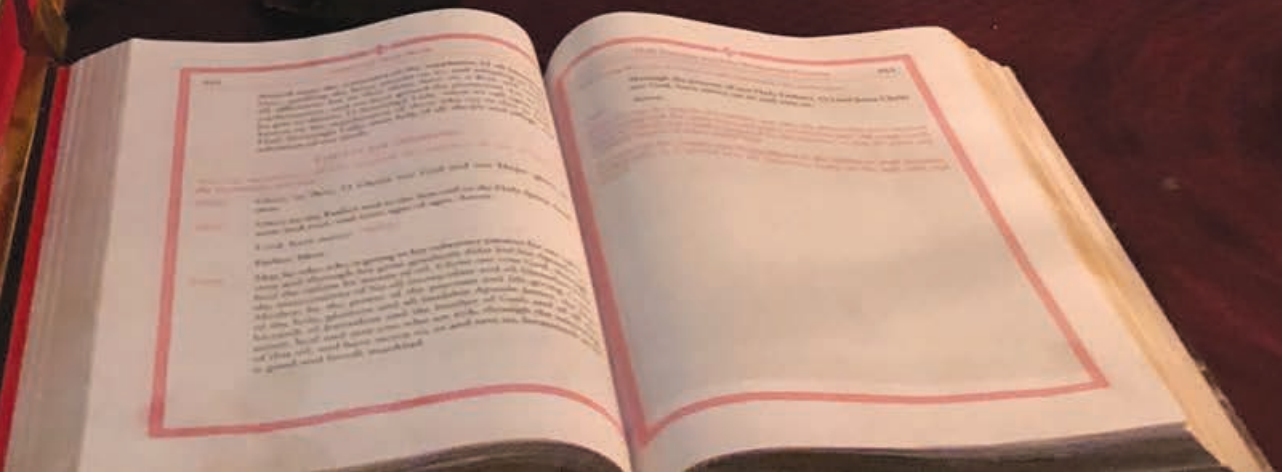


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THE WORD

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THE WORD



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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 e-mailed and provided as a Microsoft Word text or editable PDF. Please do not embed artwork into the word documents. All art work must be high resolution: at least 300dpi.

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TO BE ONE IN THE CHURCH, AS GOD IS ONE



**“THEY CONTINUED STEADFASTLY IN THE APOSTLES’ DOCTRINE AND FELLOWSHIP,
IN BREAKING OF BREAD, AND IN PRAYERS.” ACTS 2:42**

When the Metropolitan or one of our bishops celebrates the liturgy, the local church shows us what Christ meant when he prayed in His prayer, “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.” No act shows this more clearly than when, in the liturgy, the bishop kneels before the gifts of the people, the people pray the Creed, and the presbyters wave the aer (chalice covers) over the gifts and the bishop. This liturgical act typifies who we are as the Church. The bishop connects us to Christ and all of the church by his responsibility to all, and for all, in the Church, that is, all of the Orthodox bishops, all of the bishop’s presbyters, and all of God’s people. The Faith as expressed in the praying of the Creed shows that we are in the faith of the Apostles. This profession unites us

one to another and to Christ through His Church. The gifts of the people spread forth are given back to God, who returns them to us as His own. We are His, and in Him. He shows us ultimately who we are created to be, claimed by baptism as Christians, or “little christs.” Together we are the Church, which from all time is the Body of Christ, and unites us to God. By loving one another and sharing God with each other and the world, we express the Kingdom to come, which in the Church is accessible to us now! This is our destiny: to be One as God is One. We are united in Christ to God the Father and to each other. This is our mission, our identity, our Christianity, our life.

Steadfastness in the Apostles’ doctrine is continuously experiencing God’s truth and living in the light of it –

The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH

The Right Reverend
Bishop BASIL

The Right Reverend
Bishop THOMAS

The Right Reverend
Bishop ALEXANDER

The Right Reverend
Bishop JOHN

The Right Reverend
Bishop ANTHONY

The Right Reverend
Bishop NICHOLAS

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God's way. Christianity is experienced as a way of life, with Christ at the center. It is about living ever more fully, by enjoying love in and through the other. It is about sharing the truth of the Trinity and God's desire to save us through His Church. The Apostles' doctrine is the understanding of the prophecies of the Scriptures and their fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ. We must not stray from the fullness of truth. Straying includes settling for a spirituality without God. Our religious experience is about being with Christ in the Holy Trinity, and cannot be reduced to spiritual feelings for some kind of self-gratification. We need the authentic experience of the Apostles, martyrs and saints. This is union in Christ.

Likewise, Christian fellowship cannot be reduced to parish bowling leagues and basketball. Even if bowling and basketball is our parish tradition, fellowship is more than activities; it is being Christ to each other. It is about loving and mentoring each other, carrying each other's burdens, and redirecting each other to Truth, that is, Christ. Love means speaking the truth kindly and effectively for each other's salvation. It is never boastful or self-serving, judgmental or harsh. Witness in fellowship is revealing God to each other; it is kind, gentle and loving.

The bishop and his representatives lead the steadfast, continuous community from generation to generation in the breaking of bread and prayers, which is the Eucharist and liturgical prayers. This community, of course, is the one authorized and empowered by the Metropolitan and bishops. Together, we "lay aside all earthly cares" that we have set forth in our prayers, to be one with God and each other. The height of this is found in silence, which expresses our understanding beyond words. It is expressed in who we are as Christians, freed from the bondage of sin, temptation, self-interest and pleasures. It is a continual goal and calling.

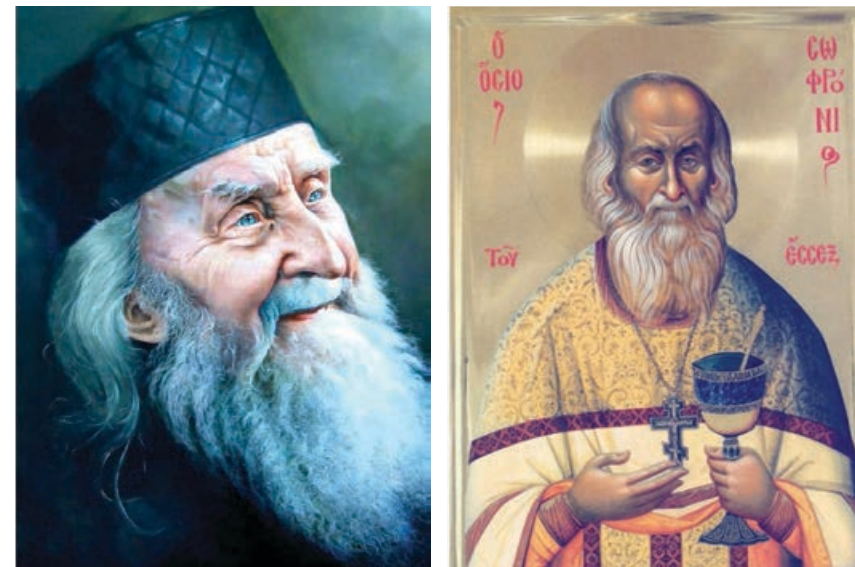
This year's Parish Life Conference theme is taken from the Acts of the Apostles. It describes who we are as a Church and as a community, and who each of us is as a Christian. We are called to be steadfast in our faith and in our relationships. On this theme our youth will present essays, poems, and orations. The clergy will preach and our speakers will reflect on who we are, and why we are.

Bishop JOHN



THE HYPOSTATIC PRINCIPLE AND ITS ILLUMINATION OF THE MEANING OF SUFFERING

Tina Cooper



ELDER SOPHRONY'S LIFE AND MINISTRY REFLECTS AN IMPORTANT TRUTH FOR A WORLD THAT DESPERATELY SEEKS MEANING AND PURPOSE: CHRIST, AS THE TRUE PERSON, IS THE FULLNESS OF BEING, AND MANKIND, CREATED IN HIS IMAGE AND LIKENESS, HAS BEEN GIVEN THE POTENTIAL TO FULFILL OUR TRUE PERSONHOOD THROUGH UNION WITH HIM. CHRIST THEREFORE IS THE FORERUNNER OF OUR RESTORED HUMANITY, AND THE ELDER'S MESSAGE PERTAINS TO THE WONDROUS TRUTH OF OUR IDENTITY AS BEINGS CREATED IN THE LIKENESS OF GOD. THIS DIVINE SEED IS PLANTED IN MAN'S "DEEP HEART," HIDDEN FROM OUR FALLEN AWARENESS.

It would have remained so, had it not been for the incarnation of the Son of God (Jean-Claude Larchet, *The Therapy of Spiritual Illnesses*, 2012). In his letter to Cledonius St Gregory of Nazianzus explains "For that which He has not been assumed He has not healed." In humility and love, God the Son chose to condescend and become man, so that our humanity could be united with His divinity. His life, suffering, death and resurrection revealed to us our true identity as children of God and showed us the path of restoration to man's pristine condition before the fall of Adam (Larchet). It is when we are united with Christ that we are able to carry out

the two great Gospel commandments of love by fulfilling their ontological dimensions (Sophrony, 1997). The *hypostatic principle*, according to the Elder, is therefore the basis of man's personhood in God's image.

In his lectures on the hypostatic principle, Father Zacharias (2015) tells us that Elder Sophrony provided four central points of his theology of the person, a few days before his death:

- i. Christ is the true person as was revealed to Moses: "I am He who is."
- ii. Man also is a person created in God's image and likeness.

- iii. The content of the person of Christ is His self-emptying *love unto the end*, by which he accomplished the salvation of the world.
- iv. Man likewise proves himself a person when he acquires love for God to the point of self-hatred, pure prayer which accompanied this, and prayer for the world similar to Christ's prayer at Gethsemane. (The Elder uses the term *self-hatred* to express his disdain for every impurity he sees in himself.)

In Hebrews 2:10 we read: “For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” To understand the role of suffering in the process of realizing the hypostatic principle in us, we should know a little about where man was when he was first created, what happened after the fall, where he is now, and who he is destined to be.

In his book, Larchet provides a comprehensive description of man's original state: oriented completely towards God to find fulfilment in Him, and destined to realize perfection by His deification – that is, becoming god by grace. Man possessed all virtue as a seed in his nature, being in a continual state of prayer and unity with the divine, in ceaseless glorification of His creator and connected to all creation (Larchet).

When Adam sinned by choosing to be his own god, mankind was separated from his creator. Man's being, no longer directed towards the worship of God became re-oriented towards love of himself. As Larchet describes it, “The mirror of his soul was darkened and ceased to reflect its creator.” With the distortion of the image of man in God and the severing of his union with the divine, the virtues weakened and man forgot his authentic nature and glorious destiny. Larchet presents a consensus of the Church Fathers, who describe man's state after the fall as one of spiritual sickness, madness and pathology. Instead of fulfilling their original purpose of turning all

of his being towards God, man's faculties began to seek pleasure and fulfilment outside of Him, avoiding suffering at all costs.

The overflowing love of Christ, made manifest by His incarnation and hypostatic union with mankind, enabled humanity once again to recover the potential of our original nature, to fulfill our destiny as Christological beings. Christ reveals to us that when we are united to God, our nature is both human and divine. He is the true archetype of man, and physician and healer of our souls (Larchet). He came not just to deliver us from our sins, but for our healing, which is inseparable from our salvation. Larchet describes this as an ontological restoration of human nature, a reorientation of our faculties, and a re-appropriation of man's true destiny.

In his third point on the subject of the hypostatic principle, Elder Sophrony states that it is Christ's self-emptying love, His *kenosis*, made manifest by His voluntary suffering and death on our behalf, that is the content of His personhood. This

is again reflected in Hebrews 2:10. Therefore, to realize the potential of our hypostatic being, we too, as Christological beings, must walk the path of self-denial in our own *kenosis*. In *His Life Is Mine*, Elder Sophrony observes that to actualize our being as *hypostasis*, we need to grow, and this growth is linked with pain and suffering. If we are to fulfill our true personhood, we must take the same path as the suffering servant in Isaiah 53, who “poured out his life unto death” so that by “His stripes we are healed.”

To enjoy the power of Christ's victory over death in the Resurrection of our true personhood, we must first

endure the suffering of our cross, that the old man might be crucified with Him (Romans 6:6). Father Zacharias tells us in his lectures on the hypostatic principle that it is through pain and suffering that our “unseen and hidden depths of being come to light.” Isaiah 53 similarly says that “after He has suffered, He will see the light of life.” Father Zacharias explains that to purify ourselves from our “luciferic” faith in ourselves, we “must overcome the

fallen nature that abhors pain and become akin to Christ in his suffering.” Thus we may be united to Him. As we read in Psalm 66, “through the fire and water the Lord brings us to a place of abundance.”

God invites us to participate in our healing by cooperation with His divine grace and will. He asks us to voluntarily pick up our cross, and to deny ourselves and our fleshly passions in a *kenosis* of continual repentance. Larchet writes that the asceticism of the Orthodox Church and the gifts of grace from the sacramental therapies – and particularly baptism and communion – illuminate the path we must walk to benefit from salvation and return to our original health. The *kenosis* or death of the self requires an obedient and faithful acceptance of suffering, a willingness to endure what is needed for the healing of our soul. As noted earlier, in turning away from God, man turned towards love of self, using his faculties to seek pleasure and avoid suffering. The self-denial of ascetic practices and discipline help us to subdue these fallen inclinations, so that our hearts may open to communion with God (the grace of His energies) and our spirit can be reoriented to Him.

Suffering in its various forms is a type of asceticism, in that it involves a discomfort and displeasure that awakens man from the sleep of his fallen state. In these times of pain and weakness, our humble abandonment to the will of God in the midst of our powerlessness invites the glory of His power and love to be made manifest in us. This brings healing to our soul and liberates us from the bondage of the passions that dominate our will. We can hear this truth in these beautiful words famously attributed to St. Augustine: “In my deepest wound, I beheld your glory.”

In the world in which we live, pain, suffering, tragedies, disease and death continually surround us. If we haven't yet been touched by adversity, there always remains an underlying anxiety: we know that it is inevitable. The world offers its own pain medication, a plethora of sleeping aids that can consume or numb the pain, addict us or distract us, and chase away the remembrance of death. Our successes, careers, talents, family, material wealth, health – all bring comfort to the soul, but all are fleeting. Each one can be taken away in an instant, bringing us the pain of separation from the things that give us meaning, and revealing the fragility of the foundation of our being when it is laid outside of God.

However we try to obscure it, the reality of suffering is unavoidable. It surrounds us in people, places and events that awaken us momentarily from the haze of our distorted perceptions. Metropolitan Nikolaos, in

his book *When God Is Not There*, observes that “life offers the medicine of forgetfulness, but there are places where we cannot forget, e.g., airports, prisons, mental institutions, hospitals, nursing homes.” Like these places, which hold within them death, sickness, separation and pain, our trials or the trials of those around us can open the door for grace to enter. This grace stirs in us a desire to turn and seek the One Whom our soul was created to love.

Understanding our nature and the beautiful gift of personhood that God has placed in our depths radically reframes our understanding of suffering and adversity. In doing so, it does not offer direct answers to the question of why we are suffering – this is knowledge reserved for God alone, as we witness in the story of Job. Instead, we can understand suffering as a necessary vehicle for the actualization of our true being through the testing of our faith. We read in 1 Peter 1:6–7: “In this you greatly rejoice . . . though you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

When, on the other hand, we set our sights on the avoidance of suffering at all costs, we deny ourselves grace-filled opportunities to grow into our *hypostasis*. In enabling others to do the same – although this may be well-intentioned – we may only be helping them avoid an experience that could bring them closer to the truth of their hypostatic calling.

Suffering not only provides an opportunity for the revelation of Divine Love within us, but also for those around us (Nikolaos). The humble acceptance of God's will in those who suffer is a powerful revelation of God's love and presence. Metropolitan Nikolaos observes that suffering generates love in the people around us, and we become bonded together in mutual compassion. When people offer their love to those who suffer, it can bring with it a powerful grace of consolation that overcomes the weight of suffering. In this shared space, a tangible love is revealed. Muse (2011) relays the concept of the *dialogos*, as the transformative encounter between persons where Christ's presence “in the midst of two or three” converts dialogue into “trialogue” and provides noetic illumination through a meeting of the uncreated with the created. Christ-in-our-midst is revealed in true hospitality and communion between persons as He brings a mutual awakening of our hearts into deeper truths of being. This can be especially therapeutic and powerful when we share together in each other's suffering.

Elder Sophrony once said that “suffering can destroy or beautify.” “We must see both of these potentials when we encounter others.” The four points of the hypostatic principle give us who are caregivers the lens by which we can perceive what those in our care are experiencing. We must always be able to bring into our mind what is going on in a person’s life, the wider context, rather than simply be dazzled by the presence of pain and suffering. We know that it is God’s “good pleasure” for His image to be restored in us and for man to be transformed into His likeness and united in Him. We were created for a purpose, and that purpose is an identity, the fulfillment of our personhood. Father Zacharias tells us in his lectures that “man’s ontological content develops in the measure of his participation in the fulness of the Energies of his Maker.” We must come alongside others who are suffering and help illumine their darkness by guiding them to respond to God’s invitation of synergy with His divine grace.

Metropolitan Nikolaos, in *When God Is Not There*, shares many examples in which the glory of God was made manifest in the midst of difficult circumstances. He observes that “embracing our suffering will give rise to newly discovered sensitivities and will unfold realities which cannot otherwise be seen.” He shares stories of trials that are rendered powerless against inner joy, and of lives that declare a hidden wonder and profound thanksgiving that seem illogical to the rational observer. In the midst of crisis, however, our souls can become overwhelmed with the pain we are facing, rendering us unable to perceive the divine plan of God hidden in our depths and woven into our being. As a helper, it is our role to share humbly in the sufferings of others, with our eyes open to the movement of God’s grace that manifests truth and revelation in both persons sharing this sacred space.

One of the most difficult things to experience in suffering is the apparent absence of God in the midst of the pain. In encountering people who have endured immense tragedy, I have felt their pain as they wrestled with questions about God’s presence or absence in times of suffering. I have experienced this disorientation in my own life. Metropolitan Nikolaos suggests that it is not a question of whether God is there, but whether we are aware of His presence, and whether we are able to see when He manifests Himself in the chosen time. He observes that our ability to see depends on the purity of our vision to perceive “God’s moment for our soul.” This, he says, requires faith in the promise of His continual presence, patience, and an ongoing struggle to purify our

sight, so that we may see Him in the humble places of our life. As Orthodox caregivers, we can help others in the struggle against self-preoccupation, and help them expand their vision beyond their suffering to His presence manifested in their lives. When someone does this, he is better able to accept and submit to the most difficult of circumstances, and can find himself in a state of peace and blessedness even in the darkest of hours.

On a recent visit to the St. John the Baptist Monastery in Essex, England, Father Peter shared with me – as we sat in Elder Sophrony’s study – that, though we must suffer to fulfil our personhood, when it is possible for us to alleviate the suffering of others, we must do whatever we can. Certainly we see that Christ had deep compassion on those who were suffering, and healed both the souls and bodies of the multitudes who came to Him in need. That said, we do not seek to escape or obscure the reality of the present pain, or to facilitate a codependent relationship. Instead, we must find the place where, in a dialogue of shared suffering and true compassion, we make meaning that uncovers our personhood. We do so as we traverse the valley of the shadow death, moving towards the destiny of the soul – seeking the rod and the staff of the Good Shepherd for guidance and comfort. By doing this, in the offering of our self to others, we allow God to draw near in His divine consolation.

In my own Christian ministry, I meet with a person who suffers from depression, anxiety and panic attacks. He often feels burdened by the weight of his suffering, and struggles to fit in with others. As a result, he feels lonely and outcast in the Church environment. To many, however, it is clear that He is gifted with a special love for God and a rare compassion for others. It is not difficult to see how God is using the experience of suffering to grant him a purity of heart that is a blessing to those around Him – at least those who are able to recognize it. Being able to redirect his focus to this gift of love, and to see how God is using it to affect others, helps alleviate his pain, and helps him avoid a fixation on how much it hurts.

Father Peter further observed that there are two pathways to the actualization of our true personhood. The more difficult path is found in the saying of St. Silouan: “Keep thy mind in hell and despair not.” In a paper that examines the psychosocial implications of St. Silouan’s dictum for survivors of political violence, Professor Renos Papadopoulos explains that this saying tells us not only to refrain from running away from the extreme pain of these devastating situations. It also encourages us to trust that a “persistent focus on them will activate a

certain process of transcendence that would bring about a radical transformation.” That said, Father Peter noted that not everyone is spiritually ready for this road, and that there is another way that is equally effective: that is, through thanksgiving. During my time at the monastery, Father Zacharias also emphasized to me the role of thanksgiving in the healing of the soul.

Father Peter recounted a story that Father Zacharias told him about visiting someone who had been recently diagnosed with a terminal illness. Her whole body was swollen and she was in severe physical and emotional discomfort. Father Zacharias asked the lady to focus on the smallest things for which she could give thanks, including the very breath that was keeping her alive. Father Zacharias visited her again sometime later. Her countenance had completely changed, so much so that he thought she had been given good news regarding her health. In fact, her prognosis was still the same. As she practiced thanksgiving, however, God had opened her heart and given her the strength to endure and the peace and grace to be thankful in all conditions. He also told a story of a girl who had endured great tragedy and was suicidal, finding nothing to live for. When he asked her if there were anything for which she was thankful, she was in such darkness that she could find none. Father Zacharias asked her to focus on any positive experiences and encounters she had in her childhood and her life up until this point. After some time reflecting, she was able to find several experiences that gave her life meaning. This opened up her heart to the many blessings in her life that she previously couldn’t see. This gave her a desire to live once again.

A week after my visit to Essex, I met with a high-school friend in Scotland who had two years before lost his brother to suicide and the year after his father to a tragic accident. His ten-year relationship with his girlfriend had also ended in the previous six months. I met with him shortly after Christmas, knowing that this was a hard time of year for him and his family. For the most part he confided about what he had been going through, and I listened and encouraged him to reflect on where he was. In the past, he had shared with me that he was an atheist. I was surprised then, to hear that following the death of his father (who was a devout Catholic), he spent some time in his father’s Church. While there, he had felt an incredible peace. He knew that he wasn’t just imagining something, and so he felt compelled to move from atheism to agnosticism. We began to talk about suffering. I told him about some of the things I had been learning. Then I asked him if there was anything in life

that he was able to feel thankful for. He told me that his sister had asked him to make a list, and that, even though he was facing such sorrow, he had thought of something very small and it made him smile. He told me that he was thankful for steak pies, a traditional British meat pie. We laughed together and, as small as his observation seemed, it was a real turning point in our encounter. We were able to take a step into the light. It seemed that we had a refreshed sense of hope for the future. A few weeks later, I received a message from him that our meeting, along with another couple of events in his life, had been a turning point in the way he felt about his life, following this period of mourning and sorrow. This encounter was a wonderful confirmation of all that I had been learning about the role of suffering in awakening the soul to an encounter with God, and the powerful place of thanksgiving in healing.

To conclude, even if the present or past circumstances of a person’s life have brought devastation and pain, we can be sure of the unchangeable and wondrous truth of mankind’s true identity. No amount of tragedy can remove the imprint of God on our soul. We must become conduits for Christ the Physician, who came to heal and restore our personhood. We must look for signs of life, and know that, however hidden, they are there. With the grace of God, we can come alongside others and help piece together the fragments of their being. The goal is a wholeness of self that can participate in the divine energies of God, necessary for healing of the soul. The Holy Spirit can enable us to see the precious treasure that stands unshaken amidst the wreckage of life, revealing an identity defined not by what is suffered, but by the truth of what remains.

Tina Cooper
Tina Cooper is a Coptic Orthodox Christian who currently lives with her husband in Long Beach, California, where she works as a volunteer coordinator for Orthodox non-profit, Project Mexico and is active in a local homeless ministry. She holds Bachelor’s and Master’s Degrees in Psychology from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland, and is currently studying in the Master of Theology program in Pastoral Care & Counseling at the Antiochian House of Studies.

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THE HEALING POWER OF REMEMBRANCE

Fr. Joshua Makoul

SOME OF US ARE BETTER AT REMEMBERING THAN OTHERS. IT COULD BE SAID THAT SOME OF US REMEMBER TOO LITTLE AND PERHAPS SOME OF US REMEMBER TOO MUCH. AN EXCELLENT MEMORY CAN BE A GREAT BLESSING BUT AT TIMES IT CAN SEEM LIKE A BURDEN OR A CURSE DEPENDING ON HOW WE CHOOSE TO REMEMBER EVENTS. THE REMEMBRANCE OF PEOPLE, PLACES, AND EVENTS PLAYS SUCH A CRITICAL ROLE IN OUR LIVES AND IT IS A PROCESS AND ACTIVITY THAT IS CONSTANTLY TAKING PLACE IN OUR MINDS AND EVEN IN THE CHURCH.

The significance of our experiences has a lot to do with how well we remember events. You see, we have something called emotional memories. Emotional memories occur when we associate strong emotional experiences with a certain event, place, or time of year. This is very good for us to know because it affects most if not all of us to varying degrees. For example, there is something called the Anniversary Reaction. An Anniversary Reaction is when we re-experience powerful emotions during a certain time of year that in which a significant

event had taken place in the past. This is especially common with anniversaries of the death of a loved one or some other painful event. Oftentimes in the days and weeks leading up to the anniversary of the passing of someone close to us we start to feel uptight, tense, and begin to feel all those painful feelings of loss and grief that we did when the event occurred. Then, when the anniversary passes, our emotional state goes back to normal. We get a glimpse into how our mind remembers, it remembers not only the event, but also the emotions and feelings tied to the event. We not only remember memories but we feel them.

Everyone remembers differently, in varying detail and clarity. Some are more affected by Anniversary Reactions than others, the reason for this is not yet understood. If we are acutely or deeply affected by these events than it might be a sign we have to do more work; more processing, talking, and perhaps more grieving over what had happened. However, there is no need for us to fear remembering, there is no need for us to fear our memories, or these painful anniversaries. Simply being aware of them and prepared for them emotionally helps us navigate through them. They can also be great opportunities for us. If we pay close attention to ourselves we can learn from them. If navigated properly, they can give us opportunities to further heal so that the next anniversary is not so difficult. These anniversaries might also reveal to us aspects of our grief or memories that we did not process enough or grieve enough. There is a healing to our remembering.

We even form emotional memories of people. We associate certain people with certain experiences and the emotions related to those experiences. This can have huge implications for our ability to forgive. This is one of the reasons why forgiveness is often a process and not instant for many people. What does one do when they forgive someone but continue to feel unsafe around them? This can lead to a great deal of confusion in someone. Have I forgiven them, or haven't I? Cognitively, intellectually I have forgiven, but my feelings are telling me I have not forgiven. This is completely normal. It means there are emotional memories that need to be worked through and this takes more time. If we do not work through the emotional memories, the spiritual danger is that fear will linger and where fear lingers anger and resentment are soon to follow.

Does the church remember? Indeed she does. Throughout the year, indeed every day, the church is in a constant state of remembrance and commemoration. We remember daily the great events that have taken place

in the history between God and man, in our salvation history. We remember those who passed on and who are now part of the church triumphant. We remember and commemorate martyrs and events that though tragic in the eyes of the world turned out to be for glory of God and the church. How we choose to remember determines how the anniversary or commemoration of that event will affect us. Our Lord’s crucifixion indeed was tragic however when seen in the light of the Resurrection, that tragedy is engulfed by joy and triumph. The martyrdom and violent deaths of the saints upon first reflection seem terrible and tragic, but when seen in the light of their bearing witness and not renouncing Christ and through the lens of St. Paul word’s when he said, “eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived what God has prepared for them that love Him” then suddenly that tragedy takes on a new light and new meaning in our life. It goes from creating great grief, despair, and discouragement in us to something we grow from, gain hope from, and that drives and inspires us.

The church teaches us how to remember. We do not need to fear remembering, the only way to true healing is through remembering. The church teaches us how to turn our losses into gains, how to turn our crosses into new life. The church gives us a new lens through which to understand and see the tragedies and painful events in our own life. It must be said and acknowledged that to go through this process is excruciating. It is indeed a crucifixion. When our painful memories and experiences are only looked back upon, viewed, and remembered only in the light of this world, we can become stuck and be driven to despair. However God has made us a promise. This world is not it. There is the Kingdom of Heaven, the New Jerusalem, that should hang like a backdrop in our lives so that when our tragedies, memories, and losses are placed in front of it, they are illumined and seen in a new light, in a new perspective.

So it is precisely the context in which we remember our departed, our sufferings, and our losses in our life that has huge ramifications for what impact those memories have on us both emotionally and spiritually. Every thought, every sigh, every reflection, and every prayer is to be made in the awareness of this present life being our exile and our true life being the Kingdom of Heaven. However, though we are in exile we still must function and engage our life in this world, and with this reality comes the danger of getting too comfortable here and developing unrealistic expectations of our life in this world. Like the Israelites who found themselves expelled from Jerusalem and in exile in Babylon, we face the

same struggle and temptation that they did of getting too comfortable in exile and forgetting our true home. It is precisely when we begin to get too settled and too comfortable in this world, and begin to lose focus on our true home, that our struggle and suffering increases. It is when this occurs, when we lose the hope filled context for our experiences and memories, that despair becomes inevitable.

So we are called to keep an unceasing spiritual vigil in our hearts while in this world. A silent vigil for the Kingdom of heaven, a vigil that cannot be observed or detected from the outside, but one that determines our inner state and peace. It is a vigil that requires an unceasing remembrance and awareness of the Kingdom of Heaven. It becomes the lens through which we perceive and see the events, both good and bad, that occur in our life. So though in exile, we are to make the most of our time here. We are to enjoy each other and wholesome earthly activities and events, but silently in our hearts, we keep a vigil for the Kingdom of Heaven, never losing sight of the context in which all of our life events take place.

Yes we must wait, yes we must hope, and yes there will be days of discouragement, however those days of discouragement cannot change the reality that in God’s time all our sadness, tragedy, pain, and loss will be consumed by the love of God and in a new life. As promised in the Book of Revelation, “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away”.

This world that wails and is in tribulation will indeed pass away. These tragedies that befall us in this world and the tragedies that bombard us on a daily basis will end. As the Lord told us at the last supper, just as a woman who has gone through child birth no longer remembers the pain of the birth process due to the joy of the new child, so we will not remember, nor our pain in this world have significance, once we enter into the new life of the Kingdom of Heaven. There will be relief and so all of our remembrance of the pain that we have suffered in this life and all of the remembrance of the losses and tragedies in this life, must be made in the awareness, knowledge, and light of God’s promise.

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FROM THE HEARTH

Learn by Doing

Keidi Lewis



“Learn by Doing,” the motto of my college alma mater, often makes me laugh. This is not because hands-on learning is funny, but because I seem chiefly to learn after *not* doing, or by doing things wrongly.

At any rate, Orthodox Christian parents will do well to take this motto to heart when instructing their children in the faith. There are parts of what we do – of what makes us Orthodox – that have to be taught explicitly to most children.

When I think about how my parents raised me, while deeply immersed in the Orthodox Church, it feels like their philosophy must have been: “Learn by watching.” Somehow, through osmosis and eager imitation, they expected me to make the decision to venerate icons, or to go to confession, or to ask priests for a blessing, all on my own. This may have worked for some children, but without other people to instruct and encourage me, I may never have taken the leaps of faith that are the quiet, subtle parts of being Orthodox, the wonderful and varied tools in our toolbox. I had to be nudged to go to confession, and then was so glad that I did. When our high school youth group visited a new church, I had a friend tell me: “Sheesh, Keidi, just kiss the icons when you go into a church!” I didn’t feel chastised, I felt invited. Distinctly, I remember thinking: “Oh! Yeah, that’s right. That’s what we do.” And then I did it.

Years later, though, true to my “learn-by-not-doing” anti-motto, and perhaps because of my unexamined “learn-by-watching” default, I didn’t teach my children. Don’t be alarmed; it’s not too late – I’m working on teaching them! After not doing it, I see I can teach them by doing the external practices of Orthodoxy with them. They are still young, and I am determined to continue presenting opportunities and encouraging them. We are learning to light candles, by doing it. If you are in the same

boat and need to “make up” a few lessons that you missed teaching, let me recommend starting with lighting candles. It involves fire and is therefore automatically attractive to kids. So that we aren’t as distracting for

the rest of our longsuffering parish, we have had to talk about the things candles are *not*: magic wands, swords, or airport traffic batons. Similarly, we have talked about the things we *don’t* do in church: jump, skip, body-slam, thump, twirl, or squawk.

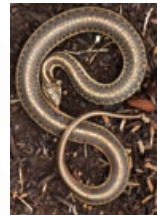
I am demonstrating for my daughters how to ask a priest for a blessing whenever I can find an obliging priest, or how to kiss the cross at the end of liturgy. My girls are not yet comfortable doing this, but if I had started them at a young age, I feel it would be second nature for them – just what we do. I’m not giving up, but I realize there is ground to make up in a few areas.

A young mother in church the other day scooped up her squirrely two-year-old who had been dancing around her ankles while she lit a candle. She held him over the icon of the Theotokos to help him venerate it, and then, after he attempted the sign of the cross, she gently moved his pudgy fist through the proper motions over his chest for him. That, my friends, is learning by doing!

Watching is perhaps a first step in the learning process, but should be quickly followed up by doing. Fasting, confession, care of the poor, participation in church activities and work days, daily prayers, scripture reading, and tithing, are all things that we learn by doing. We, as parents, must teach them intentionally, instead of hoping our children will eventually do them spontaneously from their hearts. Their hearts will be shaped by love, reverence, and the peace of the life in Christ, and their habits will show this. This is part of “taste and see”: here it’s a hope that they will be able, with our instruction and prayers, to “*do* and see.”

Serpents and Dragons in Christian Sacred Art

Philip J. Senter, Ph.D.



sacred art has been an important part of Christianity since soon after Christianity began. The earliest surviving Christian sacred art is from the Third Century: frescoes in Roman catacombs, carvings on sarcophagi of Christians in Rome, and wall paintings in the church of Dura-Europos, Syria. Numerous comments upon Christian sacred art in fourth- and fifth-century quotes, compiled by St. John of Damascus in his treatises on the sacred images, indicate that sacred art was a standard feature of churches from early on. An even earlier comment by Tertullian (in *On Modesty* 1.10), writing in the early Third Century, mentions the image of Christ on Eucharistic chalices. Such early comments on Christian sacred art show that it was used both for didactic purposes (to teach the tenets and history of the Faith) and in worship (with veneration of images as a way to honor Christ and to call to mind the deeds of his servants), just as it still is today in Orthodox churches. Whether in teaching or in worship, sacred art best serves its purpose if the viewer understands its symbology and meaning. Here we will explore the symbology and meaning of serpents and dragons in Christian sacred art.

One of the most oft-repeated images in the earliest surviving Christian sacred art is that of Adam and Eve with the serpent in the Garden of Eden. It is present among the wall paintings of the Dura-Europos church, on numerous fourth-century Roman sarcophagi, and on fourth-century medallions that were pressed into the soft walls of the *loculi* of Roman catacombs. Its popularity, which has continued through the centuries, is unsurprising, for it is a warning against giving in to temptation. That warning is a core Christian doctrine that is repeated myriad times in the writings of the Old and New Testaments, and in the Church Fathers.

A related image, that of the serpent beneath the feet of the Virgin Mary, was been popular in the sacred art of the Christian West since the Middle Ages. Christian theologians have long considered Mary a second and opposite Eve. Whereas the first Eve brought condemnation via disobedience, the second Eve brought

salvation via her obedience, through which the Savior was born. Part of the punishment of the Eden serpent was to be crushed underfoot by the offspring of Eve (Genesis 3:14–15). Accordingly, in this iconographic motif the serpent is crushed underfoot by the second Eve. The motif often includes twelve stars around Mary's head, the moon beneath her feet, and the radiance of the sun around her. The celestial objects refer to Chapter 12 of the Book of Revelation. In that chapter, St. John describes a vision of a woman clothed by the sun, with the moon beneath her feet, and a crown of twelve stars. The woman gives birth to a child who will rule all nations. She is pursued by a dragon that is defeated in battle by the Archangel Michael. Theologians have long considered the vision to represent Mary's giving birth to Christ, and the defeat of Christ's opponent (the devil).

Another image that is often found in the sacred art of the Christian West is that of the Apostle John holding a cup with a snake in it. This is a visual reference to a medieval legend in which the Apostle's drink was poisoned, but the poison miraculously crawled out of the cup in the form of a snake, making the beverage safe to drink. The snake in the cup identifies the saint as the Apostle John. This is important, for in western Christian sacred art, it is rare for the iconographer to identify the people in the images by writing their names next to them, as Orthodox iconographers do. Instead, in sacred art of the Christian West, saints are more often identified by attributes such as symbols or associated objects. For example, St. Rocco is shown with a sore on his thigh and is often accompanied by a dog, St. Paul is bald and often holds a sword, and the Apostle Simon often holds a saw (with which he was supposedly martyred).

Serpents are often present on the crozier, the staff that a bishop carries. In the Christian West, the head of a crozier is usually shaped like that of a shepherd's crook, and may terminate in a serpent that opposes a lamb. In such cases, the imagery represents confrontation between the devil (the serpent) and Christ, the Lamb of God. In the Christian East, the head of the crozier of an Orthodox bishop is usually tipped with a pair of serpents that face



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Top to bottom, left to right: Adam and Eve with the Eden serpent (fourth-century Roman sarcophagus, Museo Pio Cristiano, Vatican City), the Virgin Mary crushing the serpent (stained glass window, Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, Savannah, Georgia, 1903), the Apostle John with serpent in cup (stained glass window, Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, Savannah, Georgia, 1903), Second row, left to right: dragon heads on early twentieth-century Romanian crozier (Antiochian Heritage Museum, Bolivar, Pennsylvania), unidentified saint spearing a human-headed dragon (sixth-century chalice from Syria, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City), St. George versus dragon (sixteenth-century icon, Paleokastritsa Monastery, Korfu, Greece)

each other, or that face a cross between them. Opinions differ as to the meaning of the serpents on the Orthodox crozier. According to some commentators, the serpents are a reminder that bishops should be "wise as serpents" (Matthew 10:16). According to others, they represent the brazen serpent that Moses lifted up in the wilderness, so that the Israelites who had been bitten by venomous snakes could look upon it and be healed (Numbers 21:4–

9), a type of Christ (John 3:14–15). Other commentators see the serpents on the staff as a visual reference to Exodus 4 and 7, in which Moses' and Aaron's staffs become serpents and then became staffs again. That is, the serpents signify that the bishop is God's spokesman (as Moses was) and is a priest (as Aaron was).

The story of Aaron's staff illustrates an important point about serpents and dragons: they were originally

one and the same. In the Hebrew text of Exodus 7, Aaron's staff is said to become a *tannin* (7:8–12), and God later calls Aaron's staff the staff that had become a *nāhāsh* (7:15–21). Likewise, the monster Leviathan is called a *tannin* and a *nāhāsh* in Isaiah 27:1. Such passages as these demonstrate the equivalence between the two Hebrew terms. *Nāhāsh* is the generic Hebrew term for “snake.” The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Tes-

tament that the early Church used, translates *nāhāsh* as *ὄφις* (*ophis*), the generic ancient Greek term for “snake.” It usually translates *tannin* as *δράκων* (*drakōn*), the word that eventually gave rise to the English term *dragon*. Accordingly, the King James Version of the Bible usually translates *nāhāsh* as “serpent” and *tannin* as “dragon.” To the ancient Greeks, the word *drakōn* simply meant “serpent.” Several ancient Greek works mention an animal that is called a *drakōn* on one line and an *ophis* on the next. This even occurs in the New Testament (Revelation 12:9 and 20:2). In addition to such written works, ancient Greek paintings and sculptures also demonstrate that *drakōn* meant “serpent” to the ancient Greeks. Every work of ancient Greek art that depicts a myth with a *drakōn* in it illustrates the *drakōn* as a snake. The same goes for every work of ancient Roman art that depicts a myth with a *draco* (the Latin equivalent of *drakōn*). Such works of art demonstrate that the term *drakōn/draco* originally referred to snakes, not to bat-winged, fire-breathing monsters.

In the early centuries of the Christian Era, stories began to circulate of saints who confronted venom-spitting dragons. By the Fourth Century, the

dragons in some of the stories were spitting fire. Dragons were still depicted simply as snakes in the artwork of the next few centuries. In the Eighth Century, however, Christian artists began adding a pair of feathered wings and a pair of legs to the dragons in art. In the Thirteenth Century, some artists traded the feathered wings for leathery bat wings, a feature that became popular in the Fifteenth Century. In the Fourteenth Century, some artists began to add a second pair of legs to the dragon. This had become popular by the Sixteenth Century. From then on, it was common to depict the dragon as a bat-winged quadruped that spat flame.

Some European artists were therefore depicting the dragon as a winged quadruped by the time Marco Polo visited China. Had such not been the case, Europeans might never have given the name “dragon” to the mythical creature that the Chinese call the *lóng* and which is often called the “Chinese dragon” today. The Chinese were depicting the *lóng* as a winged quadruped centuries before the birth of Christ, when the Greeks and Romans were still painting and carving the *drakōn/draco* as a snake. The tendency to call the *lóng* a “dragon” has caused much confusion, for the *lóng* and the western dragon are unrelated things. The Greeks and Romans used the term *drakōn/draco* for a natural animal that was legless and wingless, whereas the Chinese *lóng* was not a natural animal but a weather spirit that was thought to be formless but was depicted as a winged quadruped.¹

The theme of the saint confronting a dragon is an old one. The Septuagint's version of the story of Daniel – which is in Orthodox and Catholic but not Protestant Bibles – tells of such a confrontation (Daniel 14). According to the story, the Babylonians worshipped a *drakōn* as a god. Daniel proved that the *drakōn* was mortal by feeding it a mixture of tar, fat, and hair, which killed the animal. Carvings of Daniel feeding the mixture to the serpent are present on some fourth-century Christian sarcophagi from Rome. They are the earliest known surviving images of a saint confronting a dragon. Their message appears to be a warning against reversion to idolatry, a reminder that false gods are no gods at all.

The fourth-century church historian Eusebius mentions another fourth-century image of a saint confronting a dragon, in *Life of Constantine* 3.3. According to Eusebius, Emperor St. Constantine commissioned a painting of himself and his children. Beneath their feet was a dragon speared with a dart and cast into the sea, and above St. Constantine's head was a cross. This was meant to represent the defeat of Satan by Christ. The speared dragon beneath the feet of the Emperor and his family

also introduced the iconographic motif of the dragon Satan as enemy of the state. In the First Century, B.C., Julius Caesar had introduced the motif of the dragon as enemy of the state, on coins that showed the emperor as an elephant trampling a dragon. However, St. Constantine's painting was the first to depict Satan as the dragon-enemy of the state.

That motif was continued by St. Constantine's son Constantius II, who commissioned coins that depicted a speared dragon. The fifth-century Byzantine emperor Valentinian III had coins struck that showed him with his foot upon the head of a human-headed dragon that he was spearing with a lance topped with a cross. In the same century, the barbarian kings of the Suevi and Vandals had copycat coins struck. The Mediterranean world was thus flooded with images of monarchs versus the dragon Satan, enemy of the state.

Soon, military saints were depicted spearing the dragon Satan, enemy of the state. The earliest known such images are on two sixth-century Eucharistic chalices from Attarouthi, Syria. Each chalice's dragon-spearing saint is bearded and unnamed. Labeled images of the military saints George, Theodore Tiron, and Philotheus spearing dragons that apparently represent Satan, enemy of the state, appeared in the Seventh Century. The stories of Sts. Theodore and George spearing literal dragons appeared later and were apparently inspired by the iconography, not the other way around.

Stories of saints confronting (and in some cases slaying) dragons accumulated in the Middle Ages. Literary dragon confrontations occurred with Sts. Perpetua and Thomas in the Third Century; Sts. Philip, Sylvester, and Hilarion in the Fourth Century; Sts. Ammon, Donatus, and Victoria in the Fifth Century; Sts. Andrew, Caluppan, and Marcellus in the Sixth Century; St. Samson in the Seventh Century; St. Theodore Tiron in the Eighth Century; St. Margaret in the Ninth Century; Sts. George and Martha in the Twelfth Century; and St. Matthew and the disciples of St. James in the Thirteenth Century. Most such stories appeared much too long after the saint's death to have been based on actual events, and some were based on previous stories. For example, the salient elements of St. George's dragon-slaying story are taken from the Greek myth of Perseus, and those of St. Philip's dragon-confrontation story are taken from the story of Moses lifting the brazen serpent in the wilderness.

In iconography of the Christian West, the attributes of the dragon confrontation often identify the saint. St. Margaret of Antioch was said to have been swallowed



Top to bottom, left to right: the prophet Daniel slaying the dragon (fourth-century Roman sarcophagus, Museo Pio Cristiano, Vatican City), lion and dragon beneath Christ's feet (German sacramentary, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1159). Third row: lion versus dragon (Italian lintel, Metropolitan Museum of Art, c. 1150), Fourth row: acroterion with dragons beneath crucifix adorned with peridexion fruit (museum of Monastery of St. Andrew, Kephallonia, Greece, Eighteenth Century).



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whole by a dragon while imprisoned. She killed the dragon by cutting her way out of its abdomen with a crucifix. Accordingly, she is often depicted emerging from the dragon’s abdomen, with the tip of her cloak still hanging from the dragon’s mouth. St. Martha, the sister of Lazarus, was said to have moved to France, where she encountered a dragon that had been terrorizing the locals. She tamed it with prayer and brought it on a leash to the locals, who slew it. Accordingly, she is often depicted holding a dragon on a leash.

In Christian sacred art, wings on a dragon-spearer identify him as the Archangel St. Michael. His dragon-battling story is told in Revelation 12, in which he defeats the dragon Satan. Images of St. Michael versus the dragon appear as early as the Sixth Century on Coptic textiles.

Dragons are also associated with baptism in Christian iconography. In reference to Christ’s baptism in the Jordan River, the Orthodox baptismal service includes the following line: “You did hallow the streams of Jordan, sending down from heaven upon them your Holy Spirit, and did crush the heads of the dragons who lurked there.” The last phrase is taken from Psalm 74:14: “You crushed the heads of the dragons in the waters.” Orthodox icons of Christ’s baptism therefore sometimes include the heads of dragons near Jesus’ feet. In such icons there is often another figure that one must be careful not to confuse with a dragon. It is a sea monster (representing the sea), which is usually paired with a human figure with a jug (representing the River Jordan). These two figures are a reference to Psalm 114:3, which is treated as a colorful description of nature’s awe as the Creator was dipped into the waters that He had created: “The sea saw it and fled. The Jordan was driven back.”

The inclusion of Psalm 74:14 in the baptismal service influenced the decoration of baptismal fonts in both the Christian East and in the Christian West. Byzantine baptismal fonts sometimes included a carving of a dragon or dragons, as did medieval baptismal fonts from western Europe.

Sacred Christian art of the West, from the Middle Ages onward, often paired a lion with a dragon. In such art, Christ is often shown trampling a dragon under one foot and a lion under the other. This is a visual reference to Psalm 91:13: “The young lion and the dragon you shall trample under your feet.” According to Sts. Ignatius (in *Philippians* 10) and Hippolytus (in *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist* 14), the dragon and lion respectively represent the devil and his servants or the devil and the antichrist. When the lion and dragon are shown battling

each other, the lion represents Christ, and the dragon is the devil. In such art, the lion is usually depicted on top, having the upper hand. Depiction of Christ as a lion is based on Revelation 5:5: “The Lamb who opens the seals is the Lion of Judah.” That passage, in turn, is a reference to Genesis 49:9: “Judah is a lion’s whelp...he stooped down, he crouched as a lion...who shall rouse him up?” According to St. Hippolytus, the Genesis passage is a prophecy of Christ’s resurrection (*Treatise on Christ and Antichrist* 7).

Another dragon-related motif in Orthodox Christian sacred art is the peridexion tree, a mythical tree that was said to be found in India and to provide doves with safety from dragons. Its fruit is depicted as scaly, like a pineapple. In the Christian West, a dragon may be depicted biting a peridexion tree that houses doves that represent Christians. This image conveys the message that Christ (represented by the peridexion tree) keeps Christians safe from the attacks of the dragon Satan. On an Orthodox iconostasis, the acroterion (topmost ornament) is sometimes a cross with peridexion fruit at its tips, with or without a pair of dragons lurking below. This, too, conveys the message that Christ is a safe haven from the dragon Satan.

Serpents and dragons have long been and continue to be parts of important iconographic motifs in Christian sacred art. To understand those motifs is to enable the images to convey their messages better. It is my hope that this article will bring about an increase in such understanding, so that the sacred art speaks as it should. For readers wishing to pursue the subject more deeply, I recommend perusal of this article’s main information sources, listed below.

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1. Editor’s note: The *formless* Chinese weather-spirit is reminiscent of the antagonist in the early Babylonian creation-story, the *Enuma elish*. Tiamat is the *chaos-monster*, a dragon that threatens to destroy Marduk, a young god. Instead, Marduk kills her with his arrows (lightning), and slits her body from one end to the other; one half becomes the earth, and the other the sky. In Genesis 1:2 we read that “the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep.” *Deep*, or *sea*, here (Hebrew: *tehom*) is related etymologically to Tiamat. In the Bible, God creates the world simply by speaking the word, like a king giving an order. Pagans or believers who heard this account would realize that there can be no battle, for there is no god or chaos-monster equal to Him who has created all.

WESTERN ORTHODOX IN THIS WESTERN WORLD

Fr. Edward W. Hughes

People sometimes ask, “Why doesn’t the Western Rite use the Orthodox Calendar like everyone else?” The simple answer is, “There is no such thing as ‘The Orthodox Calendar’ which everyone else might use.” The Church calendar which tells us when to celebrate the great feasts and saints’ days is actually a collection of regional and jurisdictional calendars which differ widely from place to place and from one jurisdiction to another. This, of course, is as true of the Western Church as of the Eastern Church. At no time was there ever a universal calendar that told the entire Church when and what to celebrate. Like everything else in the Church, the calendar developed regionally and represented the custom of the regional Church. As things began to be standardized before and after the year 1,000, the calendars of the regional Churches began to take on the characteristics of the great Churches, such as Rome, Constantinople or Alexandria. Nevertheless, a single, standardized, universal calendar never developed. In the West, the different rites and the different monastic organizations each maintained its own calendar. Local variations according to regions were also tolerated. In the East, the local autonomous Churches each maintained their own calendars, right up to the present day. While it might be understood that the Greeks and the Russians have differences in their calendars, it might be less well known that the calendars of the Romanian Church and the Serbian Church are not the same as the Bulgarian Church or the Georgian Church. All the Churches differ in which saints and holy days to celebrate, as well as on which day to celebrate them.

I am not speaking of the difference between the so-called “old” and “new” calendars. For those Churches which maintain the traditional or “old” calendar, the dates themselves are 13 days behind those of the revised or “new” calendar. So both groups celebrate Christmas on December 25, but they disagree on when the De-



ember 25 actually falls. No one celebrates Christmas on January 7. Some Churches understand that particular day to be December 25, while others understand it to be the 7th of January, but it is the same date. Those who understand it to be December 25 are celebrating Christmas, while those who understand it to be January 7 are celebrating St. John the Baptist. This is not the difference of which I am speaking.

I am speaking of the fact that St. Photine, the Samaritan Woman, is celebrated by the Greek Church on February 26, while the Russian Church celebrates her on March 20 (whenever they understand that date actually to fall). St. James the Bishop of Catania is celebrated by the Russians on March 21, while the Greeks celebrate him on March 24. The Greeks celebrate St. Joseph the hymnographer on April 3, while the Russians celebrate him on the 4th. St. Katherine is celebrated on November 24 by the Russians, but on November 25 by the Greeks. The Russians celebrate St. Sabbas I of Serbia on January 12, while the Serbians celebrate him on the 14th. The great feast of the Virgin on October 1 was dropped by the Greek Church after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, but maintained by the Russians and others. In 1952 the Synod of the Church of Greece revived it with all new service texts, to be celebrated on October 28 in conjunction with their Ohi Day remembrances. There are all sorts of reasons why these feasts are celebrated on different days by different churches. Some of these histories are very interesting, but not germane to the

point which I am making. It really does not matter why the various churches celebrate on different days, it is important to know that they do celebrate on different days. There would have been only vague awareness of this fact in the various “old countries” from which our Orthodox people emigrated to America. There would not be any opportunity to become aware of these differences unless one traveled to other Orthodox communities outside of one’s own country. However, here in America we could be acutely aware of these differences since we live side by side with Orthodox of other jurisdictions, all keeping their own peculiar calendars. I say “could be” because I am constantly surprised by people who are actually completely unaware of this fact. People have a strange tendency to imagine that everyone else does precisely what they themselves do.

All of this has its parallels in the historical West. Italy, France, Germany, and later England all developed their own liturgical calendars. The monastic orders: the Benedictines, the Dominicans, the Augustinians, and so on, all maintained their own liturgical calendars. Rome certainly exercised a heavy influence on all of them, but they kept their own peculiarities as well. We do not have to spend any time at all looking into these particular differences, because in 1869 the Holy Synod of the Russian Church instructed us and charged us to adopt and maintain the Benedictine forms of worship, including the Benedictine liturgical calendar. In 1882 the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate concurred with the decree of the Russian Church. Therefore we must be careful not to look into Sarum or Liege or Milan or Bangor or even Rome for uses, customs, and calendars. We are absolutely committed to the Benedictine tradition as the only tradition informing and forming our Orthodox Western Rite in all of its aspects and details.

Having come to understand this, next it is important to understand how this is applied within the Church. In the past, the different jurisdictions have understood and respected these differences. In Europe, when certain Russian groups were taken under the pastoral care of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, they continued to celebrate the various feasts and saint’s days according to their traditional Russian calendar, rather than adopting the calendar of the Patriarchate under which they were living. The same is true here in America with the Ukrainians and Carpatho-Russians under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. They continue to celebrate the feasts and saint’s days according to their own tradition, and have not adopted nor have they been asked to adopt

the calendar of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. They keep in every way the traditions and customs of their own ecclesiastical history and identity, without adopting any at all of the traditions and customs of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The Romanian Episcopate in union with the OCA always published its own ecclesiastical calendar for the use of its own parishes with no influence from the OCA itself, which follows a Russian-style calendar. It might also be pointed out that these Romanian parishes maintained their own Romanian identity with all of their own peculiar customs and traditions, without assimilating to the Russian style of the OCA. This is of importance to our Western Rite within the Antiochian Archdiocese. Because we have our own peculiar historical customs, uses, and traditions, including our own calendar, we should expect to keep all of these intact while living within the larger Antiochian Archdiocese.

Not only is there no need at all for us to adopt one or another version of the Greek Byzantine calendar for the celebration of the feasts of the Church, there is absolutely no precedent to do so. The various Russians, Ukrainians, and Carpatho-Russians living within the Ecumenical Patriarchate have never felt any need to adopt any Constantinopolitan customs in order to “fit in” with the Greek parishes under the same jurisdiction. They have always felt perfectly comfortable being themselves, and in fact, have made some effort to keep their historical cultural identities strong rather than assimilating in any way with the Greek majority around them.

Our Western Rite parishes and faithful should feel just as free to maintain our own particular traditions comfortably within the Antiochian Archdiocese; and should also be making real efforts to keep our particular identity strong and not assimilate to the Byzantine majority around us. When we allow ourselves to be tempted to adopt or imitate customs which might make us more similar in practice to our Byzantine brethren, we are weakening our presence and witness as Western Orthodox in this Western world in which we live and minister. We also weaken our identity as a particularly Western expression of historical Orthodoxy. Our Western calendar, with its ancient progression of feasts and commemorations, is an important force which has helped shape our piety and form our relationship with God. It presents a liturgical year which was formed in conjunction with the shape of our liturgical worship. The conformity of the feasts and commemorations with the seasons of the liturgical year and the traditional scriptural readings of the lectionary all come together to form a harmonious whole. This whole is the matrix or

environment in which we encounter the Living God as He manifests Himself to us humans here in this world in which we live.

This magnificent and monumental force which is the traditional Western liturgical year has hugely influenced the development of the Western civilization of which we are a part. Modernity in its various forms has sought to empty our culture and our civilization of the Divine content around which it was historically formed. When we allow this traditional force to fill our lives with the presence of God, we find that His presence transforms and sanctifies us in conformity with the Kingdom of God. This transformation is so much more natural and organic when we are living the Western Tradition which fits so naturally and organically into the Western culture and civilization which it caused to come into being and formed in the first place. There is a distinct and definite tendency for Byzantine Orthodox in this country to separate and differentiate themselves from the surrounding culture in order to be fully and completely “Orthodox.” For us, however, when we live out our Orthodox spirituality in and through the traditional Western forms, we recall the surrounding culture to its own formative content and original intent. St. Benedict, St. Gregory and St. Martin of Tours, St. Germanos of Auxerre, St. Patrick of Ireland, St. Boniface of Germany – all are said to have created Western culture and civilization out of the tribal chaos which was paganism. This is our culture and civilization. Through their prayers and with their help we must re-claim this culture and civilization for the Most Holy Trinity for whom, in whom and by whom it was originally created. Our Western Liturgical Calendar is one very important part of that mission.

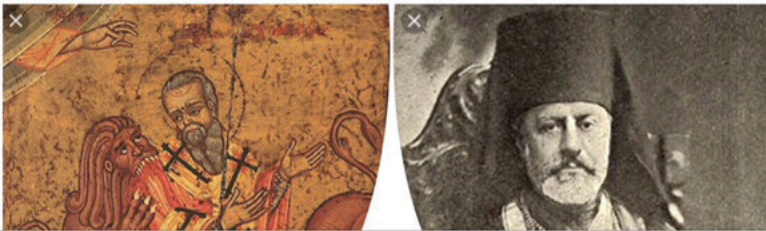
Fr. Edward W. Hughes
St. George Church, Lawrence, MA

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Can Grumpy Be Saved?

Some of my earliest memories spring from my kindergarten days at Little Red School House. Being five is pretty much the bomb: the world is new, make-believe is real, and innocence is, too. When our class did scenes from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, I was given the role of Sleepy. I wanted the role of Grumpy – everyone did – because it seemed more fun. I mean, how exciting is Sleepy? (Alas, as we grow older, sleepy comes more naturally, as does grumpy.)

While discussing the Mystery of Confession with young kids, I have mentioned how our sins – thus, our confessions – are *age-specific*. For instance, when children make their first confession, I’ll frequently name some common age-specific sins to help jog the nervous newbies recall: thinking bad thoughts, disobeying parents, taking something from someone, saying a bad word, forgetting to pray, and so on. The kids are often amazed, wondering how I know! I am no clairvoyant, though I have been seven and eight years old. The struggles of the teenagers, young adults, and the fully grown are just as predictable.

When the little ones were asked what sins might plague those in their seventies and eighties – *they* seemed clairvoyant, answering: *anger*. Why? Because, they said, they can’t do the things they used to; they fear disability and death. They also mentioned regret; perhaps their life had not gone as they’d hoped. Such fears are ever-present, regardless of age, but may be magnified as our days grow shorter.

One of my favorite children’s books, *The Grouchy Ladybug* by Eric Carle, tells the story of a grumpy and selfish bug who would rather fight than share. Upon a leaf full of aphids sits a friendly ladybug, preparing to eat, when there appears a grouchy ladybug.

“Good morning,” said the friendly ladybug.
“Go away!” shouted the grouchy ladybug. “I want these aphids.”
“We can share them,” suggested the friendly ladybug.
“No. They’re mine, all mine,” screamed the grouchy ladybug. “Or do you want to fight me for them?”
“If you insist,” answered the friendly ladybug sweetly. It looked the other bug straight in the eye.
The grouchy ladybug stepped back. It looked less sure of itself. “Oh, you’re not big enough for me to fight,” it said.
“Then why don’t you pick on somebody bigger?”
“I’ll do that!” screeched the grouchy ladybug. “I’ll show you!” It pulled itself up and flew away.¹

This reminds me of a saying in addictions counseling: “I’ll show you, I’ll hurt me.” That is what happens in the remainder of the children’s tale: the grouchy ladybug moves on to bigger foes, with each exclaiming, “You’re not big enough.” In the end, the tail of a whale slaps the bug back to the leaf with the other ladybug and the aphids. Acceptance is the key. The tired and hungry bug decides to share in the remnants of the feast.

Which brings me to parish life. Most parishes and missions have their share of “grouchy ladybugs” – those who, young or old, are just plain grumpy. Let’s be honest, they usually find other grumpy bugs with whom to fellowship. The saying, “Birds of a feather flock together,” rings true for good reason. To be fair to the grouchy, the miserable flock together, as do the slothful, the judgmental, the successful, the partiers, the cynics, and so forth.

One of my seminary professors used to say, “My age is the right age, and it increases annually.” In other words, we

must accept the age and state that our good God allows us. Acceptance is key. Incidentally, the same prof used to day: “By the time you are forty, you’ve got the face you’ve earned.”

Our kindergarten play was a simple one. If memory serves, we “dwarfs” just marched around in a circle, acting our roles, while Heigh Ho played on the turntable. Since six of the characters’ roles are defined by their names (Grumpy, Happy, Sleepy, Dopey, Bashful, Sneezy), the script was easy to follow. (Doc, so named because of the specs on his nose, was the philosopher.) Our roles were given to us; the goal was to stay in character. This we youngsters did with relish.

As we mature in the movie of life, we are not only the actor, but the screenwriter. Although genetics has a hand in our character, as does circumstance, ultimately we fashion our own script – we’ve got the face we’ve earned. Note, this saying should be applied to ourselves, and not to others. None of us knows the full sum of a man – what has fashioned him or her. If we write in our role as Judge, we have no God-pleasing role in another’s salvation, or our own.

The good news is that you don’t have to follow your script. As our first parents discovered, following our own script leads to a bad exit, stage left! We must struggle against our fallen nature toward that which God created in Paradise. This, dear brothers and sisters, is the salvific script. When it comes to acting, we would do well to practice the advice of Fr. Seraphim Rose:

If you wish to be an Orthodox Christian you must begin now, from this very day and hour and minute, to love God and your fellow men. This means: not to act in an arbitrary way with people, not just saying the first thing that enters your head, not picking fights or quarrels with people over anything, big or small, being constantly ready to ask forgiveness of them (and to ask it more than you think is necessary), to have compassion for them and fervently pray for them.²

Our role is not to fix others, but to love them. Lord knows it’s nigh impossible to fix ourselves. “Above all hold unfailing your love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8). Although she knows their

shortcomings, sins, and weaknesses, what good mother does not love her children? Those who love see the good, overlooking the bad. When we love, even though we struggle, love wins.

Granted, in our weakness, oftentimes it may be best to avoid the grumpy. This side of Paradise, people want those around them to feel how they feel. Passions, like viruses, can be contagious. St. Isaac the Syrian wrote a prescription: “Conquer men by your gentle kindness, and make zealous men wonder at your goodness. Put the lover of justice to shame by your compassion. With the afflicted be afflicted in mind. Love all men but keep distant from all men.”³

As actors are perfected in rehearsals, our growth in Christ directs us toward a better way: “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (1 Corinthians 12:9). Of course, Grumpy can be saved! But not by you. Only love saves. The script that we are to follow, should we have a role, is to love others the way that Christ loves:

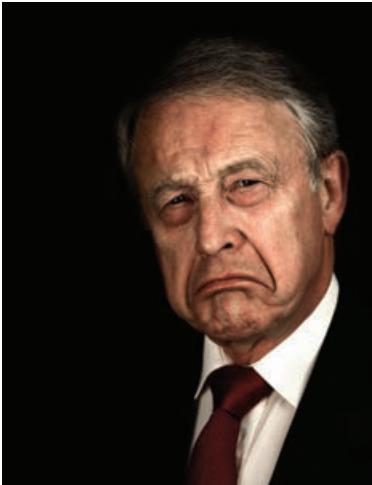
A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another (John 13:34–35).

A saying, attributed to many, warrants mention: “Be kind to everyone you meet, for each carries a heavy burden.”⁴ Other lines come to mind, and I paraphrase: 1. Take nothing personally; and 2. If we knew everything about a man, we would not judge. The Apostle Paul writes: “Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:3). Would that we could rehearse these lines each day – no matter our role – whether we’re eight or eighty.

It’s been over fifty years since my debut as Sleepy. Although I didn’t get the role I’d hoped for, I’ve rehearsed, resembled, and perfected it many times. With God all things are possible, even salvation! Still, given what’s been said above, what I know now – and for the sake of all the other dwarfs, bugs, and children – it’s best not to be Grumpy.

Fr. Joseph Huneycutt, Vice-Chairman
The Department of Missions and Evangelism

1. *The Grouchy Ladybug* (HarperCollins, 1996).
2. *Letters from Father Seraphim*, March 26, 1980 (Nikodemos Orthodox Publication Society, 2001).
3. *The Ascetical Homilies of St. Isaac the Syrian*, Homily 64, “On Prayer, Prostrations, Tears, Reading, Silence, and Hymnody” (Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 2011).
4. E.g., Ian MacLaren, St. Ephrem the Syrian, Plato, and Philo the Jew. Also rendered – “Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.”



Christopher is pursuing an Associate's Degree in Arts at Scottsdale Community College. Following time there, he will pursue studies in Anthropology and Literature at a local university. Christopher hopes to attend St. Vladimir's Seminary following graduation.

ORATORICAL FESTIVAL

OVERCOMING DIVISION, FOLLOWING CHRIST

ORATORICAL FESTIVAL JUDGES' CHOICE, DIOCESES OF THE WEST

We often hear statistics about youth falling away from the Church during their college years; it has become cliché, given how often it is stated in speeches like this. Like many of you, I have heard it for years. As the youth of the Church enter college, a significant, yet uncertain portion will drift away from the faith, and ultimately leave it. We typically hear this in the abstract; it is an issue that concerns us vaguely, but something we don't deal with daily. If you will indulge me, I would like to confess something, something I have never been open about. In the past year, I came very close to becoming one of those drifting individuals. Contrary to the popular assumption, no atheist professor indoctrinated me into a "church of skepticism," nor did I simply wake up one day and feel that my faith had evaporated suddenly. It began as a nagging feeling in the back of my mind . . . a dissonance that I initially ignored, but one that grew and grew to an overwhelming chasm. I no longer knew what I believed. And I no longer believed what I knew. I took a step back to examine the root of my doubts. I realized that they stemmed from a lack of harmony in the world around me. As I looked around, what I saw seemed incongruent with our core beliefs.

We live in what might be described as a disquieting time. Our world is increasingly divided by pain and anger and hatred. We are confronted with pressure to succumb to these feelings, and, with troubling frequency, many of us do. Many of us make concessions to the popular notion that our life requires the adoption of an "us-versus-them" philosophy, a belief that there is some terrible "Other" whose presence is an affront to our very existence. The only way to survive is to entirely sequester ourselves from this "Other" in frightened isolation. This



tendency is hardly novel: we see it throughout human history. We are taught by the Church that we are, as stated in Matthew 25:35–36, to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, take in the stranger, clothe the naked, visit the sick and the imprisoned. It is distressing, then, to see this "us-versus-them" mentality, so contrary to these teachings of compassion espoused by the Church, continue to find footing among members of her body. As I came to see this in the world around me, I realized that I, likewise, had fallen prey to this division. As I underwent my crisis of faith, I withdrew from my community. I built walls isolating myself from others, even as I condemned that same action. It became apparent that I, as much as anyone else, was in need of the reminder that is brought to us in Christ's cleansing of the temple. We are called to be a unified community, to put aside the divisive nature of the world and become "a house of prayer for all nations" (Mark 11:17).

We are taught by the world, both implicitly and explicitly, that we are, by *nature*, irreducibly different from those with whom we do not share common heritage, ideology or ancestry. When followed through, this line of thinking leads to an understanding that humanity must exist in uncompromising opposition. The thought becomes, "Those who are not among us and similar to us must therefore be our enemy." The fundamental flaw here is the failure to recognize that we, as human beings, share the heritage of heritages: creation by God, patterned in His image and likeness, as we read in Genesis 1: 26, in which the Creator says, "Let us make man, in our image, according to our likeness."

This heritage, however, does not come to us by the nature of our creation alone. St. Basil the Great reminds us in his first homily on the human condition that, while

we are inherently granted God's image by our creation, it is only "[b]y free choice [that] we are conformed to that which is according to the likeness of God We bring it about by our activity." We are confronted with a choice: either we answer the call to fulfill God's likeness, or we do not. If we choose to answer this call, we must then discern how. Turning our attention again to St. Basil, he teaches us that fulfilling this call, the very intent of our creation, comes "through kindness, through endurance of evil, *through communion, through love for one another and love for brethren.*" Our fulfillment is dependent upon a unity that is largely absent from the world around us. As I experienced in my own crisis of faith, this is often absent from our own worldview, as well. How, then, can we amend our ways, and fulfill the mission of our creation?

In his essay "Unity of the Church – Unity for Mankind," former Dean of St. Vladimir's Seminary Fr. John Meyendorff states that the clearest path to unity is through Christ. As Meyendorff states, it is through Christ's willing offering of Himself that "the divisions and contradictions of the fallen world are transfigured and overcome." Each week, we are blessed with the opportunity to partake in His willing sacrifice through the Holy Eucharist, offered always "on behalf of all and for all." This is a reminder that Christ, as He was crucified, died not only for the sake of those who believed in Him and followed Him, but also for those who did not. It is through partaking in the Eucharist, then, that we are united with our brethren, a union that is necessary for our fulfillment of God's likeness. Is unity simply brought about by allowing the body and blood of Christ to pass our lips? Certainly not. As German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes, we must resist a notion of "cheap grace," that is to say, a theology of passive salvation. Indeed, to quote St. Maximus the Confessor, "a theology without action is a theology of the Devil."

We must remember that the sacrament of the Eucharist does not end with the reception of Holy Communion during liturgy. Rather, the Eucharist is fulfilled in mission and in action. The Eucharist is fulfilled by following the archetype set by Christ in His crucifixion, in becoming living icons of Christ, and dying to ourselves and each other, *not* solely for our benefit, nor merely for those with whom we find ourselves allied, but rather for *all* people. This mission is impossible to fulfill when we continue to divide ourselves from others. The Holy Eucharist, offered for all people, cannot be fulfilled while there still exists discord among us, and

there can be no unity when there are walls between us.

Our mission is not a simple one; it is not one that will come easily to us. Rather, it will be a constant struggle against the world, against our own doubts, and against walls, created both by those seeking to divide and those we create for ourselves. It is what must be done for our sake and for others. We must turn away from petty divisions, walls that humanity falsely builds among itself. We must see each other and act in the manner of compassion and service that is inherent in our creation. We must become, we are called to become, one in Christ. It is in this manner that we will fulfill our calling to be in the likeness of God. May our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ give us the strength and compassion needed to do this.

Christopher Sola
St. George Church, Phoenix, Arizona

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COMMUNITIES IN ACTION



ST. PAUL CHURCH WELCOMES BISHOP NICHOLAS TO NAPLES

During the weekend of February 10, 2018, the St. Paul Antiochian Orthodox Church community in Naples, Florida, was infused with a tremendous energy through the visitation of their shepherd in Christ, His Grace Bishop NICHOLAS. This episcopal visit was Sayidna's first to St. Paul as diocesan Bishop, making it a fitting time to welcome him officially, while commemorating the founding of our lovely parish 21 years ago.

On Saturday, immediately upon his arrival, Sayidna spent several hours meeting with parishioners, our Antiochian Women, and the Parish Council. The St. Paul community then gathered for a

prayerful Great Vespers service and closed the day with a very enjoyable dinner together.

On the Sunday of the Last Judgement, after hearing the sobering hymnography at Orthros, His Grace presided over the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy. The faithful throughout the community packed St. Paul Church, while the concelebrating six priests filled the altar area. At the conclusion of the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, four of our own faithful were inducted as new members to the Order of St. Ignatius.

This grace-filled visitation from our local Bishop was beautifully sealed with the "Welcome Brunch" that followed, which 125 parishioners and guests

attended. After congratulating the St. Paul community for their accomplishments, His Grace pierced the souls in attendance, and lit hearts aflame, with his practical message: "I expect Fr. Paul, as your new priest, not only to comfort the afflicted, but also to 'afflict the comfortable' – it is time to take it up a notch. Our purpose is to know God, which can only be done through a spiritual life." Sayidna continued to unveil a beautiful and encouraging vision for the diocese, while assuring our community of his fatherly love, care, and support.

The faithful of St. Paul Church in Naples are indescribably grateful and blessed to be under the love and care of His Grace Bishop NICHOLAS. *Eis pola eti despota!*

BISHOP ANTHONY VISITS BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY

On Friday, February 2, 2018, the priest and faithful of Holy Apostles Orthodox Mission in Bowling Green, Kentucky, were happy to welcome their Bishop and father in Christ, ANTHONY, for a pastoral visit. Everyone was so thrilled to see him again here in "Bowling Green, rolling green," as he called it.

Our visit with Sayidna began on Friday night, when he attended a

the food line, other parishioners circulated around the room, visiting and talking with the guests. Sayidna greeted and spoke with every guest he served in line, even if the teens serving were a little shy. As a small parish, we don't always have the manpower or resources to do as much as we would like in our community, but this is one simple ministry (including the cooking of the food that is served and the serving of it on a Saturday morning)

the spiritual lives of married and single people respectively. He said that one of the most important things that prayer does is replace the thoughts that come from the world with thoughts that come from God. This is so important because, if our thoughts are confused, our emotions become confused, and then we might end up doing the wrong thing. Prayer, he said, gives us the strength to love *and* to be loved, to be a person that others, especially



dinner at a local seafood restaurant with our priest, Fr. Jason Blais, Fr. Jason's wife, Khouria Emily, and members of our hard-working Parish Council, and their spouses. For one of our Parish Council members, it was her first time meeting the Bishop. She and the other Parish Council members enjoyed a nice time of fellowship with him.

On Saturday morning, after resting from his journey, Bishop ANTHONY, Fr. Jason, the teens of our parish, and other parish members served breakfast at the local Salvation Army shelter to those less-fortunate members of our community who don't have their own place to eat or, often, to sleep. While Bishop ANTHONY and the teens served the guests in

that our church takes on once every quarter. On the morning Bishop ANTHONY was here, there were about 12 members of Holy Apostles there serving and visiting with about 30 Salvation Army guests.

The rest of Saturday was quite busy, as I'm sure all parish visits are for Bishop ANTHONY, and included lots of socializing, praying, and eating. For lunch, Sayidna attended a special luncheon with the women of Holy Apostles, and answered questions afterward. That evening, we celebrated a beautiful Vespers service and ate again, this time a very nice Italian meal prepared by some parishioners. Bishop ANTHONY's address following the meal was about prayer and the spiritual life, focusing on

our friends and family members, can depend on.

Our blessed time with Sayidna culminated on Sunday with a special visit with the Church School children during Orthros, and a beautiful Hierarchical Liturgy. This was only the second such liturgy to be served in Bowling Green. The Bishop gave another great talk in the homily. After Liturgy, we shared one last meal with Sayidna, a Greek and Lebanese lunch also made by parishioners. We look forward to our next visit from Bishop ANTHONY!



Photos courtesy of Abby Potter

LOOKING FOR YOUR VOCATION?



So often, many of us want to find our divine vocation in life. Many people think that means becoming a clergyman or a monk or nun. Although these are definitely divine callings (to use the modern vernacular), any vocation can become divine if we use it to glorify God in that occupation whether it is as a teacher, an entrepreneur, a stay at home mom or a professional athlete (just to name a few). There are also those vocations that specifically are part of parish life – Sunday school teacher, parish council member, ministry team leader, etc.

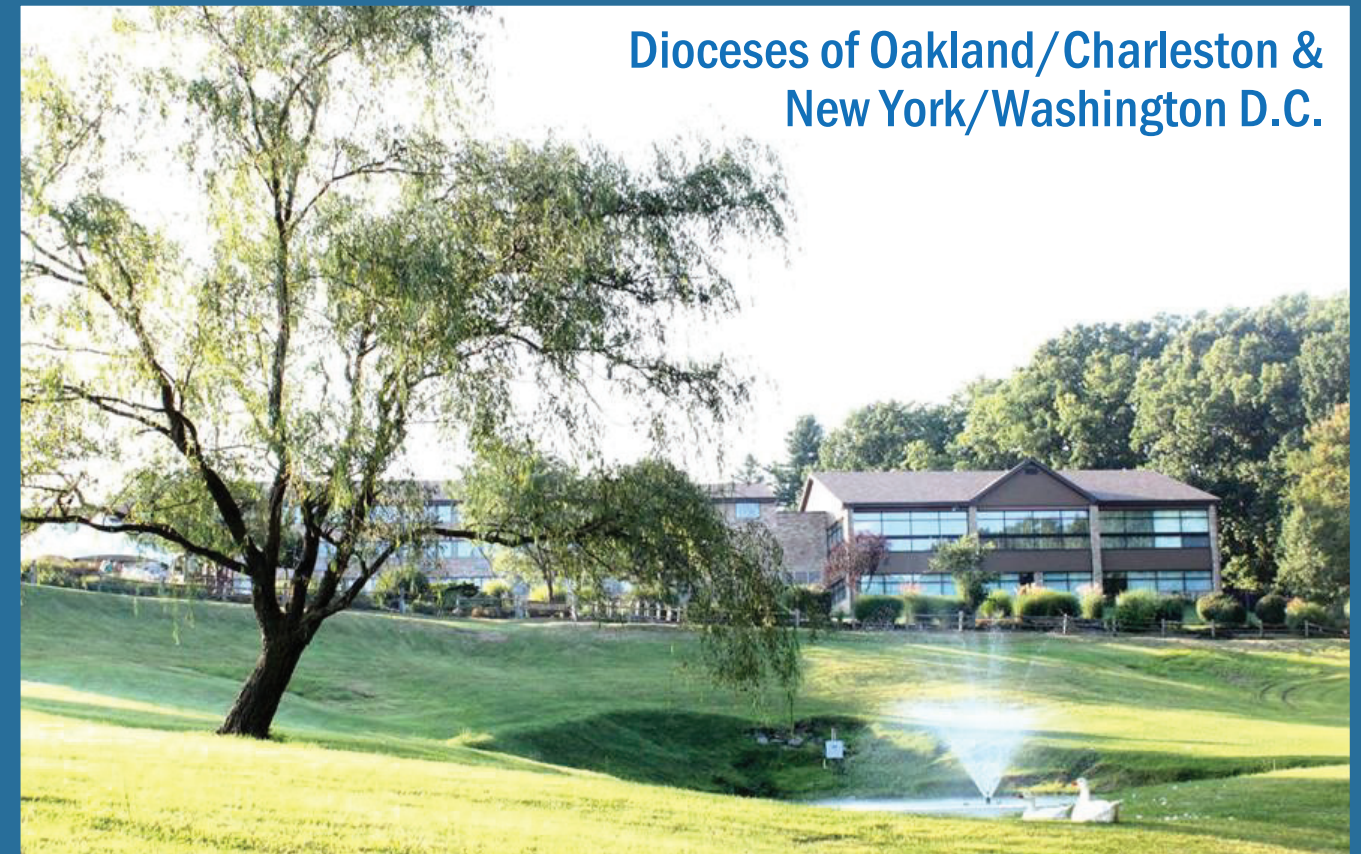
Have you ever considered a life in ministry using your specific God-given gifts? We have ministries that abound in the Orthodox world that need people to offer their gifts and talents whether it is a specific ministry of our Archdiocese or another one such as IOCC, OCMC,

OCF and many others. A wonderful place to discover these opportunities is OrthodoxJobs.com.

At present, the Antiochian Village is looking for a maintenance person who can share his or her talents for the glory of God and His Church by being part of a team of people that provides for the maintenance, repair and upkeep of the Village property. Consider joining the Village family if you have experience in HVAC, carpentry, plumbing and electrical maintenance and repair. For more information, contact Fr Anthony Yazge (franthy@avcamp.org).

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Parish Life Conference

**"They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship,
in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." Acts 2:42**

Diocese of Worcester and New England

June 23, 2018

Saint John of Damascus Church, Dedham, Massachusetts

9:00 AM	Orthros and Hierarchical Divine Liturgy
11:30 AM	Luncheons for Antiochian Women, Teens and Conferees
1:00 PM	Keynote Address by Michelle Moujaes of Faithtree Ministries, Followed by Discussion
3:30 PM	Bible Bowl
5:30 PM	Great Vespers and Oratorical Presentations
7:00 PM	Dinner, Awards and Entertainment



The Diocese of Ottawa, Eastern Canada & Upstate New York



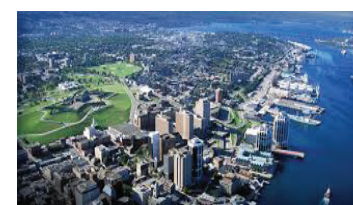
65th Annual Parish Life Conference

Hosted by

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2018 PLC Schedule

Diocese of Worcester

Hosted by Diocese Ministry Council, held at St. John of Damascus Church, Dedham, MA
June 23-24, 2018

Diocese of Miami

Hosted by St. Mary Church, West Palm Beach, FL
June 13-16, 2018

Diocese of Wichita

Hosted by Holy Trinity Church, Santa Fe, NM
June 13-16, 2018

Diocese of Toledo

Hosted by St. Elias Church, Sylvania, OH
June 20-24, 2018

Dioceses of New York and Washington D.C. & Oakland, Charleston and Mid-Atlantic

Hosted by St. Philip (Souderton, PA); St. George (Upper

Darby, PA) & Holy Ascension (West Chester, PA) Churches; at Antiochian Village
June 27-July 1, 2018

Diocese of Ottawa

Hosted by St. Anthony (St. Antonios) Church, Halifax, NS
June 28-July 1, 2018

Diocese of Los Angeles/Eagle River

Hosted by St. George Church, Portland, OR
July 4-8, 2018

Clergy Symposium

Antiochian Village July 16-20

2019 Archdiocese Convention

54th Bi-annual Archdiocese Convention
St. Nicholas Church, Grand Rapids, MI
July 21-28, 2019

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- Saint Ignatius of Antioch

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