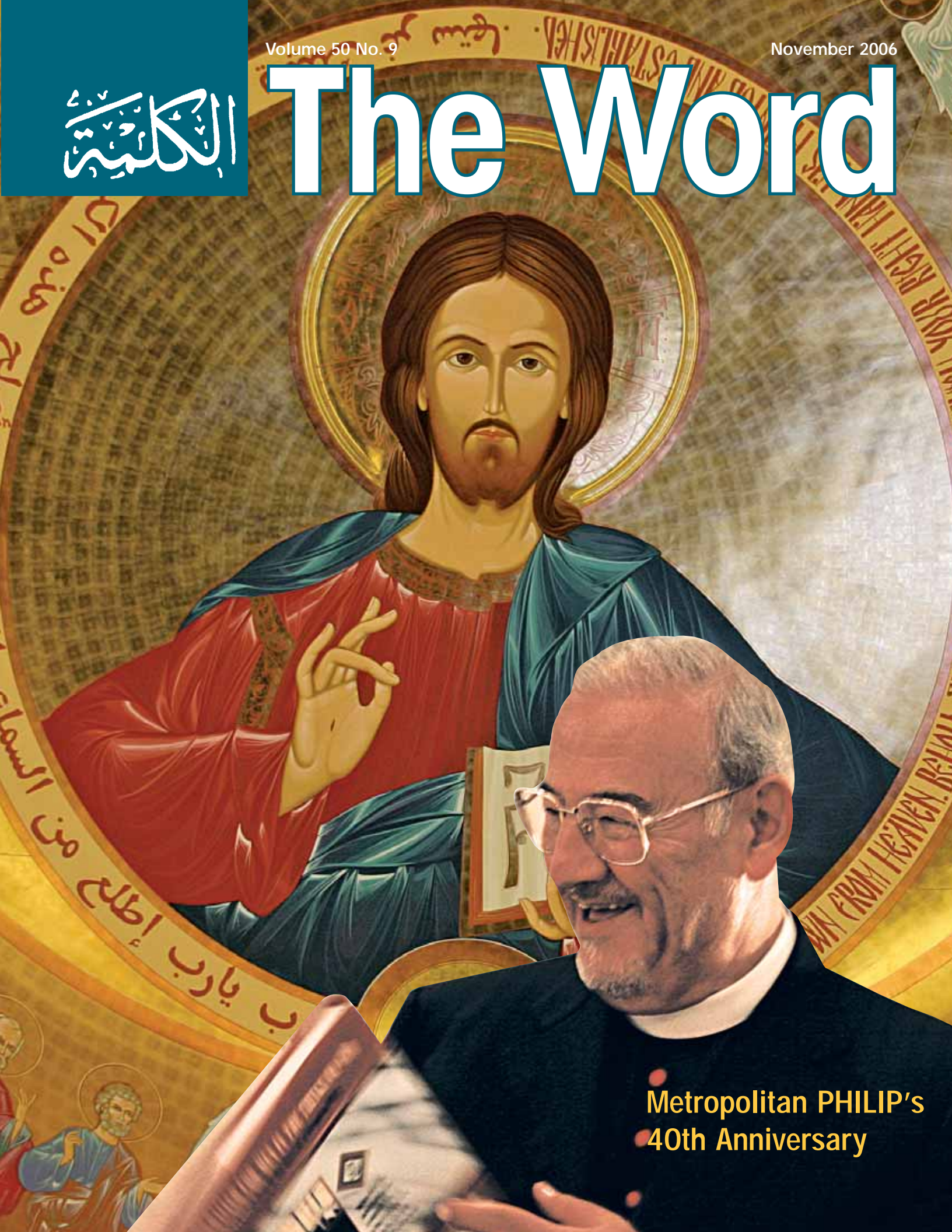


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November 2006

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The Word



Metropolitan PHILIP's
40th Anniversary

contents



The Most Reverend
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Primate

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Bishop ANTOUN

The Right Reverend
Bishop JOSEPH

The Right Reverend
Bishop BASIL

The Right Reverend
Bishop THOMAS

The Right Reverend
Bishop MARK

The Right Reverend
Bishop ALEXANDER

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Founded in English as
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by Metropolitan ANTONY (Bashir)

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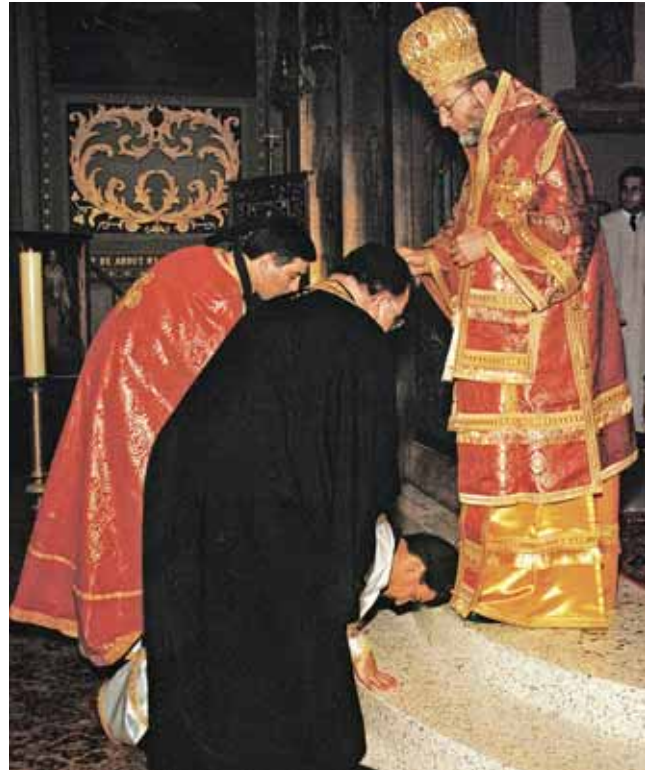
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editor's letter

Getting the Most out of our Clergy and Church Leadership

It would be hard to dispute the fact that Orthodox communities expend huge sums of financial and human resources. Church budgets are in the hundreds of thousands of dollars and our faithful volunteer hundreds of thousands of hours. With such a great operation, it behooves us to see how we can maximize our efforts and get the most from our leadership.



We most need our clergy to lead us in worship and sacraments. Our bishops, presbyters and deacons have submitted themselves to ordination in order to keep our worship orderly and administer the sacraments. They have submitted themselves with a life-long commitment to serve in Christ's own ministry, leading His community of priests, who together manifest His Kingdom. They dedicate themselves to live among God's own people, leading them to God. It is in our relationships with our clergy that we discover together God's will, love and forgiveness. This is the most important function of the clergy, so our relationships with these dedicated men must be protected and put above almost anything else.

Our relationship with our clergy must be one of reverence. It is not an accident that we address our clergy as "reverend." By revering them, we strengthen our relationship with them, allowing God to act through that relationship. We call bishops and presbyters "father" because, through our relationship with them, we gain spiritual life that brings us to God. We must never allow human disagreements about non-eternal things to steal away our relationships with our Church leaders. By showing respect and reverence to our leaders, we strengthen the leaders' ability to show God to us in our daily lives and in our times of crises. We call the offices of bishop, presbyter and deacon "holy." These offices and the men in them are holy because they belong to God. By treating men in holy offices as if they were holy, we support them in their leadership to be examples of holiness for us.



By supporting the leadership of our leaders, we can get more done as a community and thus multiply our godly efforts. This is best demonstrated in the reverse. When we don't support our leaders, we prevent the Church from acting at all. Imagine a community split in direction, frustrating the faithful and rendering them unable to witness. God forbid! I am not saying that we shouldn't offer our best suggestions to our leadership through the parish council and at general parish meetings; I mean that we should support local decisions for the unity of the parish and for the ability of the parish to serve God. By supporting the informed decisions of our leadership, we empower them to lead and accomplish the ministry goals for which they were ordained. This also prevents burnout, which occurs when a person is prevented from fulfilling his vocation.

Leadership is also an art. Preaching, teaching and leading are all arts. Like other artists, clergy do best when they are given freedom to allow their art to flow. Attempts to micro-manage artists stifle the art.

When we need to point out a particular need to a clergyman, it is most productive to share the need in a respectful, factual manner. No one wants another to tell him or her how to do his or her job. Bishops, presbyters and deacons are no exception.

Acknowledge the training and education of the Church leader. Our Archdiocese invests millions of dollars in the preparation and support of leadership through seminaries, the Antiochian House of Studies, continuing education programs, and mentoring by bishops, senior clergy and deans. How wasteful it would be to ignore the learned opinions of these men who have dedicated their lives to study and service. I am not suggesting that the laity hold their tongues and not offer differing opinions. I am suggesting that we all recognize the Church leader's dedication and his expertise in his area of ministry.

We would get more from our clergy when we respect reasonable boundaries. We know that each of us is not the only parishioner in the parish and that the Church leaders have other responsibilities. Many Church leaders have families and secular jobs to care for as well. It behooves us to call the leaders at appropriate times and to leave messages that include an adequate amount of information for the leader to manage his schedule. Sometimes Church leaders must manage their day by triage, responding to the most important crises first. When we leave messages with our needs clearly stated, we allow the Church leader to do his job better.

Speaking of families and boundaries, we would do well to recognize that the families of our Church leaders are also parishioners with their own vocations. Like all other parishioners, family members of clergy should choose for themselves how and when to serve the Church. They should teach, clean, cook and worship as they choose. Expectations of the clergy family by the parish adds stress to the clergy family's life and takes away from the creative services of the Church leader.

By showing our gratitude to our Church leaders, we can help them be energized. Positive feedback not only allows but also encourages them to study harder, serve better and balance out life's troubles. Thanking them expresses the cooperative nature of our relationships with our Church leaders. Ordination anniversaries are a particularly good opportunity to express this thanks and energize our Church leaders into better service.

We can get the most from our Church leaders by being respectful, cooperative and loving, by remembering what these leaders were ordained for and by utilizing their positions and gifts to build up the Kingdom of God.

by Fr. John Abdalah

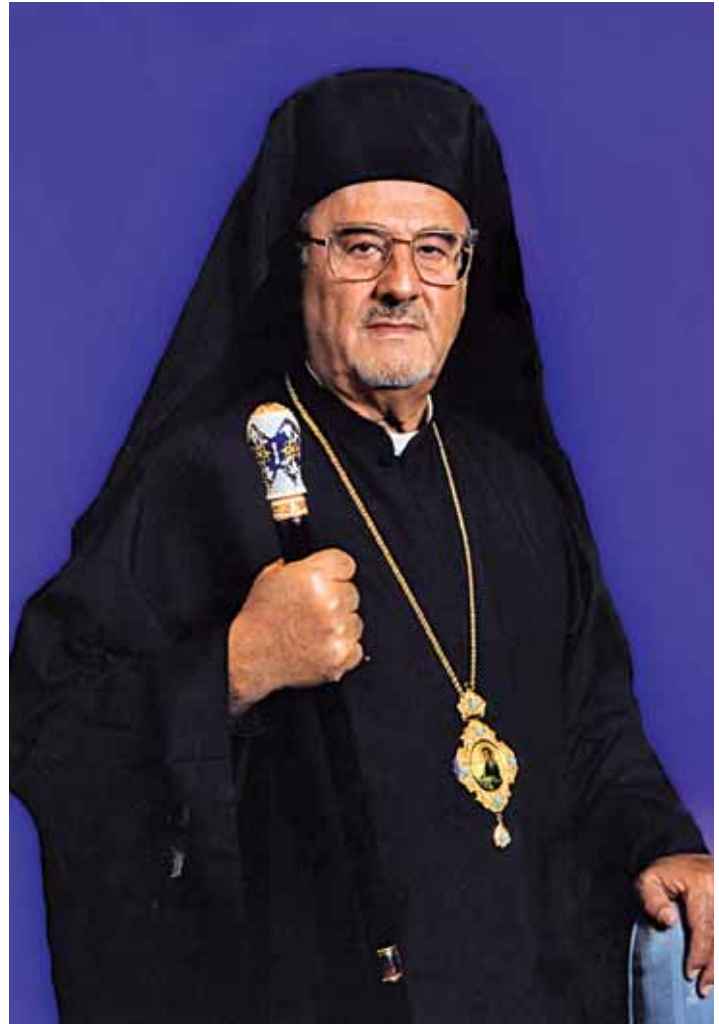
Blessed is he who gives without remembering and he who receives without forgetting.

IT IS WITH MUCH THANKFULNESS AND GRATITUDE that I would like to take this opportunity to thank my brother bishops, the clergy, esteemed members of the Archdiocese Board of Trustees, members of the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch, the Antiochian Women, Fellowship of St. John the Divine, SOYO and the parishes and laity of this God-protected Archdiocese for your wonderful generosity on the occasion of my 40th anniversary as your Metropolitan. It is hard to believe that 40 years have passed since my election, consecration and enthronement.

Words cannot express the joy I felt this past weekend in Detroit as I, or rather we, celebrated 40 years of working together to build what we have today for the glory of God and His Holy Church! The warmth of the entire weekend culminated in the gift of love presented to me by all of you at the banquet on Saturday evening. This gift, a check in the amount of \$250,000 from all of your generous donations, was too much for any one man. Therefore, I felt compelled to do as I did on my 25th anniversary in 1991 when I established the endowment for the Antiochian Village with my monetary gift on that occasion. This endowment has grown to over one million dollars and is currently being used to fund various projects for the Antiochian Village.

This time, I am donating the \$250,000 I received into a fund I have started that will become part of the Clergy Retirement Fund of the Archdiocese in the future. This fund, which I also hope will grow to one million dollars, is made up of the many gifts and honoraria I have received over the years from the generous people of this Archdiocese. It is my fervent prayer that our clergy who serve this Archdiocese faithfully all of their priestly lives will be able to retire with dignity, and I hope to do everything I can to make this a reality.

Finally, I would like to thank Archpriest Joseph Antypas and the entire community of St. George of Troy, MI, especially the members of our Archdiocese Board of Trustees in Detroit — Mr. Nicola Antakli, Mr. George Darany, Mr. Walid Khalife and Mr. Robert Koory — for their generosity and hospitality. May God bless them and their families.



Look for coverage on Metropolitan PHILIP's 40th Anniversary in the December issue of The WORD.

Your Father in Christ,


+ Metropolitan PHILIP



The WORD interviews Very Reverend Anthony Yazge,

new Antiochian Village
Camp Director.

Fr. Anthony, when did you first get involved at the Antiochian Village Camp?

My first Antiochian Village experience was in 1981 when I served as a counselor under Fr. John Namie. This was a marvelous experience, in fact, the best summer of my early life. I forged life-long relationships that summer, relationships that would shape my life and my ministry. Among the counselors and staff that year were Frs. Antony Hughes, Ed Hughes, Anthony Michaels, Michael Shanbour and Khouriyes Annie Hughes, Laila Ellias and Janet Shadid. Together that summer, many of us learned Fr. John Namie's ideas about how a liturgical life and prayer life could be part of one's daily life. For me, this opened up a whole new way of coming to know and respond to God. Life with God was not limited to Sunday! The saints become alive when we read their lives and interact with them through the services. My personal prayer life developed and I became comfortable being with God in prayer.



How did this camp experience influence your vision of camp leadership?

Metropolitan PHILIP and Fr. Michael Nasser both speak of Fr. Namie as the spiritual father of the camp. His influence on the camp shaped the Village to be a place of prayer, of awareness of the saints, and of respect of campers and staff for each other. Fr. Michael and other camp directors have maintained and nurtured this vision. Like Frs. John and Michael, I will emphasize the importance of confession. Through this sometimes-neglected sacrament and gift of the Church, young people can develop their relationships with God and other people. This is so important. The parish environment rarely offers the intensity available at camp. Camp can be a life-changing experience because it offers life without the distractions of home. It offers lots of time to reflect on prayer and our relationships. The children learn to really rely on God and each other. They encourage each other and learn from positive examples. God is the leader at the camp. Together we learn to understand His direction. Counselors and staff learn to share God's love, working in His work. The campers learn this and make this their way, too.

As a session priest, I have been deeply moved when hearing the confessions of the young people. Witnessing burdens evaporate before my eyes has been such a blessing and joy to

me. This is something that parish priests sometimes experience in the parish setting, but at the Antiochian Village it is the norm. Perhaps the children teach each other how great it is when they confess and they take courage from each other.

I believe that my first responsibility will be to serve the staff. By serving them, they will be better able to serve the campers. If we can show the staff God's unconditional love through our working with them, they will model and show this love to the campers. The campers can rest assured that we will pray for them while they are at camp and after they go home. Together we are a community of love, just like their parish communities. Like the parish, the Antiochian Village will be for them another home, a home where they will be safe and always accepted. The Antiochian Village will be a safe haven. The Antiochian Village will be a place where they can be all that God calls them to be. They will find new levels of self-respect and enjoy the love and joy of other Orthodox Christian men and women.

Do you expect an easy transition?

My transition has already begun and has been quite smooth, due primarily to the excellent work of Fr. Michael and his staff. The Antiochian Village is already a place of fasting and prayer. They have a great staff. Marek Simon and Khalil Samara are men of solid character and Christian love. The



Village is very different from Fr. John's early staff, which began with Fr. John as the only full-time staff person and has grown to a team of seminary-educated men who multiply God's gifts and work. Program development is now a year-round job, developing camping programs that work outside the box, with some programs on the road and year-round programs utilizing the camp space and buildings. We now have programs for Christian education, iconography, chanting, and daily life tools like candle and incense making, and holy bread baking. Camp on the road takes visits to holy and historic sights, as well as extreme camping and hiking experiences. We have a challenge course worth boasting over, which we use to build trust and community. With God's help, all things are possible. I watched a young lady on the zip line as she overcame her anxiety and triumphed over her fears. The other campers cheered her on and gave her courage. All this could be done because of the relationships that developed on the holy ground of the Village.

I remember that you had something to do with the beginning of Special Olympics. Is this true?

My cousin Ken and I started Special Olympics during our Teen SOYO days. We were looking for ways to reach out past ourselves. Through this program, we watched so many lives change dramatically. This program has grown every year from those early days to now being a premier program. It shows what kind of things can be accomplished by teens. The number of clergy and church leaders who have participated in this program is a testimony to what God can do through these kinds of programs. This ministry, which goes beyond the walls of the Church to the least of our brethren, has proven to me the importance of the Village and the opportunities of this holy mountain. The Special Olympics Camp has become a life-changing experience for hundreds of our teens.

Do you anticipate making any changes at the Village?

Most changes will be minor. Fr. Michael has done a commendable job and offered a holy direction. My leadership style may be a little different, but our goals and vision are the same. This holy mountain belongs to the kingdom of God. Our job is to help those who come here understand how God's Kingdom is here and now. The liturgy shows this most clearly, but God is present with us in every moment of our lives.

I want to see us further expand our year-round programs. I want to bring more programs for altar boys and young people retreats. I want to see these facilities used all the time. Sayidna PHILIP's vision of this holy mountain is being fulfilled. I told the children at family camp last week that one person can make a difference. One prayer can make a difference. With prayer, we put God's love into action. It is their honor to work in God's wo

How is your family responding to the move to Pennsylvania?

We are all looking forward to the move. Camp has always been a big part of our lives, and my children are products of the positive influences of the Village. The idea of being at all the sessions is a dream come true. We are all excited. I am particularly excited for my son Mark, who will now have some of the experiences that Matthew and Alexis have had at camp. My family will be joining me at the Village next summer, after Matthew graduates from high school.

Will you miss parish life?

God blessed us with eighteen years of parish life at St. George in Terre Haute, IN. We have wonderful relationships with so many people. We have been family for a very long time, so leaving is tough. But we will take them with us in our hearts and our prayers, and they will keep us as well. It is helpful to know that we leave the parish in good hands of spiritual leadership in Fr. Stephen. It is also helpful to know how the parish, aware of my life-long relationship with the Village, wishes my family well there. I expect them to visit the Village often, as we have programs and opportunities to share in the future. I've challenged them to come often.

You seem to enjoy being a dad and a priest. What does your wife Stefanie think about all this?

I love being a father. Our children are a great joy to Stefanie and me. Watching them grow has been such an exciting thing. Especially fulfilling is how they grow in SOYO and Church school. Stefanie and I are our children's greatest



fans. We also enjoyed nurturing our church community and now look forward to working together at the Village. Stefanie is looking forward to the new challenges and life. At the Village, we will be closer to our families as well. We hope that she will find a job teaching theology at a nearby college. She has much to offer. In our marriage, we have both been able to share in ministry. I like to see myself as the pastor in the family, and Stefanie as the theologian. Stefanie also is a seminary graduate and loves the ministry of the Church. She has certainly enriched my life and my ministry.

The Antiochian Village is a place where my life as a priest can continue to grow and expand. I will have opportunities to share Christ with the group that I feel most drawn to serve. I also believe that the Village has some special things to offer my family and me. I ask for your prayers and the prayers of the readers of *The WORD*, and for your support and cooperation as we continue together to see God's plan for our lives and our camp unfold. I look for God to show me how He wants me to journey to Him, and I hope to bring as many with me as I can.

Pilgrimage to Alaska



PART I — THE PLANNING STAGE

“As we reflect on the ways in which the Church in North America has matured, it is important to recognize that much has been done as the natural and organic response of Orthodox Christians who share the same faith while living together in one place. We celebrate and build on already existing structures.” (STATEMENT ON THE CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA, SCOBA CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS, ANTIOCHIAN VILLAGE, NOV. 30-DEC. 4, 1994)

These words, from the God-inspired “Ligonier Conference,” proved to be prophetic for a group of individuals who traveled to Alaska from different jurisdictions, but under the banner of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC), an agency of SCOBA that is one of the aforementioned “*already existing structures*.” Our purpose was two-fold. First, we traveled to Alaska as the Staff and Counselors of a Youth Camp that would be held in the Village of Ouzinkie, which is located on Spruce Island, the island that was inhabited by St. Herman of Alaska. Second, we traveled as Pilgrims, with the intention of participating in the St. Herman Pilgrimage that is held annually on Spruce Island and Kodiak. As is the case with “missionary” activity, we were unaware of the many positive changes that this trip would make in our lives.

For the members of the Antiochian Archdiocese making this trip, the journey began nearly two years prior, at the Midwinter Meetings of the NAC Fellowship of St. John the Divine, under the leadership of Khouriyeh “Gigi” Baba Shadid (NAC President at that time). At those meetings, a decision was made to work with OCMC on an NAC-sponsored Mission Trip, and the

decision was made to travel to Alaska. How fitting it was that the location of the 1994 SCOBA Conference of Bishops was the same site that launched this particular Mission Trip.

Following the 2005 Midwinter Meetings, the planning phase began. Jordan Henderson, who was present at the Meetings, coordinated the Mission Trip for OCMC, while the Very Rev. Chad Hatfield, Dean of St. Herman Seminary in Kodiak (and former Pastor of All Saints Church in Salina, KS), made the necessary preparations in Alaska. The response to this Mission Trip was so positive that two distinct programs were organized in conjunction with St. Herman Seminary and the Holy Resurrection Cathedral in Kodiak. It was decided that one OCMC Team would run a Vacation Bible School in Kodiak, while our Team would organize and staff a Summer Camp (5 days and 4 nights) for Teens. During a conference call, it was agreed upon that the curriculum for the Camp would be “The Creed.” This curriculum had already been developed for Camp St. Raphael in the Diocese of Wichita. In addition, the decision was made to dedicate the Camp to the Martyr Peter the Aleut of San Francisco, Alaska and America. St. Peter was an appropriate choice because of the fact that he is a “child” Saint. Martyred as a teenager, his final words were *“I am an Orthodox Christian and I will not betray my Faith.”* Hence, Camp St. Peter the Aleut was established.

PART II — ARRIVAL IN ALASKA

Ultimately, making the trip from the Antiochian Archdiocese were the Very Rev. Michael Abdelahad (Diocese of Worcester Fellowship Spiritual Advisor), Joan Farha (NAC Fellowship President) and Robyn Haas. On July 31, we arrived in Alaska, the “Holy Land of North America,” and we met the members of the two OCMC Teams. The other members of the Summer Camp Team were Daniel Belonick (Crestwood, NY), Zak Katsilas (Windsor, ON), Elizabeth Nichols (Germantown, TN) and Betty Sellas (Chicago, IL). With the addition of Anastasia Nicolai from St. Herman Seminary, the Team was now complete. Much to our delight, we also discovered that there was an OCF group from the University of Connecticut that was present to help prepare the Seminary, the Cathedral and various parts of Spruce Island for the upcoming Pilgrimage. For the remainder of that evening, time was spent getting acclimated to our new surroundings and co-workers. Part of the Team went to Holy Resurrection Cathedral, where we saw St. Herman’s reliquary for the first time. Those who were present venerated St. Herman’s Blessing Cross and were anointed with oil from the Vigil lamp that hangs above his reliquary. We then went to the top of Pillar Mountain, the mountain that St. Herman climbed when he was being expelled from Kodiak. It was from this vantage point that St. Herman saw Spruce Island for the first time, and decided to relocate there.

On Tuesday, August 1, Fr. Chad gave a very enlightening orientation talk to the two OCMC Teams, beginning with the history of Orthodoxy in Alaska and concluding with some of the things that we could expect to encounter during our stay. After the orientation, the two Teams met separately to continue planning their components of the Mission Trip. The remainder of the afternoon was spent purchasing the supplies for the Camp and then going, by boat, to the Village of Ouzinkie on Spruce Island.



Alutiq Dancing in Native Costumes



Bishop NIKOLAI praying at the Reliquary of St. Herman



Liturgy on Spruce Island

PART III — CAMP ST. PETER THE ALEUT

Camp St. Peter the Aleut planned to accommodate twenty-eight Teens from Kodiak and Ouzinkie from Tuesday evening, August 1 until Saturday morning, August 5. Very quickly, however, we were reminded of two things that became frequently quoted slogans. The first was something that Fr. Chad mentioned in his orientation: one must always be “fluid” in Alaska. In other words, things change on a moment’s notice, so be flexible. Since there currently is not a full-time Priest in Ouzinkie, getting the word out about the Camp wasn’t easy. When we arrived on shore, we had eleven campers ... nine from Kodiak and two from Ouzinkie. Fr. Chad indicated that the local Teens would probably “come and go” once we had established ourselves in the Village. In addition, we arrived to discover that, due to circumstances beyond anyone’s control, the arrangements for housing the Camp were “up in the air.” This brings us to our second frequently quoted slogan, which was, “Wherever life closes a door, God opens a window.” Thanks to the efforts of some of the Village residents, led by Herman Squartsoff, one of the Readers in the Village church, we were able to use the Ouzinkie Tribal Center, a beautiful building that would house all of the Campers in one location. Later on, we learned that this was the fourth location for the Camp. Upon entering the facility, we found that it was perfect. Life had closed a door, but God opened a window for our Camp.

Once we moved into the Tribal Center, the miraculous started to happen. Although the Camp followed a standard format, with Christian Education, Arts and Crafts, Sports Programs, Evening Program, etc., it was hardly a conventional Camp. Miracles abounded! Word began to spread ... about the Camp; the beautiful blue “I Believe” t-shirts (that the kids wore everywhere); learning to tie knots for a prayer rope; learning about Orthodoxy and discovering that it was “cool”; praying and discovering and singing together. So the kids

came ... and came ... and came. We were “fluid.” When heavy rains changed our plans for Thursday and Friday, we remained “fluid.” And the kids came ... and came ... and came. Our plans for twenty-eight Teens turned into forty-one kids from age five and up who became a part of Camp St. Peter the Aleut. The Ouzinkie School has thirty-six enrolled students; thirty-one of them came to Camp St. Peter the Aleut. Teens who could not tell us three things about themselves at the beginning of the Camp were smiling and singing

praises to God by the end of the Camp. Differentiating between the Kodiak kids and Ouzinkie kids was impossible. We were one Camp. Miracles abounded!

On Thursday, rainy weather cancelled some of our plans. We planned to spend part of the day with the nuns in the community of St. Nilus on an island that was adjacent to Spruce Island. We planned to celebrate Vespers there. Nature closed a door. When the residents discovered that we would be in Ouzinkie, an excitement began to spread because the “Campers” would be at the Akathist for St. Herman that is held on every Thursday evening throughout the Diocese. So, we went to the Church of the Nativity and prayed the Akathist. Later on, the people of the Village remarked that they heard voices

that they had never heard before. They were convinced that the Angels sang with us. Who were we to argue? Miracles abounded!

Another change from the original schedule involved the end of Camp. Some of the local residents requested that we conclude with Vespers on Friday evening and Divine Liturgy on Saturday morning, instead of Evening and Morning Prayers. Who were we to argue? As was the case with the Thursday night Akathist, it seemed like the entire Village turned out for the Services. Being “fluid,” we decided to invite the residents to share dinner with us on Friday evening and brunch on Saturday morning. Two of the counselors (Betty and Zak) went with Herman in his boat and caught the



On Spruce Island with Bishop THOMAS

salmon that we had for Friday's dinner. Friday's Evening Program was the Ouzinkie equivalent of "Skit Night." The Campers sang the hymns and songs that they learned, the Counselors and Campers chanted additional hymns, but the highlight was the Alutiq dancing that was performed by the Campers in authentic, native costumes.

After Liturgy and Brunch on Saturday, we packed the boats to leave. In any camp setting, getting the kids to leave each other and their counselors is difficult. In this case, however, it was bittersweet, because this was not a normal "camp setting" where the counselors tell the campers "we will see you next year." The counselors may never see these campers again after they leave Alaska. There is only the possibility of a camp for them next year.

PART IV — PILGRIMAGE FOR ST. HERMAN OF ALASKA

"Finally, we would like to thank and bless our Christ-loving flocks: the pious priests, deacons, monastics and laity — who, praying and laboring together, incarnate the oneness which our Church on this continent already enjoys. We ask for their prayers and support, as we pledge to work with them for the glory of God and His Holy Church." (STATEMENT ON THE CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA, SCOBA CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS, ANTIOCHIAN VILLAGE, NOV. 30-DEC. 4, 1994)

Our return to Kodiak on Saturday, August 5 was just in time for Vigil. For many members of our Team, it was their first exposure to Vigil (Vespers, Orthros and First Hour, combined in a single service). His Grace Bishop NIKOLAI presided and we were blessed to meet him for the first time. After Vigil, we enjoyed our only free evening of the trip as we prepared for Sunday's Hierarchical Liturgy. We were also free on Sunday afternoon because His Grace does not give a blessing for any work to be done on the Lord's Day. We went to Fort Abercrombie State Park, which is located on a high bluff over-

looking the water. It was a beautiful place for sightseeing and whale watching. We saw some Humpback and Gray whales, mostly feeding, but then two whales started to breach off in the distance. They were also rolling on their sides and slapping the water with their fins. We stayed there for a couple of hours, then returned to St. Herman's to meet with Bishop NIKOLAI. At our meeting, His Grace spoke about the condition of the Diocese and what to expect during the Pilgrimage. One thing he warned us about was exhaustion. We wondered how we could be more exhausted.

The Pilgrimage consisted of the Akathist for St. Herman on Monday evening, Divine Liturgy on Spruce Island on Tuesday morning, Vigil on Tuesday evening in Kodiak and concluded with Divine Liturgy on Wednesday morning. His Grace Bishop THOMAS arrived on Monday for the Pilgrimage. Each of the Services was beautiful and we quickly learned that Bishop NIKOLAI was right about the exhaustion.

Once again, however, the miraculous nature of life in the Church gave us a tremendous lift. At Monday evening's Akathist and Tuesday evening's Vigil, we were blessed to be able to venerate the relics of Blessed Father Herman of Alaska and to be anointed with oil by the Bishops.

At each of these Services, we were uplifted by the fragrant smell of myrrh that emanated from the reliquary, even before it was opened! It is difficult to explain, but we actually felt like we were being enveloped by the fragrance. A second example of the miraculous happened as the faithful were being anointed at the conclusion of Monday's Akathist. A member of our Team remarked that the faces of the people in the Cathedral seemed to have "changed" somehow after they had venerated the relics and been anointed with the oil. Perhaps it was a foretaste of the Heavenly Kingdom that provided us with a better understanding of how the Disciples could be with Jesus, after the Resurrection, and only recognize Him in the breaking of the bread. A third example of the miraculous



The view from Pillar Mountain



Group picture with the Protectress of Spruce Island



Learning the Troparion for St. Peter the Aleut



Returning from Christian Education



Leaving Spruce Island by boat

occurred during Liturgy on Spruce Island on Tuesday morning. As we arrived on Spruce Island, we were told to be mindful of how “still” the island was. Although completely covered with vegetation and home to many native species of birds and animals, there was almost no sound as we walked to the Chapel. By the time Bishop NIKOLAI gave his sermon at the end of Liturgy, the island was completely silent. It was as if everything on the island had stopped to listen.

There was also the experience of wonder and awe. In addition to everything that has already been mentioned, we were blessed to venerate an icon of the Virgin Mary, called “The Protectress of Spruce Island.” This newly restored icon is currently housed in Kodiak’s Holy Resurrection Cathedral and is possibly the one used by St. Herman to stop the floodwaters from engulfing Spruce Island. It was this icon that preceded Bishops NIKOLAI and THOMAS as they walked to the Chapel of Sts. Sergius and Herman of Valaam, the Chapel that was built over the grave of St. Herman. A final example of the wonder that we experienced came at Wednesday’s Divine Liturgy, when Bishop NIKOLAI announced that one of the chalices being used had been brought to Alaska by the 18th century Russian Missionaries. It is very likely that St. Herman, himself, received Communion from that chalice and kissed its base after receiving the Eucharist!

Prior to returning to our homes, one of the OCF students aptly described our time in this Holy Land of America with the following quotation from the Sacrament of Baptism and the Service of the Blessing of Water ... *“Great art Thou, O Lord, and marvelous are Thy works and there is no word which is sufficient to hymn Thy wonders!”* Our words truly fall short of describing the amazing, wondrous and miraculous events of this brief entrance into the world of missionary activity. All of us who were part of this trip returned home knowing that we were not the same people that we were prior to departure. In addition to individual and collective spiritual growth, we returned to the “lower 48” with new associations and friendships that will last forever. We are grateful to our Father, Metropolitan PHILIP for giving us his blessing to make this journey. We are thankful for this trip, and eternally grateful to our hosts — His Grace Bishop NIKOLAI, Bishop of Sitka, Anchorage and Alaska, Very Rev. Chad Hatfield, Dean of St. Herman Seminary and Rev. Fr. Innocent Dresdow, Pastor of Holy Resurrection Cathedral — for their very gracious hospitality. May God grant them many years! We are thankful that the experience of our Bishops on our Holy Mountain in Pennsylvania brought us to these Holy Mountains in Alaska. Finally, we pray that all who read this article might experience this for themselves someday.

Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Herman of Alaska and Peter the Aleut, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us!

Submitted by Very Rev. Michael Abdelahad, Joan Farha and Robyn Haas

*For a more detailed description of this trip, go to <http://www.antiochian.org/fellowship>
For additional pictures go to <http://arts.wustl.edu/~rjhaas/alaska/>*

leaving a lasting legacy for Orthodoxy: the Ultimate Gift

In the world of charitable giving, many ways of giving can be advantageous not only for the charity itself, but also for the donor. And it's not just the eternal rewards associated with almsgiving.

Dr. Fred and Leila Milkie are well-versed in the blessed art of almsgiving, both ancient and modern. "We support, all told, about eighty charities yearly with various contributions," says Dr. Milkie, a retired ophthalmologist who has lived in San Marino, California, just south of Pasadena, for thirty-six years.

"Also, we've been quite involved in generating funds for our home parish, St. Nicholas Cathedral, for the past fifteen years or so." Not to mention serving on the board of Project Mexico, as well as aiding orphans and schools throughout Lebanon, their ancestral homeland, and many other worthwhile causes. Dr. Milkie is also a long-time Life Member and advocate for the Order of St. Ignatius.



When Ruth Ann Skaff, director of development and future planning for the Antiochian Archdiocese, approached Dr. Fred and Leila about supporting the three endowed funds for Christian Education, Missions and Evangelism, and Youth Ministries, they knew just how they wanted to help. Using their years of experience in charitable giving, they chose, instead of a straight cash gift, to make a donation of stock. Once the stock was transferred to the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, assistant comptroller Peter Dacales allocated the cash evenly among the Christian Education Endowed Fund, the Missions and Evangelism Endowed Fund, and Youth Ministries Endowed Fund.

"Giving stock is really a smart way to donate," continues Dr. Milkie. "An appreciated asset, such as stock or real estate property or precious metals, offers the donor some tremendous tax advantages. Not only do you get to deduct the full face value of the asset at its current price, you also can avoid paying the long-term capital gains tax."

Such a donation maximizes the value of the gift for both charity and donor in terms of actual dollars put to good use for the cause. But make sure of one thing, Dr. Milkie cautions. "The important thing is to make sure it's an appreciated asset, a stock you've had so long you've almost forgotten about it, or a painting that's been hanging in Aunt Helen's living room for years. Such assets aren't always the easiest things to dispose of. Give it to the Archdiocesan Endowment. They'll be happy to deal with it, and it can solve a lot of your problems."

"We've known Ruth Ann a long time. We were confident that she could take the cash generated from the transferred stock gift and make wise use of it for the Church."

"Believe me," says a grateful Ruth Ann Skaff, "I 'appreciate' appreciated gifts. Such generous donations can go a long way toward reaching the worthwhile goals set by His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP, for the Self-Ruled Antiochian Archdiocese. We can all use more help from dear people like

Dr. Fred and Leila for the many worthwhile projects and programs which advance our Holy Orthodox Faith in America.”

To find out more about how you can help grow the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church in North America through a donation of stock or appreciated assets, contact:

Ruth Ann Skaff
Director of Development and Future Planning
Phone: 301-765-7001
Toll Free: 866-765-7001

by Mickey Hodges

Mickey Hodges, his wife Sarah and their four children are members of St. John the Evangelist Orthodox Church in Memphis, Tennessee. He owns his own marketing communications firm and frequently consults with Orthodox ministries on better ways to communicate.

How to Give ...

To donate stock, please instruct your broker to transfer it to:

Merrill Lynch
Nine West Office Center
2200 Fletcher Ave. 4th Floor
Fort Lee, NJ 07024

Account name: Antiochian Orthodox
Christian Archdiocese
Account number: 830-04358
DTC Number: 5198
Contact Person: Michele Corcoran
201-592-3801

Notify Peter Dacales, Assistant Comptroller of the Archdiocese, at 201-871-1355, or Ruth Ann Skaff at 301-765-7001 to ensure that the transaction is completed, and that you are properly thanked and acknowledged.

daily devotions

DECEMBER, 2006

1. 2 THESSALONIANS 3:6-18; LUKE 20:19-26 (*fast*)
2. GALATIANS 1:3-10; LUKE 12:32-40 (*fast*)
3. EPHESIANS 4:1-7; MATTHEW 22:2-14 (*fast*)
4. GALATIANS 3:23-29; MARK 5:24-34 (*fast*)
5. 1 TIMOTHY 1:8-14; LUKE 21:12-19 (*fast*)
6. HEBREWS 13:17-21; LUKE 6:17-33 (*fast*)
7. 1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13; LUKE 21:28-33 (*fast*)
8. 1 TIMOTHY 4:4-8, 16; LUKE 21:37-22:8 (*fast*)
9. GALATIANS 4:22-31; LUKE 8:16-21 (*fast*)
10. EPHESIANS 5:8-19; LUKE 13:10-17 (*fast*)
11. 1 TIMOTHY 5:1-10; MARK 8:11-21 (*fast*)
12. HEBREWS 13:17-21; LUKE 6:17-23 (*fast*)
13. 1 TIMOTHY 5:22-6:11; MARK 8:30-34 (*fast*)
14. 1 TIMOTHY 6:17-21; MARK 9:10-16 (*fast*)
15. 2 TIMOTHY 1:1-2, 8-18; MARK 9:33-41 (*fast*)
16. GALATIANS 5:22-6:2; LUKE 14:1-11 (*fast*)
17. COLOSSIANS 3:4-11; LUKE 14:16-24 (*fast*)
18. 2 TIMOTHY 2:20-26; MARK 9:42-10:1 (*fast*)
19. 2 TIMOTHY 3:16-4:4; MARK 10:2-12 (*fast*)
20. 2 TIMOTHY 4:9-22; MARK 10:11-16 (*fast*)
21. TITUS 1:5-2:1; MARK 10:17-27 (*fast*)
22. TITUS 1:15-2:10; MARK 10:23-32 (*fast*)
23. GALATIANS 3:8-12; LUKE 13:18-29 (*fast*)
24. HEBREWS 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40;
MATTHEW 1:1-25 (*fast*)
25. GALATIANS 4:4-7; MATTHEW 2:13-23
NATIVITY OF OUR LORD
26. HEBREWS 2:11-18; MATTHEW 2:13-23
27. ACTS 6:8-15, 7:1-5, 47-60; MATTHEW 21:33-42
28. HEBREWS 7:1-6; MARK 11:27-33
29. HEBREWS 7:18-25; MARK 12:1-12
30. 1 TIMOTHY 6:11-16; MATTHEW 12:15-21
31. 2 TIMOTHY 4:5-8; MARK 1:1-8

Very Rev. George Alberts



LET LIFE LIVE

CHILDREN'S RELIEF FUND



Children's Relief Fund

Very Rev. George M. Rados

National Director

*"Open our eyes that we may see the needs of others,
Open our ears that we may hear their cries
Open our hearts so that they need not be without succor.
So open our eyes and our ears*

That this day we may be able to do some work of peace for you O Lord."

Dearly Beloved in Christ,

It is my prayer that you and all your loved ones receive this communication in good health and in the grace of the All Holy Spirit.

It was always my hope that the Children's Relief Fund would someday dissipate for the lack of need. With the recovery from war-torn areas over the years, things were looking very positive, especially in Lebanon. However, with the last breakout of hostilities in the Middle East, we were helpless to do anything to stop the carnage and suffering of so many innocent people, which brought us back to "ground zero." The loss of lives, homes, security is once again resurrecting our waning support.

Although our beloved and charitable Archdiocese responded immediately to this most recent crisis, there remains an on-going need to sponsor more children through the Children's Relief Fund. We are receiving many requests for aid, and with your help we hope to sponsor all the more children.

I appeal to your generous hearts to help these needy children know that someone does care for their welfare. For as little as eighty five cents a day, you can bring faith, hope and love to their innocent hearts. In anticipation of your help, please accept the attached icon seals as a thanksgiving from the children for your participation.

In closing, I offer my personal thanks to my co-workers, Wafa Atiyeh, Janan Sarkis, and Edward Bitar, and to all our present sponsors and contributors.

During this upcoming festive season, may the joy and peace of our Lord be with you.

Yours in Christ,

Father George Rados

10620 River Road, Potomac, MD 20854 • (301) 765-9188 Fax (301) 765-9591 • P.O. Box 60692
ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA

Children's Relief Fund

"Whoever receives one little child like this in my name receives me." ~Matthew 18:5

A central component of our Christian Charities, the Children's Relief Fund (CRF) is a humanitarian project designed for the assistance of children in need. It was initiated in response to pressing appeals coming from Lebanon in the wake of its disastrous invasion in 1982. But it soon caught on as a solid outreach program, serving hundreds of school-age children each year in the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch.

The present situation in the Middle East is even more severe than it was during the war years. The declining economy, unemployment and inflation are tragedies beyond family survival; thus, the need for our help is ongoing.

CRF assistance focuses on educational sponsorship, medical aid, and international adoption.

Here's how to begin

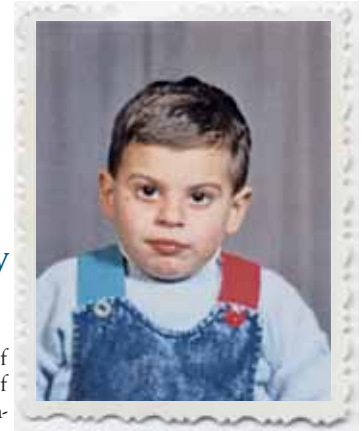
Take the first step today! Fill out the attached envelope and mail it in. We'll send you the photo and personal story of one child on our waiting list. The cost is \$25 a month ... less than a dollar a day. But the hope you'll give a child is priceless.

Sponsorship

Sponsorships are solicited from individuals and organizations who contribute \$300 a year to a child. Sponsorships do not begin until the initial \$150 is paid. After half payment, a child is assigned to his sponsor for one year. Sponsors receive the child's biography and photograph plus letters dictated by the child to a caseworker.

International Adoption

Our adoption program in Lebanon continues. Details on this program can be sent to interested parties upon request.



Adopted children

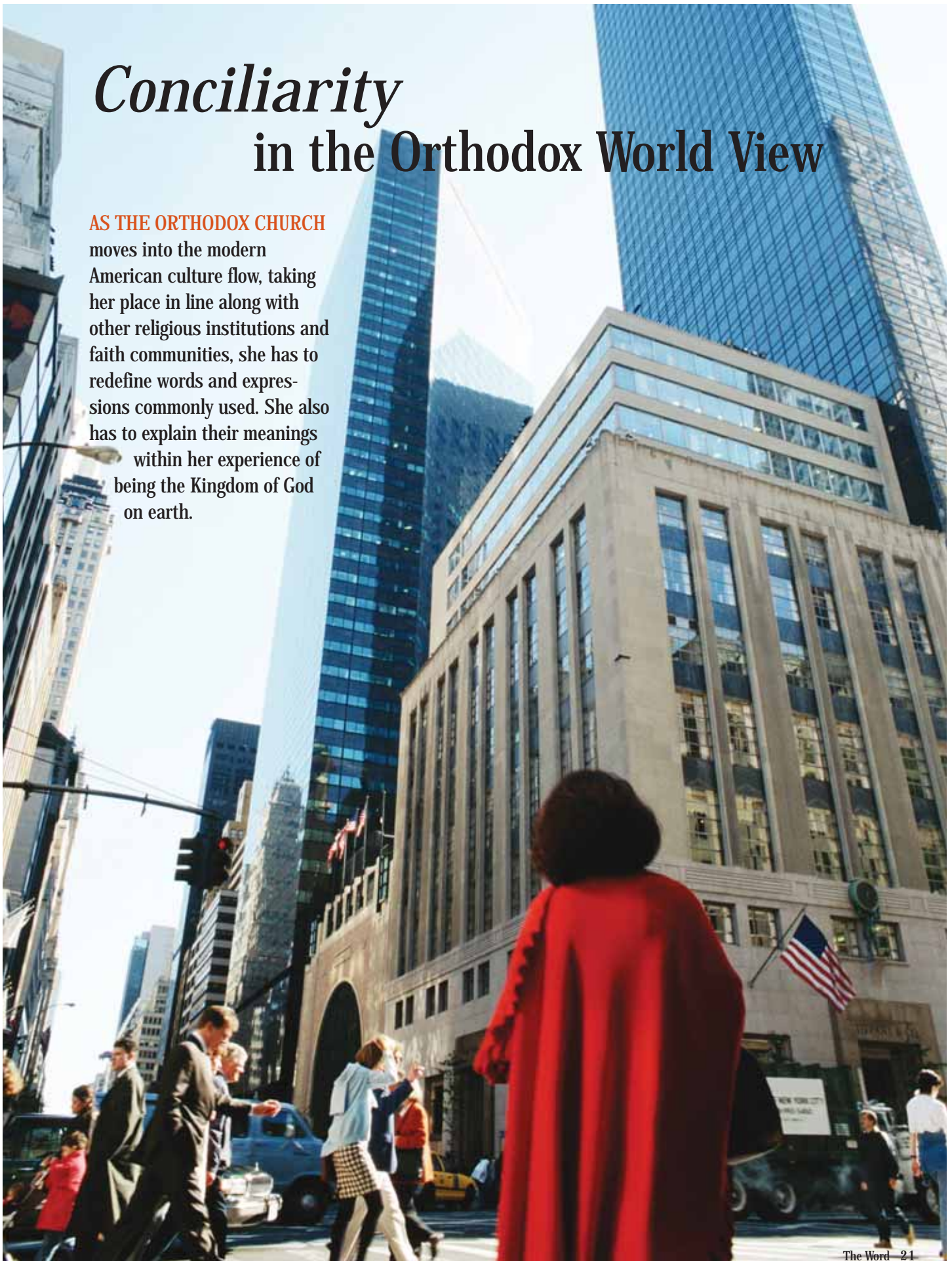


**Some
of our
Adopted
Children**



Conciliarity in the Orthodox World View

AS THE ORTHODOX CHURCH moves into the modern American culture flow, taking her place in line along with other religious institutions and faith communities, she has to redefine words and expressions commonly used. She also has to explain their meanings within her experience of being the Kingdom of God on earth.



In and through material things, this heavenly realm breaks through like sunlight through a window.

We live in a democratic society where equality before the law has become a kind of secular sacrament, a sacred article of faith which holds the whole expanse of ethnic and cultural groups together. Our government exists to ensure and enforce this sacred concept. Similarly, all other words and expressions which relate to this central concept take their meaning from it. For example, the word “conciliarity” would mean decisions and actions taken by a community where each member has an equal right, opinion, and vote. The action taken by a democratic society governed by equality before the civil law is always “conciliar.” Our society would define the word “conciliar” as something that was agreed upon by a whole body in which each member of that body had equal authority and voice and where no one person or group of persons had greater authority than others.

The Church applies a different standard of judgment and a different interpretation to words like “conciliar.” The Church is a symbol and sacrament of the Kingdom of God. As such, it holds together that spiritual, invisible, heavenly world where God, the angels and the saints are, and this present earthly existence. In and through material things, this heavenly realm breaks through like sunlight through a window. The Church is God’s personal life, His whole uncreated existence made present in time. The Church organized on earth is God’s Self-expression displayed in material forms.

For us to understand what “conciliarity” means, we must seek an answer from our experience of the Church as the Kingdom of God on earth. For this we need a different kind of dictionary and commentary. We need to look at the Bible and the writings of the Holy Fathers and get our understanding directly from God.

In the Bible, on its first page we read: “Let us make man in our image ...” (Gen. 1:26). The Holy Fathers teach us that this sentence is the first revelation of the Holy Trinity in scripture. Man is made because, in the counsel of God, in the life of the Holy Trinity, it was decided to create something which exactly reflects and contains divine life on earth, which perfectly expresses God. Man’s life is a conciliar decision!

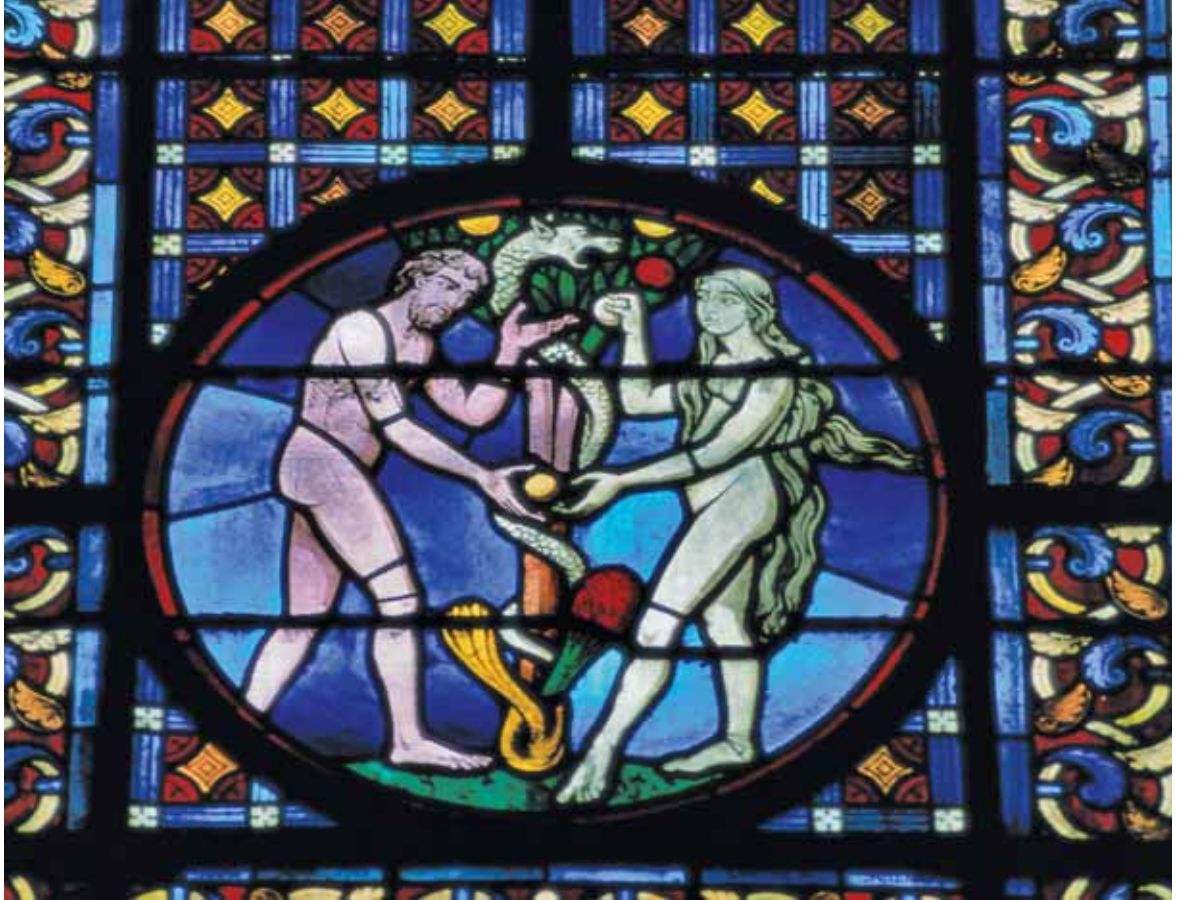
What does the life of the Holy Trinity show? How is

divine life lived? What model of life is revealed through man, who is God’s image? As God gradually revealed Himself in the Bible we know that He is Trinity, the Holy Trinity, Three Persons who share the divine nature. We also know that these Three Persons are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Gospel of St. John completely shows this. The Father is the cause, source, foundation, principle, and Person of origin for the Son and the Holy Spirit. “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights” (James 1:17). That is, the Father has two Lights, the Son and the Spirit, which He sends into the world to save and sanctify it.

The Father decides to send the Son and the Spirit. St. John of Damascus has said that all things exist for the Father by the Son and in the Holy Spirit. St. Gregory of Nazianzus said that there is a Holy Trinity because there is the Father. It is the Father who begets a Son and has a Holy Spirit, who shares His divine nature with His Son and Spirit.

The Father directs all things to be created; the Son effects the creation of all things; and the Holy Spirit perfects the things that are created. Each Person pursues the same goal but in a unique way. However, it is the Father who initiates and orders all things. This is what the Church understands as the personal character of the Holy Trinity. The Persons of the Trinity are distinguished and identified because of the Person of the Father who reveals them to us and who, in turn, is revealed to us by Them.

We know that in Paradise, this same model of life, this same order was present. As the Father, the Son and the Spirit exist in the divine life, so God, Adam and Eve, lived in Paradise. It was said that God “walked” in the Garden of Eden alongside Adam and Eve. Here we see how this divine life of the Trinity is reproduced. In St. Luke’s Gospel we read that Adam is God’s son (Lk. 3:38). And just as Eve is the helper of Adam (in the Hebrew the word for “Eve” and the word for “Spirit” both mean “helper”), the Holy Spirit helps the Son. Jesus says of the Holy Spirit that He is the Comforter and Counselor whom He sends from the Father: “He will glorify me,” Jesus taught, “for he will take what is mine and declare it to you” (Jn. 16:14).



THE GARDEN OF EDEN where God was present with Adam and Eve is a perfect picture of God's life as Trinity. It is the first gathering of God and man. It is the first Church — the word for Church in Greek means "to assemble" or "to gather."

So long as Adam and Eve listened and acted according to the decisions of God, they were happy and fulfilled, because that is the way the Son and the Spirit act toward the Father, the One who decides. Jesus said to the Jews: "I came not of my own accord, but he (the Father) sent me" (Jn. 8:42). When Adam and Eve acted without the direction of God, when they took their own "conciliar" and independent action, sin and death entered into human nature. Being cut off from the decisions of God made us hopelessly indecisive. Unable to choose God, we fumble around making uncertain choices — and, usually, make a mess of our lives. Only the obedience of the Son and the Spirit of the Father, who had "decided" to save us from ourselves, healed the broken relationship with the Father, giving us another opportunity to live with Him.

In the Orthodox Church, which we have said earlier is God's personal life with us on earth, the life of the Holy Trinity is once again reflected and restored in the model of Church relationships through the hierarchy of the Church. The bishop is our father who acts through his son the priest and in his spirit or helper, his deacon. Just as the Son does nothing without the Father, the priest and deacon do nothing without the bishop. St. Ignatius of Antioch wonderfully explained this teaching in his letters.

When the world was made, the will of the Father was fulfilled by the work of His Son and His Spirit, the effective and sanctifying causes of creation. In Eden God gave His son, Adam, and His helper, Eve, commandments and directives. In the earthly Church the Holy Apostles were instructed by Christ Himself to ordain bishops as symbols and reflections of the Father in Heaven, so that the life of the Holy Trinity could be sacramentally lived on earth in the Church, so that the paternal love of the Father which He experiences

It was said that God "walked" in the Garden of Eden alongside Adam and Eve.

*As the
Father
directs
the Son
effects
and the
Spirit
perfects*

and which maintains Him as Son could be shared first with all mankind and then with the whole creation. This true Trinitarian life is mirrored in the bishop, the priest, and the deacon: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

As the Father directs the Son effects and the Spirit perfects, so the bishop acts by his two helpers, the priest and deacon. In all things he is the father. As God serves us by lovingly sacrificing Himself for us, even to the extreme point of dying on the Cross for us, so the bishop, priest and deacon are the servants of the servants of God, sacrificing themselves for God's people.

When we read and hear about the Church acting "conciliarly," this refers to the council of bishops who function, in their sacramental calling of reflecting Christ to their communities, like God who in the council of Himself as the Holy Trinity made man in His image, which we quoted above. Conciliarity also has to do with issues related to the teaching about what and who Christ is. Specifically, it derives its meaning from the seven ecumenical councils and the doctrines contained in them. The council of bishops did not make doctrines or create teachings about God, the Holy Trinity, Christ and the Holy Spirit. They expressed the revealed truth in written form to preserve it from error, in order to guard the spiritual lives of the people of God.

Conciliarity is dependent upon hierarchy, just as there is hierarchy in the Holy Trinity, where the first Person of the Trinity is the Father; the second Person is the Son; and the third Person is the Holy Spirit. In the Trinity, as in its reflection, the Church, the position of each Person does not determine the value of the Person. Though the Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity, this does not mean that He is less than the Second and First Persons. He contains the whole divine nature in Himself, as all the Persons do. His rank in no way diminishes His importance. All the Persons share in the same attributes, properties and powers of the divine nature, but each functions in a unique and distinct way in order to reveal that one, common nature, unity in diversity. So in the Church, the lay person shares in all the life of the Church as does the person of the bishop, but they do different things, fulfilling different roles for the good of each other.

Perhaps the misunderstanding of conciliar action in our culture can be traced to Western Christian teaching on the Trinity. In the West, the personal character of the Trinity seen in the paternal and personal monarchy of the Father within the Godhead was lost when the "filioque" clause was inserted into the Creed ("and from the son"). If the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son as from one source, then the distinction between the Father and the Son vanishes and they appear identical and interchangeable. If the Holy Spirit is the life of the Father and Son, holding them together, then He stands for all of Them, since Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all spirits. This sameness is then reflected in Western culture down to our own times. Democracy and conciliarity defined as equality of authority and decision, where no one person has a greater responsibility or authority than another, is an expression of this non-personal teaching about the Holy Trinity.

This understanding of authority comes from the history of Western religious thought. The Persons of the Holy Trinity are identical in their functions; divine actions seem automatic, impersonal and reflexive. This abstract quality of action is seen in modern democracy as the rule of law, or the legalistic society we live in. Decisions are made by committees and conferences and legislative bodies and in town meetings and in political party conventions. Inevitably, each decision is a compromised one that has aspects of various opinions without any personal dimension at all.

In Orthodoxy, authority is paternal, the decision and desire of a Father for the good of His Loved Ones. Our social and religious life is founded on the family, not on the floor of a representative body of legislators, or at the bar of justice before an objective judge forming opinion on a series of written laws. There is the family of the Trinity with the Father as the Head of His Son and Spirit. There is the father in family units. And there is the father of the bishop who stands in the middle of his children and praises God.

By Rev. Anthony Michaels

Fr. Anthony Michaels is pastor of St. John Chrysostom Church, Ft. Wayne, IN.

What is *Primary* to Orthodox Spirituality?

We would think that this would be an easy question to answer ... but if we ask around, we will get many different answers. Some will tell us that we need to know the Traditions of the Church. Some will say that we need to know the Bible, others may say we need to know the Saints, while still others recommend that we need to know the liturgical services. While all of these answers are excellent, how much do we need to know about these things to begin the Orthodox journey? Certainly, as we mature as adults, our understanding of these and many other important topics regarding the Orthodox faith should increase. But what is primary to begin and live the faith that will count us among the Orthodox believers?

**Consider this primary thought:
We must know who we are in our hearts.**

Inside every human is the heart, the rudder of our ship. It is the center of our being. It is the place where we converse with both God and ourselves. It is where we decide who we will be and what we will be like. It is the primary starting place for us to understand Orthodox spirituality.

The heart has been the main topic in the writings of poets, musicians, Valentine card authors, and Saints. We often use such phrases as “good hearted;” “a perfect heart,” “the heart of the matter;” “a hardened heart,” “a pure heart,” “a foolish heart” or “a broken heart.” Many of these expressions have come from the writers of the Bible. Indeed, the word “heart” or its derivative occurs almost 1000 times in the KJV of the Bible from the front cover to the end.

Do we need to be a theologian, a monk, a psychiatrist, or an intellectual to understand this? No, surely not. Most of what we need to know is just plain common sense. After all, no one can deny that we have this place in our being that makes us run. It is our personal identity. Our heart makes us who we are. It is easy to us to talk about the “heart of the problem.” Indeed, everyone has a heart to understand, and recognizing this is the first step to becoming identified with our Lord Jesus Christ.

The effects of sins of our hearts

My daughter just had a child. Holding him, I thought, “It is so difficult to believe that an infant’s heart is sinful.” Many

teach this, but not Orthodoxy. We do not believe that we are totally depraved, as many protestants do. Nor do we believe we are born with the guilt of sin, as the Romans teach. Instead, we are born in innocence and our heart is pure. To be sure, we all sin. Yet

some, as did our Lady the Theotokos, continue in purity of heart the rest of their lives, as blameless. Since our teaching is different than the Roman view, we did not need to invent a doctrine of Immaculate Conception. Mary, the Theotokos, was as human as we are, yet morally pure throughout her life. We are all born in the same condition and we have the choice to keep our hearts pure and directed towards God, or to sin and rebel against the purity of a loving heart. Our lives become a continual struggle to conform our hearts to purity and holiness. Recognize this, and we are on our way to becoming Orthodox. Saint John Chrysostom puts it this way: “When Christ says to follow the narrow path, he addresses every man. The monk as well as the lay person can attain the same spiritual heights.”

Some, however, in spite of the effects of sin on humanity, are born in this blameless state and may continue for their lifetime. To be clear, Jesus Christ is the only Sinless One. Yet, these that I am thinking of, the mentally or physically incapable, will never be responsible for what they think in their hearts or turn into actions. God’s mercy is given to them in a very special way. For the rest of us, we must consider these things to the best of our abilities. We are all held accountable to the light we are given. For most of us, certainly those reading this essay, are able to mature and develop and make progress this center of our being, the heart. Just as Adam and Eve, we are given the choice about what we put into our hearts



and can determine what our hearts are like. Simply put, this is the first step to becoming an Orthodox Christian. Often with baby steps, our initial decision continues increasingly throughout our lives. This is the process of becoming Orthodox: Becoming God-like by restoring the likeness of God in our hearts and our daily lives.

So, do we want to decide to develop the likeness of God in our hearts?

Often, maybe most often, we choose in our hearts, to turn from God's way to our own but let's say we want to become like God. Or, we may out of complacency shrug these words off, and do nothing at all. After all, we have more important things to do with our time. But, if we are to take this all to heart, what do we do next? St. John the Baptist tell us, "Repent and be baptized." Orthodoxy teaches us that this is the first step to entering His Church. The Church also teaches us that repenting and remembering our baptism is an ongoing activity for us each day. We can be helped from both the writings of the Saints and the Bible. In fact we should not overlook the examples of good hearts that are around us every day.. With this help, the truth of "*As a man thinketh in his heart so is he*" (Proverbs 23:7) becomes a reality.

In the classic writing "*Unseen Warfare*" written in the 16th century by the priest Lorenzo Scupoli, and revised by St. Theophan, we learn of the peacefulness of the heart, and that our foremost directions of the heart is towards peace. "So strive above all things to establish and make firm the peaceful state of your heart. All your virtues, all actions and endeavors should be directed towards achieving this peace, and especially your valiant feats of struggling against the enemies or your salvation: Make it your whole care that your inner state should be in accordance with God, and you will vanquish your outer passion."

In "*The Art of Prayer: An Orthodox Anthology*," we read: "Activities are not the main thing in life. The most important thing is to have the heart directed and attuned to God. Learn to perform everything you do in such a way that it warms the heart instead of cooling it. Whether reading or praying, working or talking with others, you should hold fast to this one aim — not to let your heart grow cool. Keep your inner stove always hot by reciting a short prayer, and watch over your feelings in case they dissipate this warmth. External impressions are very rarely in harmony with inner work." And "Look to yourself, and have more concern with the heart.

The Saints often talk of a more informal contemplative

approach, which is often missing from the busy lives of the digital society in which we now live. St. Theophan the Recluse, in *The Path to Salvation*, reminds us: "True self-knowledge is to see one's own defects and weaknesses so clearly that they fill our whole view. And mark this — the more you see yourself at fault and deserving of every censure, the more you will advance. Until the soul is established with the mind in the heart, it does not see itself, nor is it properly aware of itself."

St. Anthony the Great recommends this norm for those who want to improve their hearts. His prescription allows all of us as we do mundane tasks everyday, to talk to God. Every monk or nun has a task to carry out in the course of the twenty-four hours. Since these tasks are a matter of routine, they do not demand any special attention; and so the hands can be at work while the mind converses with God and thus feeds the heart.

In the "*Early Fathers From the Philokalia*" we read: "So, if a man lacks extreme humility, if he is not humble with all his heart, all his mind, all his spirit, all his soul and body — he will not inherit the kingdom of God." A truly humble heart is an Orthodox heart. Humility, a subject all of its own, is what Orthodox Christians must learn to develop from the outset and continue to develop for a lifetime.

This is a very long passage from St. Theophan the Recluse, "*The Path to Salvation*," but I cannot say it better:

"Just as friction causes warmth, so do good works warm the heart. Without them a good spirit also grows cold and evaporates. This is what usually befalls those who do not do anything, or those who limit themselves to merely not doing evil and unrighteousness. No, we must also find good works to do. Incidentally, there are also those who make too much fuss over their works, and therefore quickly exhaust themselves and dissipate the spirit. Everything should be done in moderation. And ... developing the heart means developing within it a taste for things holy, divine, and spiritual, so that when it finds itself amidst such things it would feel as though it were in its element. Finding them sweet and blessed, it would be indifferent to all else, with no taste for anything else; and even more — it would find anything else revolting. All of man's spiritual activity centers in the heart. The truths are impressed in it, and good dispositions are rooted into it. But its main work is developing a taste for the spiritual, as we have shown. When the mind sees the whole spiritual world and its different components, various good beginnings ripen in the will. The heart, under

their influence, should taste sweetness in all of this and radiate warmth. This delight in the spiritual is the first sign of the regeneration of a soul deadened by sin. Therefore the heart's development is a very important point even in the early stages.

"The work directed at it is all of our Church services in all forms — common and personal, at home and in church — and it is mainly achieved through the spirit of prayer moving within it. Church services, that is, all the daily services, together with the entire arrangement of the church's icons, candles, censing, singing, chanting, movements of the clergy, as well as the services for various needs; then services in the home, also using ecclesiastical objects such as sanctified icons, holy oil, candles, holy water, the Cross, and incense — all of these holy things together acting upon all the senses — sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste — are the "cloths that wipe clean" the senses of a deadened soul. They are the strongest and the only reliable way to do it. The soul becomes deadened by the spirit of the world, and possessed by sin that lives in the world. The entire structure of our Church services, with their tone, meaning, power of faith, and especially the grace concealed within them, have an invincible power to drive away the spirit of the world. In freeing the soul from the world's onerous influence, it allows the soul to breathe freely and to taste the sweetness of spiritual freedom. Walking into church we walk into a completely different world, are influenced by it, and change according to it. The same thing happens when we surround ourselves with holy objects. Frequent impressions of the spiritual world more effectively penetrate within and more quickly bring about a transformation of the heart."

St. Peter tells to take action to add virtues to our whole being. As we understand, the knowledge that he is talking about is not merely head knowledge, but that knowledge that is spiritual and invasive to the heart, mind, soul and body. As a reminder, here is a passage from St. Peter's second epistle.

²Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped

the corruption that is in the world through lust. ⁵But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, ⁶to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. ⁸For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. ¹⁰Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; ¹¹for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In our heart, we need to return to God's way — become like Him. We need to do this continually, becoming more like God and less like self centered, self-aggrandizing, self-promoting individuals. God has given his people the many ways to become more like Him and to restore the likeness of God's ways in our hearts. Yes, this process is difficult. We all need help with it. But we are given the power of God, His grace and mercy, as well as His community, the Church to help us to mold our hearts anew in this process.

Begin the process of working on our hearts.

So, have we begun to know our hearts? Have we started working on our hearts to make them God-like? Are our hearts Orthodox? Or, are we more interested in knowing others hearts, or your own? Do we spend more time predicting the actions of others based upon how we perceive them in their hearts ... or do we spend more time considering our hearts, and predicting what our actions will be? Orthodox Christianity teaches us that we must be concerned about our own hearts. Help me to see my own sins and not to judge my brother. The disciplines of prayer and our services become important to continually maintain our hearts toward God. The mysteries of the church give to us to help us in this journey. Even in the mundane times of everyday life, our hearts can be directed to, and made more like God intended them to be. For **"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"** (Matthew 5:8).

by Rick Burns

Rich Burns is a member of St. Ignatius Mission, Mesa, AZ.

St. John the Divine

Oratorical Festival

Judges' Choice—
Thomas Somi

Diocese of Worcester and New England

The words of the Prophet Joel, spoken eight hundred years before the descent of the Holy Spirit, foretell the events of Pentecost. “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions” (Joel 2:28). Though they are ancient, these words remain relevant today, as we all face the challenge of accepting this blessed outpouring. Joel was an early prophet who proclaimed God’s supreme Lordship and judgment. On Pentecost, the first part of his prophecy is fulfilled with the manifestation of God’s Spirit. The second part of the prophecy will be fulfilled with the second Coming of Christ.

At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended on the twelve Disciples and those gathered in the Upper Room. On that day some three thousand souls were baptized. “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). Many of the main features of Orthodox worship — apostolic teaching, the Eucharist, and liturgical prayer — were present in the early Church, and they continue to be large components of today’s Divine Liturgy.

Before His Death and Resurrection, our Lord promised to send the Holy Spirit. In John 16:13, He proclaims, “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truths; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.” Jesus promises the Church that she will constantly be guided in truth. Consequently, the Church must trust the work of the Spirit, as the Spirit has worked through those who have gone before. Today, we must live in the manner that Joel once



foresaw, living in days “which the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad therein” (Psalms 117:24).

With the fulfillment of Christ’s promise of the Holy Spirit, the Church assumes more than mere institutional status. She is said to be “not an organization with mystery, but a mystery with organization.” St. Paul calls the Church “a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:22). The Church is the living body of Jesus Christ. She impacts the world and transforms those who live in her life and faith. She has been instructed to “stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle” (2 Thessalonians 2:15). This Holy Tradition consists of Jesus’ teachings to the Apostles, who, in turn, taught the Church under the Holy Spirit’s inspiration. As Orthodox Christians, we adhere, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to Holy Tradition as it is present in the Apostles’ writings and as the Tradition resides in the Church.

On the day of Pentecost, about three thousand people were initiated into the Body of Christ. Today, 250 million people in the world are Orthodox Christians. These numbers speak of the overwhelming growth of Orthodoxy over the past two millennia. The question we are left to ask ourselves now is: what is the current mission of the Church for you, me, and the people of North America and the world? Before we get to an answer, there is something that we must remember. We must remember that the doctrines taught by Christ and His disciples are to be safeguarded by “the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth” (1 Timothy 3:15); they are not subject to negotiation. Today’s Orthodox Church is fulfilling its responsibilities through organizations like the Church

Schools, Teen SOYO, Orthodox Christian Fellowship, Antiochian Women, the Fellowship of St. John the Divine, and the Order of St. Ignatius. Today's Church must always strive to meet the needs of children, teenagers, and adults — men and women. That is the mission of the Church and it is not subject to negotiation!

As Orthodox Christians, another question we must ask ourselves is: are we fulfilling our responsibilities to God and the Church? Have we accepted the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon us and the responsibilities that come with it? Orthodoxy is, in the words of Metropolitan PHILIP, "the best kept secret in America." While this quotation sounds encouraging to some, it also has a negative connotation. In North America, the Orthodox Church has been largely restricted to ethnic boundaries, not spreading much beyond the parishes of the committed immigrants that brought the Church to this land. In essence, factions exist within the different ethnic Orthodox Churches. In the future, we must work towards achieving a united Orthodox Church that is "the best given revelation in America." This is what WE are called upon to fulfill.

The Seven Ecumenical Councils, spanning the era from 325 to 787 A.D., represent seven of the greatest spiritual battles in the history of Christendom. They have illumined the path of our Church through the ages. They have fought against heresies, pagan teachings and practices, along with pretentious philosophical theories that are contrary to our Lord's revelations. Today's Orthodox Church faces many of the same challenges that existed centuries ago. She will continue to thrive as long as we — her members — embrace the three Christian virtues prescribed by Saint Nikolai Velimirovich: spiritual vision, moral discipline, and competition in doing good.

The Orthodox Church is and will continue to be transcendent as long as we develop and maintain the first of these virtues, spiritual vision. We have been taught to strive toward the realization and visualization of the Kingdom. The saints help us maintain the spiritual vision of the Kingdom of Heaven as our true fatherland, as the real goal of our travel and toil in this physical world. If we cannot easily open our eyes to the Kingdom, we must look through Christ, our telescope.

The second of St. Nikolai's Christian virtues — moral discipline — is the narrow path that leads to eternal life, to paradise. It is followed by obeying the words of Christ: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). To accomplish this tremendous task,

we must follow the path of the saints: prayer, meditation, humility, obedience, self-restraint, forgiveness, repentance, and sacrifice.

The third virtue, competition in doing good, affects our relationship to society. It is the highest "social" virtue. In his epistle to the Romans, St. Paul challenges us to "outdo" one another spiritually (Romans 12:10). Imagine if we tried to be more forgiving than others, more peaceful, more merciful, and more loving than others. All this would not be for the sake of pride, but for the sake of the Gospel, for the sake of our Lord Himself.

Spiritual vision, moral discipline, and competition in doing good — by adopting these virtues, we can develop the capacity to solve all the many political, social, and economic problems that we face. These virtues could help us develop Orthodox missions in non-Christian nations. These virtues will allow the fruits of Orthodoxy to be noticed, and people will recognize the pure heart beating in the chest of every Orthodox Christian.

Today, many Orthodox Christians in America face the challenge of uniting a divided Orthodox Church. During various periods of immigration, Orthodox people of every nationality — Greek, Serbian, Russian, Romanian, Syrian, and Albanian to name a few — came to North America. The first immigrants were simple, hard-working people, who delighted in their national music and food and in the spirituality of their ancestors. They were heroes in the truest sense of the word. The newer generation of immigrants admires the traditions of its forefathers, but it also craves the teachings and blessings of the Church.

We, the Antiochian Orthodox Christians of America, must continue to be leaders in the national Orthodox community. We must accept the challenge of receiving the Holy Spirit. Finally, as the Church continues to fulfill her duties to all people, we must maximize the opportunities and teachings that the Church offers. We must be oases in a desert — sources of spiritual refreshment for ourselves, one another, and for North America as a whole. We face a difficult challenge, but we must never stop asking that "He Who rose again from the dead, Christ our true God — through the intercessions of His all-immaculate and all-blameless Holy Mother ... will have mercy on us and save us, forasmuch as He is good and loveth mankind."

Thomas Somi is a member of St. George Cathedral, Worcester, MA.



Mr. Mansour Rayan carrying the Holy Light from the Holy Sepulcher on Holy Saturday with Judge Hani Natour and Mr. Ghanem Ghanem. urday with Judge Hani Natour and Mr. Ghanem Ghanem.



Mr. Mansour Rayan and Federation President, Mr. Michael Mufarreh with Mrs. Badeh Khalaf



archdiocesan *office*

Ramallah Federation and Antiochian Delegations Visit the Holy Land for Holy Week 2006

On Monday, April 17, a delegation of about one hundred members left for Amman, Jordan from Chicago, San Francisco, Detroit, San Diego, Los Angeles, Houston, Jacksonville, Louisville, Lexington, Washington, New York, and New Jersey. The next morning we flew from Amman to Tel Aviv Airport, where we were held for five hours in interrogation and then released.

We finally arrived in Ramallah in the afternoon, where we were greeted by the Mayor of Ramallah, Miss Janet Michael, the Ramallah representative, Miss Nijmeh Ganim, and her committee. We immediately began our tour and visitations of organizations, hospitals, orphanages, and Churches. Also, during the trip, Antiochian Archdiocese Board of Trustees member, Mr. Mansour Rayan, on behalf of His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP, distributed \$56,000 to various institutions, organizations, and needy families in the vicinity of Ramallah.

The Palestinian people are so thankful for the continued support year after year by His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP. For decades, Sayidna PHILIP has truly been a gracious help to the people of this troubled land of Palestine and, thus, a relentless witness to Christ's Gospel. May the Almighty God continue to bless him as he has been a blessing to countless people in dire need.

The delegation is also thankful for the generosity of George and Elaine Heider and for the support of Very Reverend Fathers Nicholas Dahdal and Constantine Nasr. Great appreciation and thanks also go to Federation President Michael Mufarreh for leading this delegation and making this trip a success.

Our agenda was full of activities, meetings, visits, and reflection, and we accomplished very much in very little time. However, we came back with memories and hearts more determined to continue this Christian responsibility of witness and contribution, led by His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP, and ultimately, serving our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The Delegation with the Mayor of Ramallah, Miss Janet Michael

Elevated

SANFORD, Priest Robert to the dignity of Archpriest by Bishop ANTOUN at St. Ignatius of Antioch Church, Franklin, TN, on August 27, 2006.

MEADOWS, Priest James to the dignity of Archpriest by Bishop ANTOUN at St. Peter Church, Madison, MS, on September 17, 2006.

SCHELVER, Priest Friedrich to the dignity of Archpriest by Bishop ANTOUN at St. Peter Church, Madison, MS, on September 17, 2006.

Ordinations

INGALLS, Methodios to the holy diaconate by Bishop BASIL at St. Sophia Church in Dripping Springs, TX, on September 17, 2006. He is assigned to that parish.

WAGGENER, Deacon Alban to the Holy Priesthood by Bishop THOMAS at the St. Ignatius Church at the Antiochian Village on September 23, 2006. He is assigned to the Mission of the Holy Trinity in Lynchburg, VA.

The people speak ...

August 28, 2006

Your Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the American Foundation for Saint George Hospital, we thank you for your tremendous support of Lebanon and its people during these difficult times, as the Lebanese rebuild their way towards recovery from a devastating war.

We are also extremely grateful for your generous and expeditious donation to His Eminence Metropolitan Elias Audi of Beirut to help him alleviate some of the suffering of our people. It will go a long way toward helping them carry out their mission and to helping meet the increasing demands of the people of Lebanon.

With your blessings, we are hopeful that in the future we can work together towards providing much needed assistance to Saint George Hospital. It is our commitment to keep Saint George Hospital a haven to turn to in times of need. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of any help.

Sincerely yours,
Amin Barakat

American Foundation for
St. George Hospital

Ramallah — Pascha 2006

The Most Reverend Metropolitan
PHILIP Saliba

Your Eminence,

Greetings to you, the Board of Trustees, and your entire Archdiocese on this occasion of our Lord's resurrection.

Once again, the Holy Land and its children have received with gratitude a new wave of your noble generosity. You have sent, yet again, one of our beloved sons and your Board of Trustee member, Mr. Mansour Rayan, who participated with us in all the services of Holy Week, Holy Saturday, and the Paschal Feast. The funds we have received from you during this visit have been sent to charitable institutions and needy families in the Holy Land.

Your Eminence, we cannot present enough gratitude and thanks for remembering your children in the Holy Land. This tells you have always been with us. God grant you health and many years. I, also, would like to thank Mr. Rayan, the members of your delegation, and all your beloved in your Archdiocese.

Your Son In Christ,
Andre Zarour,
Palestine

Review of *The Divine Liturgy of the Holy Orthodox Church of Antioch*

Subdeacon Karim El-Far makes available this audio CD of liturgical music. *The Divine Hymnal* is the corresponding music to the CD of the Divine Liturgy, chanted in English by the beautiful choir of Mount Lebanon and the School of Ecclesiastical Music (SEM). Each time I listen to that CD I am reminded how truly "other-worldly" the worship of the Orthodox Faith is. The music truly elevates the souls of its hearers to the Kingdom of God. It is even more stunning to know that Byzantine Chant can be done so well in the English language.

As an avid lover of Byzantine Chant, I find that the hymnal is filled with wonderful music that perfectly embodies the ethos of our Antiochian tradition. Furthermore, it has enabled me to teach my parishioners Byzantine notation on actual text in the English language. The layout with the Byzantine notation directly above the Western notation has proffered a wonderful opportunity for comparison between the two types of notation for the student beginning Byzantine Chant. This hymnal will be instrumental in the education of proper Byzantine Music in America.

For more information, <http://www.kelfar.net/orthodoxiaradio>, orthodoxiaradio@kelfar.net.

by Fr. Christopher Salamy

The Orthodox World



As Congress Debates Geneva Convention, Religious Leaders Say, “No More Torture”

Washington, DC — As Congress debates the meaning of provisions of the Geneva Convention, religious and human rights leaders are repeating their plea to eliminate torture as a tool of U.S. policy.

The statement, signed by the general secretary of the National Council of Churches USA and 26 other national leaders, is published as a full-page advertisement in “Roll Call,” the Capitol Hill newspaper. The ad was originally published in the *New York Times* on June 3, 2006.

The statement, “Torture is a Moral Issue,” proclaims that torture violates the basic dignity of the human person that all religions hold dear.

“There are few other issues on which the NCC’s 35 member communions are more united,” said NCC General Secretary Bob Edgar. “The use of torture or other dehumanizing measures is diametrically contrary to the love of God and the gospel of Jesus. One of the ideals of the United States is to stand in the world as a bastion against torture.”

Shepherded by the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT), the statement is signed by national religious leaders, including the Rev. Edgar, Nobel laureates President Jimmy Carter and Elie Wiesel, Rev. Ted Haggard, president of the National Association of Evangelicals, Theodore Cardinal McCarrick, Archbishop of Washington, D.C., and Rev. Joseph Lowery, co-founder of the Southern Christian

Leadership Conference.

Other signatories include Dr. Rick Warren, Rabbi David Saperstein, Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, Dr. Frank Thomas, pastor and editor of *The African-American Pulpit*, and Dr. Sayyid Syeed, National Director of the Islamic Society of North America.

NRCAT bridges theological and political divides by uniting mainstream Protestants and evangelical Christians, Muslims with Reform and Conservative Jews, Orthodox and Roman Catholics, Sikhs and members of peace churches.

Fifty-four national, regional and local religious organizations and congregations have already joined NRCAT. NRCAT will continue the “Torture is a Moral Issue” campaign by encouraging people of faith across the country to endorse the statement by visiting www.nrcat.org.

Jeanne E. Herrick-Stare, the chair of the Coordinating Committee of NRCAT and a member of the staff of the Friends Committee on National Legislation, stated that NRCAT is publishing this ad in “Roll Call” because “Congress is now considering legislation that would no longer make it a war crime to inflict brutal, inhuman and degrading treatment on a prisoner. The legislation would allow coerced testimony to be used in trials of detainees. It would strip

detainees of the right to challenge their detention before independent courts, meaning individuals could languish in prison without trial indefinitely.”

Herrick-Stare added, “It would enable detainees to be convicted of capital crimes without seeing the evidence used against them. And the legislation would exonerate, retroactively, any U.S. official who participated in torture since our invasion of Afghanistan.”

Dr. George Hunsinger, the founder of NRCAT and a professor of theology at Princeton Theological Seminary said, “NRCAT urges Congress to stand by the Geneva Conventions and the moral grounding with which our country has governed itself for well over 200 years.”

Contact: Jeanne Herrick-Stare, 202-547-6000 ext. 2513 or jeanne@fcln.org, Rev. Richard Killmer, 207-846-9963 or killmerrp@aol.com, both for the National Religious Campaign Against Torture.

NCC News contact: Rev. Daniel Webster, 212-870-2252, news@ncc-cusa.org



Helen answers questions and explains how it's done.



Helen cooks for Ladies of St. George



Helen cooking at Melanie's home for Ladies of St. George.

From Saint George Orthodox Church, Spring Valley, Illinois

The Ladies of St. George of Spring Valley, Illinois invited award-winning cookbook author Helen Corey, of St. George Orthodox Church, Terre Haute, Indiana, to spend a few days with them, visit their historic church, attend several book signings, and share an evening of cooking together under her direction. The president of the ladies group, Dottie Malooley, planned the visit with her good friend Helen.

Helen had a tour of our church and she was impressed with the love of faith that encircled the members. She commented, "It doesn't take a cathedral to instill the love and faith shown by these faithful members who worship with prayers daily, following the footsteps of their grandparents."

It's All About Koosa was the title chosen for an evening of cooking and healthy eating in the home of Melanie Malooley Thompson, Dottie's daughter. Using the last of their parishioners' crop of Koosa (summer squash), the ladies had a hands-on experience preparing stuffed koosa, ijit koosa, imnazalee, and more. The ladies added an American finish of *Koosa Desserts*, including koosa pie, chocolate cake roll made with koosa, also koosa brownies and bread. Father

Gregory Buss, pastor, his Khouriye Katherine, and 24 women enjoyed the array of delicious dishes they made together.

At the conclusion of the dinner party, on behalf of the church and the Ladies of St. George, Dottie Malooley presented

through our gift to her. She was touched by our religiously significant and historical gift to her.

In addition to her cooking class, Helen had a full agenda of media interviews and two book signings on her national award-winning book, *Healthy Syrian and Lebanese Cooking*, during her stay.

She also had a brief tour of the first Eastern Orthodox

Cemetery in the United States, established by members of the parish soon after they arrived in Spring Valley. Reverend Seraphim Nassar is buried in this cemetery.

Little did Helen know the spark of energy she would leave with our ladies, the new friends we would bring into her life, and the interest and exposure she brought to our St. George Orthodox Church through her visit with us in the Illinois Valley.

Dottie presents Helen with a special gift from the members of the Ladies of St. George

communities *in action*

Helen with a collector's copy of the first translation of the *Book of Divine Prayers and Services of the Catholic Orthodox Church*. The translation was accomplished in Spring Valley under the direction of the Archimandrite Seraphim Nassar, the first full-time priest of this parish, in 1938.

Three young women of the parish, the Abraham sisters, Mary, Elizabeth, and Sadie, completed the typing of the manuscript. The daughters of Sadie Abraham Ziady, Genie Sanders and Anysia Medawar, added a brief history of the translation. Also attending was Elizabeth Abraham Forsa's daughter-in-law, Lynette Forsa. (Antony Bashir, a director on the Archdiocesan Board, is the son of Mary Abraham Bashir). Helen has faithfully included the religious traditions and foods of the Orthodox Catholic Church in her cookbooks, and we wanted to share a part of our church history with her



BACK TO THE VILLAGE FOR WINTER CAMP



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- IOCC
- Antiochian House of Studies
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- Balamand Theological Academy
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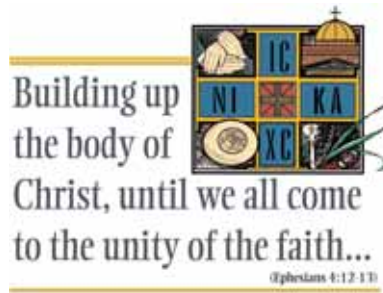
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