late afternoon chat at home, there’s nothing more important than truly knowing each child. Who are they? What are their struggles? Where are they on their spiritual walk? I hope and pray that the good people of our Archdiocese whole-heartedly support this great effort of NAC SOYO. The St. John Chrysostom Seminary Fund will ultimately fund your children’s education in the faith. By supplying others with knowledge, your children will be supplied with the knowledge of who they are as children of God.

Every parish in this Archdiocese needs a consistent community for their young people to belong to and grow from. Every child should feel constant safety and comfort with their brothers and sisters at their parish. This community must be overseen by someone who has a great love for the gospel of Christ and knowledge of the gospel of Christ, someone who wishes to live it through their service to our most precious possessions — our children. Let us all pray that the St. John Chrysostom Seminary Fund will produce much good fruit, and that, through the guidance and love of our youth directors, our children will be producers of the fruits of the Holy Spirit.



# ANTIOCHIAN VILLAGE BREAKS GROUND FOR NEW WING



Architectural drawing of interior space

**T**HANKS TO THE GENEROSITY of the Antiochian Board of Trustees, parishes, organizations and many individuals, construction is officially underway for a new, \$2,000,000, 16,600-square-foot addition to the Antiochian Village Heritage and Learning Center in Western Pennsylvania. On Saturday, April 12, 2003, Bob Laham,

Chairman of Village Council, joined with architect Peter Ceconi, Jr., AIA, and contractors to sign official documents and break ground for the project.

The new wing will house the Eastern Heritage Museum's collection of more than 700 icons, religious relics and cultural artifacts and will include a Rare Book Room addition to the library, which will help preserve and make usable for research its collection of more than 150 rare or historical theological

books, manuscripts and other documents. The expansion will occur at the south end of the present facility, becoming a connected and contiguous part of the present structure. Additionally, it will contain a sloped seating lecture/performance hall, several seminar rooms, offices, and ancillary support areas.

Funds to begin construction of the facilities were raised within the Archdiocese, primarily by contributions from members of the Archdiocese Board of Trustees, with



## ANTIOCHIAN VILLAGE



Holy Bible Vol. 1 Dated 1635 (open); Holy Bible Vol. 2 Dated 1635 (closed — black); Early King James Bible 1617 (closed — brown), *Hidayah al-qawimah ila al-imanah al-mustaqimah* 1792 By Anthimos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, donated by the Order of St. Ignatius.

donations also coming from churches, organizations and other individuals. To date, \$1,320,500 has been pledged. There are still many “naming opportunities” for donors for specific spaces such as the new auditorium, seminar rooms, rare book room, archival/work room, museum and lobbies.

“After much planning, we are excited to finally begin construction now as we head into nicer weather,” said Robert Laham. “I am extremely pleased that our Orthodox faithful believe in what we are trying to communicate and convey in this new museum project and library expansion. They have shown such incredible support financially, for which the Council and Archdiocese are most grateful,” he concluded.

Architect for the project, Peter Cecconi, Jr., AIA, designed the project’s exterior using materials to connect to the existing facility in a manner reflective of the religious heritage of Byzantine tradition. R.E. Crawford Company of Springdale, PA was awarded the bid to oversee the project as General Contractor; Griffith and Petz of Johnstown, PA

won the mechanical contract; and BECA Electrical Contractor Associates of Crabtree, PA received the electrical contract. Construction is expected to begin the fourth week of April, with completion expected

in early 2004.

Father Michael Massouh and the Very Reverend Nabil Hanna conducted a ceremony to bless the project prior to the first shovels being lifted. “It is very important for us not only to preserve pieces of our Christian and cultural heritage that come from Syria, Lebanon and other areas of the Middle East for our future generations,” said Father Massouh, Executive Director for Antiochian Village, “but is also critical for us to share it with all people to foster a better understanding among people of all faiths.”

Fr. Massouh added, “The new museum will provide an opportunity for us to share our heritage and our faith with visitors and residents in the region by providing regular hours for public access while maintaining the security and preservation of the collections. It will foster moving the Village to a ‘spiritual oasis’ where people can pamper their hearts, further enrich their minds, and find refreshment in solitude either individually or collectively,” he concluded.

The Heritage Museum will house and display delicate items behind glass enclosure walls where a constantly monitored, controlled atmos-



Byzantium wrought bronze ceremonial incense shovel from 5th-6th century



## ANTIOCHIAN VILLAGE



Handcarved wooden triptych of 31 individual scenes. Russia, 17th century

phere of 72 degrees and 50% humidity is maintained. Lighting systems have been designed to avoid the damaging effects of ultra-violet rays. Less sensitive items of metal and glass will be displayed in secured casework located in what the plans designate as “display lobbies.” Public areas will be equipped with

conventional heating, cooling and lighting systems.

The Rare Book Room will expand upon the existing library. The collection will be housed in a secured glass wall enclosure with a controlled atmosphere. Other configuration changes will occur in the library to improve security and bet-

ter accommodate library management and use.

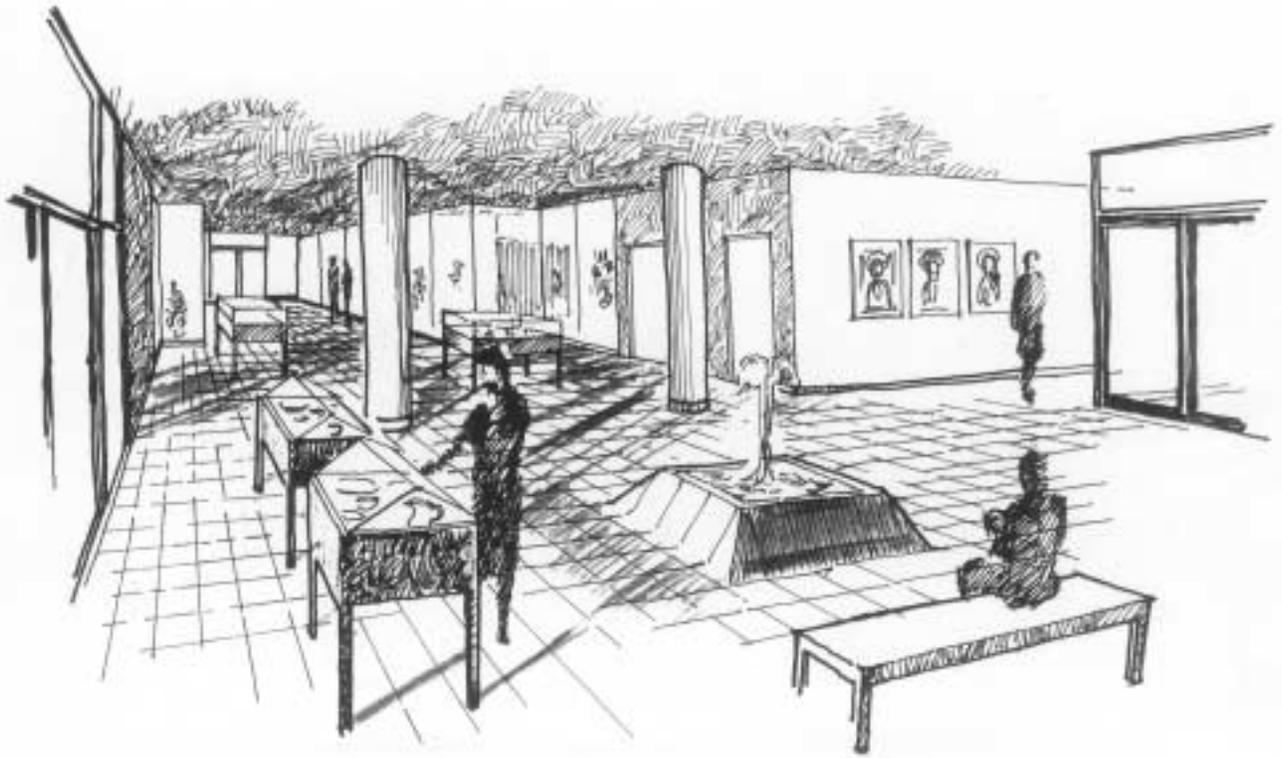
The Auditorium will be an acoustically treated, tiered amphitheater that will be equipped with a motorized projector platform and projection screen, complete sound system, and a multi-controlled lighting system. It will accommodate a variety of educational or entertainment venues.

Presently, the Village museum collections include 106 icons dating from the 12th through the 20th century, representing 14 different countries or regions of the world outside of the United States. An additional 634 artifacts, relics and items reflect the Middle Eastern and Eastern European ancestry of the Orthodox Christian heritage and culture. Among religious relics are items belonging to St. Raphael, a 5th century Byzantium incense shovel, a holy water flask from the 1700's, a Middle Eastern pectoral cross from the 1700's, several religious plaques and tetrptychs and triptychs from the 18th and 19th centuries in a variety of media, vestments, chalices, crosses, and liturgical items.

Ancient artifacts include a 2nd century BC Syrian pottery bowl, a Syrian 3rd-5th century funerary relief, a pair of Tunisian pottery oil



Museum exterior design in Byzantine tradition



Drawing of Museum Display Lobbies

lamps dating to the 5th-6th century, some bronze fals (coins) from the Eastern Mediterranean from 690-700, a 7th century Byzantium finial, and a 70-million-year-old fossilized fish from the mountains of Lebanon.

The artistic and decorative arts collection features musical instruments, wood carved artifacts from the 17th century, prints, photographs, furniture, a variety of items with inlaid craftsmanship, a wide selection of metal works, some dating to the 19th century, embroidery pieces and textiles, a doll collection, and jewelry, all representing Middle Eastern culture and heritage. Other items include household items, coins from the 12th century, armaments, clothing, maps, and a variety of other items from the past seven centuries.

The rare books, manuscripts and documents holdings include such items as one of only two copies in the world of a Coptic Psalter, the original excavated in Egypt and dated to the 4th century; a 1663

Syriac text New Testament Bible; an 1848 Arabic text of the Life of St. John Chrysostom that was written by hand with reed pens; *Hidayah al-qawimah ila al-imanah al-mustaqimah*, which is a 1792 collection of Eastern Orthodox doctrines in Arabic by Anthimos, Patriarch of Jerusalem; a 1614 Psalter vowelled in Arabic and Latin texts in parallel; and a number of Holy Bibles dating to the 1600's.

The new wing and its facilities will articulate boldly the Antiochian legacy through knowledge and understanding of its ancient and historical past and cultural contributions. Upon completion, the museum will be open to the public with regular hours.

## UPCOMING EVENTS 2003

**July 4-6, 2003**

### **Villager's Alumni Reunion Weekend**

There will be lots of fireworks and fellowship this weekend! Come join old friends and meet new ones! Cost for 2 nights lodging, 5 meals and 1 snack are: Single occupancy: \$200 per person; Double occupancy: \$142 per person; Triple occupancy: \$122 per person; and Quad occupancy: \$114 per person. For more information visit the website at [antiochianvillage.org](http://antiochianvillage.org).

**July 30-August 3, 2003**

### **Sacred Music Institute**

This year's institute theme is "Outreach Through Music," with the Very Rev. Sergei Glagolev as keynote speaker. Sessions include: newly composed music for the Divine Liturgy, new feast day music, chil-



## ANTIOCHIAN VILLAGE

dren's music, vocal training, conducting classes, Byzantine chanting and more. A \$25.00 deposit is required to register. Cost includes 4 nights lodging, 10 meals, 3 snacks and materials. Single occupancy: \$315 per person; Double occupancy: \$230 per person. Add chanting classes and pay — Single occupancy: \$422 per person; Double occupancy: \$306 per person.

### **August 15-17, 2003 Rat Race — Young Adult Conference**

Cost includes 2 nights lodging, 4 meals, and 2 snacks. For Single occupancy: \$190 per person; for Double occupancy: \$130 per person; for Triple occupancy: \$110 per person; and for Quad occupancy: \$102 per person.

### **August 24-September 5, 2003 Antiochian House of Studies**

Cost includes 5 nights lodging, 14 meals, 1 banquet, and 1 snack. For Single occupancy: \$496 per person; for Double occupancy: \$346 per person. There is a \$25.00 registration fee.

### **August 29-September 1, 2003 Family Camp (at the Camp)**

Family Camp is an opportunity for your family to get away from everyday life to grow closer to Christ. The weekend includes favorite camp activities and Christian education for both campers and parents together as well as separate youth and adult groups. Lodging is assigned by cabin for each family at the Village Camp. The cost for 3 nights lodging, 9 meals, snacks and all activities is \$195 for the first parent and \$50.00 for each additional person — parent or camper. Families of 5 or more will pay \$395 total per family. Children under 5 are free, but must be in the care of a parent at all times. Call the Village Camp for information or a registration flyer at 724-238-9565.

### **August 29-September 1, 2003 Missions and Evangelism**

Cost for 3 nights lodging, 6 meals, 1 banquet, and 3 snacks for single

occupancy: \$305 per person; double occupancy: \$215 per person.

### **September 19-21, 2003 Sts. Thekla and Raphael Pilgrimage**

### **November 6-9, 2003 Orthodox Institute**

**\*\*Antiochian Village has arranged with US Air for discounted airfares. Please call toll free 1-800-874-7687 & refer to Gold File Number 40152550. For ground shuttle service contact Majesty Shuttle at 1-877-794-3400 as part of the Antiochian Village group.**

### **Village Alumni Event**

Remember 70's night in the Pavilion? Eating your Gimme Shop candy in the Gathering Place? Chanting bombers in the dining

hall? Perhaps it has been a while, but if you were a part of the **Antiochian Village** — as a camper, a counselor, volunteer, or "hooded boy" — wait no further to be a part of the Village again.

In 2003, the Village Alumni have become an active part of the Antiochian Village camping program. We've started getting together within each region to see old friends, meet new ones, share Village memories and become an active part of local parish and SOYO life.

If you are headed to Miami for the **Archdiocese Convention** in July, be sure to see us at registration and make sure you're on our e-mail list. And come to the **Antiochian Village Alumni Cocktail Party** — for one hour right before the Grand Haflī. For more information, go to [www.antiochianvillage.org](http://www.antiochianvillage.org) and click on "Alumni."

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ANTIOCHIAN VILLAGE DONATIONS

DONATIONS RECEIVED AT ANTIOCHIAN VILLAGE FROM FEBRUARY 1, 2002-JANUARY 31, 2003

The Camp and the Heritage & Learning Center at Antiochian Village gratefully acknowledge the monetary and in-kind donations contributed during the 2003 fiscal year ended January 31, 2003. The campers, the guests, and the staff appreciate everyone's generosity. Should you care to make a restricted or unrestricted gift to the Camp or the Center please inquire of Fr. Michael Nasser or Fr. Michael Massouh.

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Dr. Henry Bitar, Aerial Photographs of Antiochian Village
Evonne Chala — 78-rpm recording of Metropolitan Germanos Chehade
Fr. Isaac Crow — Ignacio Peña, The Christian Art of Byzantine Syria (Madrid: Garnet Publishing, 1997)
Dr. George Farha, Framed portrait Antonio Ganem — Three photographs of descendants of Bishop Raphael
Lori Gaydosh, Medical Supplies
David Ghiz — Pool Supplies
Mr. & Mrs. Sheldon Kaufman, Van Anne Glynn Mackoul — W.A. Visser 't Hooft, The Genesis and Formation of the World Council of Churches (Geneva: WCC, 1987)
Bradford E. Mooney, Fort Ligonier, Antique Manuscript Display Case
Fr. Michel Najim, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Matthew (Downers Grove, IL:

- Inter Varsity Press, 2001, 2002), 2 Volumes
St. George, Boston — Camp Silverware
Isam Salah, Medical Supplies
Barbara Shoop, Four-Record Album Set by Archbishop Samuel David
Eric Snee, Lodge Furniture
Mark Strauss, Lodge Furniture
Yvonne Younes — One of her original oil paintings

Contributors to the Father John Namie Fund Fiscal Year 2003

Table with 2 columns: Name and Amount. Includes entries like Anonymous \$20, Anonymous \$1,000, Dr. Lee Anton \$100, etc., ending with Total \$4819.



# RACHEL BETROS BLAIR

**R**ACHEL BETROS BLAIR, A Dame of the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch, fell asleep in the Lord at the age of 93 on March 12, 2003. Rachel was born in Rochester, Pennsylvania, but spent nearly all of her life in Canton, Ohio. She was a committed, very active member of the Antiochian Church for her entire life. She will be remembered for the many local and national activities in which she engaged. She was a loyal follower and friend of the late Metropolitan Antony Bashir and worked tirelessly with him in his efforts to shape the Antiochian Church in America. She continued that loyalty and friendship with Metropolitan Philip, whom she first knew as a priest in Cleveland. She held numerous offices in the local and Midwest SOYO and was a fixture at the various SOYO and Archdiocese conventions, attending her last Archdiocese Convention in Los Angeles at the age of 92.

In addition to her activities with the Order of St. Ignatius, Rachel was one of the earliest members of the Antiochian Women's Organization (AOCWNA). In recognition of her efforts she received the Metropolitan Philip Award of Merit from the Midwest Region. In Canton, she was a member of Holy Cross Orthodox Church. She was an early advocate of strengthening relationships

between all of the local Orthodox churches and other ecumenical efforts beyond the Orthodox Church. She served as president of the Stark County Council of



Rachel Betros Blair  
+March 12, 2003+

Orthodox Churches. She was also active in many community and cultural activities. She had been a board member of the Women's Committees of: Walsh University, Malone College, The Cleveland

Orchestra's Blossom Music Center, the Canton Symphony, the Canton Woman's Club, The Canton Museum of Art, the Canton Ballet and the Stark County International Festival, among many others. She was a former board member of the Fairmount Children's Orphanage and was active in the United Way and activities on behalf of the mentally handicapped.

An Orthodox funeral was held in Canton on March 15 conducted by the Reverend Father David Betras, Pastor of Holy Cross, assisted by Very Reverend Louis Mahshie, Deacon Basil Shaheen, Reverend Father Michael Massouh, Very Reverend Theodore E. Ziton, Very Reverend George Treff, Reverend Father Elias Meena and Very Reverend Joseph Cervo. Rachel is survived by her daughter, Nancy Joan Blair, and son, William P. Blair, and by sisters Elizabeth Betros and Roseanne Kelly of Canton and Ruth (Mrs. Edward) Fisher of Walnut Creek, CA, and by numerous nieces, nephews and grand-nieces and nephews. She was loved by all who knew her for her vitality and commitment to her Church and community; she will be

greatly missed. May her memory be eternal!



# THE PEOPLE SPEAK ...

Editor:

Over the past 20 years there have been some churches within our Archdiocese that have resorted to charity casinos and bingos to assist in fund-raising activities. We as Christians should not lower ourselves to such hideous forms of fund-raising. Some parishioners have commented, "How else are we going to make money?" This practice interferes with the spiritual growth of a Church community and destroys the moral standards in our society. We're taking money from the misfortunes and misery of others.

The Archdiocese needs to expound the necessity of all churches to refrain from utilizing gambling and bingo monies to fund their parishes. We have to be more creative than that. Does this glorify God?

Faithfully,

Sam Salloum

4 Sienna Bay S.W.

Calgary, Alberta T3H 2C8



Father, bless!

As one who is concerned over the plight of our brethren in the Holy Land, I was glad to see (in the March 2003 edition of *The Word*) Fr. Peter Gillquist's article, "What Do You Say to Evangelical Zionists?" as well as the pieces in "The Orthodox World" section by William Hughes and Peter Kenny regarding the state of Christianity in

Palestine and the Holy Land. As a former "Evangelical Zionist," I found Fr. Peter's words very helpful as I seek to talk to people of this theological persuasion. The articles by Mr. Hughes and Mr. Kenny were especially poignant, as the world's attention has shifted from the difficulties of our people in the Holy Land to the war in Iraq (although the humanitarian work of IOCC in this area needs to be supported).

Not having the privilege of growing up in the Antiochian Archdiocese, I still have benefited greatly from the graciousness of its people, especially those in the Midwest Region, since my family's Christianization some eight years ago. Although I had been introduced to Holy Orthodoxy in Bethlehem during the summer of 1982, my family and I first experienced the warmth of Arab Christian hospitality by the good people of St. George in Cicero, IL while still inquirers.

In response to this familial affection, recently I have sought to be an advocate for IOCC's work in the Holy Land, our own Archdiocese's work with orphans (especially those of Lebanon), and the Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation. This latter organization seeks to educate American Christians regarding the fact that there are, indeed, Christians in the Holy Land and what we in the

West can do to help them. Again, thank you for printing such articles; they keep the needs of our brethren in Palestine and the Holy Land before our eyes ... and in our prayers.

In Christ,

William (Sdn. Irenaios)

Anderson

Holy Transfiguration

Orthodox Church

Warrenville, IL

Child Sponsorship

Program Coordinator

Holy Land Christian

Ecumenical Foundation

(Chicago network)

email: irenaios@juno.com



Your Eminence:

Christ is in our midst!

I am a seventeen-year-old high school student, and an active member of St. John of Damascus Church in Dedham, MA. I listened attentively on Palm Sunday as our pastor, Fr. John Teebağy, read your letter concerning your support to the Iraqi children. I am extremely overwhelmed by the plight of the injured and homeless in Iraq, especially since I heard about the bombing victim, Ali Ismaeel Abbas. I wrote a letter about my concern, which was published in two Massachusetts newspapers last week. In addition, I sent copies to President Bush and my local representatives.

I am sending a copy to you, as your reputation as a humanitarian and your

passion for aiding those in need are truly an inspiration.

In Christ,

Ashley E. Close

Westford, MA

(Ashley's letter follows:)

I saw the news clips on CNN this week about the twelve year old Iraqi Boy, Ali Ismaeel Abbas, who survived a devastating bomb attack on his home in Baghdad. His mother, five months pregnant, along with his father, brother and seven other family members, were killed. Ali somehow lived through the carnage, but both of his arms were torn off, and large portions of his body were severely burned. In a state of shock and overwhelmed at his situation, Ali was said to have whimpered, "If I don't get a pair of hands, I will commit suicide."

Prior to showing the video of Ali, Wolf Blitzer of CNN cautioned viewers that the images could be disturbing, and he was right. I was terribly disturbed by this child's ghastly wounds, and by the pathetic state of his exposed body lying on a rusted hospital bed. But mostly I was truly disturbed by how much this young boy reminded me of my brother. He had large, expressive eyes like my brother, the same round, innocent face, and close-cropped hair. He was just a little kid who probably liked the same types of things my brother likes, an innocent caught in a





# THE ORTHODOX WORLD

## IOCC TO DISTRIBUTE BLANKETS FOR RUSSIA'S NEEDIEST

Baltimore (IOCC) — Russian winters are notoriously long and harsh. Sustained periods of temperatures below zero are not uncommon. Each year, hundreds of people in the Russian Federation die from hypothermia, and thousands more must be treated.

In preparation for next winter, International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), in partnership with the Russian Orthodox Church, will distribute thousands of winter blankets to some of the neediest institutions in the Russian Federation, including hospitals, orphanages and homeless shelters.

The project is part of IOCC's ongoing effort, since 1992, to meet the most basic needs of vulnerable Russians, and will immediately help those facing the extreme cold of winter. These physically and economically vulnerable people often live in substandard dwellings, cannot afford to buy heating oil or other fuel, and are often the victims of heat and power shutdowns by authorities.

IOCC implemented a similar program, even larger in scope, in the Republic of Georgia from 1995 to 2000. During that time, about 40,000 blankets and 10,000 mattresses

were made and distributed to vulnerable Georgians.

In the Russia project, IOCC will purchase the blankets locally with funding from Church World Service and will ensure their distribution to institutions and individuals through the Russian Orthodox Church. Fourteen dioceses will be included in the blanket distribution project.

The Church's Department of Church Charity and Social Services has access to thousands of shelters, soup kitchens, orphanages and other institutions, through which IOCC is able to reach the needy. In the blanket project, IOCC will use these networks to identify and reach those in need of blankets to help ward off the cold.

Factors contributing to the hypothermia problem include homelessness, alcoholism, improper insulation in homes and unreliable public heating utilities.

According to news reports, the Moscow Ambulance Service responded to 190 fatal hypothermia cases in 2001. Nearly 2,000 people were hospitalized with hypothermia during the same time period.

The Russian Emergency Situations Ministry reported that, in mid-January 2003, nearly 30,000 people were without heat. Russian news media showed the interior walls of buildings coated with ice and resi-

dents struggling to stay warm by bundling up and huddling around electric heaters.

IOCC has been active in the Russian Federation since 1992, working to address the food and material needs of orphanages, homes for the elderly and other institutions. To date, more than \$60 million in humanitarian assistance projects have been implemented throughout the Russian Federation.

IOCC is the official humanitarian aid agency of Orthodox Christians. In just 10 years, IOCC has delivered more than \$160 million in humanitarian assistance in 21 countries.

To learn more about IOCC's programs, please visit [www.iocc.org](http://www.iocc.org) or call toll-free 1-877-803-4622.

## EXPERTS TO EXAMINE BURIAL BOX OF "JAMES, BROTHER OF JESUS"

By Ross Dunn

Jerusalem (ENI) — The Israel Antiquities Authority announced on April 1 the formation of two committees of experts to examine whether a limestone burial box, almost 2000 years old, may provide the oldest authentic archaeological record of Jesus.

The receptacle for the bones of the dead, or ossuary, bears the inscription "James, brother of Jesus" in Aramaic, and some French scholars

believe it dates back to about AD 63.

Such boxes were commonly used by Jewish families between 20 BC and AD 70 to store the bones of their relatives.

Aramaic, an ancient Semitic language, was commonly used in the Middle East for several centuries, including by Jews during the lifetime of Jesus.

Noted palaeographer André Lemaire of Paris's Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (Sorbonne), an expert in the study of ancient inscriptions, says the Aramaic words on the side of the ossuary show a cursive form of writing used only from about AD 10 to AD 70. He believes the inscription is authentic.

Now two committees of Israeli academics have been asked to give their considered opinions on the matter.

What is at stake is the possibility of confirming physical evidence about St. James (referred to as James the Less), who in the New Testament is recorded as either Jesus' "brother" or part of his "brethren," depending on the translation. According to tradition he was the head of the first Christian community in Jerusalem after Jesus' death, often called the first bishop of Jerusalem.

The job of the first of the two committees, established by the Israeli government, is to check what



it calls "the scientific aspects in the writing and style [to be able to] confirm the authenticity of the writing." The task of the second committee is to check the "originality of the patina" on the stone's engraving and the stone material itself.

The American journal *Biblical Archaeology Review* describes the patina as a substance of "thin sheen or covering that forms on stone and other materials over time" and says that it "has a cauliflower-type shape known to develop in a cave environment; more importantly it shows no trace of modern elements."

As the *Review* also says: "This container provides the only New Testament-era mention of the central figure of Christianity and is the first-ever archaeological discovery to corroborate Biblical references to Jesus." These claims are now to be put under the microscope by the experts.

**IOCC AID "LIFTING BURDENS" FOR SUFFERING IRAQI CIVILIANS**

Baghdad (IOCC) - The streets are filled with litter and sewage. The shops are shuttered. Food is still scarce, and unemployment is rampant.

Despite these and other problems faced by post-war Iraq, humanitarian assistance is starting to flow into the country, said David Holdridge, Chief Operating Officer for International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), who has just returned from a five-day trip to Iraq.

"Baghdad has a tremen-

dous humanitarian need, aggravated by the long weeks of bombing, and the lack of electricity and water," Holdridge said. "I didn't have electricity the entire time I was there. There is very little food."

Holdridge was in Iraq from April 24-29 to assess the needs and begin emergency relief distributions on behalf of IOCC, the official humanitarian aid agency of Orthodox Christians. His mission took him to Baghdad and Mosul, where he met with Orthodox leaders and interviewed members of their communities.

Holdridge attended Holy Friday services at an Antiochian Orthodox church in Baghdad and Easter services at a 13th century Orthodox church in Mosul. His 590-mile trip from Amman, Jordan, to Baghdad was without incident.

In another development, IOCC will be able to assist 1,000 Iraqi families with their food needs now that a humanitarian relief convoy has departed from Amman. IOCC will distribute 1,000 food parcels for Iraqi families in need as part of a six-truck convoy organized by the Middle East Council of Churches and Action by Churches Together.

IOCC also expects to set up offices in Baghdad and begin distributions of family food parcels, first-aid kits, stoves and cooking utensils, tents and mattresses, hygiene parcels, and water pumps. Such assistance will meet some of the most pressing needs in Iraq - hunger, malnutrition, lack of clean drinking water and transmission of



Iraqi Orthodox priest Fr. Yanoun Yagoob censes during Holy Friday services at Baghdad's Antiochian Orthodox parish. Orthodox Christians in Iraq will assist IOCC in the distribution of humanitarian assistance to needy Iraqis.

*IOCC photo by David Holdridge*

diseases.

Distributions of emergency food and medicine will be done through local parishes and the Middle East Council of Churches, Holdridge said. "They know who the neediest are in their communities," he said. "It gets down to the individual families very quickly."

Humanitarian relief supplies will be purchased in Iraq or in Amman, Jordan, he said.

During his aid-and-

assessment mission, Holdridge met Fr. Younan Yagoob, an Antiochian Orthodox priest in Baghdad. Fr. Younan is the shepherd of a small Antiochian Orthodox community in Baghdad which will partner with IOCC in its humanitarian mission to needy Iraqis of all ethnic and religious backgrounds.

"He has an abiding peace and humor," Holdridge said of Fr. Younan. "He drives a beat-up old car with



Members of Baghdad's Antiochian Orthodox community, shown here in procession on Holy Friday, will be able to help IOCC identify and assist needy Iraqis. *IOCC photo by David Holdridge*



Fr. Yanoun Yagoob, an Orthodox priest from Baghdad, Iraq, meets with David Holdridge, Chief Operating Officer of International Orthodox Christian Charities. IOCC and its church partners in Iraq will deliver humanitarian assistance to needy Iraqis of all ethnic and religious backgrounds. IOCC photo by David Holdridge

a broken windshield and a motor which could die at any time. Even so, he insisted on driving me around Baghdad. He kept many families with him in the church during the bombing.”

Christians in Iraq constitute three percent of the population in this predominantly Muslim country. Most Christians in Iraq belong to the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Catholic Church, while about 140,000 are Orthodox Christians.

Fr. Younan said some of the most pressing needs in his country include medicine, clothes for children and transportation. “Thank you for your participation in lifting burdens from the people of this country,” he said.

Holdridge said the neediest communities in Iraq include the Shiite Muslims of Saddam City, on the outskirts of Baghdad. “It’s just a great, sprawling city with a lot of overcrowding, trash lying everywhere and

sewage in the streets,” he said.

In response to the current crisis, IOCC is appealing for \$1 million to provide emergency relief, life-saving medicines and medical supplies to suffering people in the Middle East.

IOCC’s parent body, the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas, is encouraging all Orthodox Christians to support IOCC’s efforts in Iraq through prayer and giving.

IOCC has worked in the Middle East since 1997 and currently has programs in the Holy Land and Lebanon. Since 1992, IOCC has distributed more than \$160 million in relief and development assistance in 21 countries.

IOCC is an implementing partner of Action by Churches Together, an international alliance of churches and relief agencies.

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in the Arabic Language

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# COMMUNITIES IN ACTION



Domes and crosses being attached to St. James in Ft. Collins, CO

## ST. JAMES ORTHODOX MISSION

### WELLINGTON, CO

With the help of God and Metropolitan Philip's blessing, St. James Mission has after seven years finally moved into Ft. Collins, CO, where

there never has been an Orthodox Church. We have been located 10 miles north of Ft. Collins for the past 7 years because rent and real estate price both were not affordable for Mission work in Ft. Collins proper. We are grateful to all who helped, even if it was with a one dollar donation; we could not have done it without your



Bishop Basil and Fr. Mark Cranor, the Pastor, September 1 for first services in Ft. Collins

help. The property, 13 acres on Interstate 25 and at one of the major exits, was purchased this last April. It had a 5000-square-foot landscaping building on it that we converted into our worship, parish hall, and classroom space over the summer. His Grace Bishop Basil came on September 1, the Church new year, and blessed the new building. It was not consecrated because, with the help of God in the years to come, we will build a Church building and use this for our Parish hall, etc.

Thank you so much to those of you who help us! We are so visible with 2 domes and crosses on the roof that a year from now no one in the Ft. Collins area will be able to say, "Where is St. James Orthodox Church?"

## ST. GEORGE RETREAT

### FELLOWSHIP OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE TORONTO, CANADA

#### The Sound of Silence

The morning of the Retreat started as it had ended the previous evening — busy with the final preparations of food, tables, and audio/visual setups. Parishioners entered the Church from the rainy weather to begin the morning Divine Liturgy & Soul Saturday

service. The environment surrounding the eager retreat-goers slowly began transforming, unknowingly, to an environment conducive to silence.

Following the morning service a short brunch was offered. There was also opportunity to network with other retreat-goers and the guest speaker, Marek Simon, Assistant Director of the Antiochian Village.

When it was time to start, Father Iskander introduced Marek to a group of approximately twenty who ranged in age from young adults to married couples with children, to seniors.

Marek's calm, serene voice coupled with his thought-provoking and stimulating words began the presentation with an anecdote to which the moral was, "Just like soap used to cleanse is not any good if it is not used, so is faith." This connected to the theme of the presentation, "Silence must be present in order to listen for God's voice."

The presentation became interactive with everyone sharing their own personal experiences on positive memories of silence. Nature and the company of others were common ties back to achieving silence. "The journey to achieving the sound of silence, hence listening for God's voice, should not be a journey traveled alone. Whomever



## COMMUNITIES IN ACTION



Retreat participants at St. George, Toronto gather with retreat leader, Marek Simon

you feel comfortable with as your spiritual mentor should assist you in gradual steps,” said Marek.

As the members of St. John the Divine were putting the finishing touches on a wonderful lunch, Marek’s final words before lunch sparked intrigue and uncertainty amongst the Fellowship members. He posed a challenge that during lunch everyone remain silent as they eat. He further described what he meant by specifically mentioning “no talking, no reading, or no thinking about what you need to do after the Retreat — just free your mind of any type of thoughts.”

Although the beginning of this challenge was rough as everyone sat down to eat, the sound of silence was eventually heard. Afterwards, some compared it to a quiescent walk around the Antiochian Village grass in the early morning; while others were just itching to burst out in sharing with their neighbor discussion topics specifically reserved for lunch.

As Marek gathered us

back again after lunch, he re-iterated that learning to remain silent and freeing your mind would require time and discipline.

The next event on the Retreat agenda — was a stark contrast to the earlier part of the day as we transitioned into a spin-off of the game show, *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire — The Orthodox Way!* The computer-generated questions, visual and audio effects made it feel like a game show studio. The one feature lacking to make it complete was Regis himself strutting his monotone colored shirt, suit and tie! However, thanks to St. George’s artistic and talented group, our Fellowship President, Aftim Nassar, portrayed the chatterbox and cynical game show host very well!

The questions revolved primarily around what St. George’s Bible Bowl team was studying for the upcoming Parish Life Conference. A variety of contestants attempted the challenge of achieving the highest prize while seated in the chair. Our speaker and guest of honor, Marek, was one of the contestants

— who even with lifelines, only managed to achieve the one-thousand mark. Our very own Father Iskander also took the chair. After some minor struggling with a few questions and after using all of his lifelines, he accomplished the one-million mark!

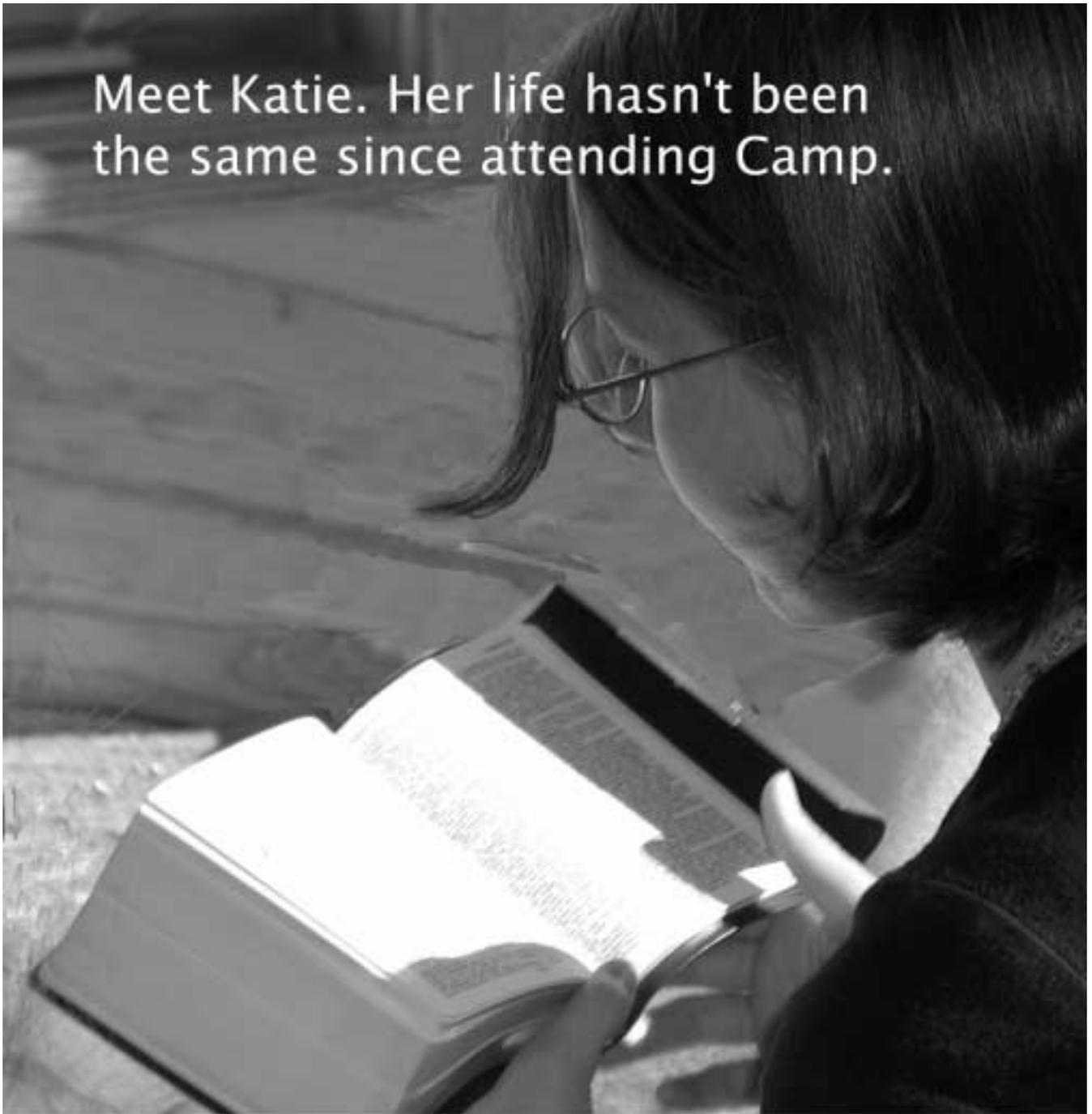
Fun, humor and laughter dominated this portion of the Retreat; alas, though, the “best” was yet to come. At the conclusion of the game show — just prior to returning to the second part of Marek’s presentation — the prizes were awarded. Instead of finding money in the amount they had won, the recipients opened their envelopes only to find that they had received a prize of prostrations (non-refundable and non-transferable)! Father Iskander, in his gracious fashion, tried to donate portions of his winnings to those present. Unfortunately, the one million prostrations remained entirely his!

Marek’s presentation was divided up into a two-step process, the first one dealing with what the goal is — achieving the *Sound of Silence*. The second part focused on how to accomplish the goal — *Giving Up In Order to Get*. Marek described the *how* part as giving up or replacing existing habits, like sitting on the couch watching TV or working on the computer, in order to set aside time for silence. He acknowledged that, in the beginning, setting aside time and balancing other aspects of life would be challenging; furthermore, those looking for an instantaneous fix were naive. One of the few tips shared

on how to handle extraneous thoughts from staying in your mind when trying to achieve silence was to write the thought down. This allows the preservation of the thought for later in order to focus on silence now. As Marek stated, “It’s only through consistency, discipline and persistence of your silent time that you will persevere in hearing God in your silence.”

On behalf of all those present at the retreat, the Fellowship of St. John the Divine, our technical audio/visual group and all the members of St. George Orthodox Church, we would like to thank Marek for sharing his time and talents with us. We look forward to growing more with future educational and uplifting experiences like this. (Marek, please keep in touch and let us know how your prostrations are going!)

Meet Katie. Her life hasn't been the same since attending Camp.



## The Order Sponsors Summer Campers at the Antiochian Village

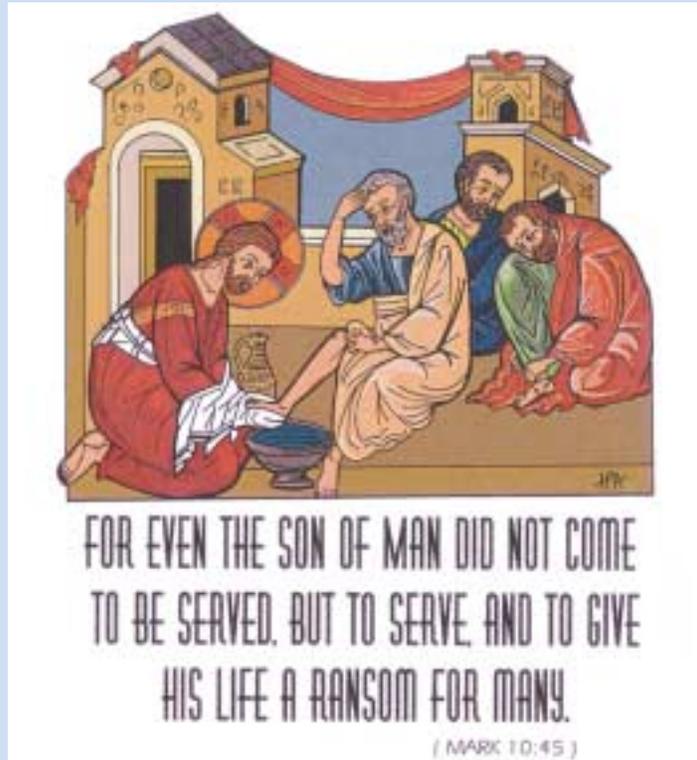
Katie was attending a teaching session at the Antiochian Village when the Gospels first came alive to her. Thanks to the financial support of The Order of St. Ignatius kids like Katie find renewal in the spiritually charged atmosphere of the Village. Lives are changed, some young men find their calling to the priesthood. No one leaves without experiencing the transforming love of Orthodox Christian fellowship. Find out how you can be a part of The Order's broad, world-encompassing vision to make a difference at home and abroad. Find out more. Contact Administrator Arlene Assile Tel. (201) 871-1355 / Email: [theorder@antiochian.org](mailto:theorder@antiochian.org)

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