

Winter 2012

Jacob's well

Translation as a Means of Grace





*"Give me this water,
that I may not thirst . . ."*
John 4:15

Published with the Blessing of
his Grace Michael,
Bishop of New York
Diocese of New York & New Jersey

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Everyone a Translator

by Fr. John Shimchick

“Translation is the core of missionary work.” (St Nicholas of Japan, Equal of the Apostles)

Shipwrecked on his way to Kamchatka in 1861, Archbishop Innocent Veniaminov ended up in Hakodate, Japan with a three week layover. There he renewed his acquaintance with a young hieromonk, Nicholas Kasatkin, the recently assigned chaplain to the Russian Consulate. Innocent observed with dismay that the mission’s lack of success and Kasatkin’s waning enthusiasm had led him to pass the time reading some French and German books available in the consulate’s library. “Throw those books away!” Innocent advised him. “They’re of no use to you here. Instead study Japanese diligently” (Paul Garrett).

Taking Innocent’s directive seriously he spent 8 years learning Japanese and studying “Japanese history, religion, and the spirit of the people in order to discover to what degree the enlightenment of Japan through Orthodox evangelism would be possible” (Alexei Potapov). Then over the next 30 years he dedicated several hours nearly each day to the task of translating the Scriptures (finishing the New Testament and most of the Old), liturgical texts, and other materials into Japanese. So determined were his efforts that when Bishop Seraphim Sigrist arrived in Japan in the late 1960’s there were more liturgical resources available in Japanese than in English. He was canonized in 1970 with the title, “St Nicholas, Equal of the Apostles, Apostle to Japan.”

One could say, as in most things, the primary example of a translator is Jesus Christ, for to translate can mean “to transfer a person from one place or plane of existence to another, from earth to heaven.” Bishop Michael in his article reminds us that in her “Falling Asleep” (the Dormition), Mary, the Mother of Life, “is translated to life by the one who dwelt in her virginal womb.” All translated words must lead to the discovery of that “life, which is life indeed” (1 Timothy 6:19).

For some, the missionary task will bring them like St Nicholas to the vocation of being a professional translator, one who literally “carries and brings across” words and images from one language to another. We are honored to feature the personal reflections on this work by Professor Anthony Gythiel, probably our generation’s most prolific translator of books on Orthodoxy and Eastern Christianity into English.

Bringing the dogmatic, spiritual, and liturgical resources of Orthodoxy into the language of whatever missionary field is essential. Fr John Meyendorff wrote that, “the policy of translating Scripture and all ecclesiastical literature into languages understandable by the peoples converting to Christianity was characteristic of the Orthodox east, and a contrast with the West.” But those of us in communities who utilize English exclusively can acknowledge that the translation effort does not end once materials are available in an understandable language. Eugene Peterson, the remarkable writer on spirituality and the pastoral life and the translator of a popular version of the Bible, *The Message*, has observed that vocationally he, but also every pastor, lives in “two language worlds, the world of the Bible and the world of Today... getting the language of the Bible that God uses to create and save us, heal and bless us, judge and rule over us, translated into the language of Today, that we use to gossip and tell stories, give directions and do business, sing songs, and talk to our children” (*The Pastor*, 303). Every pastor must be a translator. In this issue, we present how this is being accomplished in the efforts of our Diocesan pastors and parishes.

But it is also fair to say that each of us, no matter our level of language proficiency, is called - as has every Christian before us - to be translators, to put into words, stories, and by the example of our lives, the faith and the life given by Jesus to his disciples, and through them to us and to everyone else.

Finally, our theme, “Translation as a Means of Grace,” is borrowed and adapted from a talk given in 1987 by Professor Jaroslav Pelikan as part of a series entitled, “Spiritual Quests: The Art and Craft of Religious Writing.” In his presentation, “Writing as a Means of Grace,” Pelikan spoke about Augustine, Newman, and Boethius “in whose lives the mystery of the word, of its communication through speech and especially through writing, played a decisive role,... [making] their writing a means of grace for themselves and for others.” Our concern in this issue is thus to explore how the work of translation can provide a means of grace for all of us as translators and to those with whom we share the words of Christ (the Word) and the life to which he translates us.

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Professor Pelikan's article, "Writing as a Means of Grace" is available at "Supplements" - Jacob's Well section: nynjoca.org

Translated from Life to Life

by Bishop Michael



Fr Gregory Kroug

*In giving birth, you preserved your virginity,
In falling asleep you did not forsake the world, O Theotokos!
You were translated to life, O Mother of Life,
And by your prayers you deliver our souls from death.
– Troparion for Dormition of the Theotokos (August 15)*

*Neither the tomb, nor death could hold the Theotokos,
Who is constant in prayer and our firm hope in her intercession.
For being the Mother of Life,
She was translated to life by the One who dwelt in her virginal womb.
– Kontakion for the Dormition of the Theotokos*

The passage of a Christian soul from earthly life to life eternal, from struggling against sin and temptation to rejoicing eternally at the throne of the Most Holy Trinity, is revealed as a possibility for all people by Our Lord in the passage from St. John's Gospel that is read at every funeral service (John 5:24-30). And, the hymns to the Mother of God sung at the glorious celebration of her Falling-Asleep, of her reception in both body and soul into Heaven, affirm that she was indeed granted that translation from life to life that her Son made possible.

Like her, and like so many Saints – those revealed to the whole Church and those known thus far only to God – we, too, have the potential to be “translated from life to life.” This journey, this spiritual translation, is accomplished only by the grace of God, and requires of us no more and no less than living a life that is reflective of that grace. The uncreated grace of God that was lit like a pilot light within us at our Baptism, is renewed in us whenever we participate, with fitting preparation and an attitude of humility and thanksgiving, in His holy and precious Body and Blood. His grace heals us when we seek the Sacrament of Holy Anointing in times of physical or spiritual sickness; and even when we neglect or ignore that grace through missing the mark with our sins, He receives us back and restores His grace within us by means of the Mystery of Confession.

Not long ago we heard read in church the Gospel Parable of the Great Banquet, where those who were invited first rejected that invitation with petty excuses. The master insisted that his banquet hall be filled, and so he sent his servants to scour the surrounding highways and hedges in search of anyone and everyone who would honor his invitation. The

Master, we know, is Our Lord; the Banquet, we know, is His Mystical Supper – offered every Sunday and every time the Liturgy is celebrated in our parishes and monasteries. And what is more, that Banquet is brought even to those who are too ill to come to church – in hospitals, in nursing facilities, even in their own homes – if only they desire it. How then could we even conceive of shrinking back when the Chalice is brought forth for us to “take ... eat”?

Let us, rather, resolve in this New Year to partake joyfully, gratefully and frequently of what our Pre-Communion Prayers rightly call the “provision for the journey of eternal life.” Saint John Chrysostom tells us that like the beggar Lazarus, who was carried directly to the bosom of Abraham by virtue of the meekness and humility with which he lived, we too have the possibility of being carried straight to Heaven by the Lord's angels if we pass from this life having received Holy Communion, with contrition of heart, in the days before our death. Let us strive to make the life we live in between our encounters with the Lord's Body and Blood, a life worthy of those great and holy Gifts. And let us be hopeful that like our Most Blessed Mother, and like the innumerable sinners-turned-Saints whose prayers for us fill the heavens, we too might be found worthy of that blessed “translation” – from life to life.

The Lord offers us that hope in His stirring words of the Gospel of Saint John: “Amen, Amen, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life” (John 5:24).

Translation as a Means of Grace

by Professor Anthony Gythiel

I taught medieval history at Wichita State University, KS, and I am a translator. When I get stuck in a stubborn paragraph, I say a short Latin prayer to the Holy Spirit: “*Veni, Sancte Spiritus; et emitte coelitus lucis tuae radium. Veni, pater pauperum; veni, dator munerum; veni, lumen cordium.*” “Come, Holy Spirit, and send a ray of your heavenly light. Come, Father of the poor. Come, Giver of gifts, Come, Light of the hearts.”

In this article, I will first deal briefly with my own life, and then with one key aspect of patristic theology that continues to attract me. After discussing the practice of translation, I will answer questions that may arise. I was a tenured member of the faculty, but my life lacked a sense of direction. And then, mindful of the words of Socrates (c. 469-399 B.C.E.) in Plato’s *Apology* that “the unexamined life is not worth living,” I concluded that I had not really used the gift God had given me, that of languages. I had studied ten. Instead of going to church on Sundays, I listened to classical music, or read poetry by the German poets Rilke or Hölderlin. Then, unexpectedly, a former student invited me to Pascha at St George Orthodox Church. I converted to Orthodoxy in 1981.

I translate books out of a deep respect for Tradition. I know that various definitions may be given of that venerable word “Tradition,” but the one I like best is offered by the fifth-century French monk Vincent of Lérins in his renowned *Commonitorium* (c. 434). Using Latin, the language of his day, Vincent writes: “*Id teneamus quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est.*” In translation, “We use the greatest care to hold what has been believed everywhere, always, and by all.” (*Documents of the Christian Church*, ed. by H. Bettenson [1963] 84).

A concept that is essential in understanding Orthodoxy is that of “the heart.” Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335-394) wrote: “God is promised to the vision of those whose heart has been purified. *But No man hath seen God* at any time, as says the great John...[God] is the slippery, steep rock that affords no basis for our thoughts” (*Ancient Christian Writers* 18 [1954] 143, translated by Hilda Graef). And thus, God cannot be “understood” by the mind, though He can be understood by the heart, and be

loved. In the text, *On the Soul and the Resurrection*, Macrina, Gregory’s sister, states admirably, “*hé de gnósis agapé ginetai,*” “knowledge becomes love” (*The Fathers of the Church* [1967] 240, translated by Virginia W. Callahan). Another possible translation might be “Love itself becomes knowledge”—“*Amor ipse fit cognitio,*” as was said in the Latin Middle Ages. There is an intellectual knowledge, and there is also knowledge as an experience of God in the heart, by grace.

Eastern spirituality appeals to the heart. We learn about “guarding of the heart” (in Greek, *phulaké kardias*; in Latin, *custodia cordis*), vigilance or watchfulness of the heart (*népsis*), purity of the heart (in Latin, *puritas cordis*), and *kardiognésis* (Greek for knowledge of the heart). In Scripture, the heart (*lev*, in Hebrew) is the point of contact between God and the human being. It gives stability to the successive, fleeting moments of life. In *Orthodox Spirituality* (1994), Bishop Hierotheos succinctly states that “the heart is the place . . . wherein God is revealed” (35). And to repeat what Tomaš Špidlík says in volume two of *The Spirituality of the Christian East* (2005, *Cistercian Studies Series* 206), while commenting on Theophan the Recluse’s view of the degree of kinship between the human being and God (*srodstvo*, as Theophan says), “To be attentive to the voice of this ‘connaturality’ is to perceive the divine mysteries . . . as they enter our lives. The heart then becomes a wellspring of revelation” (258).

Moving away from the heart, let us now deal with “the head,” and the more technical aspects of translation. And thus, we ask, “exactly, what is translation?” It is not a mechanical act, like pouring wine from one bottle into another; nor is it a “reproduction” (in French, *un calque*). Rather, it is *the process* by which the original

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St Jerome,
the Patron Saint of Translators

text, conventionally called “the Source Text,” is rewritten into its “dynamic equivalent” (the “Target Text”). This means that the crux of the translation process consists in writing a new version that shows fidelity (in German, *Sinntrueue*) to the original. A good translator, then, does not render word for word (in Latin, *verbum de verbo*) but always meaning for meaning (*sensus pro sensu*), as St Jerome (c. 340-420), the patron saint of translators, stated. Finding the correct meaning is a major task performed by the human translator, not by a machine. The unit of translation is always the paragraph, not the individual line.

One may ask, “What, then, is a translator?” Someone who rewrites “a book-in-itself” as “a book-for-others. Translators provide an important service to the reader—that of removing barriers. Translators make bridges. Translators work in the spaces between languages, and in so doing, provide a new perspective, a new way of thinking across language barriers.

If someone were to say, “I recently read that ‘a translation is an interpretation’”—would you agree? I might add that before making the translation, the translator performs an *interpretive reading* of the original text. Like everything we do, including the gestures we make, reading, almost by definition, involves “interpretation.” The translator does a great deal of research into the significance of certain words at a given historical period and in a certain cultural or religious ambiance (the German word is *Umwelt*, “the surrounding world”). What we should remember, then, is that a theological translation must always be faithful to the original. As stated earlier, this is the requirement of fidelity, of *Sinntrueue* (*Zingetrouwheid*, in Dutch). A translator interacts with words, but he must always follow the road traveled by the author, just as the latter should follow the direction indicated by Scripture, the Church Fathers, and by Christ. The direction is always to the East: “*Ex Oriente lux*. Light comes from the East.” To conclude, then, a translator is *not* free to “recreate the original,” or distort the basic text by his own interpretation. If he does, he deserves the reproach of the Italian play on words, *Traddutore-Traditore* (“Translator-Traitor”).

The reader may wonder, “Are you working on something currently?” At present, in view of a translation, I am rereading a key work by the French Jesuit Jean Cardinal Daniélou (1905-1974), who defended his doctoral dissertation on Gregory of Nyssa (c.335-394) at the Sorbonne, Paris, in 1943. Together with Völker, the German scholar, Daniélou launched a Gregory of Nyssa renaissance in Europe in the 1950s, with the publication of a series of articles in scholarly Journals. He views Gregory as the real founder of mystical theology, defined as “a sensing of God in the soul.” The title of Daniélou’s study is *Platonisme et théologie mystique. La doctrine spirituelle de saint Grégoire de Nysse* (Aubier [1944] 326 pages). In translation, *Platonism and Mystical Theology. The Spiritual Doctrine of Saint Gregory of Nyssa*. This is an important work.



St. Luke;
Fr. Gregory Kroug

In *Ancient Christian Writers* number 18 (New York [1954]), Hilda C. Graef, the translator, states that “It is only in recent times that Gregory of Nyssa has been rediscovered as an ascetical and mystical writer of the highest importance, witness the brilliant study which Père Daniélou devoted to this side of his work” (6). My translation will hopefully be the only truly *comprehensive work* available in English on *all* aspects of Gregory’s mystical theology. Is this arrogance? No, because of

the warning given by Bernardus Silvestris (eleventh century) that the translator is only “a dwarf sitting on the shoulder of the giant.”

Someone may ask, “Is there a certain author’s work that you particularly enjoyed translating?” I would reply by mentioning, if I may, not one but two authors, the first being Tomaš Špidlík (1919-2010), a Jesuit Cardinal of the Roman Church, and professor of Eastern Patristics in Rome. I never met him, though I briefly corresponded with him. He knew Eastern theology superbly well; he was the star student of his professor, Irénée Hausherr, from Brussels, Belgium, a pioneer in the teaching of Eastern spirituality at the Pontifical Institute of Oriental studies in Rome. I translated two of Špidlík’s works: *The Spirituality of the Christian East*, Volume One (1986) and Volume Two (2005). We remember that an excerpt from Špidlík’s book, *The Art of Purifying the Heart* is found on pages

26-27 of the Spring 2011 issue of *Jacob's Well*. Špidlík viewed the Church, not in terms of a historically false Roman triumphalism ("We are the true church"), but as part of the tradition of the universal, undivided Church, the mystical body, an extension of the body of Christ. He liked the word *tserkovnost'*, a word that is hard to translate, "a sense of Church, the desire and the will to live with and in her" (*The Spirituality*, vol. one, 157). Every author has his favorite vocabulary. Špidlík was very fond of using the term mysticism. There is, he stated, "the mysticism of the Church," "the mysticism of light," "the mysticism of events," and the "mysticism of the heart." (Index, *The Spirituality*, vol. two, 500).

The second author I enjoyed translating is Paul Evdokimov (1901-1970), a Russian lay theologian, who may be viewed as the real bridge between East and West. Born in 1901, in St Petersburg, Evdokimov first went to military school, and in 1918, attended the Academy of theology in Kiev. After the Revolution, his family settled in Paris in 1923, where he studied at the Sorbonne. In 1942, he completed his doctorate at the University of Aix-en-Provence with a dissertation on Dostoevsky. He obtained a second Doctorate in theology from the St Sergius Institute, in Paris, in 1965. Together with figures such as Nicholas Afanasiev, Sergius Bulgakov, Elisabeth Behr-Sigel, and others, Evdokimov belongs to the group of émigré scholars in Paris who created what is often called "the Russian theological Renaissance." Today, this important movement is being studied more and more, as is evidenced by the *Cambridge Companion to Orthodox Christian Theology* (2008). I translated three of Evdokimov's books: *Le sacrement de l'amour. The sacrament of Love* (SVS Press, 1985), *La femme et le salut du monde. Woman and the Salvation of the World. A Christian Anthropology of the Charisms of Women* (SVS Press, 1994), and his almost monumental *Orthodoxie. Orthodoxy: the Transformed Cosmos*, which is In Press by Eighth Day Books in Wichita, KS.

Finally, one may wonder, "Why write translations at all?" Here is the answer: we translate because translations help raise the level of historical literacy among the readers. Also, we translate because of our love of words and of rhetoric or structure. As the heirs of Plato and Homer, most

Church Fathers, educated in the classical tradition, wrote well. That is, they said simple things simply and complex things clearly.

God's grace was revealed to me in the form of two presses for which I would translate books: St Vladimir's Seminary Press in Crestwood, NY, and Cistercian Publications, then at Western Michigan University, in Kalamazoo, MI. I am deeply aware that God's grace has been at work in my life as a professor and translator, and for this I bow my head in gratitude. I also know that my life does not yet form a complete unity, and that this will be an ongoing struggle until my death.



St. John;
Fr. Gregory Kroug

The thirteen books I have translated were written in French or German by great scholars: Irénée Hausherr and his Czech student, Tomáš Špidlík, both of whom taught Eastern spirituality in Rome; the Russians Boris Bobrinskoy, Paul Evdokimov, Bishop Krivochéine, and Leonid Ouspensky; Placide Deseille, a French Cistercian monk first at Bellefontaine and later at Aubazine in south-central France. In 1977, he and his community joined the Orthodox Church on Mount Athos; and Gabriel Bunge, the Benedictine specialist on Evagrius of Pontus (343-399), who has recently been received into the Orthodox Church, in Russia. I worked with Fr John Meyendorff, the renowned Orthodox Church historian, in the sense that I translated several books which Fr Meyendorff had recommended to the Board of Publications at St Vladimir's Seminary. Also, together with Professor and now Fr John Erickson, I edited Meyendorff's book, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions: The Church 450-680 A.D.* (SVS Press [1989]), a work which Jaroslav Pelikan, then at Yale University, described as "a remarkable achievement."

Why, then, are the books written by these giants of learning and holiness so important? Because they clarify the Tradition of the Fathers, and in this context, we can never emphasize too strongly that Western or Latin-speaking Christendom originated from the Greek Tradition, as a branch grows from a tree. The tree came first. Also, translators are very conscious of the fact that what they do is part of the always needed "return to the sources" (in French, *ressourcement*). We know what these sources of grace are: Scripture and the Patristic Testimony. The main virtue a translator should cultivate is

that of obedience: to Christ (2 Cor 10:5), to the Tradition, and especially the mind of the Fathers. It cannot be denied that translators help to make patristic theology relevant to our modern world.

As second author (in Latin, *auctor secundus*), the translator is an earthly channel of God's grace, linking one culture, religious or social, to another. The discipline required by translation, and the grace linked to the transmission of texts have created a certain unity in my life. And I know that some of my translations have helped certain readers find the grace of God in the center of the soul, their heart, where God meets the human being. It is well worth repeating that, while reading a text, one may become conscious of the grace of God.

Translators open new worlds of ideas, and yet, in the end, both the believer and the translator must, like Timothy (1 Tim 6:20), "guard the deposit." This too is a work of grace, to be performed not only by the hierarchy—bishops, priests, deacons, monks and nuns—but by believers the world over.

The words the French author, Georges Bernanos (1888-1948), wrote in one of his novels, "*Tout est grâce. Everything is grace*," apply in particular to the slow, painstaking work of translation. But we can perform this labor of love because our sluggish

mind (in Greek, *nous*) is illumined by the Holy Spirit. Hence the crucial importance of the words of prayer from the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts: "Enlighten the eyes of our hearts with your truth."

Professor Gythiel was born in Belgium, and lost part of his family (mother, grandmother) to Nazi bombardment as the War broke out. He lived in Flanders, almost on the French border, on the way to Dunkirk, in Northern France and then lost everything in the revolution of June 1960, in Zaire, Africa, the former Belgian Congo, now called the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where he worked as a Catholic missionary. Coming to the United States he obtained the MA and then the PhD in 1971 in medieval comparative studies from the University of Detroit. He married, became an American citizen in 1968, and was tenured in the English department at Wichita State University, in KS; received various Teaching Awards (four altogether), and in 1993 became of Full Professor in the Department of History. He converted to Orthodoxy in 1981. On May 21, 2008, he received an Honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from St Vladimir's Seminary in Crestwood, NY. for his translation work. His most recent translation – *Despondency: The Spiritual Teaching of Evagrius of Pontus*, by Gabriel Bunge – will be available from SVS Press in early 2012.

Discount Available on Selected Works

As a tribute to Professor Gythiel's translating efforts, St Vladimir's Seminary Press will make the following books available at a 20% discount until the end of February. Please call: (800) 204-2665 and give the code: AGJW.



The works are:

- Bunge, *Despondency: The Spiritual Teaching of Evagrius of Pontus*
- Bunge, *Dragon's Wine and Angel's Bread*
- Evdokimov, *Sacrament of Love*
- Evdokimov, *Woman and the Salvation of the World*
- Ouspensky, *Theology of the Icon*, vol. 1 (Professor Gythiel revised the translation) and fully translated vol. 2. These are usually sold as a set.

Likewise Cistercian Press will also make the following available at a 20% discount until the end of February. Please call: (800) 436-8431 and give the code: 80B.

- Hausherr, Irene. *Spiritual Direction in the Early Christian East*. Introduction by Bishop Kallistos Ware.
- Spidlik, Tomas. *The Spirituality of the Christian East: A Systematic Handbook*
- Spidlik, Tomas. *The Spirituality of the Christian East*, Vol. 2.

CISTERCIAN PUBLICATIONS

Texts and Studies in the Monastic Tradition

Reflections on the 16th All American Council

Fr Joseph Woodill – Pastor, St Nicholas Church, Whitestone, NY

I always look forward to an All-American Council, and I am almost always refreshed and encouraged. I look forward to seeing “close” friends whom I may have seen only a handful of times in the last thirty or so years. My wife Charlotte was with me at this AAC, and we could say, again and again, “doesn’t father so-and-so look good and he is still so enthusiastic about the Church.” Charlotte whispers to me that, “we must be getting old, Joseph, because so many priests seem young enough to be our children!” So we find ourselves encouraged because friends remain and also because new people come, all to try to be an Orthodox Church in America. We gather as a Church in continuity with the Scriptures, the Apostles, the Fathers (and Mothers) throughout all of the ages. A church not pretending, masquerading or living only for nostalgia, but endeavoring to be the truth for this land. And, often, it isn’t easy.

That last part—it isn’t easy—caused much of my “looking forward” to be filled with no little fear and trepidation. The last few years have not been easy and, as one priest said, “I often wondered if this church is worth my staying.” But stay we did, the dream and love would not die an easy death. We were struck by the apparent sincerity of the bishops who spoke on the first day. It is an open secret that since the AAC at Pittsburgh the infighting and confusion at the highest levels of church leadership has caused a worldwide scandal—not to mention the scandal in the hearts of the people who recite the Creed, saying that they believe in the Church. Metropolitan Jonah confessed that the last three years were characterized by administrative chaos, but that he took responsibility. He noted that he, and most of the bishops, are new to this job and that they need our prayers. Each bishop got up in turn and talked about his own particular story. We did a lot of laughing at this point—I like to think that Christians who cannot laugh are kidding somebody.

Much of our time from day to day was filled with study sessions related to the *Strategic Plan*. The *Strategic Plan* was developed to help us consider how we could get from where we are to where we wanted to be as Church. We divided into groups to consider one of the ten subdivisions with topics ranging (stretching) from Contemporary Issues (culture, ethics, bioethics and sexuality) through Evangelization, Leadership and Management to Youth—all of these, plus others not listed, to be

considered in about three days. Charlotte and I selected Contemporary Issues to attend. The talk at our table ranged from sexuality to ethics and bioethics. My impression was that the topics were so very broad and all-encompassing that little of substance could be accomplished in three days. Still, try we did.

Not surprisingly, real enthusiasm and spirit seemed to be found in discussions of funding. Our Diocese had crafted a motion to change the assessment from \$105 to \$50. A compromise was reached and we decided to reduce the assessment a step at a time over the next three years. The reduction in per-capita funding was described as a way of motivating change from a head tax to funding by proportionate giving (i.e., give in proportion



to what God has given you). The night before we went home featured the Grand Banquet. There was a well-done film documentary on the life of the late Archbishop Dmitri shown during the banquet. The life celebrated by the film seemed to be what we were grasping for but could not translate into programs. What bishop wouldn’t want to be loved as Archbishop Dmitri was loved? How could we build churches where before there were none? How can we be a Church, such that others are called by the beauty of the assembly?

At some point, Charlotte began repeating, “There’s no place like home; there’s no place like home.” We got home to St Nicholas in Whitestone late on Friday night. Charlotte was right, it was good to be home. This parish is our home and the place where we gather to celebrate God’s victory over the power and darkness of sin; it is the place where the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in us. Anything we do in council had better nourish this place and these people, this realization on earth of God’s love.

**Jacob's
well**
Winter 2012

*Photos by
Fr Gregory Safchuk*

Reflections on the 16th All American Council

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Rev. Fr. Leonid Schmidt
*Assistant Priest, SS Peter and Paul
Church, Syracuse, NY*

It was an honor and a great joy to travel to the 16th All American Council in Bellevue, WA as the clergy delegate from Ss. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church in Syracuse, NY. It was wonderful to see so many friends from



to the Council, and it also allowed a sizable delegation from the diocese of Alaska. What a blessing it was that they could participate in record numbers, and that their protectress, Our Lady of Sitka, made the journey as well.

Much of the Council was spent discussing financial matters, and the conversations were sometimes difficult and tense. We heard two different visions of what was best for the Church. But we often need to be reminded that the Church is not merely a human institution, and so against great odds and seemingly great disagreement, the Council reached a compromise that inspired our hierarchs and diocesan treasurers to begin working together to further our stewardship of the OCA. In the eyes of one of the youngest priests at the Council,



moments like this are proof that the Holy Spirit is at work in His Church, and that He can heal any divisions, great or small, that arise among us. If we are to be faithful in whatever work we do for the Church, we must always depend on Him, the Treasury of Blessings, to guide us, and bless us as only He can.

Jan Van Duyn
*Diocesan Lay Representative
to the Metropolitan Council*

The All American Council was both draining and invigorating, daunting and encouraging. Draining, because any week-long conference involving hundreds of participants is draining: The logistics of getting to the right place at the right time, getting meals and other daily necessities, dealing with large groups of strangers in an unfamiliar setting are just plain tiring. And, unlike secular conferences which deal with ho-hum business issues, our Council involved the very emotional process of getting a lot of people who really cared, but had different ideas to work toward a consensus on how best to serve God and spread the Gospel. Invigorating, because of the wonderful realization that each and every participant really did care about the Church and the Lord's Gospel, and wanted only the best.



It was a wonderful opportunity to meet many fellow Christians who were dedicated to a full life in Christ, especially those from the West and Alaska whom I would in other circumstances never meet. Daunting, because of the sheer number of issues that needed to be dealt with, and how much work our Church needs to do to bring Orthodoxy to all people in America. Just keep repeating "...with God all things are possible." Encouraging, because there was much to be encouraged about...very much. We have many new and highly engaged bishops working for and with us, including a wonderful, loving hierarch in Metropolitan Jonah. We have come through a time of hurt and scandal without, for the most part, losing our goodwill towards each other - and we have used the experience to improve ourselves. The finances of the National Church are being handled with full accountability, and a Strategic Plan is being put into place, supported by the input of the entire Council. It was doubly encouraging that while there were many tense discussions and considerable disagreement the debates, with very few exceptions, were conducted with good will, good humor, good sense, and love.

Finally, being in the presence of Our Lady of Sitka, singing an Akathist to her, and worshiping at several hierarchical liturgies brought immense spiritual encouragement. Now, to work....

Ariana Gonzalez Stokas

Observer, St. Gregory the Theologian Church, Wappingers Falls, NY

"It is only when in the darkness of this world we discern that Christ has already 'filled all things with Himself' that these things, whatever they may be, are revealed and given to us full of meaning and beauty. A Christian is the one who, wherever he looks, finds Christ and rejoices in Him. And this joy transforms all his human plans and programs, decisions and actions, making all his mission the sacrament of the world's return to Him who is the life of the world."

- Fr Alexander Schmemmann

Upon entering the hotel in Seattle for the All-American Council, I was greeted by a sea of bearded and cassocked men. It was evident immediately that we were Christians here to have a lengthy discussion about important matters of the Church. There were resolutions, arguments, worry over money and over power. But there were also fellowship, prayer and an evident desire to facilitate the positive growth and development of the OCA.

I imagined that individuals who worked in the hotel or who were there staying for business or a vacation must have heard our prayers and bells, observed the similarity of dress and assumed that we are a faith community that walks lockstep in agreement with one another. But this is not the case. As a participant in the working group on contemporary issues, it became evident that we are a faith that is and always must be, like Jacob, wrestling with God; wrestling to discern Christ in all things and thus in ourselves. It became clear to me that this

discernment, a perpetual discipline, is the path to the transformational joy Fr. Schmemmann describes. Platitudes and decrees are not sufficient for the wrestling and searching that is essential to the practice of the Orthodox faith. Inattention to the living face of Christ in all people, homosexuals included, still marks the tone and spirit of many debates. It quickly became clear in the working group that the ability to question, speak of experience and feelings in the face of seeming incommensurable things is where the miraculous nature of faith arises and is THE CHURCH. Communion between individuals who agree, who do not question one another or challenge one another to taste and see again, is easy and perhaps not the deepest level that the teachings of the Church urge us toward. Christ and Mary the Mother of God had no guidebook, only the silent blossoming of joy that is spoken of many times in the Orthodox faith.

Many of us around the table that day did not agree on issues concerning homosexuality, abortion and end of life choices, yet we agreed on the necessity to open a space for the collective discernment to happen. This was, I believe, transformational to understand that the way is discovered not by resolutions or platitudes or treatises, but through the sacrament of encountering people wrestling, wondering and wandering with God.

James Kornafel

Delegate, SS Peter and Paul Church, South River, NJ

The 16th All-American Council in Seattle was the third such gathering I had the honor of attending as the lay delegate from SS. Peter & Paul Church in South River. For me, this Council was more forward-looking and upbeat than the ones in Toronto and Pittsburgh. The necessary business portions of the week-long agenda were, for the most part, efficiently and effectively completed. The reports of the officers, departments and institutions were more positive than negative. The Holy Synod was more engaged than ever before; the openness, honesty and transparency that so many of us have wanted from the central administration since the "scandal-ridden" years were clearly evident. Critical issues of the Church, especially those that related to the Strategic Plan, were discussed frankly and honestly. Eyes were opened and many were inspired to new commitments in guiding our beloved Orthodox Church in America through the next triennium, including a general movement away from the current assessment system to one that promotes proportionate giving.

I truly appreciated being one of 600+ delegates to meet and enjoy camaraderie on the West Coast for the first time in the history of our young Church. Much was accomplished, but much more needs to be done. I hope and pray that the feeling of optimism with which I left Seattle will continue to grow, for I truly believe that every day holds the possibility of miracles.

Jacob's well

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Our Lady of Sitka

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Miracles Still Happen on Ideal Street in Buffalo

Miracle of Operation Buffalo

Over the past few months, Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church, located at 45 Ideal Street in Buffalo, has undergone a significant transformation. On August 1, by the initiative of His Grace Bishop Michael, "Operation Buffalo" was launched to prepare the rectory for the arrival of the new parish priest, Fr Volodymyr Zablotskyy. Volunteers from across the New York and New Jersey Diocese traveled to Buffalo to share their love for the church. This was the first effort of its kind in the Diocese and it may become an example for similar future undertakings in the Diocese and throughout the OCA. The talents and the labor hours offered by the volunteers were nothing short of miraculous. A project that would ordinarily cost tens of thousands of dollars was accomplished on a "boot strap" budget.



But there was another side to "Operation Buffalo" which might not have been immediately noticed. The love, dedication, and sacrifice of all the volunteers were infectious and brought a jolt of enthusiasm and the hope for a brighter future for the parish. But "Operation Buffalo" also helped the parishioners realize that their parish is indeed a part of the Body of Christ and a Church of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey. This, of course, would not be possible without the fatherly love and concern of His Grace Bishop Michael, who in the past year visited the parish numerous times, particularly during "Operation Buffalo." Parishioners were deeply touched when hearing His Grace say on several occasions, "The Body of Christ in Buffalo is hurting - we need to help them."

Follow the "continuing miracle" taking place on Ideal Street by going to the parish's website: <http://www.peterandpauloca.com/>

Miracle of the Gospel Book

On Saturday morning, November 12, while walking around the church property, Fr. Volodymyr noticed a broken pole light with some rocks still lying near and around the pole. The broken light was not a result of some mischief; it was part of evidence left behind by the thieves who managed to take about 100 square feet of copper from the church roof. The thieves were also able to enter the church through a basement window and steal a Gospel Book that dated back to at least the time of the construction of the present church in 1933.

A number of local TV stations picked up the story which offered Fr. Zablotskyy an opportunity for appealing to the public with a plea to offer any information which may lead to the return of the Gospel, while some parishioners stepped forward with a reward of \$1,000.00 for the return of the book.



See the story of "Operation Oneonta" on our Diocesan website.

Two weeks later on Saturday, November 26, Fr. Zablotskyy was in for yet another surprise. Around 8:30 PM parishioner Steven Camp knocked on the door of the rectory. Steven was very emotional and clearly shaken. "Father, you can't believe what just happened," he said, while giving the stolen Holy Gospel book to Fr. Volodymyr. An unidentified man approached Steven, and after verifying that Steven indeed was a member of Saints Peter and Paul Church, handed him the Gospel Book and said before wailing, "I need to do the right thing. I can't live with this any longer." The following day during the Divine Liturgy Fr. Volodymyr, while reflecting on the Gospel from Luke (Luke 13:10-17) said, "While we marvel at the miracle of Our Lord healing a crippled woman by His healing touch, last night Our Lord touched the crippled heart of a man whose name we may never know. Let us pray that the healing of that man's heart will be complete. As miraculous as the return of our Holy Gospel book is, the Lord is capable of working greater miracles in this man's heart."

Thinking back on all these things that have happened over his first few months as the acting rector, Fr Volodymyr has concluded that: "It is part of our life. Indeed it is the very sign that we are alive. Good things are followed by bad and then the pendulum swings back again. Saint Paul reminds us that 'all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose' (Romans 8:28)."

Events This Year at St John's Russian Orthodox Church, Passaic, NJ

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Bishop Michael, Bishop Alejo and local clergy

Bishop Alejo of Mexico City visited the parish over the weekend of March 19-20, 2011, leading an Akathist service to Our Lady of Guadalupe entirely in Spanish, and the serving at the Sunday Divine Liturgy, utilizing mostly Spanish and some English hymns.

St. John's hosted a regional Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on March 30, 2011. This was the first time that clergy and faithful from all three of Passaic's Orthodox churches worshipped together at the same service!



Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

The Presanctified Liturgy was officiated by Bishop Michael, assisted by the parish rector, Fr. W. Sophrony Royer, and Fathers Stephen Kaznica (SS. Peter & Paul's, Passaic), Dimitry Don (Ss. Kosma & Damian's, Passaic), Stephen Evanina (Holy Assumption, Clifton), Yaroslav Stebelsky (Holy Apostles, Saddle Brook), Boris Sloodsky (Mother of God, Mays Landing), and Deacon Vladimir Oliynik (Ss. Kosma & Damian's, Passaic). The congregation, numbering about 80 people, was comprised of people from all three Passaic churches, the Clifton and Saddle Brook churches, and even a few from a local Ukrainian Orthodox church in Clifton. Following the service, a Lenten meal was enjoyed by all in the parish hall.

Features on our Diocesan Website

Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors [DDB] program

As part of a "*Vision for Our Future*," Bishop Michael launched the **Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors [DDB]** program in January 2011. He called upon the faithful of the diocese to voluntarily support three initiatives through their financial gifts. These initiatives are:

Support for Mission Parishes • Support for Seminarians • Support for Existing Parishes

Thanks to the sacrificial generosity of **DDBs** from throughout the diocese and beyond, over \$100,000 was contributed during the first year (2011) of the program! As a result, vital ministries have received much-needed support; the work of the Church is being funded as never before! There are visible "fruits" of our labors and efforts as mission parishes are being established and supported, seminarians are receiving scholarships, and struggling parishes are being revitalized.

Lessons in Our Faith

"**Lessons in Our Faith**" is a new series of video presentations offered by His Grace, Bishop Michael. In these videos, His Grace will explore matters of faith, belief, and practice within the Orthodox Church. They are intended to provide the faithful with much-needed information, guidance on their spiritual journey, and assistance in answering questions that may arise from non-Orthodox friends or acquaintances. The first of these lessons ~ "**The Theotokos: 7 Questions and 7 Answers**" ~ is now available, and more lessons are planned for the future. A special "icon" linking to this section will be permanently displayed on the homepage.

These two programs and consistently updated new material are available on our Diocesan website: nynjoca.org

St. Gregory's Expanding

On January 21/22, 2012 St. Gregory the Theologian Church in Wappingers Falls, NY, will celebrate its patronal Feast with the completion of the first Phase of a three-phase expansion of facilities. His Grace, Bishop Michael will bless our efforts, and former clergy, and friends from seminary and other institutions will come to share our joy. This first phase comprises a new spacious and bright Fellowship Hall connected to the small present one (which is buried like a basement), and opening to the parish's wooded picnic grounds and local stream. At some point we hope to afford a needed expansion of the worship space, but we have decided for now to at least effect a major spatial change in the Nave, by opening the relatively low roof with a central clerestory structure (cupola) offering new light and height into this area.

Because of the large travel distances in the Hudson Valley (the nearest English-speaking Orthodox parish is at least an hour in any direction), we consider it essential to our gatherings to provide the space needed to continue "the liturgy after the Liturgy," where fellow Christians share the happenings of the week, stories of healing, pleas for support and moral courage, and hopes for the community as it constantly changes with the baptism of new souls, the arrivals through marriage and the mystery of God's call. This is why the fellowship space was deemed a priority, the place to build our bonds of friendship.



Our process confirmed two intractable laws of construction: 1) everything will cost much more than estimated, and 2) everything will take much longer than promised! No doubt, we also discover another law of parish life: a small number of the parish core will always rise to carry the unpredictable burdens, and such folk are not necessarily those with greatest resources. Another version of that law: If you need something done, ask a person who is busy and generous! The building process is a real distillation of priorities, commitments, fears and hopes—they invariably rise to the sur-

face and reveal our true faces. While there may be general unanimity and joy in the process, it would be false to claim that any community survives construction unscathed. Our economy leaves even the most ardent Christians at times nervous and hesitant to act: "We have enough for our needs!" must be a familiar refrain even in the most enlightened community. But the process opens doors for mutual encouragement, and in many subtle ways all members minister to one another, allaying fears, sharing hopes and dreams, and one wants to believe that such ministry cannot but begin to liberate members in their personal lives as well.

Now, with the physical changes palpable and the end at hand, nerves are calming and being replaced by a growing anticipation of improved community life, through which we also hope to better serve the needs of the local neighborhoods as well.

Bishop Seraphim Sigrist and the Exploration of Community

by Stephen Keeler

His Grace, Rt Reverend Seraphim Sigrist, retired Bishop of Sendai of the Orthodox Church in Japan, visited Holy Cross Church in Medford over the weekend of December 3-4. His Grace, the author of our adult study book, *A Life Together: Wisdom of Community from the Christian East*, served with us at Great Vespers on Saturday December 3 and was our honored guest at a reception following the service. During the discussion, His Grace gave a little talk about his life and his thoughts about the Church, and fielded questions from the two dozen or so parishioners and guests..

Born in Westchester County, New York, Bishop Seraphim was raised in a fervent evangelical Christian home, and during college at Nyack became aware of the Orthodox faith and was received into the church. Entering St. Vladimir's Seminary in the early 60s, he recalled fond memories from that time of some of his great teachers such as Frs. Meyendorff and Schememann. Upon graduation and ordination, he responded to an invitation from the Church in Japan to serve there (the Church in Japan was canonically affiliated with the Metropolia, as the OCA was known at the time). Immersing himself in the culture, history and language of the country and the Church, he was well prepared in the 1970's when he was asked to serve as the Bishop of Sendai in northern Japan. In the late 1980's with the failing health of his mother and being the only child, he asked to return home to serve the Church in America and to tend to his mother. Much of his time since then has been dedicated to supporting Hosanna, a Russian Orthodox community in Moscow dedicated to living and promoting the life and works of the

Rev. Alexander Men, a visionary priest who was martyred by Soviet agents in 1990. *A Life Together* is his third published book, and is taken from a series of talks given to the Hosanna community.

During and after the dinner, His Grace talked about this history of the Church in Japan, and the tremendous impact of the 19th century Russian missionary St. Nicholas. For example, so great was the volume of liturgical and educational texts St. Nicholas translated that their number exceeded those available in English in America in the 1960s. Early adherents to the faith were farmer families in northern Japan, many of them Samurai who had been dispossessed by the Meiji Restoration. His Grace also talked with us about his thoughts on the interplay between mission and ecumenism, on the Church in Russia and in America, and encouraged us to be not afraid, as Fr. Men would say.

His Grace also joined the adult study group on Sunday morning before liturgy to discuss his book. His Grace shared with the group the origin of the book, and how he was challenged by a member of the Hosanna group in Moscow to write down his talks on sobornost. He elaborated on the historical and philosophical roots of sobornost, and had a lively discussion with the group about how it is lived and can be lived in the modern age. His Grace served and preached at the liturgy.

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Fr Hoffman Awarded Jeweled Cross

On Saturday, October 15, 2011 His Grace, Bishop MICHAEL, made an archpastoral visit to Holy Transfiguration Church, Pearl River, NY. During the Little Entrance of the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, Bishop MICHAEL bestowed an award of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the OCA, the Jeweled Cross, upon the rector of the parish, The Very Reverend Igumen Joseph (Hoffman). Among his several remarks, Bishop MICHAEL related the Holy Synod's recognition of Igumen Joseph's many years of dedicated service to the Holy Orthodox Church as a priest, his position as secretary to the former Archbishop of NY and his active role in pan Orthodox relations with the Russian Church Outside of Russia.



Iconographic Plan Emerging in Brick, NJ

Our parish, The Orthodox Christian Church of the Annunciation in Brick, New Jersey, has recently witnessed the completion of the first phase of an iconography project that will, in time, result in the adornment of the entire church nave and altar with traditional icons and ornamentation.

The church building was erected in 1993-4 under the guidance of Father David Vernak, rector

As beautiful as the church was with her white walls and cherry-colored iconostasis, those very walls seemed to cry out for iconography. For many years, parishioners had talked and dreamed of undertaking an iconography project. Finally, in 2010 – the fortieth year of the parish's existence – the parish prayerfully and with great faith committed to move forward with the project.

After speaking with several iconographers about the project, our rector, Father Gary Breton, selected Ivan Roumiantsev (through St. Tikhon's Monastery Bookstore) to sketch out a plan and ultimately to write and supervise the installation of the icons and adornments. At the time, Ivan was finishing his work of doing a similar iconography project at All Saints Orthodox Church in Olyphant, PA. That church experienced a fire in 2006, and the entire church interior needed restoration. After seeing what Ivan accomplished at All Saints Church, the decision to commission him for our project was made much more easy and clear. Now, after the completion of Phase I, it very much seems that this decision was directed by the hand of God.

There is a very clear effect to having new icons on the walls of the church. The church looks different, obviously. Where there was white, there is now color. Where there were blank spaces, there are now saints and scenes from the rich scriptural and oral Tradition of the Church. Where the church lighting was once reflected by the white walls, it is now soaked up by the icons.

But there is another effect, and that is in having the ability to better explain and tell the story of our Orthodox Faith. We are able to speak about and point to saints of the Church such as SS. Constantine and Helen, Ss. Vladimir and Olga, SS. Peter and Paul, SS. Cyril and Methodius. We are able to speak about and point to icons such as the Ascension of Our Lord, the Annunciation to the Theotokos, the Nativity of the Theotokos, the Visitation of the Theotokos with St. Elizabeth, the Marriage at Cana, and the Myrrhbearing Women. In other words, we are better equipped to preach and explain the Gospel of Christ not only to those who have ears to hear, but now to those who have eyes to see.

As we continue toward Phase II of our iconography project, we look forward not only to



of the parish from 1975 to 2002. A hand-carved wooden iconostasis, constructed by Father George Zelenin with icons written by iconographer Xenia Pokrovsky, was placed in the church in 1997. The combination of the beautiful church architecture and the stunning iconostasis has made the church a prayerful, fitting place for parishioners and visitors to worship and experience the sacramental life of the Orthodox Faith.

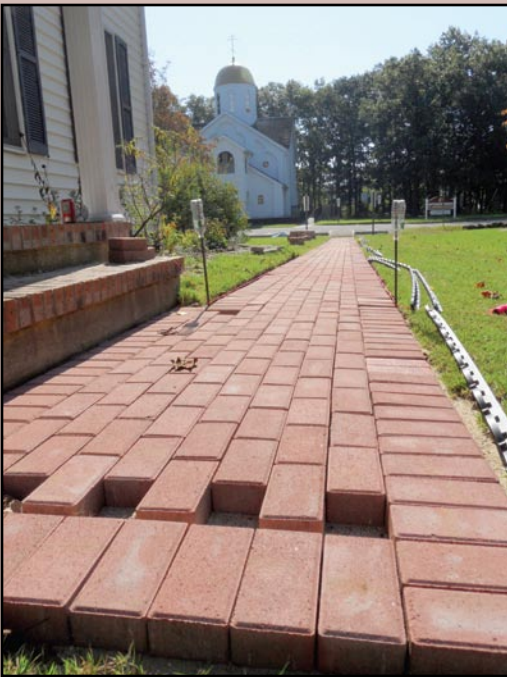
Brick by Brick

The construction of a “brick” walkway in Brick, New Jersey is nearly complete. At the Orthodox Christian Church of the Annunciation, a paver stone walkway is being constructed as the Eagle Scout project of Alex Breton, son of Matushka Mary and Father Gary Breton (the parish rector). The walkway connects the parish rectory to the church, running from the rectory’s front steps to the edge of the church’s parking lot.

The practical need for this walkway has existed for quite a while, so its construction is being heartily welcomed from that perspective.

Father Gary will especially be happy not to have to walk across a wet or snowy lawn in order to get to the church. But there is another dimension to this project that makes it special; the walkway consists of pavers that have been donated by parishioners and friends, and these pavers are engraved with the names of family members both living and departed. It also contains pavers for parish founders and for each priest who has served the parish to date. Some pavers are engraved with scripture verses and quotes from Church fathers. So, the walkway will also serve the community as a memorial monument.

The walkway was constructed by volunteers from Alex’s Boy Scout Troop, the church community, and friends and family. The support by parish members and friends has been truly warm and outstanding. The original plan has now been completed, but additional requests have led to an expansion of the project which should be completed next Spring. By the grace of God and the hard work of the volunteers, this will happen – brick by Brick!



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the further adornment and beautification of our church, but to gaining more tools and opportunities for us as a parish to better witness and preach the Gospel to the world. In this phase, we plan to add icons of the Platytera (Mother of God) above the altar, Christ Enthroned behind the altar, and additional saints within the nave. There is genuine excitement within the parish at what we are now able to behold in the nave of the church. There is also great anticipation as we imagine what effects the next phase of iconography will provide. This excitement and anticipation is clearly evident and

reflected in the generous pledges and donations that both parishioners and friends have made – and continue to make - toward the project.

Throughout the entire iconography project, we know that God is with us. We ask for the prayers and support of our brothers and sisters throughout our deanery, diocese, OCA, and beyond. If you cannot visit us personally, please view our website holy-annunciation-church.org/ and share in our joy over this wonderful gift and opportunity with which God has blessed our parish family.

Deacons' Day of Service Holy Trinity Church, East Meadow, NY

by Dn. John Diamantis

"Remember the word that I said to you 'A servant is not greater than his master.'" John 15:20

While walking in and around Penn Station to share 100 bag lunches prepared earlier in the day I came across a Caucasian couple who for anonymity's sake will be referred to as Kathy and Mark. Living on the streets has a way of aging people and while



they might be younger they looked to be in their 60's. They had not eaten in two days and looked malnourished. My senses were aroused, clearly their hygiene had been neglected in all regards and it is difficult to imagine that they could have been in good health. Kathy even had a worn

bandage on her hand, struggling to adhere to its original placement.

Despite several attempts at getting Kathy to stand aright and steady herself to walk toward the meals she hadn't the strength or stability. Mark was not much better. After learning their names and conversing with them briefly I offered them each a simple meal prepared earlier in the day.

Returning minutes later with food and water Mark was found lying on the sidewalk incoherent 15 feet away from where I had left him. Some thoughts going through my mind were "Were Kathy and Mark merely malnourished? Perhaps these people were drunk, or were they using drugs? Why should we have compassion on people like this? Isn't feeding them just another way of enabling their behavior? Won't they just start using drugs again?"

When considering this situation more closely it seems to me that the answer to these questions is found in a question. Simply, "To what degree does it matter?" or more accurately, "To what degree do Kathy and Mark matter?" Did not Jesus Christ come to save sinners? Did not Jesus Christ come

to minister to the needy and command that we, His disciples, the Church, do the same?

This is the purpose behind the Deacons' Day of Service-- to extend what is taught and done scripturally and liturgically in our Holy Orthodox Christian Church to the world around us; for deacons to remember their position is one of servitude and to assist those in our parishes to accept Almighty God's challenge to us, namely to love one another as He loves each of us.

With the blessing of His Grace, Bishop +Michael the first "Deacons' Day of Service" was held on Saturday May 14, 2011. Deacons from all jurisdictions spanning New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut were invited. Financial contributions were received by many and those who attended shared their remarks about the day.

The Deacons' Day of Service began with a spirited celebration of the Divine Liturgy at St. John Chrysostom Orthodox Church (OCA) in Woodside, NY presided by Fr. Daniel Degansky of the same parish, Protodeacon Paul Sokol of Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Manville, New Jersey and Deacon John Diamantis of Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in East Meadow, New York. Dn. John Mamangakis of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in New Rochelle, New York read the epistle.

Following the Divine Liturgy and a light meal prepared by Diakonissa Andrea Diamantis the participants' fingers became sticky as Fr. Daniel and the deacons prepared 100 brown bag lunches of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, an apple, and water. The group then carpooled with lunches in tow to Penn Station in the heart of New York City where they spent about two hours distributing these meals and ministering to the homeless.

While this ministry involved sharing prepared meals with the hungry and homeless the more important focus was on conversing, relating, and sharing the love of our Savior with them. Protodeacon Paul Sokol shared that he had engaged in ministry like this before "but in this instance each and every person expressed gratitude." When his son, Zachary Sokol, (age 13) was asked about

his experience during serving he said “Wow!” and noted that he had never before seen such a degree of poverty either in number or severity.

After serving approximately 50 people their bag lunches everyone returned to St. John Chrysostom parish for Vespers, served by Fr. Daniel and Protodeacon Paul and then headed out to a local Greek restaurant for dinner, at the invitation of His Grace, Bishop +Michael.

In reflecting on the day Dn. John Mamangakis noted that “What was done today was good, but there is so much more to do.” Indeed, how true it is. “The poor you will have with you always” and “The laborers are few” our Savior tells us, but these are not excuses to disengage from the world around us. These are the very reasons that people like you and I, ordained or not, must take up our cross and

follow the Lord-- which means doing what He asks and expects of us.

The servant is not greater than his master and, no, the point of this type of ministry is not to change the world. The point is to practice loving as God loves us, unconditionally and infinitely those whom are within our reach. In this regard the first ever Deacons’ Day of Service was a great success!

The total cost of the food supplies for distribution to 100 people was just over \$100. Additional proceeds for the day went to support “Christian Kitchen,” an Orthodox Christian ministry of Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in East Meadow New York which feeds, clothes, and shares the love of Jesus Christ with the needy of New York City and Long Island.

“Thank you” to all who contributed time, prayers, and alms to the success of this inaugural event.

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Recently Assigned Pastors

Fr Thaddeus Franta

Fr Thaddeus Franta has recently been assigned acting rector of Holy Trinity Church in Rahway, NJ. He graduated from St. Tikhon’s Seminary this past May. Before that he and his wife, Velislava, lived in Northern Kentucky where she taught music and he was an electrician. He was baptized Orthodox in 2002, when then lived in New Mexico. Velislava was raised Orthodox in Bulgaria, and has been in the United States for fourteen years. Fr Thaddeus was ordained to the diaconate by Bishop Michael on May 8, 2010, and to the priesthood on September 17 of this year.



Hieromonk Kilian Sprecher

Hieromonk Kilian Sprecher was ordained this summer on the feast of SS Sergius and Herman of Valaam (28 June) by Metropolitan Jonah, his spiritual father. He graduated with a MDiv from St Vladimir’s Seminary this past May, and currently is spending an additional two more years there, writing a ThM thesis in canon law.

He was born in Orange County, CA in 1982, and moved all over the country and world, as his father was an enlisted soldier in the US Marine Corps. He is the eldest of four children (three sons, one daughter), and completed his undergraduate studies in Montréal, Canada. He spent a year abroad in high school in Germany, and has many close and continuing relationships with friends and family there. It was then that he first encountered saints’ relics and monastic life – the first saint being St Kilian the Hieromartyr of Würzburg (8 July) in Northern Bavaria, after whom he was named at monastic tonsure.

He has been a monk for six years now, and has just recently learned that he will be commissioned as a Reserve chaplain for the US Navy. Until then he has been assigned as acting rectory of St Gregory Palamas Church in Glen Gardner, NJ.



Photo by Fr Gregory Safchuk

A Day in the Life of St Andrew's Camp

by Kamelia Waskiewicz

It is 5:30 am and the light picking through my window awakes me. I look up and witness another beautiful sunrise... The camp grounds are so quiet, girls deeply and peacefully asleep after talking and playing secretly way past the lights-out time.

In an hour, another day will begin at St. Andrew's Orthodox camp. A day filled with activities, prayer,

Liturgy or any other service, every time we gathered I could feel God's spirit abide in us. The special and unique part is that St. Andrew's chapel is truly a children's chapel. The boys diligently perform duties as altar boys, assisting the priest; everyone helps clean; girls walk in and light a candle; but most amazingly, everyone sings. Joining voices together created heavenly beautiful music, and I could not help but think that this is how angels sound. The children have no idea how hard it is to sing our Orthodox chants, prayers, and psalms. Not realizing the magnitude of their actions, they take as a given praising the Lord in worship, following the melody as closely as they can while reading. Most of them without any formal education in orthodox music, by the end of the week all of them sound like professional chanters.

I sing with them and keep thinking what miracle a children's choir is. The children at camp accomplish incredible harmony so naturally only by learning from each other and opening their hearts to Christ! From seven year olds, trying to repeat the words as fast as everyone, to the teenagers, reluctant to join at the beginning and mumbling while staying aside, we all moved as one with a full strong voice by the end of camp.

I strongly feel that St. Andrew's Camp is truly a place where heaven and earth meet. It only takes one look at the horizon to confirm it. The sky is so low, you could touch the stars at night. The trees are so grand, the meadow filled with fireflies. The surface of the lake barely moves, the small waves



sports, children's laughter, splashing water in the lake...Every camper has a favorite activity and memory – horseback riding, a game of kickball or Frisbee, playing on the playground, music, talent night, campfire night, swimming, or simply sharing time with their friends.

For me, the most memorable and moving experience at camp was during worship in the chapel. Whether it was matins, vespers, Divine

Christmas at East Meadow

Holy Trinity Church, East Meadow, NY has a long-standing tradition of presenting Christmas programs and pageants. Many of the children in this year's program held on December 11, 2011, are the sons and daughters of previous pageant participants. The program featured children presenting the Nativity account using scripture quotes and narratives, while others assembled a poster-sized image of the Christmas icon, featuring the Virgin Mary, the infant Christ child and other people mentioned in the biblical account. Children in costumes then created a 'living Nativity icon' on stage. With hymns and traditional carols sung between scenes, those in attendance were invited to sing along.



Creating Sacred Space

by SaraLee Pindar

For the past six months, the Mother of God, Joy of All Who Sorrow Mission has been gathering for Sunday Liturgy in the music room of a secular private school while we wait for the local permits that will enable us to finish remodeling an old house into our new church.

As used here, a “sacred space” is a place that is consciously and conscientiously dedicated to worship and prayer – a place where people may expect and receive communication with God. For the Orthodox, such a place is normally a temple with an altar, icon screen, candle stands and icons. But when the need arises, the dedication and spiritual energies of those who come together for worship can create this environment in such diverse places as a private home, a public park, or the corner of a battlefield.

In our case, the area to be converted is a large music room that is starkly bare except for one wall that is painted a deep red. It is this wall that we face during the service. Because of the school's restrictions, we are unable to use candles or incense, and of course the icons we need for Liturgy must be brought in each week and then removed again. One of our members called this “church in a box.” But it is the attitude and efforts of all who gather there that transform this environment into sacred space. Our diverse community is pan-Orthodox with a considerable number of converts, and we come together from as far south as Burlington and as far north as Peapack. We all bring with us

the expectation and determination that at this time and in this place we are the local expression of the worshipping church.

The first to arrive on Sunday mornings are Fr. John Cassar and his son and chief server, Anthony, Deacon Joseph and his brother John, the choir director, Ben, and his wife, Julie, and a few other volunteers who begin by arranging the furniture. Chairs are lined up to create a center aisle that leads to the folding table set up as an altar. The large icons of the Lord and the Theotokos are propped on chairs, and the choir stands are arranged on one side of the room.



The people who start coming in quietly and reverently, who bow towards the altar, make the sign of the cross and begin their prayers before Liturgy create the atmosphere that transforms this room into our temple. Although coffee hour is being set up quietly in the back, everyone's gaze is towards the newly created sanctuary and when the reader begins the Hours, it is clear that

those present are praying with him.

The feeling that we are all in church continues through the Liturgy, the prayers after Communion, the announcements and the singing of “Many Years.” Then we are dismissed, coffee hour begins, worship segues into fellowship, and the room reverts back to a merely functional area until next Sunday, when we will create sacred space all over again.

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roll back and forth in unison. It is as if time stops at camp, and we receive the privilege to enjoy God's creation in all of its wonder. Perhaps the biggest manifestation of the meaningful and wonderful time shared at camp are the tears that pour from the children's eyes on the last day. Tears of sadness to part from their friends in faith, from the love and acceptance they have found, and from the incredible spiritual experience.

I invite you to come and participate in this God created and blessed time next summer at St. Andrew's Orthodox Camp, Jewel, NY.

Kamelia was an Adult Counselor during the summer of 2011 and attends St John the Theologian Church, Shirley, NY. The 2012 Camping Season will run from July 8-August 4. For more information go to: standrewscamp.org.

Jacob's
well

Winter 2012

The Spiritual Lives of Soldiers Part III – After the Fighting is Over

Fr. Jerome Cwiklinski

After the Armistice in 1918, a British officer remarked, “now that this war is over, we can go back to real soldiering.” There is much truth in that statement, though perhaps not the way he intended – the war continues for its veterans even after the shooting stops – in fact, at that point their war is just beginning.

One of the greatest challenges for any warrior is the return to routine. Discipline and attention to detail is seldom questioned in a war zone because survival depends on it. Back in garrison, however, discipline may seem nonsensical, appearing to emphasize minutiae merely for the sake of compliance, and placing importance on activities that are far from life or death situations. On the other hand, veterans who remain in military service, even in peace, continue to benefit from their accountability to the institution and the structure it provides, whether they like it or not.



There is another population of veterans who do not have that: those who, after a wartime experience, retire or are discharged. Reservists and National Guard who demobilize and return to their civilian occupations fall within this category. Our priests and parishes can help these individuals, but they must first know something about the stress that comes from the high tempo of operations since 9-11.

Following a wartime deployment, a warrior may experience the after-effects of physical, emotional, and spiritual “wear and tear,” especially if they deployed multiple times and saw action. They will have undoubtedly experienced the loss of someone close, whether a buddy who died alongside them, or someone they knew getting killed, or perhaps a loved one who died back home. Even in wars fought for righteous causes, there can be moral strife and inner conflict. An individual may be critical of a leader’s decision that, in their estimation, got people killed, or of superiors who behaved unethically. Perhaps they judge themselves for not measuring-up to their own expectations their first time in battle.

Everything can be a reminder – a passing garbage truck may stimulate olfactory memory of the smell of death, or certain perfumes of the scent used to mask it. Someone whose convoy was hit by an IED may be unable to drive over the cables used to count traffic or recoil at the sound of 4th of July fireworks. Even without such triggers, placid surroundings can be met with resentment of those who never went to war.

The threat from the enemy may have ceased, physical wounds healed, but the mental and spiritual scars of battle continue to fester and place veterans at risk of sickness, injury and even death. Without the camaraderie of those who shared their dangers and hardships, they might underestimate the ability of others to empathize or even care. Some may crave an adrenaline rush and find it through careless, potentially self-destructive behaviors, such as binge-drinking, substance abuse, driving under the influence, speeding, defiance of authority, and denial of love to their families and to themselves.

The headlines may declare the war to have ended, the troops may come home, but the devil has not signed any capitulation and continues to attack, and in some cases defeat, our warriors. Some veterans create their own hostilities, committing acts of domestic violence including murder and suicide while others succumb to divorce, joblessness and homelessness.

Various reactive measures, including interventions, may be effective in these situations, but a more proactive, pastoral approach is warranted to prevent their occurrence.

The military takes care to thoroughly equip and train its personnel before sending them in harm’s way. Since 9-11, the phenomena of Combat and Operational Stress (COS) and Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS) has been matched with “stress-inoculation” and other programs designed to build resiliency long before their exposure to trauma. This includes realistic combat simulations but also the inculcation of values and skills that help them to identify dysfunction early and make them want to seek help for it. That many combat veterans, including the seriously wounded, are able to cope

This article concludes the three-part series, “The Spiritual Lives of Soldiers.” All of the articles are available in “Supplements” on the *Jacob’s Well* section of our Diocesan website: nynjoca.org.

and lead productive lives, with their relationships intact, is proof positive that such a solid foundation can stave-off self-destruction.

As Americans we care for the general welfare of all of our armed forces though, naturally, as Orthodox Christians we are most concerned with the lives of Orthodox service members, especially those we know. Perhaps we remember when they were baptized, as “a newly enlisted warrior of Christ” – when the foundation was laid upon which to build a spiritual bulwark, never imagining that they would engage in real warfare.

It stands to reason that parish Priests must remain in contact with their spiritual sons and daughters who leave the parish to serve in the armed forces. It may be possible to work in tandem with a chaplain, but once those veterans return home they are solely reliant on their parish community, and it is indeed a good sign when they come to church.

Priests may react to the issues veterans confide with a mixture of discomfort, horror, and even awe. Counseling them or hearing their confessions is a process not to be short-circuited by abruptly absolving them if it takes too long to tell their story. They may tell it again and again. The veteran needs permission to grieve, and to perceive it not as weakness but as a sign of being real. Judgments of others may need to be reframed in a different context, “you say your lieutenant got people killed, but wasn’t it the enemy?” Priests must have the courage to speak the truth to those with the unique experiences of combat even if he is not a veteran himself. If need be, he may have to rebuke a hero – which takes special courage to do – if they fallen victim to vainglory and entitlement that breeds contempt for rules.

The wellness continuum means to encourage those who are well, help those who are stressed, refer those who are injured, but take the sick to the physician they need. Priests need to know their own limitations in dealing with matters properly within the competence of the medical or mental health profession. Priests must not underestimate their unique spiritual contribution to the healing process even when those other professionals are consulted.

More and more, medical professionals admit that a healthy spirituality and participation in religious activities directly correlate with a patient’s recovery. This is their general observation of all religions and

Christian faiths. As Orthodox Christians we surely believe how much more effective are we as the very Body of Christ, the source of wholeness, whereby sins are remitted and the world itself is overcome.

When it comes to successful reintegration of a returning veteran, the entire parish, not just the priest, is involved. Parish life can provide some of what those members had in military service that kept their lives in order: camaraderie, structure, accountability, and a mission or purpose. The sacred offices and liturgical seasons, especially the Lenten periods, can impart structure. The Sacrament of Confession provides accountability and guidance. And our faith – in which Christ’s victory over death redeems fallen humanity – provides the purpose and goal of life, a return to the companionship and love of God.

“Carry on, my wayward son – there’ll be peace when you are done...” were the lyrics of a *Kansas* song used in the closing credits of the 1977 semi-comedy *Heroes* in which Henry Winkler portrays a dysfunctional Vietnam vet who regains control of his life. The Beatitudes also reassure the afflicted throughout all ages, including war-weary veterans, that better things await those who now suffer. Our Savior’s own words correlate with the symptoms of combat stress – wear and tear, loss, and inner conflict – but instill hope in response to each:

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn,
for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after
righteousness, for they shall be filled...
Rejoice and be exceedingly glad,
for great is your reward in heaven!

Fr. Jerome Cwiklinski is a priest of the Orthodox Church in America and a Navy Chaplain currently assigned to U.S. Marine Corps Forces Central Command and I Marine Expeditionary Force. He serves St. John the Forerunner Orthodox Chapel, Camp Pendleton, California. A 1986 graduate of St. Vladimir Seminary, he and his wife, Matushka Wendy, and their family, reside in Oceanside, California.

Jacob's well

Winter 2012



Bells as an Orthodox Experience

by Archpriest Thomas Edwards

You're running late. You are nearing the church or you're downstairs setting up for the coffee hour. You hear something. It's the church bell calling you and all the world to worship. The Divine Liturgy is about to begin and if you don't get a move on - you're going to be late.

At some other time you hear the bells' mournful toll and you know someone has gone to God. You cross yourself and pray, *Eternal Memory*. You hear jubilant bells and you know a marriage has been celebrated and you pray, "O Lord our God crown them with glory and honor"... And when you hear the most joyful and glorious peal of bells you know: *Christ is Risen!*

Traditional Orthodox church bells, unlike Protestant and Roman Catholic bells, are not tuned on a lathe to produce familiar major and minor chords. The voice of the Orthodox bell is just that - a voice. In the Russian tradition, a church bell, "...must sound rich, deep, sonorous, and clear, for how can the Voice of God be otherwise? It must be loud, because God is omnipotent..." ("The Bells" by Elif Batuman. *The New Yorker*, Apr. 27, 2009)

In a sense, Orthodox church bells might be considered aural icons. What the icon is to our sight, the bell is to our hearing. It's almost as if Orthodox church bells become singing icons. A set of proper Orthodox church bells establishes the acoustic space of an Orthodox church just as icons and hymnography define its visual and spiritual space.

Russian church bells are legendary. In Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, it's the church bells of Moscow's Kremlin that announced Napoleon's advance. No wonder that in Tchaikovsky's, *1812 Overture*, the triumphant dramatic conclusion is brought to a fever

pitch with the ringing of church bells, superimposed over the music of the troparion, "*Spasi Hospodi... O Lord save Thy people...*" and the pounding blast of canons. Wow!

Concerning the ringing of church bells, the article in *The New Yorker* states: "...Their tolling... has been known to bring miserly or hard-hearted people to repentance, and to dissuade would-be murderers and suicides. In *Crime and Punishment*, Raskolnikov falls into a guilt-induced fever, hearing the ringing of the Sunday church bells; he gives himself away by returning to the scene of the crime..."

The blessing of Orthodox church bells is defined in *The Book of Needs* as, "The Blessing, Naming and Chrismation of a Bell..." The Blessing of Bells includes some elements of the rite of Baptism including the anointment with holy chrism. The bell is named and consecrated to the memory of a saint whose icon is often molded into its side when the bell is cast. Today not only monastic communities but parish churches as well have seen the addition of traditional Orthodox bells as prescribed in *The Book of Needs*.

In the service for The Blessing of Bells we pray that God will:

Grant it the grace that all who hear its sound, whether by day or by night, shall be roused to the glorification of His holy name and That by the voice of its ringing all destructive winds, storms, thunder and lightning, and all harmful weather and destructive things of the air may be appeased, calmed and cease to be. That it may drive away every power, craft and slander of invisible enemies from all His own faithful people who shall have heard the voice of its ringing, and arouse them to the observance of His commandments,... May storms, hail, whirlwinds, fearful thunder and lightning, evil and destructive winds befalling them be appeased, calmed and made to cease at its ringing.

Up until the Soviet period Moscow was famous for its thousands of bells whose sounds reverberated across the city and far into the country. The Soviets were quite serious in their destruction of church bells and bell ringing was forbidden by



The bells of St Vladimir's Seminary

law. Thousands of tons of sanctified and chrismated Orthodox church bells were destroyed and melted into industrial materials including weapons of war, the reverse of turning swords into plough shears. As bells were melted down, churches were turned into factories, storage facilities and all manner of profane structures and thousands upon thousands of faithful were exiled to gulags where they were tortured and martyred for being confessors of the Orthodox Faith.

Several months following the collapse of the Soviet Union I spent a week in Moscow. My most memorable experience followed the Divine Liturgy in the historic Uspenski Sobor (Dormition Cathedral) inside Moscow's Kremlin. It was Sunday May 24, 1992, the feast of SS. Cyril & Methodius (OS.)

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy Patriarch Alexy, of blessed memory, led thousands of faithful including some from America, +Bishop Basil Rodzianko, and Fr. John Meyendorff of blessed memory along with Fr. Daniel Hubiak and myself in procession through the streets of Moscow. Exiting the gigantic doors of this 15th Century cathedral our

eyes were drawn upward to the afternoon sky full of hot air balloons carrying huge icons of Christ the Savior and the holy Theotokos. Near Lenin's tomb we saw a handful of die hard Soviets marching around that infamous mausoleum of the godless. The contrast was amazing: a band of left-over Leninists vs. thousands of Orthodox Christians. Two processions within the same space and yet a million miles apart in belief; one cursing the ringing of church bells while the other blessing God with every peal. Every bell in Moscow was ringing as thousands moved in procession through the streets. It was one of those heaven on earth moments...

It was still the paschal season so the thousands and thousands of us sang over and over again, *Christos Voskrese...* as we meandered through the streets of Moscow. Our singing of *Christ is Risen* was superimposed over the reverberation of Moscow's bells. It combined the soaring high drama of the 1812 Overture and the miracle of Christ's resurrection comingling with the never ending ringing of those bells, the bells, the bells. Glory to God for all things!

Purity of Heart and Internet Pornography

by Albert S Rossi, PhD

[Editor's Note: The 2nd Annual Diocesan Clergy Conference was convened by His Grace, Bishop Michael, on October 17-18 at Holy Assumption Orthodox Church in Clifton NJ. The topics of presentation and discussion were: Internet Pornography by Dr. Albert Rossi and Cases of Sexual Misconduct by Archpriest Michael Matsko.]

The current plague ravaging our culture, the fastest growing addiction in the US, is internet pornography. Our best defense is a potent offense. Our Lord said, "Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God." The converse is implied, namely, those who are not pure of heart may not see God. That would be tragic because those who don't know God don't know themselves. We are made in God's image and likeness. That is the template for knowing ourselves.

Our potent offense is purity of heart, a gift from God that we cooperate in receiving.

So, our challenge is to retain, sustain and cultivate "purity of heart." The question is where do we start. Well, we pray and ask for guidance. We ask for strength and to be guarded. The current operational definition of guarding the heart is

support. That means surrendering to the Lord and to another human being inside of, and outside of, confession. The key word is "and." We need other humans to walk with us in our pursuit of "purity of heart." We need to be accountable to the Lord and to other humans. We need to allow others to support us by prudently disclosing our inner and outer activities.

Purity and Isolation

There is good reason to take the topic seriously. For starters, 87% of male youth and about 30% of female youth admit to looking at internet pornography regularly. Our youth are getting their sex education through internet pornography. This can destroy the possibility of healthy boy-girl friendships. More than that, family life in the future is jeopardized. The future of our Church rests on stable, faith-filled and loving marriages, the foundation of loving families.

For internet pornography, the great enemy is isolation. Isolation leads to despondency that leads to despair. Those persons who watch pornography usually do so in private, often thinking that no one knows and no one is hurt. Of course, this is a lie but the secrecy blinds the person to the Truth.

We all need someone to know the summary of our outer and inner lives, our spiritual father and a trusted friend or two. Perhaps the greatest suggestion in this little article is that each of us has the humility to disclose, on a very regular basis, the deepest, darkest secrets in our hearts, inside of and outside of, confession. We need a “soul friend,” a person inside and outside confession who can listen to us non-judgmentally and thereby lighten our burden. We also need to become such a person for others.

Computer Protection

If we are looking for real support to keep us from internet pornography on the computer, one of the best helps is a software called *Covenant Eyes*. With *Covenant Eyes*, a person subscribes and adds an email address or two of persons who are willing to be “accountability partners.” *Covenant Eyes* also supplies a service to cover hand held smart-phones

The person who subscribes to *Covenant Eyes* simply supplies the email addresses of the others. The subscriber's computer is then monitored and a weekly summary is sent to the email addresses the subscriber supplied. The accountability partners receive a weekly summary of everything the person viewed on the computer that week. The summary is neatly categorized into clumps of acceptable and unacceptable sites. The accountability partner, upon finding unacceptable sites visited, might send an email saying something like, “Is there something we need to talk about?” The process is safe and can be exceedingly helpful.

There is a cost for a *Covenant Eyes* subscription. The regular cost is \$8.99 a month. But, it is possible to attach to an existing group for \$2 a month. For more information about this please contact Dr Rossi at realsimplenow@gmail.com. If a person attaches to an existing group for \$2 a month, the only thing the group's sponsor knows is the mere fact that the person is now a member of the group. The sponsoring person does not know who the accountability partners are. The sponsoring person does not know any of the internet activity of the person who joins. The setup is clean and non-invasive.

Some persons are literally addicted to internet pornography. For those persons, the suggestion is to find a local *Sexaholics Anonymous* (SA) meeting by going to www.sa.org. SA has many members who have never acted out with another human. Their reason for attending meetings is to stop viewing internet pornography. SA meetings are closed meetings, unlike AA that has occasional open meetings where non-addicts can attend. SA is for lust or sex addicts and those who think they may be lust or sex addicts.

Conclusion

We can only continue our life as a person who is “pure in heart” if we are walking this walk with others. Simply put, we can't do it alone. The John Wayne approach, that is, rugged individualism, doesn't work. We need to talk about our behaviors and our temptations to trusted friends. Married persons can only say so much of this with their spouse, especially temptations about purity. Yes, it is possible to over-communicate about these issues. In today's lingo it is called TMI, too much information. The wife can't hear that her husband was sorely tempted by a relative at a dinner party. TMI. But, the husband does need to tell that to a trusted friend, soon thereafter. We might call that trusted friend an “accountability partner.” All this is so counter-cultural. Our culture is highly verbal and filled with Reality TV but the culture does not encourage a person to own and share with the Lord and another human being the temptations of the heart in order to arrive at “purity of heart.” Generally, the culture encourages a disclosure of faults as a catharsis, a dumping to feel better. Orthodoxy is about doing the Lord's will, not feeling better.

Purity of heart comes to those who really, really want it. And that means being humble enough to include the support of others in our pursuit of virtue. [Recommended reading: *The Drug of the New Millennium* by Mark B Kastleman.]

Dr. Rossi teaches courses in pastoral theology at Saint Vladimir's Seminary. He is a member of the SCOPA Commission on Contemporary Social and Moral Issues. He has written numerous articles on psychology and religion and published a book through Paulist Press entitled, *Can I Make a Difference: Christian Family Life Today*. After teaching at Pace University for 24 years, he retired as Associate Professor of Psychology. He is a licensed clinical psychologist in the state of New York.

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and the hot-cakes and the ketchup on the scrapple, displacing the time and arrangement of the checkerboard tablecloth like torque gone wrong in a bad translation of some macabre motorcycle joke, he looked at me and said, "I ain't gonna' be here in six months. You gotta' ask her serious this time."

I had a bad feeling "You're leaving?"

"I'm dying. I got cancer." It wasn't funny anymore. "And don't you tell her."

Not long after they married. He wanted her to have everything. He really did love her.

There was Sister Grace. Father Mike, who'd married them. (Bobby'd been Catholic as a kid) A nurse-practitioner with a stethoscope. Bobby's nephew. Carla. And me.

I was sitting on the edge of the bed when he closed his eyes. Nurse took his pulse and pronounced him.

I could hear the comforting and the crying and the phone calls being made down the hall. I sat alone with my friend and prayed. He had the Catholic Last Rites... I guess I was praying for me.

Translate me, O Sovereign Lady, to the hallowed and precious arms of the holy Angels, so that, covered by their wings, I see not the impious, putrid and dark forms of the demons.

Maybe twenty minutes went by. Maybe more - And he opened his eyes - Bright blue and iridescent - Loud eyes - Displacing the silence of the prayer - Shouting out as much as is possible for eyes so long closed - Son of David, shouting out all the more - For hope in God.

...And that evil be not eternal... this indestructible bond should be cut away and dissolved, and

that this body be dissolved from that of which it was fashioned, and that the soul should be translated thence where it will remain until the General Resurrection...

I couldn't quietly call the others, and I couldn't leave, but I tried. And they saw the same thing I saw as they returned one by one - Staring up past me - Like no earthly person was there in the room - Bobby, signing - Signing to someone up beyond where I sat - Somewhere above where the rest all stood. No one spoke.

Finally - I said. "Bobby. What do you see?" His grip on my wrist was so unexpected and sudden - Displacing the temperature and the tonality and the texture of the room.

He turned his head and he looked at his poor theology-talking friend like a man who had to chew a baby's food for him - A look that displaced message and meaning - context and connotation - syntactic-structure, our given-situation - It seemed he felt sorry for us.

"I know you want to know," he said, "But I can't tell you right now." And this time when he closed his eyes it was different. It was for good.

I don't know what particular argument remained un-translated for what particular recipient on that particular day in that particular room - But I do know nobody walked away with what people call word-sense disambiguation - We knew none of that mattered - And I know I know I didn't know how to sign then, and I still don't know - But I'm pretty sure that in that particular translation, Bobby's argument with himself or whoever he was signing to about who was gonna' do the leaning blew back over the Z-bar and opened his eyes.

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Winter 2012

New Covenant House Outreach Center in Camden, NJ

Because of the generosity of a dedicated Orthodox family living in the Camden area, Covenant House has been able to expand its services beyond bi-monthly street outreach and referral. Father Stephen Siniari is now working in Camden on a daily basis hoping to establish a storefront drop-in center where Covenant House staff might offer referral and basic social services to young people in Camden County ages 18 – 21. On behalf of Covenant House, Fr Stephen wishes to thank those who have supported this work in the past, and asks your prayers for the continued good work God is accomplishing among us. Contributions to this effort can be sent to: Covenant House New Jersey, Camden Initiative, Attn: Maureen Hunt, 330 Washington St., Newark, NJ 07102

One Begger Telling Another Begger Where to Find Bread

SIGN

by Fr Stephen Siniari

There are few efforts more conducive to humility than that of the translator trying to communicate an incommunicable beauty. Yet, unless we do try, something unique and never surpassed will cease to exist except in the libraries of a few inquisitive book-lovers.

- Edith Hamilton

Their telephone blinked red when it rang. The doorbell too. Neither mother nor father could speak to or hear their only child. But their son Bobby could speak and hear. And he signed too.

He was a tough guy, Bobby. Came to work with us right out of the Navy. Could fix anything. Rode an old-school chopper with chrome Z-bar handlebars that curved out and back.

Wore short-shorts and red ankle socks with cut-off tee-shirts, jump-boots, and a marine-corps cap. "Why?" I asked. "Just to tick people off."

If I needed to go somewhere no one else would go, to get a kid out of a jam, I'd go find Bobby in the basement among the tools in the maintenance department he ran.

"Get on the bike." I'd get on the back.

"And don't lean. I'll do the leaning."

We'd have shouting conversations over the engine noise about the one thing he didn't believe in. Space aliens? Not a problem - But God? Bobby said he really wanted to, but no matter how hard he tried, he just couldn't find a sign.

But at the same time, that's all he ever wanted to talk about - Any time we'd ride - His every other word blown back over the Z-bar involved some question about God - Ballistic-theology - Rotational force - Twisted cosmology - Displacing space and matter and Garden State Parkway mile-markers - Eradicating time like string-theory gone wild in Einstein's mind.

After a year father died. And then mother.

One morning Bobby didn't want to eat breakfast alone. "Busy? So get on." He looked back. "I know, Rich. You'll do the leaning."

We blew over the Brigantine Bridge past the beat-up pick-up truck and old motorcycle-parts moldering in the front-yard, the boat, and the blinking house with the blinking telephone and doorbell and every other blinking thing he now owned - Alone.

He motioned to a waitress in the Pirate's Den diner and asked if I thought she was pretty.

"Yep."

"Go tell her I love her."

"You go tell her."

"Her name's Carla."

"No. I ain't going."

When I went over she looked at me and said, "Yeah, I know, Bobby loves me."

It was funny at first. We started going once a week. It was a cute joke.

But as time went by the - Tell her I love her - Turned into - Ask her to marry me.

"You ask her."

She already knew when I got there. "Yeah, I know. Bobby wants to marry me."

It was funny, A sort of running gag.

Then one morning it got serious - Too serious, over the coffee

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Jacob's well

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