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The Word

Volume 55 No. 3

MARCH 2011





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Founded in Arabic as
Al Kalimat in 1905
by Saint Raphael (Hawaweeny)
Founded in English as
The WORD in 1957
by Metropolitan ANTONY (Bashir)

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Member
The Associated Church Press
Conciliar Press
Ecumenical News International
Orthodox Press Service

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358 Mountain Road
PO Box 5238
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COVER: THE TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY. The center icon is of Saint John Damascene, remembered for his defense of the holy icon. The icons on the cover are by Janet Jamie of St. Elijah Church in Oklahoma City. They were commissioned by Fr. Stephen Rogers/St. Ignatius, Fr. John Henderson/Sts. Peter and Paul, Fr. Josiah Trenham/St. Andrews, Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox in Tulsa, Fr. Christopher/St. George, Kearney, Fr. Rooney in Wichita Falls, Texas, Sts. Benedict and Scholastica, Bishop BASIL/private commission, Fr. Jeremy Davis/private commission.

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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.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION:

U.S.A. and Canada, \$20.00

Foreign Countries, \$26.00

Single Copies, \$3.00

The WORD (USPS626-260) is published monthly, except July and August, by the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America at 358 Mountain Road, PO Box 5238; periodicals postage paid at Englewood, New Jersey 07631-5238 and at additional mailing offices.

Postmaster send address changes to: The WORD, 358 Mountain Road, PO Box 5238, Englewood, NJ 07631-5238

ISSN 0043-7964 www.antiochian.org.

Canada Post Publications Agreement No. 40691029

Return Canada address to:

AIM, 7289 Torbram Road, Mississauga, ON L4T 1G8, Canada.

Making Up is Hard to Do

If Neil Sedaka is right, and “Breaking Up Is Hard to Do,” what would we say about making up? Making up sure isn’t easy, but it is what Christianity and life are all about. Christ took on flesh to restore fallen mankind, broken up, to God. Jesus was born to join that which is separated together again. He came to heal people, broken and sick by sin, and restore them to oneness with Him.

Making up requires humility. We must put our pride, fears of rejection and embarrassment aside. We must be loving and vulnerable to enter the difficult process of making up. We must overcome our fear of rejection and of being hurt, to open our hearts to restore and be restored to each other. Lent is a great time to make up. The Church, our mother and nurturer, gives us this time every year to forgive each other and to journey home to the path of holiness and wholeness which is in Christ. She gives us a way to break free of our hurts, distractions and sin to come home. She does this through invitations to fervent prayer, frequent gatherings, fasting, education and alms-giving. She calls us away from contemplation of ourselves, self-indulgent behaviors concerning food and time, to a Lenten journey to Pascha, the Passover into heaven which, in Christ, is at hand!

I confess to you that when I have been hurt, I am cautious around those who have hurt me. I am afraid to trust those who have disappointed me and weary about being vulnerable in their presence. How terrible it would be for me if God were like me! He doesn’t run away; rather He gives opportunities to start again. He makes up with me and regenerates our relationship.

The enemy of making up is pride. Pride says that I don’t need God and I don’t need to make up. Pride tells me that I can make it on my own. Pride tells me to be self-sufficient and to be strong.

The truth is that not being right with God makes us outside of a relationship with God. That puts us in bad company. Further, the truth is that not making up with each other puts us outside of God’s grace as well. We can’t be loving God and sharing His love while we are busy being angry with each other, and hateful to each other.

A second enemy of making up is fear. I am afraid that if I make up, I will look weak and you may take advantage of me. If I stand with God, I need not fear you or anyone else. God is God, and His choice to love and hold me is enough for me.

A crazy fear of mine is that God will want me to do something outrageous if I make up with Him. I keep this fear even though God has never called me to do anything that was negative or self-destructive before. I hold this fear even though God has never hurt anyone I know. He calls me to be me, nothing more or less. This makes my fear neurotic (not based in reality, or at least exaggerated), though knowing it to be neurotic doesn’t take it away. I need to hear His word, Fear not!

The closer we are to God, the more we see our sins, and this is uncomfortable. Maybe that is why I have trouble making up. Nevertheless, God is God, He expresses Truth and He loves me and calls me home. He wants to make up with me.

This Lent is the Lent I choose to make up with God and those whom I have offended and are offending. Don’t be too surprised if you get a call from me asking if we can make up with each other and with God. If you don’t hear from me, simply know that I ask your forgiveness and invite you to make up with me and with God. I ask this, knowing how “making up is hard to do.”

Fr. John Abdalah



Cultivating Inexpressible Joy



Godly life is joyful. Secular life is sorrowful. For forty years, as though the presence of God were a toxin in our culture, schools and public square, many of America's leaders have been zealously working to detoxify our land. Not surprisingly, the more secularized we have become, the more sorrowful we have become. Now here is an amazing disconnect. Why is it that America has never been so Christian¹ and yet so joyless? A greater percentage of our population self-identifies as Christian than at any time in our nation's history, yet we are by all observable phenomena radically depressed. How are we to explain such an anomaly?

The normal state of internal affairs for Christians is expressed by St. Peter: “. . . Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory” (1 Peter 1:8). Prozac is no substitute for joy inexpressible. While there are many contributing factors to this epidemic of joylessness, I would like to suggest the primary cause: isolation.

Joy and the Presence of God

Joy is an attribute of Almighty God. He is joy, and the joy of His people. “Oh, send out Thy light and Thy truth! Let them lead me; Let them bring me to Thy holy hill and to Thy tabernacle. Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy” (Psalm 43:4). God is joy, and to draw near to God is to draw near to joy. “Thou shalt show me the path of life; In Thy presence is the fullness of joy; At Thy right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Psalm 16:11). It may be obvious to many, but in my pastoral experience it needs to be repeated that the primary cause of depression is being far from God. It is the absence of God that elicits within us the greatest grief. Joy is not the absence of sorrows; joy is the presence of God in all these things. It is our impression that we are alone in the midst of our pains that is the source of our greatest sorrow. When God is there, all of our difficulties are infused with a mysterious joy. When He is not, even our greatest earthly happiness is unsatisfying.

When we endure the crosses of this poor life without the knowledge that God is in them all, and has sent them to us in His providence from the abundance of His love designed for our salvation, then these very crosses kill us. They provoke within us a great despair, and this despair, according to St. John Chrysostom, is the greatest of the tools of the evil one.

These things need not be. An icon of inexpressible joy offered by God to the world in recent centuries is the life of St. Seraphim of Sarov (1759–1813).² All the saints of God, by being God-bearers, carried in their bosoms unbounded joy and passed it to all who gathered around them. St. Seraphim, however, was exceptional. Though he was a monk he chose not to don the traditional black cassock, but wore throughout the year a

white one. Rather than saying, “Christ is risen,” only for the forty days of Pascha, as is customary, he employed this greeting every day of the year. He greeted his visitors, who included the likes of the Tsar and Tsaritsa of Russia, universally as “My joy.”

His entire life was spent in the quest to acquire the Holy Spirit. “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you . . . If you know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him” (St. Luke 11:9,13). St. Seraphim knocked. For a thousand days and nights he remained upon a rock in prayer. St. Seraphim asked and St. Seraphim received. The Holy Spirit came upon him in great measure, and the fruit of the Spirit’s presence was inexpressible joy. “For the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace . . .” (Galatians 5:22).

In the famous *Conversation*, St. Seraphim explains to his spiritual son Motovilov:

“When the Spirit of God descends on a man, and envelops him in the fullness of his presence, the soul overflows with unspeakable joy, for the Holy Spirit fills everything he touches with joy . . . This is that joy of which the Lord speaks in His Gospel: ‘A woman when she is in travail has sorrow, because her hour has come; but when she is delivered of the child, she remembers no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. In the world you will be sorrowful; but when I see you again, your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you’ (Jn. 16:21-22). If the first-fruits of future joy have already filled your soul with such sweetness, with such happiness, what shall we say of the joy in the Kingdom of Heaven, which awaits all those who weep here on earth? . . . Then this transitory and partial joy which we now feel will be revealed in all its fullness, overwhelming our being with ineffable delights which no one will be able to take from us.”³

Overcoming Isolation from God

The path to overcoming isolation from God begins, continues, and ends with repentance. The first word spoken by our Savior in His pub-

Joy is an attribute of Almighty God. He is joy, and the joy of His people.

lic preaching was: “Repent!” (St. Matthew 4:17). Likewise, His last words to His Apostles prior to His Ascension were that “repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations” (St. Luke 24:47).

Now some readers may be thinking to themselves that this article was supposed to be about joy, not the tears of repentance. Any dichotomy between the two, however, is false. There is no joy without repentance, and there is no true repentance that is not followed by, and indeed infused with, great joy. This divine union of repentance and joy is no more clearly set forth than in the Psalm of Repentance *par excellence*, Psalm 50 (LXX). This prayer of heartfelt repentance was authored by King David as an offering to God following his tragic fall into adultery and murder. The repentance modeled in Psalm 50 is the balm of healing and restoration of joy for ruined consciences and broken hearts to this very day. *Repentance is the divine prozac*. “Have mercy on me O God! Blot out my transgressions! I have done evil in Thy sight! Create in me a clean heart, O God!” And then comes the joy. “Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice. . . . Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation.”

Repentance Is the Restoration of Inexpressible Joy

There is no more expedient path to joy than sustained repentance. Christians know by experience that joy is not the polar opposite of sorrow, but its transformation. *Charmolypi* is the character of the Christian. This word is found in the work of St. John of Sinai,⁴ the author of the *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, and was probably coined by him. It means “joyful sorrow” or “bitter joy,” and it is the normative spirit of the Christian. Young children model this *charmolypi* when, in the midst of a crying spasm, with tears running down their faces, they catch a glimpse of their mother staring lovingly at them, and then they break into laugh-



ter. Tears, laughter, tears, and laughter are meshed together, and soon all comes to calm. So it is with the repenting Christian, who perceives the gaze of His loving heavenly Father. Our tears become infused with joy.

The Modern Abandonment of Repentance

Now if repentance is the path to joy, a culture that does not repent is going to be joyless. The priest’s confessional has been abandoned as the psychologist’s couch has been embraced. Today Roman Catholic priests have a few hours a week slotted for confessions, when just fifty years ago whole days were taken up with the task. Most Catholics simply are not confessing. Most Protestants have not historically practiced private confession, but have in their tradition an emphasis on self-examination and repentance, but today ‘repentance’ is not viewed as “seeker-friendly” in Protestant churches.⁵ Are we Orthodox Christians faithfully confessing?

The joy of the Resurrection follows the agony of the Crucifixion. The joy of the Christian life is the fruit of repentance. Repentance removes our isolation. *Practice regular confession and your life will change for the better*. For the next year read a prayer of repentance for your sins every evening before retiring. Then do a thorough examination of your conscience once a month and make confession. In so doing you can expect to be divinely stabbed with the joy inexpressible.

V. Rev. Josiah Trenham, Ph.D. (Dunelm), Pastor
St. Andrew Church, Riverside, California

- 1 Samuel Huntington, *Who are We? The Challenge to America's National Identity*, Simon and Schuster: New York, 2004, pp. 352-357.
- 2 If the reader has never read St. Seraphim’s life, I encourage you to do so. There are several excellent lives of St. Seraphim in the English language, and I highly recommend Archimandrite Lazarus Moore’s *St. Seraphim of Sarov: A Spiritual Biography*, New Sarov Press: Blanco, Texas, 1994.
- 3 Harry Boosalis, *The Joy of the Holy*, St. Tikhon’s Seminary Press: South Canaan, Pennsylvania, 1993, p. 82.
- 4 St. John (A.D. 570–649) was the Abbot of the Monastery of St. Catherine of Mt. Sinai.
- 5 Confession alone to God with your head on the pillow is simply deficient repentance. St. James 5 makes it abundantly clear that we are required to confess to *another human being*, and the human beings St. James mentions in this context are *presbyters*.

Two Modes of Christian Being: Individual and Corporate

During the Diving Liturgy, the priest invites the congregation: “Let us love one another, that with one accord we may confess, Father, Son and Holy Spirit: The Trinity, one in essence and undivided.” The priest and the congregation exchange the kiss of peace. The priest makes three low bows before the altar table and kisses the veil covering the Holy Gifts and says, “I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength; the Lord is my firm foundation, my refuge, and my deliverer.” To understand fully this important call for Christ’s presence among us, we must be aware of three important conditions:

1 1. Our gathering should be called in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. From the very beginning of the Church’s missionary ministry, we see that Christ is the beginning and the end of the Church as a worshipping community. Jesus Christ commissioned His disciples to “go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19–20). He empowered His holy disciples and Apostles, that they should bind and loose the sins of men. He said to them, “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained” (John 20:22–24).

2 2. The very purpose of our liturgical gathering and church worship, corporate and private, is unity and union with Christ. We become one with Him when we receive His holy Body and precious Blood. The Lord commands; He does not give an option. He says, “Take, eat . . . Drink from it, all of you” (Matthew 26:26–27). Our gathering is in His name. He becomes the center of our gathering. Those who partake of the Body and Blood of our Lord are called to experience “cleansing of soul, remission of sin, communion of the Holy Spirit, and unto the fulfillment of the Kingdom of Heaven.”

3 3. In the personal and corporate identity of the believers and in the Church’s liturgical and prayer life, we can discover what is unique to our personal confession of the

fundamentals of the faith. “I believe in one God . . . And [I believe] in one Lord Jesus Christ . . . And I believe in the Holy Spirit . . . And I believe in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church . . . I acknowledge one baptism . . . I look for the resurrection of the dead.” Before sleep, we say, “O Lord Jesus Christ, into thy hands I commend my soul and my body. Do thou bless me, have mercy upon me, and grant me life eternal.” And as we enter the church, we say, “I will come into thy house in the multitude of your mercies and in your fear I will worship toward thy holy temple. Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness . . . Make your way straight before me, that with a clear mind, I may glorify Thee forever.” The personal character of our prayer life is an extension of our corporate identity. So as a worshipping community, we say, “In peace, let us pray to the Lord”; “Through the intercession of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us”; “Save us, O Son of God”; “Let us love one another”; “Let us stand aright; let us stand with fear”; “Vouchsafe, O Lord, that with boldness and without condemnation we may call upon Thee . . .”; and “Our Father . . .”

Christ is among us when we are united as one with Him. This oneness is an inner, mystical, and existential reality. Our gathering, under the roof of the church, becomes a reality; for we are granted “with one mouth and one heart to glorify and praise His all-honorable and majestic name: of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” The Lord Jesus unites us, one with another, without eliminating our particularities.

We are called to make the presence of Christ a dynamic reality in our lives. Our invitation to the mystical banquet requires preparation and awareness. Blessed are those who joyfully and with contrition of heart draw near with fear, faith and love; those who ascend with Christ and gather around His mystical Supper, and who realize that Christ is among us when we are confirmed to be in Him.

V. Rev. Fr. Joseph Antypas
Chaplain, The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch



Reflections on Ministering to College-Age Orthodox Christians in a Postmodern World

The importance of giving pastoral care to college-age people is certainly no secret to those who are doing it – and even more so in our time, when we have moved into what is called the “post-modern era.” Developmentally, the college years are a crucial and eventful time of moral, spiritual, physical and intellectual growth. I would suggest that the changes that occur in the four college years are so dramatic that, frequently, the college freshman is hardly recognizable as the same person when he or she graduates. College is also, in my opinion, the first time that individuals have the developmental skills and life experience really to understand the Christian message and dedicate themselves to Christ. Regardless of the effectiveness of our catechetical programs during childhood, those who are even younger are simply not prepared to understand abstract concepts like Trinity or Incarnation, and the implied relationships. Providing college-age Orthodox Christians an opportunity to discover, strengthen and (or) commit to Orthodox Christianity should certainly be a priority of the Church. Many Orthodox don’t return to the church after these years away at school. While the various statistics may be conflicting and controversial, all will agree that the loss to the Church of many young people, and the loss to the students of the Church, are of significant concern for the Church.

I will offer some reflections on post-modernism and how college-age students typically are thinking. I will also discuss some of the common pastoral needs of this group and some ways an Orthodox chaplain might respond. In particular, I will address homesickness, loneliness, depression, drinking, sexual activity outside of marriage, obsessive-compulsive acting out, and judging by peers of one another. I will also address the task of helping the post-modern college student to develop more mature images of God, as we know Him in Orthodoxy, and to grasp the character of His One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

What do we mean by postmodernity? The faculty of Georgetown University offers the following definition on its Web site.¹

The Modern and the Postmodern: Contrasting Tendencies

“The features in the table below are only often-discussed tendencies, not absolutes. In fact, the tendency to see things in seemingly obvious, binary, contrasting categories is usually associated with modernism. The tendency to dissolve binary categories and expose their arbitrary cultural co-dependency is associated with postmodernism. For heuristic purposes only.”

MODERNISM/MODERNITY	POSTMODERN/POSTMODERNITY
Master Narratives and meta-narratives of history, culture and national identity as accepted before WWII (American-European myths of progress). Myths of cultural and ethnic origin accepted as received.	Suspicion and rejection of Master Narratives for history and culture; local narratives, ironic deconstruction of master narratives: counter-myths of origin.
Faith in "Grand Theory" (totalizing explanations in history, science and culture) to represent all knowledge and explain everything.	Rejection of totalizing theories; pursuit of localizing and contingent theories.
Faith in, and myths of, social and cultural unity, hierarchies of social-class and ethnic/national values, seemingly clear bases for unity.	Social and cultural pluralism, disunity, unclear bases for social/national/ ethnic unity.
Master narrative of progress through science and technology.	Skepticism of idea of progress, anti-technology reactions, neo-Luddism; new age religions.
Sense of unified, centered self; "individualism," unified identity.	Sense of fragmentation and decentered self; multiple, conflicting identities.
Idea of "the family" as central unit of social order: model of the middle-class, nuclear family. Heterosexual norms.	Alternative family units, alternatives to middle-class marriage model, multiple identities for couplings and childraising. Polysexuality, exposure of repressed homosexual and homosocial realities in cultures.
Hierarchy, order, centralized control.	Subverted order, loss of centralized control, fragmentation.
Faith and personal investment in big politics (Nation-State, party).	Trust and investment in micropolitics, identity politics, local politics, institutional power struggles.
Root/Depth tropes. Faith in "Depth" (meaning, value, content, the signified) over "Surface" (appearances, the superficial, the signifier).	Rhizome/surface tropes. Attention to play of surfaces, images, signifiers without concern for "Depth". Relational and horizontal differences, differentiations.
Crisis in representation and status of the image after photography and mass media.	Culture adapting to simulation, visual media becoming undifferentiated equivalent forms, simulation and real-time media substituting for the real.
Faith in the "real" beyond media, language, symbols, and representations; authenticity of "originals."	Hyper-reality, image saturation, simulacra seem more powerful than the "real"; images and texts with no prior "original". "As seen on TV" and "as seen on MTV" are more powerful than unmediated experience.
Dichotomy of high and low culture (official vs. popular culture). Imposed consensus that high or official culture is normative and authoritative, the ground of value and discrimination.	Disruption of the dominance of high culture by popular culture. Mixing of popular and high cultures, new valuation of pop culture, hybrid cultural forms cancel "high"/"low" categories.
Mass culture, mass consumption, mass marketing	Demassified culture; niche products and marketing, smaller group identities.
Art as unique object and finished work authenticated by artist and validated by agreed upon standards.	Art as process, performance, production, intertextuality. Art as recycling of culture authenticated by audience and validated in subcultures sharing identity with the artist.
Knowledge mastery, attempts to embrace a totality. Quest for interdisciplinary harmony. The encyclopedia.	Navigation through information overload, information management; fragmented, partial knowledge; just-in-time knowledge. The Web.
Broadcast media, centralized one-to-many communications. Paradigms: broadcast networks and TV.	Digital, interactive, client-server, distributed, user-motivated, individualized, many-to-many media. Paradigms: Napster and the Web.
Centering/centeredness, centralized knowledge.	Dispersal, dissemination, networked, distributed knowledge
Determinacy, dependence, hierarchy.	Indeterminacy, contingency, polycentric power sources.
Seriousness of intention and purpose, middle-class earnestness.	Play, irony, challenge to official seriousness, subversion of earnestness.
Sense of clear generic boundaries and wholeness (art, music, and literature).	Hybridity, promiscuous genres, recombinant culture, intertextuality, pastiche.
Design and architecture of New York.	Design and architecture of LA and Las Vegas
Clear dichotomy between organic and inorganic, human and machine.	Cyborgian mixing of organic and inorganic, human and machine and electronic.
Phallic ordering of sexual difference, unified sexualities, exclusion/bracketing of pornography.	Androgyny, queer sexual identities, polymorphous sexuality, mass marketing of pornography, porn style mixing with mainstream images
The book as sufficient bearer of the word. The library as complete and total system for printed knowledge.	Hypermedia as transcendence of the physical limits of print media. The Web as infinitely expandable, centerless, interconnected information system.



I find it helpful to tell them that depression is a normal response to loss, and all change, positive or negative, is processed with some normal and healthy depression.

Claims that God has revealed Himself to a people seem arrogant and foolish to an audience that has no sense of absolute reality or truth in a religious context. Truth, they say, doesn't belong to anyone. Each person has his/her own truth. Those with a post-modern mind-set are suspicious of history. They are interested in their own experience of God. Here the Orthodox can provide, through worship and sacraments, a real and concrete experience of the Living God who reveals Himself as Trinity. To facilitate this, we must challenge students to develop and strengthen their own real relationship with God through prayer. We also need to help them understand better who God is, and what He reveals about Himself.

I find the parables of the Kingdom to be the best source for challenging incorrect or immature images of God. Man is created in the image of God, not God in the image of man, yet our personal images of God from our youth are of the authority figures of our lives. God is like a parent who is punishing, a state trooper who sets a speed trap, a teacher who humiliates students with incorrect answers, a coach who judges us inadequate.... Yet Christ is the perfect Icon of the Father, and He says that the Father is like a woman who seeks the lost coin, a father who celebrates the return of the prodigal, a shepherd who leaves the flock for the lost sheep, and the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep.

God has taken on flesh so that we can build a relationship with Him. He has shown Himself to be a Person, and relations with Him are personal. Just as we develop relationships with each other, constantly revealing ourselves and correcting misconceptions that others have and reveal to us, the Orthodox Christian develops a relationship with God the Father, through Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit. Thus, as we speak to God regularly in prayer and regularly listen – by being quiet, reading and hearing the Scriptures and Church Fathers – and as we encounter God speaking to us through clergy and other Orthodox Christians, and through the sacrament of confession, we come to know Him. When we gather together in His Name, Christ promises to be present and make Himself known to us. When we spend time with each other, developing our relationship, we no longer ask if the other exists. Rather, we understand that because we know someone, the question of existence is surpassed. This is the kind of knowing and being that we have in relationship with each other, and this is equally true of our relationships with God. So a student may ask, “How do we know God exists?” but this, for me, is the wrong question. We know God as we know each other, and no one has yet to ask me if I exist. The better our relationship, the deeper is the knowing. Knowing God is being in relationship with Him and is so much greater than knowing about Him.

When we commune with God, we share the life He took on flesh to share. I like to discuss with young people the liturgical prayers at the consecration, in both the liturgies of St. John Chrysostom and St. Basil the Great. I remind them that God has called us out of the world to be His people, and that through baptism He has grafted us to Himself. Christianity cannot be reduced to people controlling each other, being nice, Christian-like or civil, good citizens, or the like. The Word became flesh to share His life with us. He entered into our life, our sufferings and our deaths. Only through Christ can we share the life of the Trinity. Deification is the message, not Judeo-Christian morality or world-views.

College-age people are often away from home for an extended period of time, for the first time in their lives. They have left their parents' homes and their familiar routines. Many have spent so

much time relating to the world through computers that their social skills may be lacking, adding to their feelings of isolation. Some depression is an expected response to any change, and surely a change in living arrangements qualifies here. (Consider, too, the change in social groups, parish routines, and jobs, each of which provided some kind of support.) Campus ministries can be an opportunity for them to find others with similar backgrounds and faith experiences. They may be a source of support and social networking. For those who have trouble reaching out, organized activities can be a life-preserver in a tumultuous sea of change. I find it helpful to tell them that depression is a normal response to loss, and all change, positive or negative, is processed with some normal and healthy depression. Many young people are relieved by naming and understanding their feelings, and realizing how normal those feelings are. As a mentor, the college chaplain can help young people do this. The skilled chaplain listens and reflects back the feelings that he or she is hearing. By relating to the feelings without long autobiographical disclosures, which tend to steal away the young person's story and make the discussion about the chaplain, the chaplain can be very helpful. Depression can be good when it is part of the process, but it is not good when one gets stuck in it.

After an adult has heard the story, he or she could ask, How long do you think that the adjustment to these changes, or the mourning of these losses, should continue? This gives the young person permission to make sense of his or her grief, and to begin to take control of the process. Young people often describe feeling alone even in a crowd. This "aloneness" is a normal part of experiencing grief. Sometimes a friendly suggestion to keep in touch with parents and siblings is a relief to a young person, who is afraid that calling home would make the student look weak or a burden to family. Letting the student see, too, that this change in routine can be traumatic to the family left behind, can sometimes be helpful. Our hope here is that the young people may "stretch" and be less egocentric, considering the perspectives of others.

It is no secret that many college-age students are binge-drinking. The pressure from peers

to participate is great. Fear of being labeled or shunned is scary to college-age students who are already feeling isolated and lonely. Organized activities for the weekends offer viable alternatives for our young people. Such activities also give post-modern youth opportunities to serve and make a difference in the world, as they say they want to do; they seek opportunities to live out their faith by serving those in need. Orthodox Chaplains can also offer a forum where young people can discuss alcohol, faith and loneliness. The Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) may be the only place where an Orthodox teen may feel free to share his or her own standards and beliefs. The chaplain can also offer God's understanding of the struggle and affirm God's own unconditional love as well as forgiveness.

Post-modernists usually accept society's attitude that anything goes, sexually. If premarital, extra-marital or same-sex options are wrong, a post-modernist may blame God for making life the way He did and then challenge or even condemn God for judging. To traditional thinkers, this logic seems absurd; nevertheless, this is what many young people are thinking. I find it helpful to begin our discussions affirming what Scriptures and Orthodox life defines as the purpose of sex and marriage. God is three Persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit; one God in relationship. If we are indeed in God's image and likeness, then we relate to each other. God makes a man and a woman husband and wife through His sacramental gift of marriage. Sex expresses this mystery and gift between married persons. Anything short of this sacramental union is a distortion of the gift, and all distortion is sin. I also find it helpful to discuss that laws or rules in the Church, like those at home, are meant to teach and protect. We have rules at home against playing around a lit stove. Such rules are gifts to protect us from being burnt. The rules about sex are gifts to protect us. For me, the challenge is to communicate effectively the truth that sex is holy and belongs to the sacramental gift.

I share with post-modern college-age students the discovery of social psychologists that people justify their actions by changing their perspectives. The application here is that once a couple begins to be sexual, they convince themselves that they love each other. Few of us would

The Word became flesh to share His life with us. He entered into our life, our sufferings and our deaths. Only through Christ can we share the life of the Trinity. Deification is the message, not morality or world-views.

admit to ourselves that we have sex just to satisfy ourselves and that we don't care about the other. Once we start being sexual, we can't know if we are having sex because we love each other, or think that we love each other because we are having sex. Sex confuses relationships and prevents a relationship from developing in a more "natural" way.

Post-modernists are often idealists and perfectionists, and many of them feel guilty and sinful simply for having temptations and for being sexual creatures. It is helpful to affirm for them that God understands and loves them. It is also helpful to reaffirm that all of us who share flesh, share temptation. Christ became man to share even these temptations and to save us. The chaplain again is a mentor who helps young people through this confusing transition in life. While it is sometimes good to be intense and perfectionist, giving us advantages over less-careful students or workers, in this arena it is destructive. It leads to feelings of isolation and self-condemnation. I challenge those who fall into this to consider what is fair: Is it fair to judge yourself more harshly than you judge or would judge your friends? Is it reasonable to judge yourself instead of accepting God's mercy and love? People need to understand that such self-condemnation is pride, and that we are taking God's place in judging. In situations like this, a call to repent (change one's mind) is a welcomed one.

Many of the post-modern young people I have worked with report obsessive-compulsive thoughts and actions. These students tend to be very bright and very intense people. When asked, most will admit that they can remember making up games to help them be less bored as children. It is my idea that many have kept these boredom-busting habits too long and now they get in the way of studying. I challenge such students to understand that these habits come from themselves, and they have the right to change them. I also call their attention to the self-delusion of magical thinking, in which compulsive actions or obsessive ideas are supposed actually to change what happens. Most can understand that magical thinking belongs to early stages of cognitive development and is simply immature. Knowing this, most are able to change their habits. I might ask why God is subject to, and

controlled by, your rules or compulsions? This is usually met with a laugh. The mentor offers encouragement.

Post-modern man and woman seek a relationship with God. Such relationships are fostered the same way human-to-human relationships are, that is, by spending time together and listening. We need to help a generation that has never been without the noise of computers, televisions and iPods to sit quietly before the living God and commune with Him. We need to show them how they relate to God through worship and sacraments. We need to help them understand that sharing in God's work is sharing life with God and deepening their relationships. We need to encourage them to understand that feelings are often confusing and to help them understand what God is doing, even when it doesn't feel the way they might have imagined it would. We need to be willing to share ourselves and to talk about our prayer life and our relationship with God.

To minister to post-modern, college-age students, leaders need to be authentic. They need to be honest and open. Post-moderns will not accept hypocrisy or dry academic formulas when it comes to religion. They want to know how you relate to God and why you think they should. It's not enough to perform ancient ritual. We need to teach how we relate to God through these rituals, why we use them and what they mean to us. Because we have two thousand years of relating to God as a Church, as a people, as God's own, we have an advantage over those who are more cerebral in their approach, but we need to make it real, and that comes from really showing what it means to be with Christ.

Footnote:

1. Martin Irvine, Founding Director and Assoc. Professor, Communication, Technology and Culture Program, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Georgetown University, (<http://www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/irvinem/theory/pomo.html>).

Fr. John Abdalah is Dean of St. George Cathedral in Pittsburgh and has been working with college students for almost thirty years. These reflections were prepared for an OCF Chaplain's Conference at the Antiochian Village.



How the SMI Changed My Life

Imagine being appointed to a leadership role in your parish without knowing whether you are truly prepared or equipped to handle it.

Imagine that it is a position requiring specialized knowledge in liturgics, music theory, conducting, enunciation, pronunciation, vocal technique, byzantine tones and hymnology, teaching, and so forth. Imagine there is no one with all of these skills that you can talk to, because you really wouldn't know where to begin to find the sources of all the information you need to be successful in your leadership role.

Early in my ministry as an Antiochian Orthodox Church Choir Director I found myself in precisely this situation. Although as a musician I had majored in voice and piano, there was a lot about directing a choir I needed to learn. As the result of a directive from His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP, the opportunity came to attend the first-ever Sacred Music Institute (SMI) at the Antiochian Village in 1984. I didn't know what to expect. I attended, believing that my faith would guide me to solutions. What I found in the hills of Pennsylvania shaped my sacred music ministry and my contribution to my parish, my diocese and the Archdiocese for the next 28 years. The courses I took at the SMI were given by a group of musicians and clergy who were experts in their respective professional fields, and the courses served to fill gaps in the knowledge I needed to be successful. There were music-school teachers, theologians, conductors and key-note speakers.

Each and every year upon returning to the SMI I would tap into this wealth of resources in sacred music and take away something new, whether it was new music to teach my choir at home, or conducting techniques, or a better understanding of the byzan-

tine tones and the order of the liturgical services.

I learned something each and every year! Over time, the Sacred Music Committee identified the strengths and talents of the participants, and I, too, have imparted my expertise to others.

No one person except Christ himself is all-encompassing. In the quest to make my contributions meaningful, I found the fountain from which knowledge flowed freely. It is hard to describe to someone what he or she would gain by attending the SMI, whether he or she is a choir director, a choir member, a chanter or a member of the clergy seeking musical support. The only way really to know, is to attend and experience the Grace of the Holy Spirit, take it back to your parish with you, and then come back for more spiritual and musical renewal each year.

In July 2010 the SMI celebrated twenty-five years of excellence in sacred music. The Department of Sacred Music has grown and developed, and so have I. I am grateful to His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP for his vision in providing us with the Antiochian Village, without which I might never have made the connections that helped me grow in my ministry. I am also grateful to His Grace Bishop Basil, the overseer of the Department of Sacred Music, for his deep understanding of the role and challenges of church musicians. The SMI changed the course of my ministry in sacred music, and it can change yours too! I hope to see you at the next Sacred Music Institute, July 20–24, 2011.

Venise Kousaie, Choir Director, St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church, Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada



The Order of St. Ignatius Why Do They Wear Those Red Crosses?

A Member of the Order of St. Ignatius Replies

A homily given December 19, 2010

It is my honor to present the homily today to my beloved parish of St. Anthony's, on the topic of The Order of St. Ignatius. We celebrate the feast day of St. Ignatius on December 20, and today, St. Ignatius Sunday, members of the Order throughout the Archdiocese take time to celebrate our patron Saint. We celebrate his sainthood by offering our parishes a plentiful coffee hour, serving as ushers and as readers of the Epistle, and offering the homily. We wear these red crosses to signify our love, loyalty and admiration for our Christian faith. We all share a common love for Christ and his Church and a shared belief that through The Order collectively we can assist our Archdiocese in performing Christ's work.

One of the healthiest characteristics of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese in North America is the active role that parishioners have taken and continue to take in program development, both at the parish and the Archdiocese level. The parish involvement in activities of the Archdiocese in 1975 was strong, but there was not sufficient funding for the departments to be run effectively.

Let me give you a few examples. In 1975, the Department of Christian Education (which was responsible for the production and coordination of all religious education) had a budget of \$7,000; that was \$23,000 below what was needed for effective work. The Department for Missionary Activities

and New Parish Development was allotted \$4,000 (\$30,000 below what was needed). The Archdiocese allotted \$25,000 that year to be designated to the Clergy Pension and Life Insurance Program, again, far short of what was needed. Many programs, such as The Department of Youth Affairs, had no designated funding. The concept of a Village comprised of a camp for our youth, a Monastery to call home, and a center for theological and liturgical research, was a dream. The Metropolitan and the Archdiocese Board recognized that we were indeed at a crossroads in the development and growth of our Archdiocese.

The Order of St. Ignatius is a service-based organization within the Archdiocese that was envisioned and created by Metropolitan PHILIP in 1975. The Metropolitan chose the scripture from Mark 10:43 to serve as the foundation to the Order: "Whosoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whosoever would be first among you must be the servant of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve"

The members of the Order of St. Ignatius are individuals, both parishioners and clergy, who feel that it is their obligation as Christians to serve their fellow human beings, by doing the works exemplified by our Lord Jesus Christ. The members of the Order provide the necessary funding as well as the manpower for the projects to take hold. Giving back

to God, our Church, and our Archdiocese, my brothers and sisters in Christ, is everyone's responsibility. Everything that we have in life belongs to God; we are merely stewards of what He has given.

The Order is made up of 4,400 individuals within the Archdiocese, from all walks of life, from young adults in college to senior citizens in their 90's. The members of the Order at St. Anthony's truly exemplify that diversity. It is by no means an organization that involves only the wealthy, but is made up of those who feel that they can donate \$1.37 per day, in order to change the world tomorrow. Paying our annual dues to the Church (a responsibility of the utmost importance) helps the Church operate on a day-to-day basis; belonging to the Order gives the future leaders of our church, our youth, a foundation on which to grow and make a difference in the world.

In the past thirty-five years the Order has made immense strides. Last year alone, the Order contributed 1.4 million dollars to various departments and programs within the Archdiocese. Let me highlight a few project contributions:

- \$175,000 for summer camp scholarships at the Village, to help subsidize the cost for those who cannot afford it; 35 years ago the village was an empty field; now there are five summer camps for our youth throughout the country
- \$25,000 to help pay for the College Conference, allowing hundreds of college students from all over the country to attend a four-day religious retreat during winter break
- \$30,000 to assist married seminarians with living expenses as they complete their full-time studies
- significant sums for training teachers and Youth Leadership; \$25,000 to International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC, an Orthodox organization that helps those in need all over the world)
- \$200,000 annually for our clergy retirement funds
- \$160,000 for the development of missions and new parishes

St. Ignatius drew the Ephesians to Christ with the hope of faith and togetherness. He asked them to sing communally the praises of God so their voices could carry far and wide. It was through this example, that thirty-five years ago Metropolitan PHILIP initiated the idea of an organization that would challenge the laity of the Archdiocese to a new dimension of service. Since that day, the Order has contributed over twenty million dollars to worthwhile projects all over the world. The Order has responded to needs outside our Archdiocese, such as Project Mexico, IOCC, Holy Trinity Nursing

and Rehab Center, and flood and earthquake relief. The works of God know no country boundaries or religious differences.

As I am thirty-five years old, I have been brought up enjoying the fruits of the Order within the Archdiocese. One of my friends, who was a counselor at The Special Olympics at the Antiochian Village, became the head of Special Olympics in her State of Texas. Her works, which were nurtured by the Order, are affecting thousands of athletes and families alike on a yearly basis. While attending Rutgers College fifteen years ago, I would attend Holy Week Liturgy by myself at a local Greek Church. Last Holy Wednesday, I once again attended the church, with my family. This time there were a hundred students from the university present, praying together, as part of the Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF). The OCF is a college organization, comprised of Orthodox students from all ethnic jurisdictions; it is now found on 175 college campuses throughout the country. It is sponsored by the Order of St. Ignatius.

I understand that during these difficult financial times some of us may consider passing on membership in the Order of St. Ignatius. As Orthodox Christians, we must be aware of the human suffering that surrounds us, but that is all the more reason to join. With thirty-eight percent of the Archdiocese's funding coming directly from the Order, one can clearly see the importance of this organization for the growth of our church and the ever-growing human need around us. In simple terms, we need to do more! It breaks down to \$500 a year, \$42 a month, or \$1.37 a day. That \$1.37 can and does affect thousands of lives.

I would like to challenge the youth of St. Anthony's and the Archdiocese to become members of the Order. After all, we have all been recipients of the Order's generosity our entire life; it is time that we give of what he has given us.

St. Ignatius in his letter to the Ephesians writes. "Pray, then come and join this choir, every one of you; let there be a whole symphony of minds in concert; take the tone all together from God, and sing aloud to the Father with one voice through Jesus Christ, so that He may hear you and know by your good works that you are indeed members of His Son's body. A completely united front will help to keep you in constant communion with God."

My brothers and sisters in Christ, the Order acts as our Archdiocese's choir, singing the praises of Christ in a unified voice.

Robert Scarpa, Parishioner and Member of the Order of St. Ignatius
St. Anthony Church, Bergenfield, New Jersey

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APRIL 2011

DAILY DEVOTIONS

V. REV. GEORGE ALBERTS

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. ISAIAH 29:13-23
GENESIS 12:1-7
PROVERBS 14:15-26
(FAST) | 8. ISAIAH 45:11-17; GEN-
ESIS 22:1-18; PROV-
ERBS 17:17-18:5 (FAST) | 15. ISAIAH 66:10-24
GENESIS 49:33-50:26
PROVERBS 31:8-31
(FAST) | 22. I CORINTHIANS 1:18-
2:2; MATTHEW 27:1-61
(STRICT FAST) |
| 2. HEBREWS 6:9-12
MARK 7:31-37 (FAST) | 9. HEBREWS 9:24-28
MARK 8:27-31 (FAST) | 16. HEBREWS 12:28-13:8
JOHN 11:1-45 (FAST) | 23. ROMANS 6:3-11
MATTHEW 28:1-20
(FAST) |
| 3. HEBREWS 6:13-20;
MARK 9:17-31 (FAST) | 10. HEBREWS 9:11-14
MARK 10:32-45 (FAST) | 17. PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9;
JOHN 12:1-18 (FAST) | 24. ACTS 1:1-8; JOHN
1:1-17 HOLY PASCHA |
| 4. ISAIAH 37:33-38:6
GENESIS 13:12-18
PROVERBS 14:27-15:4
(FAST) | 11. ISAIAH 48:17-49:4
GENESIS 27:1-41
PROVERBS 19:16-25
(FAST) | 18. EXODUS 1:1-20; JOB
1:1-12; MATTHEW 24:3-
35 (FAST) | 25. ACTS 1:12-17, 21-26
JOHN 1:18-28 |
| 5. ISAIAH 40:18-31
GENESIS 15:1-15
PROVERBS 15:7-19
(FAST) | 12. ISAIAH 49:6-10
GENESIS 31:3-16
PROVERBS 21:3-21
(FAST) | 19. EXODUS 2:5-10
JOB 2:1-10; MATTHEW
26:6-16 (FAST) | 26. ACTS 2:14-2
LUKE 24:12-35 |
| 6. ISAIAH 41:4-14; GEN-
ESIS 17:1-9; PROV-
ERBS 15:20-16:9 (FAST) | 13. ISAIAH 58:1-11
GENESIS 43:26-31
PROVERBS 21:23-22:4
(FAST) | 20. EXODUS 2:11-22
JOB 2:1-10; MATTHEW
26:6-16 (FAST) | 27. ACTS 2:22-36
JOHN 1:35-51 |
| 7. ISAIAH 42:5-16;
GENESIS 18:20-33
PROVERBS 16:17-17:17
(FAST) | 14. ISAIAH 65:8-16
GENESIS 46:1-7
PROVERBS 23:15-24:5
(FAST) | 21. I CORINTHIANS 11:23-
32; MATTHEW 26:2-27:2
(FAST) | 28. ACTS 2:38-43
JOHN 3:1-15 |
| | | | 29. PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11
LUKE 10:38-42, 11:27-28 |
| | | | 30. ACTS 3:11-16
JOHN 3:22-33 |

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	MARCH 7 How many clocks do you have in your home? Deposit .05 for each in your Food for Hungry People Box, because "time is running out" for those who are starving.	8 "Put a little love in your heart," get FFHP off to a good start. Put in a penny for all the "loves" in your life.	9 Count the number of Bibles in your home and deposit .10 for each, because Jesus said, "I was hungry and you gave me food."	10 Count the number of soda cans or water bottles in your home. Put in .03 each, because Jesus said, "I was thirsty and you gave me drink."	11 How many radios do you own? Deposit .15 for each. Radios are a means of communication. Let's communicate our love for the hungry.	12 Count the number of steps (inside and outside) of your home. Put in .05 for each step. Help the hungry "step" into a new future.
13 How many mirrors are in your home? Give .10 for each. Let your "mirror" reflect the image of one who cares.	14 Count the locks in your home. Give .05 for each lock. Let's "unlock" the door that gives hope to the hungry.	15 How many rings do you have? Deposit .10 per ring. This will help us bring food to the hungry!	16 How many eggs are in your refrigerator? Give .05 for each. Hungry people have to "scramble" for their food.	17 How many doors does your home have? Give .05 for each. Help open a "door" to a better future for the world's hungry.	18 Have everyone in the family deposit all the pennies they have in their pockets or purses. It makes "cents" to help the hungry	19 How many electrical outlets are in your kitchen and living room? Give .05 for each. You'll get a "charge" out of feeding the hungry.
20 "Button up your overcoat" – so simple to do. They are not only hungry, but very cold, too. Deposit .05 for each coat in your home.	21 For every cell-phone in your home, give .10. It is "long distance" to hungry areas in most parts of the world. Let's make it a toll-free number.	22 How many extension cords do you have in your home? Give .10 for each. Let's "extend" a helping hand to those who need it.	23 For each pie or cake in your home, deposit .15. We should never "dessert" the hungry.	24 How many iPod's do you own? For every one deposit .10. Let's never "tune out" the hungry.	25 For every salt and pepper shaker, give .05. Let's all "sprinkle" their lives with a little seasoning.	26 For every TV show that was watched today, give .10. TV helps us see around the world, this money will help us feed the hungry around the world.
27 How many computers do you own? Deposit .25 for each. Let's take a "byte" out of hunger!	28 How many pictures do you have on your walls? Just "picture" yourself without food & deposit .02 for each picture.	29 Deposit .20 for each pair of contacts or eyeglasses you have. This will help us "see" clearly the need to care for the hungry.	30 Do you have a piano or organ in your home? Deposit .50 for each. This is a "key" to sharing and caring.	31 How many erasers can you find in your home? Give .02 for each. Let's "erase" hunger from the world.	APRIL 1 Count your tea or coffee cups and deposit .02 each. Our "cup runneth over," so let's fill theirs.	2 "I've got my love to keep me warm," that's true, but the hungry have only you. Give .02 for each blanket in your home.
3 How many cars are in your family? You can't "Dodge" the hungry, but you can alFord" to pay .25 for each car.	4 Day by day, from dawn till night, Hunger knows no hour – nor if it's day or night. Give .10 for each lamp in your home.	5 How many cameras do you have? Give .15 for each. This will help us make all "negatives" positives.	6 Pick up all the loose change lying around the house. Put it in your FFHP Box. This will help make a "change" in the world!	7 Count the scissors you have in your home and give .25 for each pair. Let's "cut-out" the hunger in hunger-y!	8 How many members does your family have? Deposit .10 for each. The hungry have families to feed also; let's make this a real "family affair!"	9 How many towels are in your home? If you give .01 for each towel, this may help us "wipe out" hunger for all people.
10 "Hey, Big Spender," drop a coin in the slot – give to others what they haven't got! Put in a coin or bill of your choice.	11 How many heads of lettuce are in your refrigerator? Deposit .10 for each. "Lettuce" show the hungry that we care.	12 Count the cans in your cupboard. Deposit .02 for each. Don't let their cupboards be like "Old Mother Hubbard's!"	13 How many postage stamps do you normally use in a week? Give .05 for each. This is a sure way to "stamp out" hunger!	14 How many sweaters do you have? Give .05 for each. Sweaters keep you warm. This is one time they won't mind if we "pull the wool over their eyes."	15 How many chairs are in your home? Give .05 per chair. We can't just "sit" around when so many people are hungry.	16 How many cookbooks do you own? Give .20 for each. We will be able to "cook up" the hungry to live by.
17 How many eggs are you going to color for Pascha? Give .05 for each. Let's help "color" their world with love!	18 "Brother can you spare a dime?" or maybe two? The FFHP program really depends on you. Put your dimes in the box.	19 Count your C.D.'s. Give .01 for each. Let's make this a "record-breaking" year for FFHP!	20 How many songs have you listened to today? Deposit .02 for each. Let's stay "in tune" with the hungry.	21 How many crosses do you have? Deposit .10 each. Crosses remind us of Christ's suffering; let's not make the hungry suffer anymore.	22 "A dream is a wish your heart makes," and our dream is for hunger to stop. We are wishing that the FFHP program will go over the top!	23 We pray you have been generous in your almsgiving. "For inasmuch as you have done it unto the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto ME!"
24 Christ Is Risen!						

Ordained

McNARY, Mark, to the holy diaconate by Bishop ANTOUN, on January 30, 2011, at St. Basil the Great Church, Metairie, Louisiana. He is attached to that parish.

MOGA, David, to the holy diaconate by Bishop THOMAS, on January 30, 2011, at St. Nicholas Church, Cedarburg, Wisconsin. He is assigned to that parish.

Leave of Absence

PORTER, Deacon Michael, a student at St. Vladimir's Seminary.

Restored

HILLHOUSE, Fr. Edward, to the holy priesthood by Bishop JOSEPH, on January 22, 2011, at St. George Church, Portland, Oregon. He is assigned to that parish.

Donations to The WORD January 2011

Mrs. Fauzia Makarios and family, in loving memory of husband, father, grandfather, and great grandfather, Moussa Diab Makarios	\$100
Mr. Elia. Qushair	\$20
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Mrs. J. Aoude	\$20
Najib and Gisele Azar	\$35
Lori and Brian F. Cavalier	\$100
Mr. Anthony Coniaris	\$10
Dr. Samuel Cross	\$100
Samira M. Deeb	\$200
Mr. Keith Dudum Trust	\$100
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Mr. Georges Ghareeb	\$25
Drs. Fuad and Amal Hajjar	\$500
Mrs. Isabelle Hakim	\$10
Farid and Nabila Hawwa	\$100
Michael and Jeremiah Hong	\$100
Mr. George N. Jabbour	\$200
Elaine Jacobs	\$50

Mr. Walid Khalife	\$250
Elie Khoury	\$50
Mr. Wafeek Khoury	\$25
Al and Marlene Mamary	\$250
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Janvieve Fasheh	\$50
Albert and Samira Kasssieh	\$100
Mr. Michael Mansour	\$100
Mr. John Haffty	\$25
Anis Saliba, MD	\$100
Mr. Philip Bouassaly	\$40
Mr. Georges N. Nehme	\$50
Ms. Sandra Arida	\$20
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Mr. Ronald Garrity	\$4
Jean Sam	\$300
Odette Sawiris Khoury	\$25
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V. Rev. Fr. Athanasios Emmert	\$130



St. Mary's Antiochian Orthodox Church in Mississauga

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The Antiochian Women Announce Scholarship

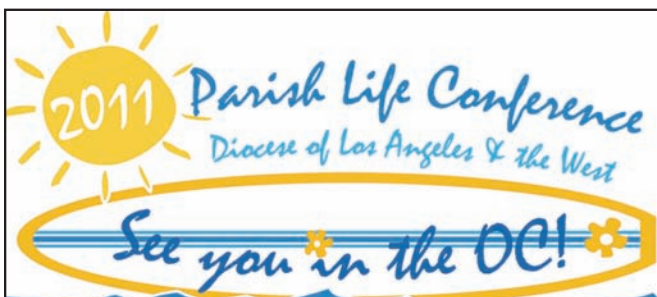
The North American Board of The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America is offering its annual scholarships, usually in the amount of \$500 each, to help women continue their education in order to improve their circumstances and those of their families. Applications, which must be submitted by May 27, 2011, are available from your parish priest.

The requirements for the scholarship are as follows:

1. The applicant must be a woman over 25 years of age;
2. The applicant must be a member in good standing of a parish of the Antiochian Archdiocese;
3. The applicant must be actively involved in her parish;
4. The applicant must be applying for, or registered in, an academic or trade program of study; and
5. The applicant must demonstrate financial need.

The names of scholarship recipients will be announced in July by the North American Board at the Summer Meeting during the Archdiocese Convention in Chicago.

For more information, please call Khouria Helene Hajal at (613) 738-0476 (Canada) or Cindy Nimey at (315) 796-7910 (USA).



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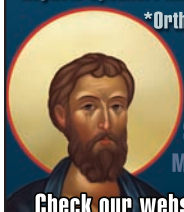
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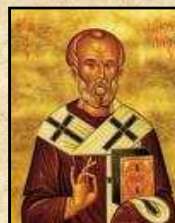
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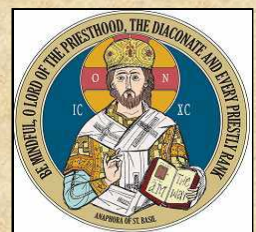
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Website: www.antiochian.org * Email: archdiocese@antiochian.org

February 3, 2011

Mr. Elias Yelovich
1634 Carrolls Tract Rd.
Orrtanna, PA 17353-9740

Dear Mr. Yelovich:

As you know, the Spiritual Court of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America convened on January 26, 2011 to deliberate your case. The final report of the Spiritual Court is attached to this letter, which includes their recommendation. We have accepted their recommendation and inform you of the following:

1. Effective immediately, you are deposed from the Holy Priesthood, and returned to the rank of layman
2. You are given thirty (30) days from the date of this letter to write a letter of repentance and to return to the Antiochian Archdiocese as a layman. Failure to do this will result in your excommunication.

We pray that our Lord will show His great mercy, and that your heart may be moved to repentance and a new beginning.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Metropolitan Philip".

+Metropolitan PHILIP
Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of All North America

Copy to: Bishop Thomas, Members of the Spiritual Court

January 26, 2011

DECISION OF THE SPIRITUAL COURT OF THE
ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA
vs.
PRIEST ELIAS YELOVICH

The Spiritual Court of the Antiochian Archdiocese, consisting of Archpriest David Hester (appointed by Bishop THOMAS as president of the court), Archimandrite John Abdalah, and Archpriest Olof Scott convened on Wednesday, January 26, 2011, at 9:00am at the Heritage and Learning Center of the Antiochian Village in Ligonier, Pennsylvania.

Fr. Elias Yelovich was not present at the hearing. Documents were reviewed which showed clear acts of disobedience and, most importantly, a letter from Fr. Elias Yelovich to Bishop THOMAS (Joseph) was presented in which he stated "I moved on" and "I am now under the authority and protection of my new Bishop in the Holy Synod of Milan," which is a church body that is not in communion with any Orthodox body in communion with our Archdiocese.

According to the canons of the Orthodox Church, a cleric must receive a letter of commendation from his bishop in order to be received by another (Canons 13 and 33 of the Apostolic Canons). Fr. Elias did not receive any such letter releasing him to another bishop. After reviewing communications between Bishop THOMAS and Fr. Elias, we determined that Fr. Elias was prevented from exercising his priestly and administrative authority (*i.e.*, suspended). We understand that being suspended does not constitute a canonical release.

After reviewing these facts, we came to the following unanimous decision:

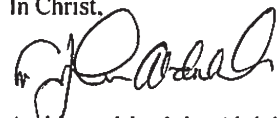
Whereas, Fr. Elias was suspended by Bishop THOMAS with the blessing of Metropolitan PHILIP (Saliba) yet still presumed to act in priestly service;

Whereas, Fr. Elias has left the canonical Orthodox Church for the "Holy Synod of Milan," a group which is not in communion with any Orthodox church in communion with our Archdiocese, without a release or permission of his bishop (Canon 15 of Nicea I), not receiving the consent of his bishop to do this (Canon 16 of Nicea I, Canons 8 and 20 of Chalcedon, Canon 17 of the Penthekti/Trullo Council); and

Whereas, Fr. Elias has set up a new parish community within the "Holy Synod of Milan" which has divided the faithful of St. James Mission in Westminster, Maryland, his former pastorate, creating his own altar, creating a schism contrary to the canons (Canon 6 of the Council of Gangra, Canon 31 of the Apostolic Canons, Canon 4 of the Council of Antioch, Canon 1 of St. Basil, Canons 10 and 11 of Carthage);

We thus unanimously recommend to the Metropolitan Archbishop that, for leaving the Archdiocese without canonical release, the Priest Elias Yelovich be deposed from the holy priesthood and returned to the rank of layman; and further, that he be admonished to repent and return to the Archdiocese as a layman, and that if he not repent within thirty (30) days, for setting up a separate altar and creating a schism contrary to the canons, he be excommunicated.

In Christ,



Archimandrite John Abdalah



Archpriest Olof Scott



Archpriest David Hester

Communities in Action



Bishop THOMAS Visits St. Raphael of Brooklyn Mission

On October 30–31, 2010, the congregation of St. Raphael of Brooklyn Orthodox Church, located in Chantilly, Virginia, and its priest, Fr. Thomas Palke, gratefully received His Grace Bishop THOMAS. Bishop THOMAS's visit was his first to the mission since the mission's move to Chantilly from nearby Centreville, Virginia, where we had met for four years. Sayidna THOMAS presided at Great Vespers on October 30, during which he offered words of instruction, admonition, and encouragement to the congregation. Afterward, the congregation enjoyed dinner and a mini-concert from violinist Michael Munayer, a member of St. Raphael's. Over dessert, Sayidna spoke briefly and opened

the floor for questions from the faithful. Among other topics, he discussed with the faithful the prospect of administrative unity among the Orthodox churches in America. Joining the mission for the evening's events were Fr. John Anderson, attached priest of St. Raphael, Fr. Patrick Cardine of St. Patrick's Orthodox Church in Warrenton, Virginia, Fr. Nicholas Alford of St. Gregory the Great Orthodox Church in Washington, D.C., and Deacon Peter Maris of Holy Cross Orthodox Church of Linthicum, Maryland.

The next morning, October 31, the mission joyfully celebrated Orthros and the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, with Deacon Peter Maris also assisting. Sayidna THOMAS delivered the homily. In his sermon on the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Sayidna encouraged the congregation to grow in its support of

the mission through outreach to the community and care for the poor. Sayidna also cautioned the faithful that, by showing hospitality to strangers, many had unknowingly entertained angels, and that we always should be prepared to give cheerfully to the work of the Lord. At the conclusion of Liturgy, Emma Salameh, daughter of Mike and Katrina Salameh, was churched. The morning concluded with a sumptuous assortment of food provided by members of the congregation. During this time, Sayidna conversed with a number of members and guests.

Bishop Thomas has faithfully visited our mission every year and provided wise counsel and words of encouragement. We are thankful, Sayidna THOMAS! Many years, Master!

Christmas at the Cathedral

December was filled with tidings of great joy at St. George Cathedral in Charleston, West Virginia. We welcomed home for the holidays His Grace, Bishop THOMAS, who served the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Nativity and was in attendance for several of our holiday presentations.

On December 5, after Divine Liturgy, our teen group served their annual pancake breakfast with all the toppings. On December 6th, 8th, and 10th, the Antiochian Women/Ladies Guild, St. Ignatius, and the Young Adults held their Christmas Dinners and end-of-year meetings.

HARK! the voices of angels were heard on Sunday, December 12, and fourteen members of our Junior Choir performed solos and duets of traditional Christmas carols for the congregation, after Divine Liturgy. Under the direction of our choir director, Lexie Damous, and accompanied by Michael Barnhouse, this was truly a gift of the season.

The same evening we returned to the sanctuary to hear a Christmas Cantata by our Liturgical Choir. The musical selection entitled "Night of the Father's Love," by Pepper Choplin, related the awe and mystery of our Savior's birth, and was narrated by Becky and Terry O'Fiesh. A unique blend of musical styles and words, combining traditional carols and scriptures, provided a most joyous evening!

Members of St. Ignatius participated in the service December 19 for St. Ignatius Sunday by reading the epistle and passing the offering trays. After Divine Liturgy, our Church School presented their Annual Christmas program with each class participating in the play and caroling. Refreshments were served to all afterward.

St. George was blessed to host the visitation of the Kursk Root Icon of the Mother of God on Wednesday, December 22. This thirteenth-century icon is one of the most miraculous icons of Russia. The Little Compline Service with Akathist to the

Theotokos was held at 7 p.m., with the veneration of the Icon immediately following. A presentation of the history of the Icon was given by Archpriest Serge Lukianov. Copies of the Holy Icon were for sale and then were blessed in front of the Kursk Root Icon. We were truly moved by the number of people present for this holy event.

As Bishop THOMAS greeted everyone with "Christ is Born!" after the Feast of Nativity, and the response of "Glorify Him!" was given, everyone returned home to be with family and friends. Upon the dawn of that glorious morn of the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we awoke to a white Christmas. Christmas at the Cathedral in Charleston was a most blessed and memorable one!

May the New Year bring good health, peace, happiness, and His Blessings to Metropolitan PHILIP, Bishop THOMAS, Fr. Stephen, the parishioners of St. George and the Archdiocese.

Fr. Olof Scott
Dean, St. George Cathedral
Charleston, West Virginia





Choir Makes "Joyful Noise" in Norwood, Massachusetts

Family, friends, and townspeople gathered on Sunday, December 19, 2010, in our beautiful Byzantine Church of St. George, Norwood, Massachusetts, to attend our choir's first public Christmas concert.

In the fall, our priest, the Very Reverend Father Joseph Kimmett, suggested that the choir prepare a Christmas program to be presented in the church for the Feast of the Nativity. The choir worked very hard in rehearsals under the direction of Choir Director, David Franciosi. They also had a lot of fun and enjoyed the camaraderie during the many practice sessions. Together at the concert, the choir made a "joyful noise" unto the Lord, thanks to His blessings.

The musical program was uplifting, and the choir fabulous. The concert was videotaped by our town's Norwood Public Access service and has been shown on television many times. DVDs are being made for distribution. We can hope that the choir of St. George, Norwood, has only begun a wonderful tradition.



The Choir of St. George, Little Falls, Visits the Archdiocese Headquarters

On December 21, 2010, His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP hosted the Annual Christmas visit of the Choir from St. George in Little Falls, New Jersey, at the Archdiocese Headquarters. This visit has become an annual tra-

dition, and always fills the headquarters with the joy of music and good fellowship.

The choir began the singing of Christmas hymns outside the front entrance of the house and then made its way into the house to greet His Eminence. They were led by their Pastor, Very Rev. Elias Bitar, and Mrs. Christine Lynch, the Choir Director.





After receiving a blessing from His Eminence, the choir continued their beautiful singing in the living room. At the conclusion of the musical program, everyone gathered in the chapel for evening prayers.

Finally, the choir was treated to dessert and coffee in the dining room.

As in the past, it was an evening of joy and good fellowship during this most blessed season of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Fr. George Kevorkian
Archdiocese Headquarters

Hunger Banquet at St. George, Boston

Have you ever been *truly* hungry?

Have I? This might seem an odd question, coming from a teenager like myself, as teens have a reputation for appetites larger than Jupiter and its sixty-three moons combined. While it is true that teens eat so much because they are growing fast, our astronomical appetites somehow are always satisfied; I must admit that the answer – for me – to the question above is *No*. As a matter of fact, I can safely say that I have never gone

to bed hungry in my life. When we say “hungry,” however, what are we really saying? We are expressing our desire for food, either because we have had none or not enough.

Now take a moment and think: how many times have you felt actual hunger and been *denied* food? For me, the answer is *rarely, if ever*. Yet the hunger of some children and adults is met with empty hands. Should we be concerned that about 22,000 children starve to death every *day*? Of course. Does it really matter that about one-sixth of the world’s population is currently hungry to the point of near starvation? Without a doubt. To me, though, it would be worth the effort, time, and money to host an entire hunger banquet and teach my church community about hunger even if only *one* person worldwide was hungry; that would be one hungry person too many. These reflections on my life and the situation with others pushed me to host a hunger banquet – hitting the supportive parishioners of St. George with rice and beans – at Saint George Orthodox Church in West Roxbury, Massachusetts.

Let me explain what a hunger



banquet is, and what it is meant to do. Just to start, the name “banquet” is misleading. Banquets usually serve hundreds of people in a lavish hall, where waiters and chefs are madly running around making sure that everyone is enjoying a five-star meal. A *hunger* banquet, however, takes this lavish meal and gives it to only about twenty percent of the people in attendance; this group is called the “upper class” and is served a full meal including (but not limited to) pasta, chicken, bread and butter, and salad. The “middle class,” about forty-five percent of the banqueters, is given a meal that is slightly less extensive, including rice, beans, chips, and salsa. The final group, called the “lower class” – the remaining thirty-five percent – is served a skimpy meal of rice and water. As might already be evident, the banquet was set up to parallel real-world circumstances, except for the inflated percent of lower-class and middle-class people. (In reality, there are many more people in the middle class, but I decided to adjust the numbers for learning purposes.) In order to make my point in the most obvious way, the banquet volunteers and I decided to



serve the lower class, while having the middle class and upper class serve themselves; as in the “real world,” the lower class had little choice over what they ate, if anything. Moreover, while the higher class sat at tables with tablecloths, shiny utensils, and nice plates, the middle class sat just on chairs, and the lower class had to eat on low risers about a foot off the ground.

As an object lesson, the lower elevation of the poorest class is intentional and is meant to convey two things: people in the lower class look *up* at the rich, as do those in starving communities worldwide; and those in the upper two classes are meant to find themselves feeling guilty for the fact that they are higher – even if it is just physically. The most interesting phenomenon of the banquet, however, was the fact that, though sharing food was allowed, it rarely happened: the “rich” could share their better food with the lower two classes, but it was infrequent, across the board. This parallels the real-world situation, in which most affluent (or even just well-off) individuals ignore the issue of hunger in other parts of the world, for whatever reason. It is because of this widespread ignorance that I chose to lead Saint George’s effort in shedding light on this issue.

For what it is worth, I am deeply proud of my church, and am happy to report that the hunger banquet was an overwhelming success. Over two hundred attentive and car-

ing members of the parish gave valuable time out of their day to learn about an issue that, admittedly, is not a popular topic of dinner conversation. From the moment the hunger banquet ended, it was clear that a great majority of those attending had been strongly influenced and were ready to take action. Our thanksgiving food drive, for instance, which occurs every year around this time, surpassed our minimum sixty-bag total by over 30 bags, and did it with over 15 volunteers. My humble prediction is that we far surpassed our impressive annual Thanksgiving average of 6,600 pounds – all of which was sent out to local families in the Boston area.

Why bother replacing the highly popular and traditional coffee hour with such a banquet? Why bother trying to teach people about hunger when the hungriest people in the world live thousands of miles away? The answer to this question is not necessarily the simple “moral answer” that *hunger is bad*, or *not caring about world hunger is immoral*. Father Timothy Ferguson, the priest at Saint George and an avid supporter of the hunger banquet, said it much better in his inspiring and unique answer to this question during liturgy: “None of us truly knows what hunger feels like, so it seems only right to come together and experience it in order to understand the feelings of our starving neighbors worldwide.” Father Timothy and the Saint George Parish Council

both saw the importance of such a project from the moment that I suggested it to them, especially since it was to be done right before Thanksgiving, a time of great family feasts nationwide. They both believe – as do I – that as Christians, blessed with food under our Lord, we must face this issue *locally*, raise awareness, and plant the seed of hope in our own communities, in the expectation that it will soon bloom into a larger effort to eradicate hunger. Crucially, everyone involved in this project recognized that, in fact, local action *does* foster hope more than anything else we could do. Personal interaction in the *local community* is the most powerful tool with which to address the problem of hunger, for it inspires hungry people, and gives them another reason to live. If the personal touch of local action – like that which the Saint George Hunger Banquet advocated – spreads, then hungry people will have something to hold onto. They will be able to see the kindness of a caring community and the preaching of Jesus Christ Himself.

Ramzy Kahhale
St. George Church, Boston

Interfaith Celebration of Peace in Montreal

At 6 p.m. on November 2, 2010, representatives of the Jewish, Muslim, and Orthodox and other Christian faiths joined the Mayor, Gerald Tremblay and over 300 guests for a celebration of peace in the City Hall of Montreal, Canada. Master of Ceremonies Nadia Lawand, a parishioner of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church of Montreal, commenced the program by introducing the four choirs, who chanted in unison the song “*Un Monde pour Paix / A World for Peace*.” This first interfaith ceremony celebrating peace in Montreal was the brainchild of Rev. Fr. Antony Gabriel, Pastor of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church of Montreal, who shared his vision of an interfaith celebration of peace in Montreal, a city of diverse ethnic and religious groups who live together in harmony, with Rabbi Levi Lerner of Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom. The two worked for over a year to bring together adult and children choirs, religious and political leaders and the media for this remarkable event.

After the introductory song by the four choirs, Mayor Gerald Tremblay spoke about Montreal’s diversity and the harmonious life of the different groups, and invited three religious leaders, Rabbi Lerner, Economos Gabriel and Imam Sayed Nabil Abbas, to speak from the teachings of the Torah, the Christian

Scriptures, and the Qu’ran.

This was followed by an angelic hymn, “Praise Ye the Lord ... Alleluia,” chanted beautifully by the Children’s Choir of St. George Church, under the direction of Samantha Michael, the Youth Director. Then there were three readings from the Torah, the Bible and the Qu’ran, by Rabbi Adam Shiar, Rev. Smythe and Imam Said Fawaz, respectively.

The ceremony continued with the Turkish Children’s Choir singing a beautiful hymn about peace. This set the stage for a lighting of candles. Mr. George Saad, called by Jean Charest, Premier of Quebec, an “ambassador for peace,” called on the Mayor to light the first candle for peace, which he did while eight children lit eight candles representing the eight goals of the City of Montreal: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS; malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; and develop a global partnership for development. While the candles were lit, Mrs. Lawand read the Declaration of Peace, which had been signed by all of the attendees, in both French and English. It says,

Today we are gathered at Montreal City Hall as people of diverse faith traditions who share a

common humanity and destiny on this planet. Montreal is a city of many religions, diverse cultural communities and traditions. Underlying the pluralism of Montreal is the longing of every citizen to live in peace and harmony with all others.

As clergy and community leaders in Montreal, we pledge to continue our city's tradition of dialogue, mutual understanding and neighborliness for the sake of peace and amity. May our city, a microcosm of the world's diversity and of our common humanity, provide to all Canada, to all lands and peoples, a living example of peace and good will for generations to come.

The ceremony continued with two choir performances: the Jewish Children's Choir and an interfaith adult choir. Following this, Rev. Deacon Antony Mansour of the Orthodox Church in America and Director of the Ecumenism Centre in Montreal thanked everyone who attended and participated in this celebration. After these words of thanks, Mrs. Lawand introduced the final piece: the song "Salaam, Shalom," chanted by the four choirs.

Following the closing applause, Mrs. Lawand invited all for a cocktail party prepared graciously by the City of Mon-



(Left to right): Theodore Peterson (St. Anthony), Jacob Elwell, Nicholas Jones, Fr. Bogdan, Sara Ferguson, James Esper, Irene Papas.

treal, at which members of the diverse groups mingled with each other and signed the Declaration of Peace.

Fr. Jean El Murr
Pastoral Assistant, St. George
Antiochian Orthodox Church
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Pan-Orthodox Liturgy at Saint Antony's, Butler, Pennsylvania

Butler is a small town, hard hit by the demise of the steel industry. It is currently plagued by unemployment, poverty, and declining demographics. Yet Butler has no less than three Orthodox churches – Saint Andrew (Orthodox Church in America), Saints Peter and Paul (Ukrainian), and Saint Anthony (Antiochian) – within walking distance of each other! They owe their existence, of course, to the local history of the respective ethnic communities (Little Russian, Ukrainian, and Syrian-Lebanese). Yet continuing to maintain three distinct

Orthodox communities, all small and struggling, has little to do with either Orthodoxy or common sense. If there is any advantage whatsoever to the curious fact that there are three Orthodox churches in view of each other, it is that every encounter can be the occasion of joyful celebration of our fundamental unity as Orthodox.

On January 16, the Sunday prior to the Feast of Saint Anthony the Great, the parishioners of the three Orthodox churches in Butler gathered at St. Anthony's Antiochian Orthodox Church for common worship and fellowship. The three priests, Fr. Joseph Wargo (OCA), Fr. Paisius McGrath (Ukrainian), and Fr. Bogdan Bucur (Antiochian), celebrated Orthros and Divine Liturgy, with well over a hundred people participating. On this first pan-Orthodox Sunday Liturgy celebrated at St. Anthony's, the singing was gorgeous, thanks to the enthusiasm and professionalism of the Byz-

antine Choir, which traveled from St. George Cathedral in Pittsburgh to Butler especially for the occasion! And since this was a celebration of Saint Anthony the Great, “the father of monks,” a special collection was taken for the nuns at Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Elwood City, Pennsylvania.

The service was followed by a delicious lunch. Even though the guests outnumbered them about four to one, St. Anthony’s parishioners somehow managed to serve up more than anyone could eat. Judging from the joyous atmosphere of brotherly banqueting, a perfect continuation of the spiritual feast at Divine Liturgy, it appears that a growing pan-Orthodox awareness is taking hold in Butler. Through the prayers of our holy fathers, we are planting today the seeds of tomorrow’s Orthodox unity in America.

Fr. Bogdan Gabriel Bucur, Ph.D.
Saint Anthony Orthodox Church,
Pennsylvania
www.orthodoxbutler.org

St. Andrew the Apostle Lewes, Delaware

His Grace Bishop THOMAS made his annual visit to the mission of Saint Andrew the Apostle in Lewes, Delaware, the weekend of November 21, 2010. On Saturday, a group of parishioners with their Pastor, Father Boniface Black, accompanied Sayidna to the property where, God willing, our Church will be



built. With prayer, a cross was planted on the land.

The Feast of the Entry of the Theotokos was celebrated with Vespers, Matins and Hierarchical Divine Liturgy. Subdeacon Adrian Budica, a son of Saint Andrew and recent Masters Degree graduate of Saint Vladimir's Seminary, was ordained Deacon. Archpriest Thomas Zain, Dean of the Saint Nicholas Cathedral in New York, joined us for the weekend, along with

Subdeacon Jason Flowers and family from Saint John Chrysostom, York, and Subdeacon Joseph Kavchok from Saint Paul, Emmaus, both in Pennsylvania. A wonderful choir, wall-to-wall congregations and magnificent weather combined for a beautiful weekend.

Following the Sunday Divine Services, parishioners hosted a reception for the congregation and visitors at their spacious residence. May God grant many

years to our Bishop and to the newly ordained Deacon Adrian, and continue to bless our community of faith as we follow Bishop THOMAS's encouragement to make Orthodoxy known in southern Delaware.

Fr. Boniface Black, Pastor
Saint Andrew the Apostle, Lewes,
Delaware



The parish of St Andrew's Antiochian Orthodox Mission held its annual Outdoor Blessing of the Water with Cross Dive on the extremely cold, blustery day of January 9, 2011. The Blessing was held at the beach in Perdido Key, Florida, on our beloved Gulf of Mexico. Sixteen divers, ages 7-15, plunged into the turbulent and frigid surf after the Cross, which was retrieved by Eleni Sfanos. All who participated received commemorative hoodies, which read, "ReDefining Fools for Christ."

The Orthodox World

Support for Children Who Bear Burden of HIV in Ethiopia

At eighteen years old, Tilahun is barely an adult, but he is already almost middle-aged.

Tilahun lost his brother and father to AIDS in Ethiopia, a country where the disease has claimed the lives of millions and lowered life expectancy to 48 years. Now he cares for his bedridden, HIV-positive mother and his three younger siblings as the head of the household.

More than one million children like Tilahun and his siblings have been orphaned or left to fend for themselves as a result of the AIDS epidemic in Ethiopia. The epidemic is one of the key challenges for Ethiopia, one of the least-developed countries in the world, where nearly half of the population lives below the poverty level. The poor and women are especially vulnerable because they do not have access to health services and health education.

Disease, poverty and the responsibility providing for his family, however, have not dampened Tilahun's aspirations for the future. He has been trained in effective business management techniques and provided with start-up capital. The funds allowed him to open a small convenience shop which now helps support his family and pay for his siblings' school tuition.

"I would like to develop the shop even more," said Tilahun. "With my earnings, I have

opened a savings account for my future education as well as for my siblings. I understand the importance of ensuring that my siblings complete their education. I also plan to open other shops to support my family better. Now, I feel independent."

The training and the capital for his new business came from International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) through funding from the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the U.S. Government initiative to help save the lives of those suffering from HIV/AIDS around the world. Over the past two years alone, more than 1,000 orphans and vulnerable children have been given the opportunity to begin entrepreneurial ventures, in addition to 1,600 adults. The program is part of a

comprehensive HIV/AIDS care and support program carried out in cooperation with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter Church Aid Commission. Since 2004, the two organizations have reached over 11.5 million Ethiopians with prevention and awareness messages.

IOCC, founded in 1992 as the official humanitarian aid agency of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA), has implemented over \$330 million in relief and development programs in 33 countries around the world. IOCC is a member of the ACT Alliance, a global coalition of churches and agencies engaged in development, humanitarian assistance and advocacy.

Mark Hodde
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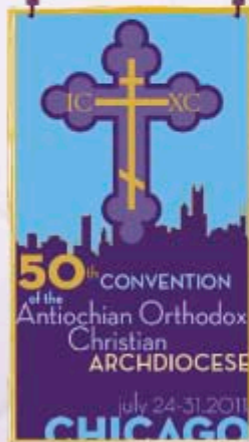
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