

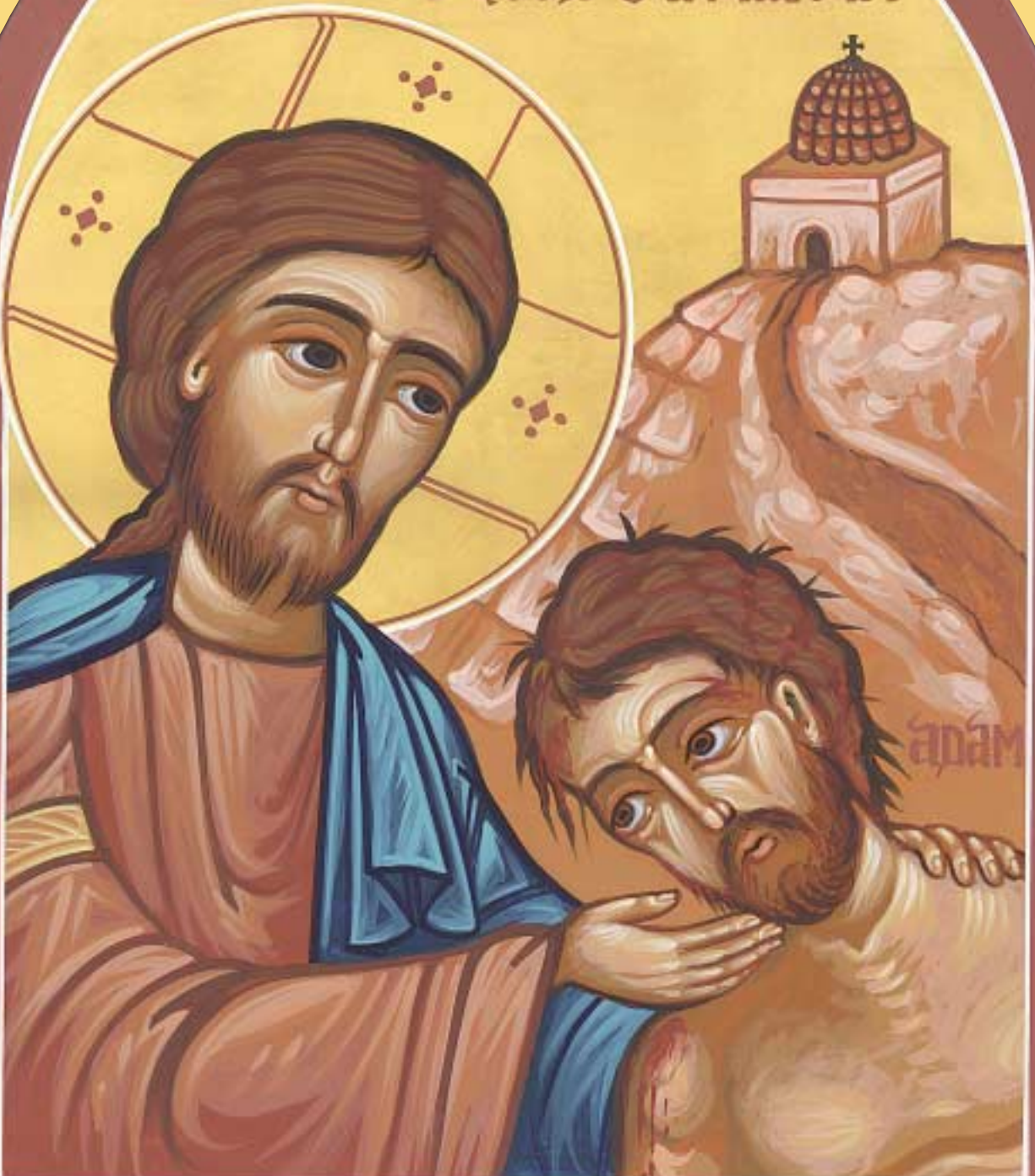
THE
WORD

FEBRUARY 2001

VOLUME 45 NO. 2

الكنيسة

JESUS CHRIST
THE GOOD SAMARITAN



◆
The Most Reverend
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Primate

The Right Reverend
Bishop Antoun, Auxiliary

The Right Reverend
Bishop Joseph, Auxiliary

The Right Reverend
Bishop Basil, Auxiliary

The Right Reverend
Bishop Demetri, Auxiliary

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REFLECTION ON THE COVER ICON: The account of the Good Samaritan is found in Luke (10:29). Because this is a parable about the Kingdom, we understand the message to be about Christ and salvation. When asked by a lawyer who willed to test the Lord, Christ gave an account of three priests. One of the priests was a liturgical priest, another from the Levites, the priestly tribe, and the third a Samaritan, an "outsider." The priest who came from the outside and proved to be a good neighbor is Jesus Christ. The man needing help is any and every person, represented in the icon as "Adam." The icon shows our Lord lifting, embracing and loving us. Notice that the Church has no door, rather an opening from which flows living and nourishing water. This shows the heavenly gifts of Baptism and Eucharist to cleanse and feed us. The gold in the sky shows the light of the Kingdom, light not of the sun, but of God. We who are baptized into Christ and are fed at His altar with divine food are to enter into His priesthood and embrace and love each other. This is an "icon" of the Kingdom of God, painted by Nick Papas of Greensburg, PA; it is part of the private collection of Fr. John Abdalah.

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الكلمة

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PASTORAL CARE

THE WORLD IS CHANGING AT AN EVER-increasing rate. Technology and communications are growing at such speed that people are genuinely overwhelmed. Often, people turn to psychology and social work for relief. Orthodox Christians know that real relief or peace comes only from Jesus Christ.

As a science, psychology studies mental processes and responses. Such study informs us well about our behaviors and thoughts. Social psychology has much to say about how people respond in various situations. Social work has much to teach about offering people opportunities to change. While these sciences have much to offer us about the human condition, they mostly begin and end with the client's own feelings and impressions. Orthodox Christians know that peace is a gift of God and comes to us through Jesus Christ. While caring for each other, we come to respond to God who is revealing Himself to each of us in each of our particular conditions. Because the human condition is a result of a world and mankind separated from God and His creation, it is precisely a restoration to God that brings the relief that human beings seek.

An Orthodox pastoral care-giver recognizes that it is Jesus Christ who is the pastor who cares for His creation, and all those He created in His image and likeness. This caregiver studies both social sciences and God's revelation. Baptized into Christ, he or she can help one who is seeking relief to find it. Relief comes from restoration to God who came to us in Jesus Christ, and who comes to us in those who put Christ on.

For one to be an effective pastoral care-giver, one must study both theology and the social sciences. Because of our emphasis on Christ's incarnation, Orthodox theology communicates well with the social sciences and the social sciences well with Orthodoxy. This easy communication is a result of God's action of entering His creation and being human like us. In the incarnation of His Son, God has provided us with an example of how healthy humans can be. By sharing His own life with us, we can be restored to that life that God first intended for us, a life of abundance and of peace.


The pastoral care-giver provides the pilgrim seek-

ing God a safe environment where God can be found. God is found in both the pilgrim and the pastoral care-giver. The care-giver can be a man or a woman, a cleric or non-cleric. Clergy and seminarians are studying the social sciences in large numbers, undoubtedly because they understand the needs of God's people at this time in our human history. Of greater interest to me are the large numbers of social scientists who are studying theology, recognizing that here is the wisdom that will enrich their vocations and bring them into Christ's ministry.

For decades, Church leaders have been suspicious of the social sciences. In the Church, our understanding of the human being begins and ends with God. As a science, the study of people's behaviors and thoughts has begun and ended with individuals. As the number of mental health workers who are converted to understand the importance of God in their own lives and the lives of their clients increases, our suspicions and fears should decrease.

I encourage clergy and church leaders to identify mental health professionals of their community who understand that Jesus Christ is the real care-giver and who are willing to work in His ministry. A computer search of members of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors may be one place to start.

Another opportunity is to gather Orthodox Christians who do mental health work to meet regularly with area clergy to discuss how theology informs psychology and psychology theology. I promise such meetings, especially when they revolve around specific case studies, would be very informative and lively. I would also encourage mental health professionals to join other mental health professionals already studying in the Antiochian House of Studies program, a distance learning theology program of the Antiochian Archdiocese, to help them enrich their ministries and vocations.

Pastoral care is the care of Jesus Christ for His Church and the real people in it. Care-givers enter into Christ's ministry to work in His priesthood and to share His life. Pastoral care is a gift from God, a ministry, and a life that brings joy and peace to the Church and to the care-giver who knows and loves his/her God. 

◆
**EDITORIAL
BY**
*Very Rev. John
Abdalah*
◆



REPORT ON THE JERUSALEM TASK FORCE DELEGATION TO AMMAN

BY DR. ISSA J. BOULLATA

AN OFFICIAL DELEGATION representing the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America as well as the Jerusalem Task Force was formed in USA and Canada to go to Amman, Jordan to celebrate on December 15, 2000 the consecration of the new and independent Arab Orthodox Church of St. James in Amman. The pastor of this new independent church is Father Dr. Kamal Farhat, who has personally put himself under the temporary omophorion of Metropolitan Philip after resigning from the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Jerusalem. The leader of the delegation was Bishop Demetri Khoury, who also carried a check for \$100,000 from the Archdiocese of North America to the victims of the current Palestinian intifada of Al-Aqsa.

When Jordan's Minister of Interior ordered the closing of the church, the delegation went to Amman regardless of this unjust order. Their aim was to protest the closure of the church, to give support to Fr. Farhat and his church community, and to seek legal ways of re-opening the church.

In addition to Bishop Demetri, the members of the delegation were: Dr. George Madanat, Mansour Rayyan, Fr. Constantine Nasr, Fr. Nicola

Dahdal, Dr. Wafe Nasr, Dr. Issa Boullata, Rev. Dr. John Benefiel, Farouq Shawarab, Monther Madanat, Farid Ayoub, and Constantine Nasr Jr. They were joined in Amman by Task Force members formerly residing in USA: Dr. Ghassan Juwei'ed and his wife Zakuyyeh and Farid Sweilem, owner (with his three brothers) of the New Palm Palace Hotel in Amman where the delegation stayed.

The delegation began its activities on Friday, December 15, 2000 by a

America. They heard from members of St. James church expressions of faith and of determination to go ahead with the establishment and development of their church, independent of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, despite his attempts to influence other members of the Arab Orthodox community against joining the new St. James church by gifts of money.

On Saturday, December 16, Ambassador of Palestine in Jordan, H.E. Omar Al-Khatib, came to the

hotel at midday to greet Bishop Demetri and receive from him a check for \$100,000 from Metropolitan Philip and his Archdiocese in North America in support of the victims of the Palestinian intifada of Al-Aqsa against Israeli occupation. Members of the press were present as well as members of the Task Force delegation, members of the church council and the community of St.

James Church in Amman, and representatives of the Orthodox Society headed by Dr. Raouf Abu-Jaber. Bishop Demetri gave a very moving speech in Arabic then presented the check to H.E. Omar Al-Khatib, who responded with an equally moving speech on accepting it.

In the evening, the delegation met with members of the Orthodox



Delegation of the Task Force with Ambassador Omar El-Khatib.

preliminary planning meeting, attended by Fr. Farhat. They later met with the church council and the church community of St. James in Amman and discussed with them the future of their church, the legal steps needed to re-open it, and the moral and financial support of Metropolitan Philip, the Task Force, and the Archdiocese of North



IN DEFENSE OF AN ARAB ORTHODOX CHURCH

Society in their building in Amman to discuss with them the common cause of regaining the church rights of the Arab Orthodox Community in Jordan and the Holy Land, rights usurped by the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem and his Greek hierarchy.

Dr. Abu-Jaber outlined his Society's recent activities, including letters sent to Jordan's King Abdallah II and his Prime Minister, to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, and to Jerusalem's Patriarch explaining the Arab Orthodox community's call for compliance by the Jerusalem Patriarch with Jordanian Law 27 of 1958, which he ignores. Dr. Abu-Jaber also spoke of the closing of St. James Church in Amman, following a letter to Metropolitan Philip by Antiochian Patriarch Ignatius, leaked by someone to the Jerusalem Patriarch and the Jordanian government. The Antiochian Patriarch said there was no such thing as an Arab Orthodox church in Amman and advised against the involvement of the Antiochian Church in establishing one.

Dr. George Madanat reviewed the relations between the Task Force and the Orthodox Society and noted, in particular, the Task Force's decision in its 1998 conference in Detroit to establish an independent Arab Orthodox church in Amman. Dr. Madanat added that representatives of the Orthodox Society and the Palestinian Orthodox community attending the conference requested and were given a sixty-day reprieve for consultation but did not later respond, so the independent Arab Orthodox Church of St. James was established and its priest Fr. Farhat sought and received ecclesiastical protection by

Metropolitan Philip.

Dr. Abu-Jaber and other members of the Orthodox Society said the establishment of St. James Church in Amman creates a schism in the Arab Orthodox community. They added that reform of the Jerusalem Patriarchate should be sought by other means that would preserve the unity of the Arab Orthodox community and keep the Jerusalem church one. Dr. Madanat and other members of his delegation said there was no schism at all but that there was need for new means, since the same old means used again and again had not led to any success over time.

Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Palm Palace Hotel by Bishop Demetri with the participation of Fr. Constantine Nasr, Fr. Nicola Dahdal, Fr. Kamal Farhat, and Deacon Elias Barakat. More than 200 people from St. James Church attended, in addition to the Task Force delegation

there is no power in the world that can prevent him from praying to God and performing his duties as a priest, despite the closure of his church. He thanked Metropolitan Philip and his Archdiocese as well as Bishop Demetri and the Task Force for their support and hoped the building of St. James Church will be re-opened.

After the buffet lunch at the Orthodox Club, the members of the Orthodox Society and the Task Force delegation exchanged speeches about co-operation with regard to theological education of Jordanian and Palestinian Arab Orthodox young men who consider being priests. Dr. Madanat explained the possibility of scholarships in America offered by Metropolitan Philip and he outlined the required qualifications, when these young men apply. Dr. Abu-Jaber concluded by hoping for continued co-operation between the two

organizations on matters of common purpose.

On Sunday evening, the Task Force delegation met with members of St. James Church Council and its legal committee headed by Haifa Sadiq. Lawyers Husam Naffa' and Salim Sweiss were also present. Discussions revolved on the legal aspects of closing St. James Church, particularly the letter of Jordan's Minister of Interior based on Jordanian

laws of 1938 and 1958. Strategies of challenging the letter of closure were discussed.

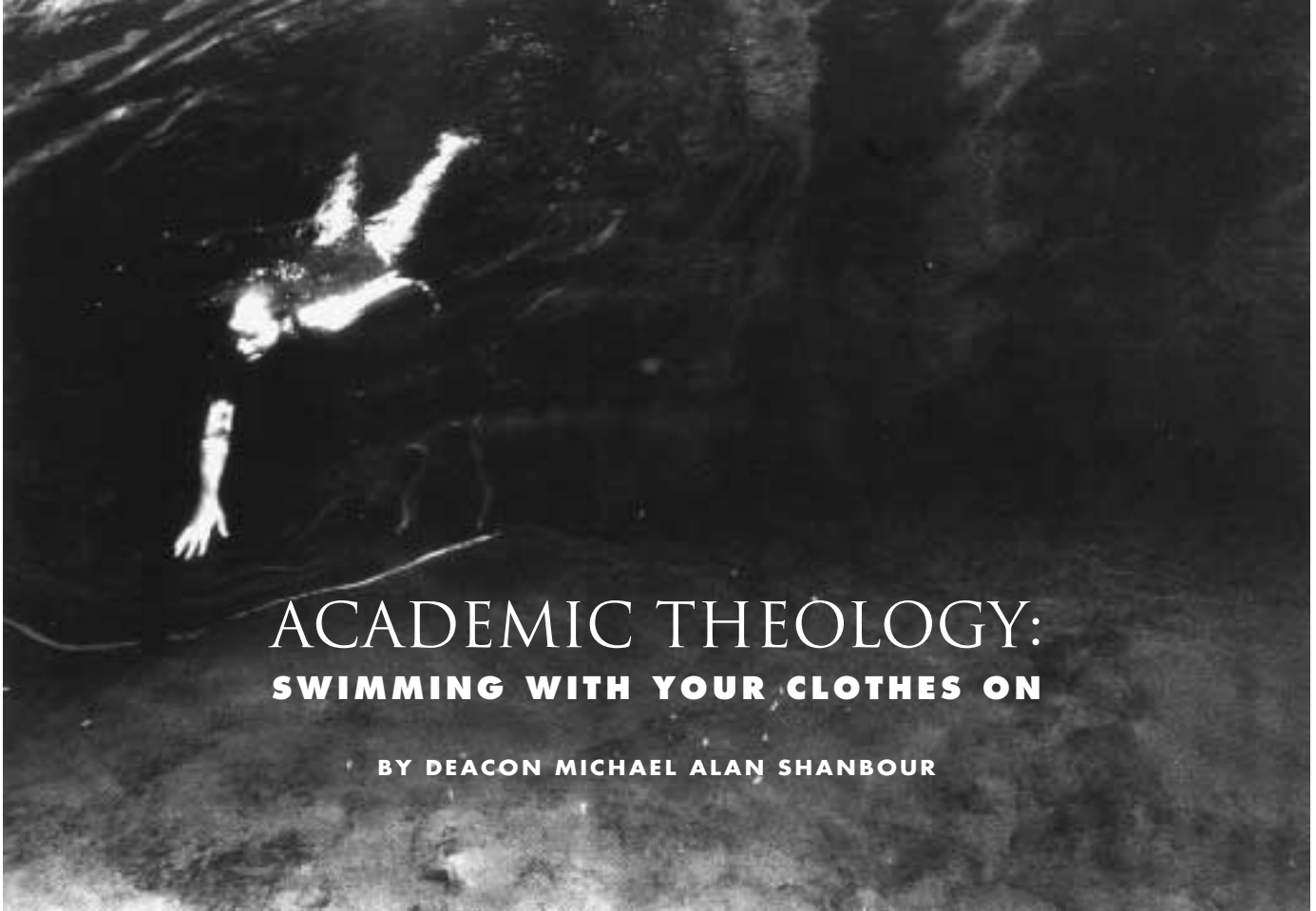
A press conference was scheduled at the Palm Palace Hotel at noon on Monday, December 18 and a Task Force panel headed by Dr. Madanat responded to questions from the



His Grace Bishop Demetri, Ambassador of Palestine to Jordan Omar El-Khatib

and some members of the Orthodox Society. Bishop Demetri gave a powerful sermon, emphasizing the support of Metropolitan Philip, his Archdiocese, and the Task Force and expressing the hope that St. James Church will prosper as long as its people have faith and determination. Fr. Farhat concluded with another strong sermon announcing

Continued on page 38



ACADEMIC THEOLOGY: SWIMMING WITH YOUR CLOTHES ON

BY DEACON MICHAEL ALAN SHANBOUR

IN THE RENOWNED AND GOD-inspired work, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, St. John Climacus makes an amazing and disturbing statement: “He who dabbles in theology while still in the passions is like one who tries to swim with his clothes on.”

Of course, one who swims with his clothes on is likely to be weighted down and to drown. For once within the waters the clothes become saturated and restrict the proper movement of the body, potentially rendering it incapable of swimming. This teaching of St. John is essential to the Orthodox understanding of the nature of theology and theological education, the nature of the Church, the nature of the spiritual life and the life of each Orthodox Christian.

I believe that Orthodox theology is in time of crisis and many of us have placed ourselves in dangerous waters. We have often replaced the understanding and practice of true theology with the intellectual *appearance* of theology, an “academic” theology.

THEOLOGY AND THE TRUE THEOLOGIAN

According to the teachings of our Holy Fathers on the stages of the spiritual life, theology is the *final* stage and is equated with perfect self-emptying love. For the Fathers there could be no theology apart from the practice of prayer and self-denial, humility and love of one’s enemies. Theology was understood to be the words, the silence and the actions of one who had been formed by faith and transformed by grace. A theologian was not one who could understand abstract concepts about God, but who had taken up the cross and followed Christ. Yet, in our day the saying, “The theologian is the one who truly prays” is one of the most often quoted and simultaneously the most neglected in practice (most certainly by the author of this article).

In the Orthodox understanding, the true theologian is the one who has attained to purity of heart and dispassion, has become illumined and deified in Christ, and therefore has attained to the experience of God and to God-likeness, that is to love. This is, of course, why in the

Holy Orthodox Church the Saints are our theologians, because they know God. They have attained to that state of purity and love in which speaking about God is synonymous with and is the fruit of their own experience of God.

As St. John Climacus says, “The man who wants to talk about love is undertaking to speak about God. But it is risky to talk about God and could even be dangerous for the unwary. Angels know how to speak about love, but even they do so only in proportion to the light within them.” The true theologians of the Church, St. Gregory Palamas for instance, have been filled with this same angelic and uncreated light and are able therefore to speak about God with authority, from experience. The vision of God is therefore the prerequisite for theology, and purity of heart is the prerequisite for the vision of God. “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.” St. Paul himself received his theology from his vision of Jesus Christ. For most of us, attaining to the vision of God requires great struggle, tears, confession and repentance, and the conscious practice of humility and obedience.



In modern times we have become too ready to pronounce ourselves theologians by being *informed* rather than by being *formed* by the prayer of the Church and the practice of the spiritual life. Most Orthodox know that one does not become a theologian by merely memorizing Bible verses. Yet we often unconsciously adopt a similar Protestant approach toward theology, disguised by our acceptance of certain doctrines, of Church history, and of a liturgical “style” of worship. It should be clear to us that this temptation is so great for no other reason than that it is easier for us. For instance, it requires much less struggle to read a “theological” book which does not challenge me to change my unspiritual habits, than to prepare for and receive the sacrament of confession. In contrast, the battle cry of Orthodox theology is, “Give blood [effort], receive [the Holy] Spirit.”

Yet by continually pursuing theology without practicing the spiritual life I become an “academic theologian.” I read theological books and yet my sins, bad habits, and passions remain untouched, unexamined, unchanged, unhealed. As we shall see below, this merely intellectual approach to theology is nothing new and has been confronted by the Church before.

As a former seminary student I am acutely aware of the temptation to fall in love with “theology” as a study, as a means to speculation of new controversies in the theological sphere, or as a conceptual form for its own sake. Both prior to and during my theological education I read extensively about monasticism — its history, its significance, its special influence on the life of the Church — without having ever stepped foot in a monastery, without ever being in the presence of a holy monk, without ever soaking in the rays of obedience, humility, simplicity of life, and living theology found in such a setting! Today it is possible to read books that interpret the theology of the Holy Fathers of the Church without ever reading them for ourselves, or worse, without having a spiritual guide to put them in

perspective for us.

In the Orthodox Tradition theology does not proceed from *reason*, from the brain. Theology is a state of grace, a return to our nature before the fall in which reason has become formed and informed by the grace of God in the heart. The spiritual center (in Greek, *nous*) of the soul returns and abides in the heart, thereby restoring the natural vision of God. As Adam heard the voice of God in paradise, the pure soul also naturally communes with God and receives His words. As Adam knew the names of the animals, the illumined soul knows the true nature of all created things. As Adam prophesied, the illumined soul speaks the word of God by virtue of its vision of Him. As Adam was clothed in the uncreated Light of God, the deified soul (the true theologian) becomes a vessel of grace, embodying theology, which is direct and experiential knowledge of God.

EDUCATION AND THEOLOGY

While theological education has become more important than ever in light of centuries of oppression, the pervasiveness of western forms of humanistic and scholastic theological approaches, and the danger of modern secularism, a theological education which is not based upon an Orthodox understanding of theology fails us. A contemporary Russian elder, Abbot Nikon (1894-1963), gives us an excellent summary of the objectives of theological education. Speaking of some tendencies of theological education in this time he says:

Instead the students are obliged to memorize huge amounts of material. Does even one subject reach the mind, let alone the heart? ... This is a conglomeration of facts — raw, undigested material. What is worse, given a weak faith and a worldly mind, the study of spiritual truth only leads to the diminution of these truths. The veil of mystery is removed from them, the depth of divine wisdom is stripped away. These truths become the subject of polemics, foreign to

the student’s soul. His faith dwindles and even evaporates.

In contrast to this academic approach, Abbot Nikon presents the objectives for a good theological education:

A spiritual school must 1) strengthen faith; 2) teach one to pray; 3) teach one to know himself, his fallen state; 4) teach one to fight sin and temptations through the example of the Holy Fathers; 5) teach one to understand and gain a feeling for the writings of the Holy Fathers, and through them, the Gospel — to make them one’s own, dear and close to the heart, alive, answering the need of the soul in all circumstances, and not merely the subject of intellectual knowledge; 6) teach one to view the Gospel commandments not as an impediment to free living but as a path to finding ... the pearl of great price for which, upon discovering it, a man gladly sells everything else, i.e. all the worldly interests and pleasures, all that the world prizes.

Without these criteria there is the danger of making theology an academic subject matter, or a speculative philosophy that produces purely abstract concepts and intellectual formulations wholly foreign to faith. We should not pursue theology as such but seek to be formed in the spiritual life through guidance from holy and experienced teachers who follow the practical path of the Holy Fathers.

Unfortunately, in our time, theological education has sometimes become founded on speculation rather than upon the mind of the Church Fathers. Instead of immersing ourselves in obedience to the Holy Fathers, we seek to raise ourselves above them, imagining ourselves their equal and peer. Instead of preparing our hearts to receive the theology of the Church by pursuing purification, we seek to become theologians in our own right. Instead of prayer, we seek speculation. Yet, as St. John Climacus says, “The growth of fear [of God] is the starting point of love, and total purity is the foundation for



ACADEMIC THEOLOGY

theology.” The “academic theologian,” however, exalts his own reason over the experience of the Holy Fathers of the Church.

ST. GREGORY PALAMAS AND BARLAAM

In the 14th century, St. Gregory Palamas defended the true nature of Orthodox theology against a scholastic theologian from the west, Barlaam. Barlaam taught that logical reasoning and philosophical knowledge was greater than the Saints’ experience of God, that the philosophers were greater than the Apostles, and that philosophy was more refined than the experience of God’s Light since in his opinion, God’s grace experienced by the Saints is a creation. St. Gregory recognized the danger in this academic approach, which seeks to exalt fallen reasoning and speculation above the pure prayer of the heart by which the true theologians of the Church are “taught by God” Himself. When the heart is purified and the soul illumined by the uncreated Grace of God, one comes to true knowledge and experience of God, which is theology.

Academic and speculative theology can become a “drug” to which we become addicted and which keeps us *from* the spiritual life. I have seen young men interested in theological education embroiled in speculative issues such as women and the priesthood, perhaps imagining themselves a “new” Athanasius articulating the faith of the Church for our times. The desire for answers to these speculations overcomes and distracts from even the desire for living the spiritual life or listening to the teachings of the Holy Fathers. Yet too often the answers are sought not in the simple teachings of the Church but within one’s own reason. Yet how can we seek the “higher” things without having attained to the basics?

“The Lord Himself says: ‘If you do all that is demanded of you [that is, follow all the commandments], consider yourselves unprofitable servants whose duty it is to fulfill the

master’s orders’ (Luke 17:10) ... For this reason, the seeking of high spiritual states is forbidden by the Lord and by the Holy Fathers. All our inner struggle should be concentrated on repentance and on everything which promotes the penitent state” (Abbot Nikon).

One must only experience an internet listserve devoted to theological discussion to see that today everyone has become a “theologian.” In our day it is possible to graduate from seminary and yet not even be able to fulfill a simple rule of



prayer — five minutes in the morning and ten minutes in the evening. The point of spiritual education is the health of the soul. While many of the Holy Fathers and teachers of the Church had great formal educational backgrounds, other great “theological minds” of the Church had only elementary school educational levels. This should teach us that theological education is not determined by academics.

The books we read often form our spiritual attitudes and approach to theology. Do we continually read highly academic-oriented theological books, or edifying works which seek to teach us how to live the spiritual life? Books on the lives of holy persons (canonized and not yet canonized) of our own times are being

written and translated in abundance today. These books can provide us with examples which inspire us and form us in the theology of the Church. There are the lives and teachings of more recently canonized Saints such as St. Silouan the Athonite, St. John Maximovich, St. Nicholas Planas, St. Nektarios of Aegina, and the Elders of Optina Monastery, Leonid, Anthony, Moses, Macarios and the others. There are still many more works in existence of those holy ones who have not yet been officially canonized by the Church: Papa Dimitri Gagastathis, the Nun Gavrillia, Elder Porphyrios, Elder Joseph the Hesychest, Elder Amphilocios Makris, Elder Epiphanius Theodoropoulos, Elder Paisios of the Holy Mountain, and many more.

THE CHURCH AS “HOSPITAL”

The primary indication of true theology is whether it affects the cure of our souls. The Holy Fathers often refer to the Church as a “spiritual hospital” for sinners. Sin is a spiritual sickness and the goal of theology is to bring the person into spiritual health and wholeness through repentance, to heal the passions and restore them to their proper order. As St. Basil the Great says, “Cure is not conditioned on the passing of time but rather by the manner of repentance.” Based upon this understanding of the goal of theology, a penance is always seen as the method by which a person can overcome sin and receive the healing for the soul.

Through Christ, “Physician of our souls and bodies,” the Church provides us with the true doctrine, true prayer, true sacramental life, and true spiritual teaching which can heal us. This is the purpose of the Church and this is our hope for salvation. The Church is the hospital in which we all find the medications and surgeries that bring grace deeper into the soul in order to purify the heart. All of this takes place through our active repentance and prayer,



which is the beginning of theology.

Therefore struggle is necessary. We must take seriously the prescription of the Church and her teachers. Our participation in the activities and sacraments of the Church must be accompanied by our own inner spiritual struggle. In the words of St. Maximos the Confessor, "Theology without action (*praxis*) is the theology of demons." The *praxis* refers not to mere activity or even social action, but rather to asceticism, self-denial, the inner work of purification, prayer and repentance. The Holy Fathers teach that the sacraments only effect healing in us to the extent that we are open to their grace through purity of heart. The sacraments give us the grace to do the work of purification. Just as wine cannot be poured into a container which is already filled with oil, the sacraments can only import grace to the extent that the soul can receive it.

Involvement in activities, organizations, and programs within our parishes do not take the place of repentance and spiritual growth. The quality of these activities will reflect the degree of repentance and spiritual health of those who undertake them. These activities and "ministries" will bear fruit and bring healing to the extent that the persons involved are being healed through repentance.

THEOLOGY AND SALVATION

The purpose of theology is to lead us to salvation, and salvation is our participation in true theology. Forgiveness in and of itself is not always equal to salvation. The dire consequences of sin, which is the darkening of our soul and loss of spiritual vision, cannot be overlooked in our search for the salvation of our souls. Heartfelt and active repentance must follow forgiveness to effect the purity of heart which brings kinship with the One who saves. It is true, we can never

earn our salvation. Yet we are saved by grace, and grace comes to the one who sincerely demonstrates his desire for it. As St. Augustine said, "Who is it that purifies us if not God? But God does not purify you unless you are willing."

We Orthodox love to talk about St. Moses the Robber and St. Mary of Egypt, both terrible sinners before turning wholeheartedly to God and embracing the ascetical life of repentance. We discuss in detail their sinful lives before their conver-

In the Orthodox understanding, the true theologian is the one who has attained to purity of heart and dispassion, has become illumined and deified in Christ, and therefore has attained to the experience of God and to God-likeness, that is to love.

sion. We also discourse on their eventual saintliness and the wonders that God worked through them. Yet what about the period in between? How often do we remember the frightening and agonizing struggle that led them to sanctity? How often do we forget the years of penance and suffering necessary to overcome the passions which had taken root? According to the life of St. Mary of Egypt, seventeen of her forty-seven years of prayer and fasting in the desert were spent in unspeakable anguish from terrible thoughts and temptations produced by her sinful life. By overlooking this long period of "silence" in between

sinfulness and saintliness, we mislead ourselves and unknowingly minimize the effort required to reach such holiness.

In the Orthodox Tradition, true theology flows from the heart and mouth of one who comes to know God from direct experience through spiritual struggle. Theology is not a comprehension of concepts, but the result of a fight against the passions which has cleared the spiritual vision to comprehend all things as they are and to behold Christ. The theologian is the one who has been restored to the state of Adam before the fall, who "knew" the names of each animal and walked with God.

St. John of the Ladder speaks about the dangers of speaking about God before having been purified of the sins which darken the vision of the soul. He compares such a theologian with one who jumps into waters while still wearing his clothes. He is weighed down by the heaviness of the soaked clothes and sinks into the depths of the waters. We must remember that the heretic is not one who merely fails to "understand" the Church's teachings, but one who twists the teachings of the Church to fit into his own desires (passions). He is one who needs his "truth" to be something other than the Truth in order to compensate for his crippled or diseased soul. He needs the heresy because his ego will not let him have it any other way. The heresy is actually food for his passions.

Does our theology confront us on a personal level? Does our theology restore our spiritual health? Is our theology a theoretical concept or more like a surgeon's scalpel which effectively cuts out the passions which are the diseased areas of our soul? Have we replaced academics with the saving theology of the Holy Fathers?

Dn. Michael Shanbour serves at St. Mary Church, Omaha, NE.



HOPE IN THE FACE OF DEATH

BY VERY REV. JOSEPH ALLEN

IF ANYTHING MAKES US STOP and think about “hope” it is our need to deal with death and grief. Otherwise it seems to be too philosophical and esoteric a topic with which to deal. And yet, since death and grief will sooner or later touch each of us, can we afford *not* to understand hope?

We can begin that understanding with St. Paul, who wrote about the three theological virtues, faith, hope and love. And he did say that of the three, the greatest is love. The Eastern Christian Tradition would have to add, of course, that where any one of these virtues exists, all three exist at that same moment. But that still does not change the fact: so much has been written about, and taught about, faith and love, that seldom do we hear about hope. And yet in both the Old and New Testaments we are told, time and again, that our very salvation depends upon hope.

Why is there so little focus on hope? Is it because faith and love are easier to understand? Is it because we confuse “hope” and “wishful thinking”? Is it because we are caught up in a world which seems so full of futility and despair, a life bent upon cynicism and helplessness? Such conditions lead us to “hopelessness,” a condition of heart and mind that leads to despair and depression. Indeed, the latest findings confirm that hopelessness is the prime cause of suicide!

Paradoxically, however, it is precisely as we contemplate death and grief that we are forced to deal with hope. This truth was learned by Leo Tolstoy in his *Death of Ivan Illych*, and C. S. Lewis in his *A Grief Observed*, both books which seek to teach a “theology of hope” in the face of *Thanatos* (death). One, Tolstoy, focuses upon death itself;

the other, Lewis, focuses upon grief. Let us briefly look at both.

In Tolstoy’s book *Ivan Illych*, at the very end of his life, saw “light,” and that was because he finally discovered that his hope was not in those various earthly gifts which populate his life. Tolstoy writes that *Illych* now understood such things as the “insubstantiality of his man-

has not only studied theology, but has *experienced* theology: “one must be knocked silly to come to his senses. Only torture will bring out this truth. Only under torture does he discover it himself” (p. 50). Then, and only then, does Lewis recount his “enormous gain” when he turns to God, i.e., after his grieving “unlocks the door.”

**Yes indeed,
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(II Cor. 5:4).

ner of life, values adhered to by society and his profession” (p. 127). The ultimate clarification came to *Illych* when his son kissed his hand, and he then “fell through and saw light.” This even led him to forgive the others before accepting his own death. For our present purposes, however, the point is that the light — the illumination — will always lead beyond the gift of the Giver Himself; He is our only hope (Psalm 39:7). Indeed, no one of faith in God has the right to remain attached to the gift, even when its loss brings such pain. Hope teaches this lesson.

Turning to grief, Lewis reminds us it is hope which leads a person toward spiritual growth and healing. “Do not grieve as those who have no hope,” says the Great Apostle Paul. Lewis makes this a central point, already known to any person who

Ann Loades, when introducing *A Grief Observed*, points to the fact that it is precisely Lewis’ hope which heals his grief: “The key to this recovery was praise as a mode of loving and of God as giver.”

Both Tolstoy and Lewis, then, serve to remind us that hope in the face of death and grief is related to God’s grace, and that is delivered by Jesus Christ. Both point to the source of their hope as expressed by St. John’s Gospel: “Verily, verily, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he shall never taste death” (John 8:51).

None of us, of course, must think that this means we shall not die in our bodily life: “for the form of this life is passing away” (I Cor. 7:31 and I John 2:17). This is precisely the mistake which the Pharisees made, that is, what they could not under-



HOPE IN THE FACE OF DEATH

stand about the meaning of His words. They say to Jesus: "Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets died also; and you say, 'If anyone keeps my word, he shall never taste of death'" (John 8:52). The Pharisees, in such a response, understand neither death nor hope. To begin with, their grasp of death was merely limited to our earthly life; they did not understand the deeper reaches of death, which means, precisely, "separation from God"! Yes indeed, we are mortal, but after Christ, mortality to this earthly and bodily life does not mean separation from the life with God: "What is mortal is swallowed up by life!" (II Cor. 5:4).

But what does this mean, "swallowed up?" It means that our mortality is transformed, is consumed, is precisely "swallowed up," but only because "life itself enters death itself," thereby destroying death. As the Orthodox Christians chant at Pascha, this Life "tramples down death by death." This is the reason that in the Christian East, the faithful find the meaning of hope in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "But we do see him who has been made for a while a little lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone" (Hebrews 2:9).

Jesus "tastes" death for us. It is interesting that the Greek word for "taste" in this verse is *geuomai*, which literally means "to taste and

experience." Jesus Christ experiences death on our behalf so that it no longer means separation from life with God; we no longer have *that* as a penalty, we no longer have to pay *that* as a wage: "The wages of sin is death, but the grace of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, Our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

This is the radical nature of the Christian claim, guarded with great strength by the Orthodox Christians: we have true hope because of what is accomplished in the Resurrection. Otherwise dying is simply dying. *That* is absolutely hopeless. But if in dying we die in this hope, that is, with our eye turned toward the One who freely entered death to "convert" it into life, then what was darkness becomes the way to light, what was despair becomes the way to joy. This affects not only how we are to die, but precisely how we are to live, for it is so true that one never knows how to live until he learns how to die.

Hope, therefore, holds a critical place in human life. And because that is true, we must know two facts about it, not only as we face death and grief, but as hope speaks to us day by day.

The first fact is the difference between "wish" and "hope." We wish *that*, but we hope *in*. Hope is not directed toward immediate and concrete gratification, or toward comfort, or toward "insurances." Here is where the logic of this world will lead us: to hope for a commodity, whatever it be. However, the best example of a true hopeful attitude is

(Romans 8:24)

for what he sees?"

For who hopes

is not hope.

that is seen

"Now hope

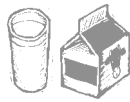
the child toward his mother. The child is constantly asking for the very concrete things, but his ultimate love for his mother does not depend upon the fulfillment of these wishes. He knows that she only wants what is good for him, although he may cry or be very angry at not receiving immediate gratification. But the child soon learns that wish focuses on the gift, while hope focuses on the *giver* of the gift. Looking deeper, this example tells us that, relative to God, wishing is usually transient and self-centered, while hope is always hoping in God.

Secondly, we must remember that hope stands between what is actual and what is possible, between the "what is" and the "not yet." Indeed, it is not seen now: "Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees?" (Romans 8:24) This means that even if one's wish is not immediately granted, hope, because of such a relationship with God, can abide. Thus, hope is given, received, found. One hopes with, through, and even *for* someone else. It is a shared experience and is best generated in the relationship of the love which transcends oneself, i.e., in the Communion of Love, the Church.

Yes indeed, in this world we do have tribulation. Yes indeed, in this world we do have futility, and death and grief. Yes indeed, we have starvation and "rumors of wars." Yes indeed, our enemies attack us on the left and on the right. But our proclamation is only that of the Psalmist: "For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is in Him" (Psalm 62:5).

Thus, as Ivan Illych and C. S. Lewis, each in the face of their death and grief, have taught us: we are called to remember that hope is not a matter of intellect or wishful thinking. It is a word spoken by God to which, in the end, the human heart must respond.

Father Joseph, pastor of St. Anthony's Orthodox Church in Bergenfield, NJ, is also Director of Theological and Pastoral Education of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America, Englewood, NJ.



IOCC TO HELP IN

PRESIDENT CLINTON ANNOUNCED on December 28 that fourteen private voluntary organizations, one of which is IOCC, will receive funding as part of a \$300 million Global Food for Education Initiative to promote better nutrition and school enrollment for needy children in poor countries. IOCC will implement school lunch programs in the Republic of Lebanon and the Republic of Georgia. IOCC was one of 40 invited guests at the White House announcement. President Clinton stated: "Nearly half the human race struggles to survive on less than \$2 a day; nearly a billion live in chronic hunger; half the children in the poorest countries are not in school." He added that, "Experience has shown here at home, and

around the world, that one of the best ways to get parents to send their children to school is a healthy meal." Under the Initiative, the United States Department of Agriculture donates surplus U.S. agricultural commodities for use in school feeding and pre-school nutrition projects. School feeding programs assure that children attend and remain in school, improve childhood development and achievement and thereby contribute to more self-reliant, productive societies.

IOCC's proposal is that the program in Lebanon provide between \$3-4 million of aid. The pilot program is for one year, but may become a multi-year program. The program in Lebanon is designed to provide a meal (snack) for 30,000 school children who attend public schools in poor regions in Beirut (southern suburb, Bourj Hammoud, Boushryeh and Ras el Nabeh),

levels of those children still able to attend school and will provide an incentive for enrollment to those who had dropped out. Furthermore, improved nutrition has been shown to increase students' alertness and ability to learn. Keeping children in schools will in the short-term fight the increasing phenomenon of child labor and begging and in the long-term will definitely improve the

social and economic situation of families who live below the poverty line. Rebuilding Lebanon as a democratic and civil society that respects human rights relies essentially on investing in human beings. Lebanon's future and stability depend on the new generation that should be given all the means needed to overcome the horrible effects of war and to



Children in the Republic of Georgia enjoy a school lunch.

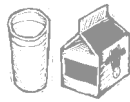
South Lebanon (Bint-Jbeil, Rashayya, Hasbayya, Marjeyoun and Jezzine) and Akkar district in North Lebanon. These children come from poor families who are most adversely affected by Lebanon's harsh economic situation and, especially, the continuing decrease in purchasing power experienced by households with limited income.

A school lunch program in public schools limited to the poor regions and districts of the country will no doubt promote significant improvement in nutrition and attendance

strengthen harmony and reconciliation.

The IOCC staff hopes the following specific results will be accomplished by the program: (1) 70-80% of students experience improvement in diet; (2) school attendance rate improves by at least 25%; and (3) drop-out rate reduces by at least 25%.

According to a study published in June 2000 by the Center for Research and Development, the number of illiterate people in Lebanon is estimated at 13% of the total population. The school enroll-



30,000 CHILDREN

Lebanon

ment rate is estimated at 72.9% for children of families who live below the poverty line. In general, school enrollment rates are estimated at 80% in Beirut, 78.8% in South Lebanon and 74.1% in North Lebanon. The study indicates that the percentage of male/female enrollment in schools is almost the same.

IOCC is going to work with the Lebanese Ministry of Education to implement the program. Education in Lebanon has been severely affected during the period of civil war and the country finds itself in a desperate struggle to recover. Due to the high cost of education in private schools, which has increased beyond the ability of many parents to pay, pupils have started transferring from private schools to public schools at an unprecedented rate. The Ministry of Education reports the number of students joining public schools is increasing at a rate of more than 15% annually. Because it has been very difficult for so many to pay even the \$60 per year public school registration fee, the Lebanese Government has issued a decree recently eliminating that fee for the 2000-2001 school year.

IOCC's Chairman of the Board, Charles Ajalat, said that, "IOCC's work around the world, and particu-

larly the work that will be occurring in Lebanon, has been inspired by Metropolitan Philip's concern about

Ajalat said, "A simple daily meal can mean the difference between a life of poverty or one of opportunity for these 30,000 children. We can make such a difference through a relatively simple, yet powerful program. We are pleased and blessed to be part of this initiative."

Upon hearing the news of IOCC receiving the Global Food for Initiative grants, Metropolitan Philip said, "This is the work which must be done, to feed the hungry and help the poor. This program will, God willing, impact an entire generation of Lebanese and Georgian children and, thus, the future of these whole countries. The bishops of the Orthodox Church on this continent are proud of our SCOBA agency, International Orthodox Christian Charities, and the tremendous work being done by it."

Founded in 1992 by the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas, IOCC is the relief and development agency

of the Orthodox Church worldwide. Over the past decade, IOCC has provided over \$100 million in assistance to 18 countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Middle East.



the poor. Saidna Philip, as Vice-Chairman of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA), was instrumental in the creation of IOCC." With respect to the Global Initiative,



A MERCY OF PEACE, A SACRIFICE OF PRAISE

BY VERY REV. JOHN ABDALAH

“A MERCY OF PEACE, A SACRIFICE OF PRAISE” is indeed a curious text that requires some thought. Obviously, by the treatment it has received from the great liturgical composers, this phrase must have great importance. But what does it mean? Who offers the mercy, what is the peace, whose sacrifice is it, and what is a sacrifice of praise?

Let’s begin by putting the phrase in context. The deacon stands amidst the congregation, lifts his orarion, and chants, “Let us stand aright; let us stand with fear; let us attend, that we may offer the Holy Oblation in peace.” It is certainly no accident that this invitation is offered not by the priest or bishop, but by the deacon. The deacon, as the leader of the faithful, stands amidst the congregation, calling this whole congregation to prayer and leading the community in the worship. The invitation to offer “a mercy of peace, a sacrifice of praise” is clearly presented to the people of God. It is God’s people who offer the holy oblation in peace.

The deacon calls the faithful to stand upright. Some ancient texts call mothers to gather their children and hold them tightly. So important is what will come to follow, that we continue: “Let us stand with fear,” or in a state of “awe” as is a reasonable and correct response to God. We have no equality with God; we stand as creatures before our creator. We are not afraid of His glory or greatness, yet we stand with respect and awe. “Let us attend” calls us to attention. We are at such a state of readiness because we are to offer the holy oblation in peace.

Holy means belonging to God. So the oblation or offering that we are coming to offer is God’s own. This will be amplified when the bishop or priest says “thine own of thine own,” while the gifts are being held up by the deacon, bishop or priest. A key to understanding this text are the words “in peace,” which we come to understand mean “inside of



Christ,” who is our peace. We are baptized into Him and we put Christ on. So we have the deacon calling us, the people of God, to offer Christ’s offering inside of or within the body of Christ. Because Christ is uniquely the Word of God who took on flesh, He alone can be both the offerer and the offered.

The one person of the community who offers to God on behalf of the community is the priest. The priest who fulfills the priesthood of God’s people is Christ. Again, He is the one who offers and is offered. He fulfilled the priesthood by joining

Himself to human flesh and offering Himself, once and for all. By taking on flesh, He restored His divine image to humanity, allowing us once more to be a reflection of God. It is into His priesthood that we are baptized, and it is in this function of priest that we discover our real humanity, which reflects God. This does not exclude us from the additional roles of prophet and king. Nevertheless, it is in the expression of priesthood that we reflect most clearly our function from within the priesthood of Christ. This is what is meant by the “royal priesthood.” This priesthood belongs to all those baptized, as does the function of prophet and king.

We fulfill the ministry of prophet by knowing God’s will for our salvation, of king by ruling over the space God has given us as stewards. But perhaps the image of priest is the most realized in our Christian lives.

Within our metaphor of priesthood, we have at least two functions: ministry and worship. It is in leading the worship, due God the Father, offered in and through the Son by the action and life of the Holy Spirit, that our choirs lead God’s people in praise. This prayer, necessarily liturgical as God’s own, shows us to be in Christ’s priesthood. This action shows us to be human *par excellence*. Human is that which God created “in His image.” Inside of the Word of God, the divine Logos, we praise God with human words and human voice.

Let us reflect briefly on the offering itself. We offer bread and wine, living elements, both alive with living ingredients. Both the bread and



A MERCY OF PEACE

wine involve tedious processes of manufacturing that involve both the actions of God and of humankind. Both come from the seeds of the plants, symbols of new life and regeneration. They then require planting, care for growth, harvesting, milling, the addition of a living agent such as yeast to ferment or grow, and then cooking or distilling. What better symbols could God have used to offer as our offering in resurrection or eternal life?

This is the context in which the choir responds to the deacon's invitation to offer the holy oblation in peace. We respond first by amplifying what the oblation means. It is Christ's oblation or *offering* to us as His mercy and of us to His Father as it expresses His perfect praise. The Church calls on the choir leaders to lead God's people to offer up in hymns of praise, not spoken, but sung with our whole beings, with brightness and joy, this "mercy of peace, sacrifice of praise." Praise sets us in a relationship with God that reflects the true nature of man and God. Man praises that which he worships, and worship is meet and right for God. To be in correct relationship with God, we need to submit to His divinity, and circumcise our hearts. We turn to God, and offer ourselves and each other, using our whole being, holding nothing back. We do this, of course inside of Christ's priesthood, reflecting our own priesthood, given by God in baptism.

The job of the choir leader is a very important one in the life of our Church.

I was asked to reflect, as a priest, on the importance of the choir and on the relationship of the choir to the priest. I believe I have shown that it falls upon the choir to reveal in the liturgy what it means to be in Christ, and reflect His priesthood through praise. This is done most clearly in the context of the liturgy through the singing of the anaphora but is involved in all praise and worship. But our function of praise is even more essential. I believe our very humanity depends on reflecting God, and we reflect God when in Christ we worship. I dare say that we are human because we praise

God, and without praising God, we are really something less. I believe that the choir leads us to express our humanity. Our choir leads us to be in Christ's priesthood, and it is in this action that we share God's life and are saved. It is the choir that inspires us and lifts us to gather with the community of angels that stand at the throne of God the Father. It is the choir that teaches us the theology of the Church, expressed in Her prayers. It is the choir that reinforces the message of the bishop and presbyter which is preached and proclaimed in the sacraments of liturgy and worship of the Church.

It is from this perspective that I comment on the relationship of the priest to the choir. The choir leads the congregation in offering a mercy of peace, a sacrifice of praise. The liturgy is not, as is sometimes visualized, a dialogue between the priest and the choir. It is an interaction between God and His people. His people are those who in every generation have joined the choirs of angels in singing "Holy, Holy, Holy."

Because we are joining the liturgy in heaven, celebrated by the angels and saints, we must resist innovations. We humbly join with those who have added their lives to these prayers, one generation after the other. Please resist the temptation to make the liturgy better or "more relevant." Change is at the expense of our harmony with those who have gone before us but are alive in Christ.

It falls upon the choirs and their directors to demonstrate a relationship of life with God. The fluidity that exists in the worship should reflect the ease of relating to God that was experienced in the Garden of Eden before the fall. It is up to you, the choir director, to express this theology. Not just in this one instance, but in general, it falls to you, the choir director, to understand the Church and Her instruction as expressed through Her worship, which is Her work and Her life. The term *liturgy* means the "work of God's people." Our work, our very function is to worship, to offer our sacrifice of praise. "A mercy of peace, a sacrifice of praise" is praise offered by us from inside of Christ to

God the Father. Christ is the one who offers the sacrifice and the perfect praise as the one and perfect "priest." In Christ we offer our praise in His praise to His Father. The praise is offered liturgically by both the pastor and the people. While it is the pastor who is set aside to live among the congregation and to lead God's people to salvation, it is indeed the choir who brings the congregation to life in worship. It is the choir who brings the voice from the center of our beings, to the ears of our Lord. It is the choir that calls God's people to worship, and to offer the holy oblation in peace.

Now that you share this understanding of your priesthood, allow me to share some practical reflections on effective priesting:

- Remember that Christ is the real priest, and we share in His life. Don't get too puffed up, because it is His praise, His prayer and His sacrifice after all.
- Don't get angry when those that you love are not ready to sing God's praise just when you are. God allows us to come when we are ready. In Christ, we need to do the same.
- Don't throw pearls to the swine, or speak of the mysteries to God's enemies. We must wait patiently for people who are not yet ready to join and to understand our priestly office.
- Don't put music or technique ahead of prayer. We gather to do God's work of liturgy, not to have the best concert that we can.
- Know how important the work that we do is in keeping the ministry of the Church in good order. We must not be too casual or less than prepared for the ministry that has fallen to us.

My prayer is with those choirs everywhere who lead us in offering the holy oblation in peace, a mercy of peace, a sacrifice of praise.

This message was offered in August, 2000 by Fr. John Abdalrah to the Sacred Music Conference held at the Antiochian Village.



O GOD OF SPIRITS AND OF ALL FLESH

BY V. REV. STEPHEN ROGERS



the seventeenth of February this year the Church gathers together to celebrate the Saturday of Souls. As a prelude to Great Lent, we assemble to pray for all departed Orthodox Christians, petitioning that God would have mercy on them and grant them eternal life.

The prayers for the departed are prayers of love and of hope, earnestly seeking that the God of all love and hope would give rest to the souls of the departed in a “place of brightness, a place of verdure, a place of repose, whence all sickness, sorrow and sighing have fled away.”

We celebrate that through Christ’s incarnation, death and resurrection, the door to paradise has been reopened and the possibility of dwelling in the eternal presence of God is made available to those we love and to us. Near the close of the Trisagion Prayers for the Departed,

the prayer of the priest on behalf of the departed reveals the magnitude of what Christ’s incarnation, death and resurrection have accomplished on our behalf. The priest prays: “O God of spirits and of all flesh, who has trampled down death, and made powerless the devil, and given life to the world ...”. In this prayer we see the threefold triumph that Christ has bestowed upon those who believe in Him.

First, by His death and resurrection. He has “trampled down death.” Echoing the Paschal troparion, our prayer for the departed reminds us that Christ has removed us from the inexorable stranglehold of death. “For as in Adam shall all men die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Because of the love of Christ, death is no longer the ultimate finality and separation. What once was man’s greatest fear has been transformed into the passageway to man’s greatest hope. We can pray for our departed loved ones with hope. For the Christian, death is still the enemy, but it is a conquered enemy. And though we grieve over the physical departure of those we care for, we do not despair, for death has been trampled down by the death of Christ on the cross.

Secondly, the prayer for the departed reminds us that Christ has “made powerless the devil.” Our adversary, the Evil One, has been defeated. Christ has descended into Hell itself to proclaim that God has loosed the bonds of death and assured the defeat of the one seeking to devour us. As we go through life with its ups and downs, its triumphs and tragedies, we must remember that though there is sorrow and evil in the world, they are passing away. The author of all evil is destined for defeat. Good is tri-

umphing over evil. We sometimes make the mistake of paying more attention to the desperate work of a defeated devil than we do the redeeming work of an all-loving God. We must not live as if there is no devil; a wounded animal is still a dangerous animal. But we need not live in fear. Ultimately, the power of the devil has been conquered and he will not drag us down to defeat if we keep our hope fixed on Him who conquers.

Thirdly, in this prayer for the departed we are reminded that Christ has “given life unto the world.” The fruits of Christ’s sacrifice on our behalf are not limited to the other side of the grave. Christ came that we might have life and have it abundantly. A foretaste of the promises of the life to come can be experienced in this present life as well. Our faith and hope in Christ can remove “sorrow and sickness and sighing” in this present life. There is a place of rest and of brightness opened to us now. God is the God of all spirits and of all flesh and He is the hope and salvation of both the living and the dead. We can pray for our departed loved ones and they can intercede for us, for the same God grants His love and mercy to all. In that, we are never separated from those passed away before us. We are in communion with the same God and therefore in communion with one another.

And so we pray for the departed, not out of fear or desperation, but with hope and assurance in the God who “has trampled down death, made powerless the devil and given life to the world.” As we gather together for the Saturday of Souls let these three promises be our guide and our hope.



ARCHDIOCESAN OFFICE

Blessings and many thanks to all who visited, telephoned, sent cards, gifts, faxes, letters and e-mails to me, and all who made contributions to the Southwest Region's "Bishop Basil Missions Endowment Fund" on the occasion of my Name's Day, the feast of St. Basil the Great, on January 1st. Know that your thoughtfulness, generosity and kind words are very much appreciated. May this new year be blessed of God for us all!

In Christ,
+Bishop Basil
Wichita, Kansas

Mrs. Jennie Sadallah Seven Hills, OH	5.00
Wafeek Khoury Sylvania, OH	25.00
Jamely Aoude W. Roxbury, MA	20.00
Laila & Joe Abud Grosse Pointe Woods, MI	30.00
Jeanette Corey Charleston, WV	100.00
George Owen Lebanon, KY	20.00
Gordon & Laura Jones Milford, PA	20.00
Louise Essey Zdilla Belle Vernon, PA	25.00

ELEVATED

Fr. **JOHN TEEBAGY**, St. John of Damascus Church, Dedham, MA, was elevated to the dignity of Archpriest on Sunday, December 3, 2000.

APPOINTED

The Very Rev. **JAMES KENNA** has been appointed Dean of the East Texas Deanery, effective January 1, 2001.

DONATIONS to The WORD

Dr. Sam and Jacquie Kouri Wichita, KS	\$500.00
Mrs. Rudy George Cleveland, OH	250.00
Joseph Corey Dedham, MA In loving memory of my wife Adele Corey	25.00
Juliette and Raymond Selim Cornwall, Ontario	30.00
Sam Newey Jacksonville, FL	200.00
Walid Khalife Bloomfield Hills, MI	100.00
Labbie S. George Parma, OH	20.00
Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Basarab York, PA	25.00
Mrs. Adele Ash Natick, MA	25.00
Margaret Sturm Beaver Falls, PA	15.00
Mr. & Mrs. Sami Azar Catasauqua, PA	100.00



The choir of St. George, Little Falls, NJ Christmas carols at Archdiocese headquarters.



Christine Lynch directs the choir at the Archdiocese headquarters.



SOUTHEAST REGION JUDGES' CHOICE:

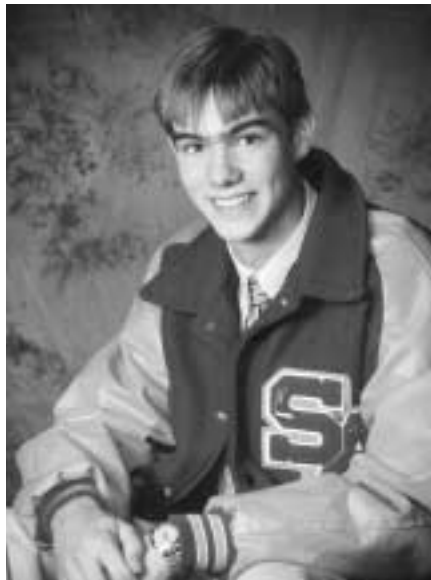
Philip Rogers

THOSE OF YOU WHO KNOW my dad, know that he is very indecisive about which verse from the bible is his favorite. Almost every Sunday in his sermon he makes the comment about a verse being "one of his favorites." It does not matter whether the verse is from Acts or James, it is always one of his favorites. Recently at a lenten youth retreat with our church, all of the people present were asked to share their favorite bible verse. When my dad's turn came around, without hesitation he said, "The Gospel of John, Chapter 1 verse 14, 'And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth'." Knowing that this is my father's favorite verse tells me just how important the meaning of this verse is.

Whether we realize it or not, this verse plays an important role in how we live our life today, tomorrow, and every day in preparation for the world to come. At least it does for me. In order to better appreciate this point one must understand more fully the meaning of the verse.

"And the Word became flesh." Let's start there. Who or what is the Word? This question is answered earlier in the Gospel of John, chapter 1 verse 1. The Apostle John tells us that "In the beginning was the word, and the Word was with God, and the word was God." This verse establishes one of the key beliefs in the Holy Orthodox Church, the belief that the Father and the Son are coequal and coeternal. Since John says, "In the beginning was the Word," he is telling us that this same Word who becomes flesh has been around since the beginning of time. The Word has been in heaven with

the Father, and now He is taking on human form. "All things were made through Him," as it says in verse 3. This Word has existed eternally and can be seen as the same creator God of the Old Testament. "And the Word was with God, and the word was God." The final words of the first verse of the Gospel of John show the relationship of the Word and God. The phrase, "The Word



Philip Rogers

was with God," shows a definite difference in person between the Word and God. One can not be with oneself, unless of course one has split personalities, but this is not the case. The Holy Early Church Fathers are sure in the belief that God the Father and his Son, the Word, are two separate, distinct persons. And yet, John also says that "the Word was God." This is another profound statement that settles not only that the Word was with God, but that the Word was also God. This statement tells us that with

God was the Word for all eternity and the Word was God. Two different persons yet both part of an all-powerful, all-knowing, all-praiseworthy Godhead.

Now, going back to verse 14, John tells us that, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." The Word took on flesh and blood giving himself COMPLETE human form. COMPLETE human form to live with us. In the first verse of the gospel we are being told that the Word is COMPLETELY God, and now in verse 14 we are being told that this same Word is becoming flesh and taking on all aspects of human nature except sin. The ONLY sinless one, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us. Christ's taking on of flesh, or His incarnation, is especially important in our lives as Christians.

In verse 4 of chapter one, John says that, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." To put it simply, without the Incarnation there would be no Orthodox Church. This is very pivotal in all of our lives. The Orthodox Church is the cornerstone for everything that all of us do in preparation for the life to come. Without the "Light of Light," as we say in the Nicene Creed, we would be in the dark to the cleansing and healing of a baptism of the Holy Spirit. Most important of all, we would be without the saving grace of the resurrection. By the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us, the entire human race is renewed, not only physically but in an even more powerful spiritual renewal of the soul. Jesus took on human form and bore the sins of the world that we, the horrid sinners that we are, may one

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SHARING THE FAITH

Religious education news from around the Archdiocese

THE CROSS AND THE QUILL

On January 1, 2001 a new baby was born in the Department, and was named *The Cross and the Quill*. Intended to meet the need for discussion on current issues in an Orthodox context, it is written by teens for teens. The January issue offers a column where teens can write in questions for Bishop Basil, a column by an Orthodox college student, a lead article on abortion, and more. The Department of Youth Ministry edits all copy.



Designed for use with parish high school students, it is available for downloading the first week of each month from the web at www.antiochian.org/christianeducation/eq. You may also request it be mailed by phoning the Department at (717) 747-5221.

The first three issues are being written by the students of St. John Chrysostom Parish, York, Pennsylvania. I thank them for agreeing to pilot this project with me. A photo of our group, taken at our patronal feastday banquet, is on the front page. The writing of the publication will move to a new parish every three months.

The Cross and the Quill is a project of the Department of Christian Education in conjunction with the Metropolitan's recently formed Youth Council.



Wichita, Kansas

SIXTH CSD SEMINAR HELD

Participants are shown in the photo. Front: Christopher Chichura, Subdeacon Charles Baz, Gigi Baba, Jimmy Shadid, Cathy Ellsworth, Lee Ann Vandervort. Back: Randy Paul Philips, David Nelson, Georgia Bakas, Victoria Ziton, Kh. Theodora Wolf, Seraphima Berquist, Linda Maloley, Kh. Maggie Hock, Marlene Kaim

HELP WANTED FOR APRIL 2001 NEWSLETTER!

For the next newsletter, I'd like to offer a **review of vacation church school programs**. If you have had a successful program, please review the program, noting: name of program, ordering information, cost, description, why it worked well with your group, how many staff it required, and how you modified it if that was necessary. Deadline is February 15. THANK YOU.



THE DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

FOR YOUR INFORMATION . . .

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(724) 684-5472

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DID YOU KNOW?

73% of our church schools combine two or more classes.

Data gleaned from our Departmental Survey, Spring 1999.

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Beloved in Christ,

With our first year completed, I thought it might be useful to recap the work of the past year in terms of items available from the Department of Christian Education, and to let you know what is "in the works" for this year.

The following are resources available from the Department. Call for details:

- 1) Orthodox Christian Education Resource Directory (also available on our website)
- 2) "Teaching Pies: Cross-Reference Guide for the OCEC Curriculum, and Activities for Using the Pies"
- 3) Church School Director Manual (\$15)
- 4) Resources and Planning for Small or New Church Schools
- 5) Middle and High School Interim Curriculum
- 6) The Cross and the Quill (see previous page)

The Department's agenda for the coming year includes two major projects. The first task is to compile our recommendations for the Creative Arts Festival, both for its organization and its implementation at the parish level. As I held workshops across the country many concerns and many good ideas were voiced. The task now is to place these in a form that can be useful to all.

In my position as Chair of the Orthodox Christian Education Commission's Curriculum Department, I will begin the second major task: initiating the curriculum revision project. This is a huge task requiring several years, funding and prayer. With God's help we will meet the challenge. I will be writing more about the project in future newsletters.

It has been a memorable first year. I would like to acknowledge the help of many people in the accomplishments of the Department, in particular, the regional representatives and associates, and my secretary, Rosemary Shumski. I am grateful to all, my family, laity, clergy and bishops, who offered encouragement this past year. I would also like to express my gratitude to Metropolitan Philip for allowing me the opportunity to serve our faithful in this position.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the help of the Holy Spirit who has, on more than one occasion, given me the right words to say when I was in need of inspiration. May the Holy Spirit guide us all in the new year!

Carole A. Buleza



RESOURCE REVIEW

by Rosemary Shumski

Little Falcons is a children's magazine published by the Serbian Orthodox Office of Diocesan Education and edited by Father Thomas Kazich. Its goal is to bring children together with their Orthodox faith and heritage and expand their knowledge of various aspects of church life. Each issue is dedicated to a religious theme: for example, the Gospel, Vestments, or the Holy Trinity.



The first article explains the concept in terms that children can understand. Additional feature stories relate to the theme and examine the topic from biblical and liturgical viewpoints as well as historical and social perspectives. The issue on vestments discusses the Old Testament story of Joseph and mentions some parables in which clothing is symbolic of "putting on Christ." An explanation is given as to why clergy wear vestments and describes how vestments are made. Another article includes a time line showing different types of clothing worn by people throughout the ages, talks about today's clothing, and addresses the issue of what is considered appropriate attire for church and other occasions.

A section entitled "Further Exploring" lists brief descriptions of books for recommended reading. Other regular departments include poetry, music, and a column called "What Kids Think," in which children answer questions associated with the topic of the month. There are also activities such as word searches, games and puzzles.

Although directed to the home, the magazine can be adapted for church school use. Each issue contains enough material to develop into a four-week study unit. The publication is geared toward students in grades three through seven, but some articles and activities may be suitable for younger children as well.

Little Falcons is published four times a year: November, January, March, and May. Subscription rates for the current school year are \$15.00 for an individual subscription and a bulk rate of \$5.00 per subscription if ten or more copies are shipped to one address. Back issues are available for \$5.00 each. To subscribe to the magazine or obtain more information, contact: Little Falcons, P.O. Box 371, Grayslake, IL 60030, 1-847-223-4300, email: littlefalcons@owc.net

FAITH AND FAMILY

At the Church School Director Seminar at the Cathedral in Wichita this fall, we were treated to a lenten luncheon served by Chris Farha. Always on the lookout for lenten foods my kids will eat, I asked for the recipe for her wrap sandwiches. I see the possibility for variations that my children will enjoy. I loved the soup, although for my children I will probably use canned diced tomatoes instead of picante sauce.

VEGETARIAN WRAP SANDWICHES

Flavored flour tortillas
 prepared hummus
 sliced cucumber
 stacker dill pickles
 bean sprouts
 red bell pepper strips
 green salad mix or fresh spinach

Spread hummus on entire tortilla. Layer all ingredients, leaving the following borders: 2" on sides and bottom, 3" on top. Fold sides in, then roll from bottom up, sealing edge with hummus. Cut in half on the diagonal, wrap and chill. (If you choose to vary the veggies, stay away from those that contain too much moisture.)

QUICK BLACK BEAN SOUP

1 #10 can black beans
 4 c cooked rice
 32 oz. picante sauce
 4 c water
 1/2 cup lemon juice
 2 T basil
 2 T oregano
 Salt and pepper

Drain beans, but do not rinse. Combine all ingredients and simmer for 1 hour, stirring frequently.

Thank you, Chris!





TRIAL OR TREASURE?

BY CAROLE A. BULEZA



IT'S COMING. Sure as night follows day.

Soon you will hear the gospel of Zaccheus and you will know that it is time once again for The Great Fast. Now I know we have other fasts in the liturgical year, but as Pascha is the “Feast of feasts,” the Great Fast stands as the “Fast of fasts.”

As the woman of the house, I find all fasts, especially the Great Fast, a challenge. My family’s spiritual life depends on me — to the degree that I observe the fast, so goes the rest of the household. I struggle year after year to find menus that my family will eat for 40+ days, complicated by three family members who have “absolute” dislikes or dietary needs. As if it weren’t hard enough to master life in the kitchen, we are to master our lives outside the kitchen, and that is a matter of even greater importance and difficulty. Granted, the ancient church understood rightly that fasting, prayer, and almsgiving helped us “set aside all earthly care,” but they didn’t live in today’s society. Most of us own a lot of earthly care, and the more we have, the more work we face during the Great Fast.

Yes, it is a trial. I know I am not alone when I say that. Nonetheless, there is a part of me that does look forward to the 40-day journey. One of the blessings of Orthodoxy is an understanding of spiritual development. Most often, three stages characterize the journey. The first is a divesting of oneself from all that keeps us

from God, the second is a dedicated practice of Christian life, and the third, intense prayer.

Once, when life was simpler, I spent a significant amount of time praying and reading scripture during Great Fasts. It was hard at first. There were so many distractions going through my mind. But I persevered, and after about three days I had crossed over to the

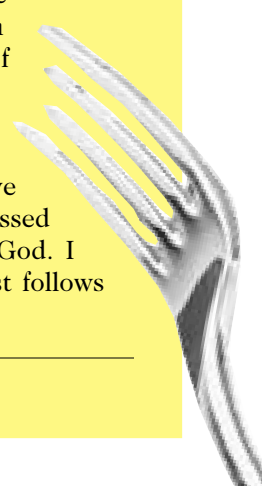
place where I wasn’t forcing myself to sit still. I typically read the gospels so I could “listen” to Jesus. Passages touched my heart each day. I recorded these and kept them in my Bible. One of my favorites was: “For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.” (Matthew 6:10) Most importantly, I found that peace that surpasses our understanding — “Peace, I leave you. It is my gift to you,” as Jesus promised.

I began to yearn for my time with God each day. It was as if I were drinking from the fountain of life. Those around me also benefited from my time with God. I trusted God to take care of me. I found I had much to give others, because I was being given much. I was less judgmental and more compassionate. I loved, because I was loved first. I often draw on the strength I gained from those Great Fasts of long ago.

So, I do look forward to the Great Fast. I wonder if this year I might be able to pray, fast, and give enough so that I touch, once again, that blessed experience of abiding in the presence of God. I know it is waiting for me. Sure as the feast follows the fast. Sure as day follows night.

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, nor thieves break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.

Matthew 6:19-21





ORATORICAL FESTIVAL

ORATORICAL FESTIVAL

Continued from page 18

day rise again to an eternal life in the kingdom of heaven. The ultimate goal of Jesus' life was to save the human race, to reunite us with God the Father. The Incarnation, the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us, is only the beginning of this journey.

"And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." In this phrase, John is pointing out the works Jesus did throughout his life. Through these works, all around Him were able to see His power and glory and realize that this man was the promised messiah. John calls these works signs. Seven of them can be found throughout the gospel: the wedding at Cana, the healing of the nobleman's son, the healing at the pool of Bethesda, the feeding of the five thousand, Christ walking on water, the healing of the man blind from birth, and the raising of Lazarus. Through these signs and the teachings of Christ, we are shown that He is the promised Messiah of the Old Testament.

The next phrase from John 1:14 "Only begotten of the Father" is one that we all say every Sunday in the Nicene Creed, "only begotten, begotten of the Father before all worlds." The Son is from the Father, and yet has been around just as long. There is nothing else that is born of God, making the Son, only begotten and also fully God. So in the incarnation of Christ we see the Son of God coming and taking on human form and ultimately dying for the sins of the world.

"Full of grace and truth." I'm sure we have all heard the expression "by the grace of God." This saying holds a lot of truth. By the grace of God we will all be able to one day be witness to His power in all of its splendor in the kingdom of heaven. Only through the grace of God will this happen. The Word became flesh and was full of grace and truth so that even through its many faults, man can one day rise to be with God in his heavenly kingdom. God's grace extends to all beings that He creat-

ed. For me this is a very important statement. Our God is a very forgiving one. He does not expect us to be perfect and never to sin, as I know I do. He looks past all of our sins into a repentant heart and forgives. The phrase "full of grace and truth" promises the forgiving love of God. Knowing that God will forgive you for your sins is not an excuse to go out in the world and sin and say, "Oh well, God forgives me and I am going to go to heaven and then go out and commit that same sin again." That is not how it works. I wish it were that simple. God does love us and through the grace and love of God, we will hopefully one day be able to share in eternal life with Him. However, it does take work on our part. The sacrament of confession is a very important one. After committing a sin, any sin, no matter how big or how small, a truly repentant heart can go to a priest for prayers and guidance. This allows you to have your slate of sins wiped clean, to have the burden of your sins lifted up off of your shoulders. Through the grace of God, all of your sins are forgiven.

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." After looking at the meaning of this verse, one can ask, "How does this affect me? What does it matter that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us?" The Holy Athanasius tells us that God became human so that we can become like god. Not God by nature, but through communion with God to come to share by grace the fullness of the image of God and to live in the mansions of heaven. John picks up on this point in verse 16 when he says "and of His fullness we have all received and grace for grace." By the grace of God, we can become like God, filled with love, joy, holiness, and wisdom.

The meaning of this passage is further illumined by the liturgical context in which it is read. The Holy Church Fathers did not choose this verse to be read on Great and Holy Pascha by accident. This gospel is read after a long period of prayer

and fasting, the lenten season. During such a grueling time, one can begin to lose hope that the lenten season will never come to an end. I know I find myself thinking that I will never be able to eat that half pound ribeye and taste the cakes and foods of the Pascha season. But in the early morning of Pascha, with the lights all turned on and the priest and clergy arrayed in their shining vestments, we are reminded why we sacrifice. Not only during the lenten season but all year. We are reminded why we try to extinguish the burning desires and passions of the flesh. We avoid the worldly temptations simply because the Word became flesh. The incarnation is our ticket to a better world. We fast and sacrifice now, so that one day we may be rewarded with a life in communion with God that is only possible through the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us. And even when we fall away and succumb to these desires our sincere repentance is accepted only through the grace of God.

We were made in the image and likeness of God. We understand what this means because the Word has become flesh and dwelt among us. Each of us are called to make ourselves more and more in that image every day through our actions and decisions. We are called to be visible images of Christ, as He was of the Father. At my age, the young children at church are watching me in all the things that I do. I am watched as I serve at the altar, and as I go through school and am about to embark on my life as a college student outside of my home. This task is especially hard for not only myself but for other teenagers who find themselves in similar situations. Many times, peer pressure could take hold with many worldly temptations such as drugs and alcohol. The only way to overcome these obstacles is to turn to such verses as this one for guidance and for us to realize that our purpose here on Earth is to strive to become more and more like God the Father through the vision we are given of Him through Jesus'

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MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT — TOOLS FOR PASTORAL COUNSELING

OUT IN THE FAR WEST amid Washington state's cold and moist but not too rainy days, about 30 priests and their wives from all of the five wide-ranging states (Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Utah) of the Pacific Northwest Deanery gladly found one another once again wandering among the evergreens and lodgings at Camp Brotherhood, Arlington, WA, November 29-December 2. Out away from the big city, the quiet of timelessness, which nature always assures, welcomed us almost as eagerly as our blessed Master Bishop Joseph. With him we all returned to our yearly retreat, in obedience and love to him and each other. With the exchange of the kiss of peace we also exchanged the news of our families and parishes. And then we got down to business.

So what was the topic of discussion this year? Marriage enrichment and the tools for the priestly counsel needed in the parishes for those who will be and those who are married. Fr. John Downing, attached to St. Michael Church, Whittier, CA, brought with him many years of study and preparation along with a great amount of enthusiasm for this subject. His wife, Nancy, kept him on track and very graciously. They themselves for me were one of the best of all the "tools" he brought with him. Nancy's life changed drastically five years ago when she was found to have Parkinson's disease. Her husband's gentle, kind and attentive care imaged the essence of the giving relationship of marriage, especially since he himself suffers from diabetes and could use some caring hands aimed at his own physical needs.

The first morning of the retreat

began the best way possible with the patronal Orthros and Hierarchical Divine Liturgy of St. Andrew's Orthodox Church in Arlington, Washington, where Fr. David Hovik serves with his wife Kh. Debbie. And back at the retreat center, it was fitting to hear Sayedna Joseph open the sessions with his usual straightforward, godly counsel by sharing with us a beautiful image of his own parents as a micro-Church. He remembers when he was a young boy at home, being up in the morning to do his schoolwork. His parents would be up very early also, kneeling together in prayer for their children. This is a holy icon of marriage, as God desires for us all in our homes. A godly marriage will for the most part beget godly children. And the godly marriage is steeped in prayer and Church. To this His Grace called us once again and to the work ahead, as we listened and discussed the topic of Marriage Enrichment.

But now I will get down to the nitty-gritty of the sessions and the topic of marriage as a path to holiness. Fr. John Downing initiated his talks by setting before us the Good Samaritan, saying that in marriage we are to be such to our spouse and family. Healing is needed, with the goal being to learn to love each other as Christ loves us. With ten hand-outs as tools for the three sessions, he embarked on the

first basic topic of discussion: identifying, accepting and sharing one's feelings with each other as spouses. The purpose of this emphasis on feelings is to realize how the stresses of life affect our ability to communicate and relate. We need to identify and appropriately express and deal with our feelings or we could spiral down into despair. People are drowning from not knowing what is going on inside them and they lose who they are. The Holmes-Rahe Social Adjustment Scale as well as a list of Nine Common Marital Issues were given as helpful visual tools for the identification and awareness of the stresses that can affect us in our communion and communication. In the sometimes hotly intense discussion of the retreatants on this subject, it was agreed, I think, that understanding ourselves is not and end in itself, but a necessary precursor to repentance and overcoming our sinfulness.

Fr. John went on to discuss creative communication. This is a process of identifying, accepting and sharing one's thoughts, values and feelings in a skillful process of verbal





PACIFIC NORTHWEST DEANERY CLERGY AND CLERGY WIVES RETREAT



communication that is simple and effective for families and couples. Control, responsibility and accountability form the core of effective communication. The goal is to have nothing which we do not resolve or that we hold onto which can separate and alienate us from each other: identify feelings to know one's self, accept feelings in order to handle them better and deal with them responsibly; share feelings to keep nothing hidden and unresolved. This builds a trust relationship that is lasting and full and maturing. A sheet showing a Circular Process of Personal Interaction is a schematic tool aimed at helping us understand the dynamics of interpersonal interaction. This deals with the stereotypes in our minds which affect how we hear and act upon the words and actions of others. Understanding these filters through which one perceives will help couples avoid stockpiling unresolved issues. Two other helpful tools Fr. Downing gave us are the Feeling Word List, for identifying feelings, and a *Recipe for a Blessed Married Life* by Fr. Anthony Coniaris. The first statement of the recipe states: "An exhaustive study of police records shows that no

woman ever shot her husband while he was doing the dishes. Learn to serve each other in humility and love." Ha! I agree totally. And at the bottom of the title page for the Feeling Word List we find this quotation of His Eminence Metropolitan Philip: "Our human emotions, which demonstrate themselves through bodily reactions — compassion, sorrow, fear, joy, must be constantly recognized as our own, not denied as part of us ..."

To fill out and complete the teaching sessions, we were given the following handouts of Fr. Downing's: Blocks to Listening; Communication Destroyers; a Trust Development Window, as well as a Recommended Book List. These printed tools, along with quite a bit of lively discussion, made for a full few days together. The clergy wives also had a special time without the husbands in a group time led by Fr. Downing. We found this time very encouraging in the building of our sisterly care of each other and in just getting to know each other better. Bishop Joseph had a separate deanery meeting with the husbands during which Fr. Alban West of St. George Church in Portland, Oregon, was appointed as the ecclesiarch of our deanery. We have already benefited from Fr. Alban's expertise in this area and look forward to many more years of the same.

The strong stitching which held us all together in this retreat were the Vespers, Compline and Orthros services, the vigorous walks and personal talks at meals, and His Grace Bishop Joseph presiding as our spiritual father and Master and guide. The strong sense and evidence of our deanery family communing in oneness of heart and intent in the One Holy Trinity guides us toward our parishes in many places once again. And we are praying all the more for each other, for our Father Sayedna Joseph and for the families and parishes we serve and hold dear. May God bless us until next year and always.

ORATORICAL FESTIVAL

Continued from page 23

coming into the world.

By the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us, all aspects of human nature are divinely touched. Through the incarnation of Christ we are given the opportunity to become more and more as the Father had first intended. This goes not only for humans but for all created things, for all things aglow with the radiance of the touch of the graceful hand of our loving God. Because of this I strive to live my life so that those around me know that what really matters in life is becoming closer to God. Without the incarnation of Christ, none of that would be possible. By coming to dwell among us, Jesus showed how we are to live our lives in total praise of the Father, and, by His grace, we will one day come to be united with the Father in the heavenly kingdom. It is up to us to follow the example established by Jesus so that we may be witnesses of His glory. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Philip Rogers, 18, is a member of St. Catherine Church, Aiken, SC.



COMMUNITIES IN ACTION

ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT

SPRING, TX

The last quarter of 2000 has been very exciting and rewarding for St. Anthony the Great Christian Orthodox Church, in Spring, TX. We welcomed our new priest, Father George Dahdouh, and his family with a special Greek brunch gathering at Asope's Table restaurant in Spring, TX. The Dahdouh family was welcomed with open arms and they enjoyed meeting all the members of the parish and friends in the community. In September, the parish picnic was a great success with food, games and plenty of fun on the soccer field. The children

challenged the parents to a game on the field with Fr. George officiating. The children gracefully won, with the parents learning a lot about the rules of soccer. In November, 120 church members and friends broke bread together at St. Anthony's first annual Thanksgiving feast at Clementine's Restaurant. The women of St. Anthony's hosted the event with the generous donations from owners and church members Elias and Carolyn Deek. We all gave thanks for our many blessings and enjoyed the delightful meal, the wonderful company, and the time spent together as an active and loving community. In December, Saint Nicholas visited St. Anthony's and read a story about the history of St. Nicholas and helped to dis-

tribute gifts during the gift exchange. We look forward to the new year and we would like to invite all brothers and sisters in Christ to visit St. Anthony's in Spring, Texas.

THE 2000 WESTERN REGION AOCWNA

RETREAT

Leaving the everyday world behind, looking for a bit of silence and time for contemplation, 96 women from across California, and from as far away as Boise, Idaho, converged at the San Damiano Retreat Center in Danville, CA for the Western Region Antiochian Women Retreat. Held over the November 11th weekend, and for the fourth year in a row, those who attended, including our beloved Sayidna Joseph, agreed that the time together was a tremendous success.

This year's theme was the Holy Cross. Father John Reimann and his wife, Khouriye Christina, gave wonderful presentations on the historical, spiritual, and practical meanings of Christ's Cross. Fr. John reflected on the hymnography of the Church and its lessons on the Cross. Khouriye Christina focused on the types of crosses one bears, internal and external, and how to bear them practically with the help and

guidance of Christ. These times of learning, of women scribbling diligently in little notebooks, of listening with open ears and minds, were then concluded by blessed moments when the Bishop would listen and respond to various questions, regarding communion, confession, discerning the voice of God, and dealing with our internal and external crosses.

Not only were our insides spoken to, but the lovely setting of San Damiano, with its quiet courtyard and fountain, the meandering paths in the forest, and the elegant Spanish-style architecture, made contemplation easy. Just think, no dishes, no lists or standing in the line at the grocery store. If you've never attended, make a mental note now to consider coming to next year's retreat, already in the planning stages, November 9-11, 2001.

Many, many thanks to Father Michael Lewis from St. Luke, Garden Grove, CA, Father John and Christina Reimann from Saint Nicholas in Los Angeles, the retreat organizers and overall "be-everywhere-ladies," Khouriye Maria Jackson from St. Stephen, Cupertino, CA and Karen Swehla from the Mission in Modesto, CA and Bishop Joseph, the faithful shepherd of our region whose many profound words include these: "Silence is the most eloquent form of speech."



St. Nicholas pays a visit to the children of St. Anthony in Spring, TX.



COMMUNITIES IN ACTION



Attendees at Western Region Antiochian Women Retreat with Bishop Joseph.

THE ORDER OF ST. IGNATIUS

**GRAND ASSEMBLY
2000
FORT LAUDERDALE,
FLORIDA**

Metropolitan Philip, Archbishop Antoun and many participants of the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch came together in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida on September 23-28th for the year 2000 Grand Assembly. It was a wonderful week of fellowship and reassessment of the direction of the Order. Evelyn Koury organized the events and is to be commended for her hard work and dedication. The week ran smoothly and everyone had a splendid time. Several speakers participated during the week for the edification of the attendees, including Gabriel Habib, whose topic was Spirituality and Dialogue of Antioch. Mr. Habib represents the Orthodox Church all over

the world and is involved in dialogues with a variety of religious groups. Fr. Michael Nasser, Director of Campus Ministry, spoke on the Youth Council and Campus Ministry. Several others spoke as well on different topics of import.

At the Grand Banquet on Friday night all those present had the opportunity to join in on a flag-waving, fun game that cre-

actively addressed the accomplishments as well as challenges faced by the Order of St. Ignatius. Three cheers for Dr. Eugene Sayfie for planning this creative approach to dealing with tough questions. Dr. Donald Howard organized a Golf Tournament at Weston Hills Country Club to benefit the Antiochian Missions Fund. Barry Lutz and

Lucille Brown organized a tremendously successful Auction and Dinner Hafli that benefited the local host parish, St. Philip Church. Following Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning, twelve people made the decision and commitment to participate in the good works of the Order of St. Ignatius. They came to understand that with their relatively small annual gift,



Three of the twelve new members of the Order of St. Ignatius from St. Philip Church with Metropolitan Philip. From left to right: Very Reverend Father Alexis Kouri, Gloria Seig, and Libby Newberg.



COMMUNITIES IN ACTION



Fr. David Kruse giving Communion to the faithful of St. Raphael Mission.

many people in need within and without our Archdiocese will feel God's blessings in a real and practical way. Dr. David Skaff and the St. Philip chapter of the Order hosted a breakfast for all participants, wishing them well and praying for safe arrivals as they headed home after a busy and successful weekend.

**ST. RAPHAEL MISSION
PALM SPRINGS, CA**

It was with humility and tears of great joy that we, the small mission church of Palm Springs, CA, received the honor of becoming the first church to be named after the newly-canonized St. Bishop Raphael of Brooklyn, the first Orthodox bishop consecrated in America. The awesome challenge has been laid

before us to live up to St. Raphael's manner of life and servitude. We do not take this challenge lightly. By the grace of God and St. Raphael's prayers we also set out to find and nourish the lost sheep in our small corner of America.

Our Patronal Feast Day has been designated as November 1. This year, we celebrated the Feast on Saturday, November 4th. Our first name day as a new mission and as the first church named after St. Raphael. What a day!

This day also brought our newly assigned priest, Fr. David Kruse. Our name day celebrations began with Vespers on Friday night. The celebration continued Saturday morning with Matins and Divine Liturgy. Celebrating with Fr. David were Rt. Rev. Paul Doyle, Rt. Rev. James Tavlarides, Rt. Rev. Charles Lehman, Fr.

Josiah Trenham, Fr. Joseph Corrigan, Fr. John Finley and Fr. Andrew Welzig. Also present were Dn. Howard Shannon, Dn. Eli Khoury, and Dn. Michael Gillis. His Grace Bishop Joseph was unable to attend as he was in Syria, but sent his blessings through Rt. Rev. Paul

Doyle. The service, along with the chanting led by Fr. John Finley, was an awesome experience. The small chapel was filled to capacity with 165 of the faithful from the Southern California Deanery. Truly this joyful celebration will long be remembered.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a luncheon at the Ramada Inn of Palm Springs, during which time a presentation of an icon of St. Raphael was given to Fr. John Finley for his devoted guidance in establishing our mission. The luncheon ended and most visitors returned to their own parishes for their Saturday and Sunday services; however some stayed and joined in the continuation of our day with Vespers, then Matins and Divine Liturgy on Sunday. Again the spirit of joy and thankfulness filled us. "We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we give thanks to Thee for Thy Great Glory" which we have been honored to receive. Please pray for as we continue His work here in the new mission in Palm Springs, CA, St. Raphael.



Icon of St. Raphael in St. Raphael Mission, Palm Springs, CA.



THE PEOPLE SPEAK ...

Dear Father John,

Greetings in this holiday and Holy Day season.

I have just read the biography of St. Raphael of Brooklyn. I can safely say this book is the most fascinating I have ever read. Believe me when I say it touched me as no other book has.

As I grew up I lived in the area that he lived in.

I was born after he fell asleep in the Lord. As I read the book I was taken back in memory to the times I walked to St. Nicholas Cathedral on Sunday mornings, where I taught Sunday School and sang in the choir. It brought me back to my childhood, and to very familiar areas.

As I read the book I found myself amazed at how he struggled, a person with so much love in his heart for mankind. We have so much to learn from him.

I feel very rewarded in having read this book, and I am sure others who have read it feel the same way. I would not hesitate to recommend it to people of all ages and inclinations, as it is inspiring.

Yours in Christ,
Kh. Julia Thomas
St. John the Divine
Orthodox Church
Lake Charles, Louisiana



Dear Father John,

Father Alban's article "The Israel of God" in December's *Word* really "scratched an itch." Cer-

tainly, if we were interested enough, we could research the Church's understanding of and teaching on Israel. But I was particularly pleased to have the biblical issues so well addressed in one article. Unfortunately, for the most part only Antiochian Orthodox Christians (a true minority) will see this article.

I understand the importance of the Church staying out of political debates, but since our church was founded in the Holy Land and since our Christian identity lay at the very heart of the definition of "the Israel of God" couldn't we find scope to present the truth to a wider audience?

These misguided notions have largely shaped our nation's foreign policy toward the Middle East to the extent that we do not believe we can or should develop any other regional ally except for the modern nation of Israel. This is very sad and cuts to the root of distrust that most Islamic countries feel toward the U.S. It truncates dialogue between Christians and Muslims and fosters the sense that the "Western" agenda is by association the Christian agenda. The Orthodox Church's truth is nowhere to be heard. For the most part I like Condoleeza Rice's foreign policy, except where she articulates the idea that Israel is the U.S.'s key ally in the Mideast. Where did she get that idea and how can we

begin to reverse these entrenched notions?

In its present form, Fr. Alban's article is not an appropriate way to present the Christian position outside our ranks because there are too many references to the Middle East church, the faithful and Orthodoxy. To hold the attention of those who need to hear this message we must not give the impression that we are guided by any parochial or political agenda. Perhaps it could be reprinted in a neutral version which we could give to family and friends as the occasions arise.

Sincerely,
Linda Hopkins
Plantation, FL



Dear Friends in Christ,

Let me thank you for the joy that your generous \$3,000 gift brings to our kids' lives. I want you to know how much I appreciate all that you do to help our kids, especially during this Christmas season.

Two thousand years ago, a star in the sky carried a message of hope. Today, Covenant House carries the message of hope for the 1,600 kids who come to us each night. To them, hope is a hot meal, some clean clothes, and a safe place to get his or her life back together. At this time of year, it is even more important to provide these services. They are real gifts to kids in crisis. Whether you decorate a tree or light

a candle or simply honor the tradition of "peace on earth," I pray you will remember our Covenant House kids. Without your support there would be no place for those without families or homes to celebrate this holy season. Thanks for the miracle of your support.

Have a blessed and happy holiday! My prayers are with you. Please say a special prayer for our kids.

Gratefully,
Sister Mary Rose
McGeedy, D.C.



This article in Arabic is a message that Archbishop Ilyas Kurban delivered to a huge crowd of Christians and Muslims in the city of Tripoli, Lebanon.

كلمة المطران الياس قربان، متروبوليت طرابلس والكورة وتوابعهما للروم

الأرثوذكس ، مناسبة مسيرة القدس في طرابلس

الجمعة ١٥ / ١٢ / ٢٠٠٠

لكِ جئنا يا قدسُ يا مدينةَ السلامِ في شهرِ التقوى والإيمانِ وفي زمسنِ
الميلادِ المجيدِ لثحتي كنيسةَ القيامةِ والمسجدِ الأقصى ولنعنَ للملأ أن فلسطينَ
لنا وقدسَ فلسطينَ لنا.

إن الانتفاضة التي تشهدها الأراضي المقدسة هي انتفاضة حق لشعب لا
يعرف الاستكانة ولا يتوقف عن المطالبة بحقه في وقت نام فيه الضميرُ العالميُّ
وسقط العدلُ عند فوهات المدافع. فيا ضميرَ الأممِ قم من غفوتك، وأنتِ
أيتها الأممُ المتحدةُ الرافعة شعار الدفاع عن حقوق الإنسانِ وعن حقِّ
الشعوبِ في تقريرِ مصيرِها لماذا لا تتحركين؟ أم إن قتلَ شعبٍ مسألة فيها
تظنر؟ إننا ندعو العالمين العربيين والإسلاميين لرفع الصوتِ عاليًا دعمًا للانتفاضة
الشعبِ الفلسطينيِّ بكلِّ الوسائلِ المعنوية والمادية والبشرية.

ها قد جئناك يا قدسُ، من طرابلسَ والكورةِ وزغرنا والبترون وبشوي
والضنية وعكارَ ومن كلِّ حدبٍ وصوبٍ لنجددَ إيماننا بك قبلة أفئدتنا
ومسرى قلوبنا، ولنقول لأهلنا ولأطفالنا في شوارعِ فلسطينِ المحتلة إن
الصهيانية الغزاة، ولو اقتلعوا أشجارَ الزيتونِ المباركة، فإئسهم لن يستطيعوا
اقتلاعنا من ترابنا ولن يستطيعوا محوَ ذاكرتنا العربية والوطنية، وإله مسهما
ارتفعت المستوطناتُ في فلسطينِ الجريحِ فستبقى قاماتُ الأطفالِ حاملي
الحجارة أكبر من كلِّ استيطانٍ وأقوى من كلِّ اغتصابِ أرضٍ.



إِنَّ الدَّمَ الزَّكِيَّ الْمُرَاقَ لِكِفَيْلٍ بِنَظْهِرِ الْأَرْضِ الْمُقَدَّسَةِ مِنْ رِجْسِ الصَّهَابَةِ
الْعُزَاةِ، وَهُوَ أَقْوَى مِنْ آلَائِهِمُ الْحَرْبِيَّةِ وَعَدِيدِهِمْ. إِنَّ دَمَ فِلَسْطِينَ الطَّاهِرَ
سَيُطَهِّرُ الْعَالَمَ مِنْ آثَامِ صَمْتِهِ عَنْ جَرِيمَةِ الْعَصْرِ.
بوركتكم يا أحيي في خروجكم اليوم، وعسانا أن ندخل غدا أرض
الأنبياء ويدخل معنا إلى تلك البقاع العدل والسلام والحرية فكون آمين
مطمئنين ومحقق إذ ذاك انتفاضة الأقصى أهدأها.

والسلام

* المحامي سليم الصويص

صلاة التحدي

تتولى وزارة الداخلية، ونستذكر موقفها الحميد حين
ثار أهل الفحيص على البطريركية الأورشليمية
اليونانية القيادة فرض وزير الداخلية آنذاك، وهو هو
الوزير الحالي، التدخل، وقال: هذه مسألة داخلية، ولو
إن الذين استشارهم معالي وزير الداخلية احسنوا
الاستشارة لما صدر قرار اغلاق كنيستنا.
ونحن على يقين بأن معالي وزير الداخلية سنتقم
الامر وسيلف مع الحق، وسيلف مع الأرثوذكس
الاحرار الذين يرفضون الخضوع لسلطة اجنبية،
ويرفضون وجود اية سلطة خارج عن سلطة الدولة
الارثوذكسية ولقومية غير القومية العربية.
ونحن المسيحيين العرب الأرثوذكس في فلسطين
والاردن، الذين خلعتنا شر الغريب اليوناني عن رقابتنا،
لن نعود الى العيوية لأجنبي وسنظل نناضل حتى
ينضوي كل المسيحيين العرب الأرثوذكس تحت لواء
كنيستنا العربية الأرثوذكسية وإذا أراد كنيستان ان
يظلوا حراسا على مقدساتنا - مثل ناطور فيروز - فهذا
امر سيكون موضع نظر، ولكن أرضنا وأوقالتنا ستكون
لنا ولن نؤجرها للعدو الصهيوني.
كلمة أخيرة أقولها، مكررا ما قاله المطران العربي
«يوسف» في واشنطن في اجتماع في العام الماضي: «لا
معنى للمسيحية بدون القدس ولا معنى للانجيل
بدون القدس، أقول: القدس الشريف وليس اورشليم،
لأن القدس لنا نحن العرب المسيحيين والمسلمين فقط،
وليس لليهود اي حق في القدس الشريف - ويجب ان
تسقط خرافة أبناء ابراهيم لأن اليهود ليسوا أبناء
ابراهيم بل أبناء الافاعي والحيات كما يقول النبي
يوحنا المعمدان «يحى»
فالقدس عربية «مسيحية - اسلامية فقط» ونحن
دعاة تعريب الكنيسة الأرثوذكسية سنظل نناضل من
اجل تعريب الكنيسة وتعريب القدس حتى يصبح
للمسيحية معنى وللانجيل المنس معناه الحقيقي.

العدو الصهيوني فيساهم بذلك في تصفية قضية
فلسطين
ولهذا تعربنا على القيادة اليونانية في القدس
الشريف، ولكن تعربنا على القيادة اليونانية ليس
خروجاً على المذهب الأرثوذكسي فنحن أرثوذكس
وسنظل اماناً على مذهبنا ولن نتخلى عنه، ونحن
نرفض الخضوع للقيادة اليونانية ونريد ان يكون لنا
مطراننا العربي وكهنتنا العرب الذين لا يحنون امام
البطريك اليوناني ويطانته.
وحركتنا ليست انقساماً في الكنيسة الأرثوذكسية
ولكنها انتعاق، نحن نثور ونعلن رفضنا
الخضوع للقيادة اليونانية ونرفض ان يكون صك
تحررتنا كتاب من البطريرك اليوناني او اجازة من
القانون رقم ٢٧ لسنة ١٩٥٨ الذي اعطى البطريرك
اليوناني السلطة لكي يبيع اوقاف كنيستنا
الأرثوذكسية دون ان يكون للحكومة الاردنية سلطة
على منعه او على تحويله الى المحاكمة بجرم بيع
الاملاك المؤمن عليها الى العدو الصهيوني.
نحن عرب أرثوذكس من فلسطين والاردن ولنا
يونان أرثوذكس كما يحبر البطريرك ولنا يونانا ...
بل نحن عرب اقحاح تعود جذورنا الى آلاف السنين في
هذا الوطن.
كما ان مقدساتنا في القدس وبيت لحم والناصره
وغيرها ليست اوقافاً يونانية بل اوقاف عربية
مسيحية، والبطريك اليوناني ليس قيما على اوقاف
يونانية بل قيم وكيل على اوقاف عربية.
اكتب وأوضح لانني على يقين تام بأن حكومتنا
الكريمة ستقف الى جانبنا اذا عرفت الحقيقة، ولكن،
من المؤسف الا تحسن الحكومة وخاصة وزارة
الداخلية - اختيار من تستأثر برأيهم قبل ان تصدر
قرارها باغلاق الكنيسة العربية الأرثوذكسية.
نحن نعرف الشخصية المستقيمة المستنيرة التي

في ١٧/١٢/٢٠٠٠ اقام المسيحيون العرب
الأرثوذكس في الاردن وفلسطين ترفضون الهيمنة
اليونانية صلاة في قاعة احد فنادق عمان لانه ليس لهم
مكان يصلون فيه بعد ان صدر قرار باغلاق الكنيسة
التي افتتحوها لتكون مكان عبادة لهم.
وترأس هذه الصلاة المطران الأردني - الفلسطيني
المولود بدمتري خوري الذي رفضت القيادة اليونانية
للكنيسة الأرثوذكسية المقدسية سيامته كاهنا الا اذا
تزوج، حتى لا يصبو فكره الى الارتقاء في سلم اللاهوت
فيصبح مطراناً ثم منافسا على كرسي البطريركية،
فسافر الى امريكا حيث احتضنته الكنيسة العربية
واعطته الفرصة لكي يحرس المسيحيين العرب هناك
ويحافظ على ثقافتهم ولغتهم وتقاليدهم العربية
بالتعاون مع كهنة عرب من الاردن وفلسطين وسوريا
ولبنان فيظل المغتربون على تماس دائم مع وطنهم
وغده وتاريخه وتراثه.
اهم ما في هذه الصلاة - التي اسميها صلاة
التحدي - انه لم يسمع فيها كلمة يونانية واحدة، بينما
لا يخلو قداس لدى الأرثوذكس او الكاثوليك من كلمات
يونانية.
نحن عرب، لغتنا عربية، وصلاتنا عربية، ولن
نشوهها بآية كلمة اجنبية
لقد كانت هذه الصلاة تحديا مكشوفاً للذين
يتاجرون بالقانون «٢٧» الخاص بتنظيم البطريركية
الأرثوذكسية ويستخدمونه متى شاءوا ويعطلونه
متى خدتم التعطيل مصلحتهم.
نحن المسيحيين العرب الأرثوذكس في الاردن
وفلسطين، وفي الاردن خاصة نعلن رفضنا القاطع
الخضوع لنصوص هذا القانون الذي يضع كل شيء
في يد البطريرك اليوناني.
ونقول: نرفض هذا القانون لانه يطلق يد
البطريك اليوناني لبيع وقفنا واملاك بطريركتنا الى



ANTIOCHIAN VILLAGE UPCOMING EVENTS

Marriage Enrichment

February 2-4, 2001

To provide the information and experience that will assist married couples to move further on their paths to holiness and becoming one flesh. Activities during the weekend will include skill sessions, worship services, a candlelight dinner, a no-utensil finger food meal, and time for leisure activities.

Lenten Retreat

February 25-27, 2001

Participate in the Great Journey to Pascha. Daily services including the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete, presentations and discussions, meetings and confessions with priests, study and meditation time.

Building an Orthodox Marriage

March 2-3, 2001

A retreat for couples seeking marriage, newly married couples, and couples ready to renew their love and understanding.

Beginning Chanting

March 11-16, 2001

Learn the eight tones of Byzantine chanting, including the special hymns of Lent.

Renewing Baptismal Vows

April 29-May 1, 2001

As an Orthodox Christian you were probably baptized as an infant and your god-parents recited your vows for you. Now that you are an adult, would you make those vows on your own? Spend a weekend reviewing the Orthodox baptismal service, participating in worship services, dining on fine foods, enjoying the beauty of the Village setting, and relaxing.

Write Antiochian Village or call 724-238-3677 for more information or to reserve a workshop.

DONATIONS GRACIOUSLY RECEIVED AT ANTIOCHIAN VILLAGE

The Camp and the Heritage & Learning Center at Antiochian Village gratefully acknowledge the monetary and in-kind donations contributed during the 2001 fiscal year ended January 31, 2001. The names on the following list are the names for which we have records. Should we have inadvertently missed listing someone's name or if we have incorrectly identified the donation or the amount, please let us know so that we may correct our records. The campers, the guests, and the staff appreciate everyone's generosity.

Monetary Gifts

- \$65,000+**
Order of St. Ignatius — Camper Scholarships
- \$15,000 and over**
Ernest Saykaly
- \$5,000 and over**
William & Sophia McGrath
- \$2,000 and over**
Anonymous
Pinewood Children's Charities
- \$1,000 and over**
Midwest Teen SOYO
- \$500 and over**
Connie Abodeely
Dr. & Mrs. Joseph Samra
Sami S. Rafidi
Michael Ann Christian
James and Somaya Watkins
- \$200 and over**
Ladies Guild, St. Michael Orthodox Church, Greensburg, PA
Renee Mefrige
Joseph Samra, III
Mr. and Mrs. Gregory Threadgill
- \$100 and over**
Jay Banna
Mr. & Mrs. Mark Fennema
St. Nicholas, Cedarburg, WI
- \$50 and over**
Mark & Christina Kinan

\$25 and over

- Dr. & Mrs. Ledware Anton
AOCWNA — Midwest
Rose Zrake

Under \$25

- Anonymous
Christina Sabbagh

In-Kind Contributions

- Kathy Abraham — Decorations and Specialty Foods for College Conference, Mid-Winter Meetings, and Summer Meetings
- Dr. Robert Aber — Medical Supplies
- Dr. Raymond Cohlmiia — Medical Supplies
- Dennehy Dental — Medical Supplies
- Al Dirani — Tax Abatement for the Village
- Laila Elias — Kitchen Supplies
- David Ghiz — Pool Supplies
- Lucy Hanna — Ancient Book of Psalms
- Alfreda Ferris Haracivet — Framed Print
- Mary Harami — Books to the Library
- Elaine Heider — Golf Shirts to Camp and Center Staff
- Order of St. Ignatius — Two Volunteer Cabins and One Camper Cabin
- Dr. Sam Kouri — Medical Supplies
- Dr. Jerry Machado — Clergy Vestments
- Sara Maloley — Medical Supplies
- Diana Masood — Items to the Museum
- William Obeid — Paraclesis Service Books
- Patterson Dental — Medical Supplies
- Andrea Piera — Medical Supplies
- Dr. Raymond Rishwain — Medical Supplies
- Philip Tamoush — Orthodox Directory on CD-Rom
- Julia Thomas — Christmas Issue of Greetings From Home Magazine
- Dr. & Mrs. Joseph Samra — Persian Carpet



DAILY DEVOTIONS

MARCH, 2001

- 1. ISALAH 2:11-21; GENESIS 2:4-19; PROVERBS 3:1-18 (FAST)
2. ISALAH 3:1-15; GENESIS 2:20-3:20; PROVERBS 3:19-34 (FAST)
...
31. HEBREWS 9:24-28; MARK 8:27-31 (FAST)

By Very Rev. George Alberts

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese Publications Department

358 Mountain Road, Englewood, NJ 07631
Phone: (201) 871-1355 Fax (201) 871-7954

NEW RELEASE! NEW RELEASE! NEW RELEASE!

INTENTIONAL PARENTING CASSETTES BY DR. JOHN DALACK, PhD

- ❖ Tape 1 — Parents and Parenting: Knowing Yourself
❖ Tape 2 — The Problems of Raising Christian Children in a non-Christian World
...
❖ Tape 5 — Responsibility and Independence

Please send me _____ set(s) of Intentional Parenting at \$24.95 per set. I have enclosed my payment of \$ _____, which includes 10% postage and handling for US orders, or 20% postage and handling for Canada and Overseas orders. Send to:

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JERUSALEM EASYWALKS

By Aviva Bar-Am

Brimming with history and studded with anecdotes and folk tales, Jerusalem Easywalks is an absorbing book that takes you into every corner of the most fascinating city in the world. It includes 17 circular strolls and the Via Dolorosa, a plethora of Jerusalem attractions, all kinds of travel tips, and information on wheelchair accessibility. Venture into early neighborhoods, delve into ancient ruins that date back to our forefathers, explore the Temple Mount, visit unique museums, and enjoy incredible views of the Holy City!

Please send me _____ copy(s) of Jerusalem Easywalks at a cost of \$22.50 per copy. For orders in the US, please include 10% for postage and handling. For Canada and Overseas, please include 20% for postage and handling. Please send to:

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NEW! NEW! NEW! NEW! NEW!
NINTH HOUR AND TYPICA
DIVINE LITURGY OF THE
PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS
OF SAINT GREGORY
THE DIALOGIST
For Wednesdays of Great Lent

Compiled and Edited by Mareena Boosamra Ball, Chris Farha, and Robert Stadler for the Department of Sacred Music of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

Complete English Text for Priest and Congregation with two music settings, Byzantine and Non-Byzantine.

Please send me _____ copy(s) of *The Divine Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts* at a cost of \$9.95 per copy. For orders under \$20.00 in the US, please include \$2.00 for postage; for orders under \$20.00 outside the US, please include \$4.00 for postage. For orders \$20.00 or more, please include 10% for postage in the US, or 20% for postage outside the US. I have enclosed US \$ _____. Please send to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

2001 JACK G. SHAHEEN MASS COMMUNICATION SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

The fourth annual \$1000.00 scholarship, in honor of Dr. Jack G. Shaheen, will be awarded to an Arab-American student in journalism, radio, television or film.

The purpose of the award is to encourage outstanding Americans of Arab heritage to excel in Mass Communications studies.

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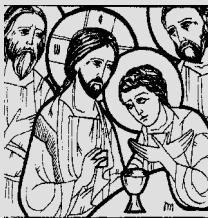
To apply, send the following:

- *A one-page personal statement of purpose to the ADC Research Institute (ADCRI), stating why you merit the scholarship.
- *Two letters of recommendation from media professors.
- *Official transcripts, including your grade point average.
- *A statement that you are an Arab American.

Send applications by April 15, 2001 to:

ADCRI
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 Washington, DC 20008

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THE ORTHODOX COMPANION

by Rev. David E. Abramtsov



THE ORTHODOX COMPANION is a manual containing an explanation of the most important prayers and practices of the Orthodox Church. This important information should be at the fingertips of all pious Christians. It will prove useful to church school students, parents and all others wishing to learn more about their faith!

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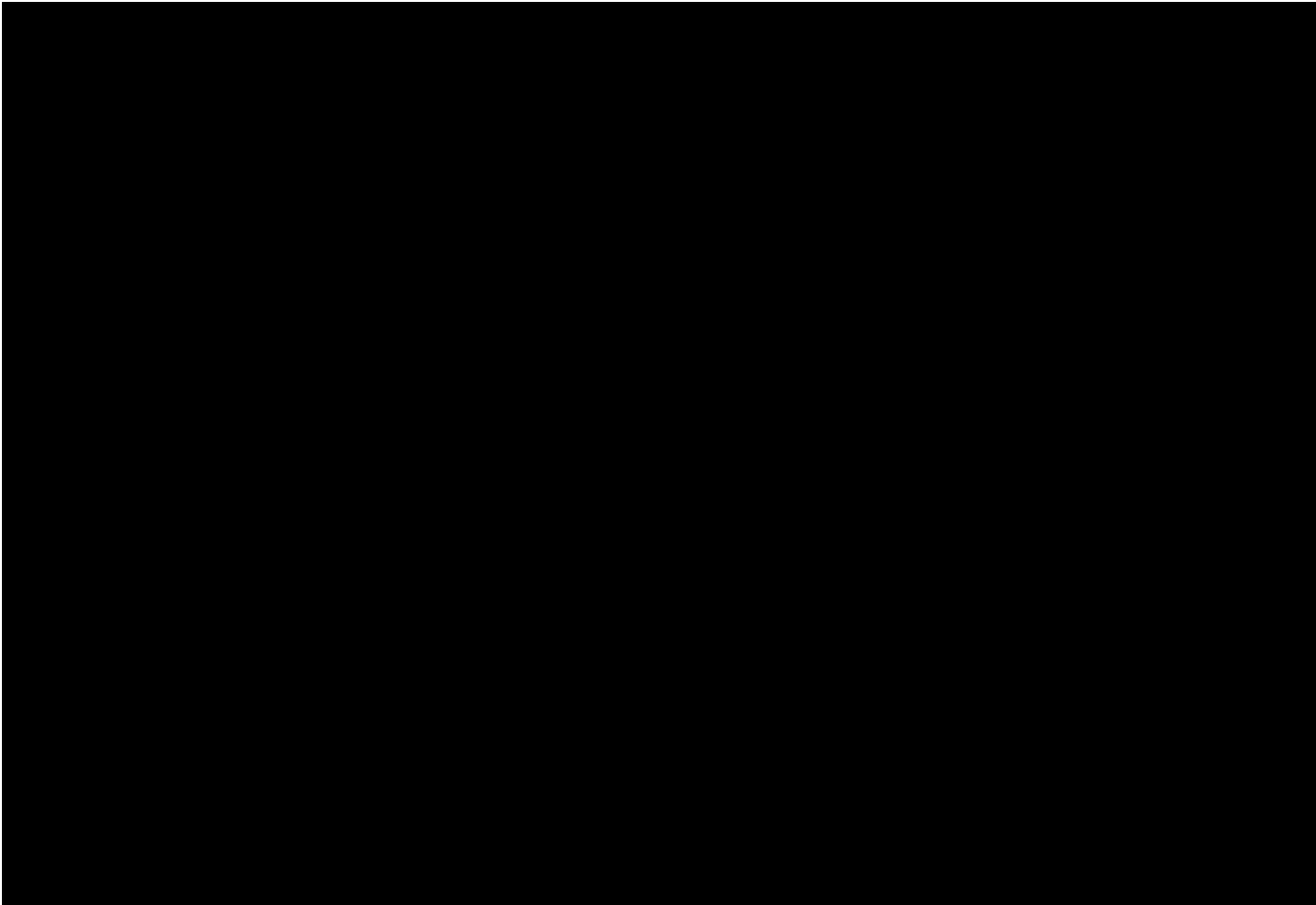
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MY LENTEN JOURNEY
An Interactive Poster for Children

Make a card for someone you love (like your grandparents) and send it to them in the mail.

MONDAY

Do something nice for your mom and dad
How about helping them get dinner ready?

THURSDAY

Give up TV for a whole Day! When you get home from school, make a sign that says "No TV Today".

SATURDAY

My Lenten Journey is a large color poster designed to help children understand how they can participate in Great Lent. Daily challenges give the child the opportunity to do, give, give up, or think each day during Lent as a way of making his or her own offering.

And don't forget ... as you complete each daily challenge, mark off each day with one of the colorful stickers enclosed!

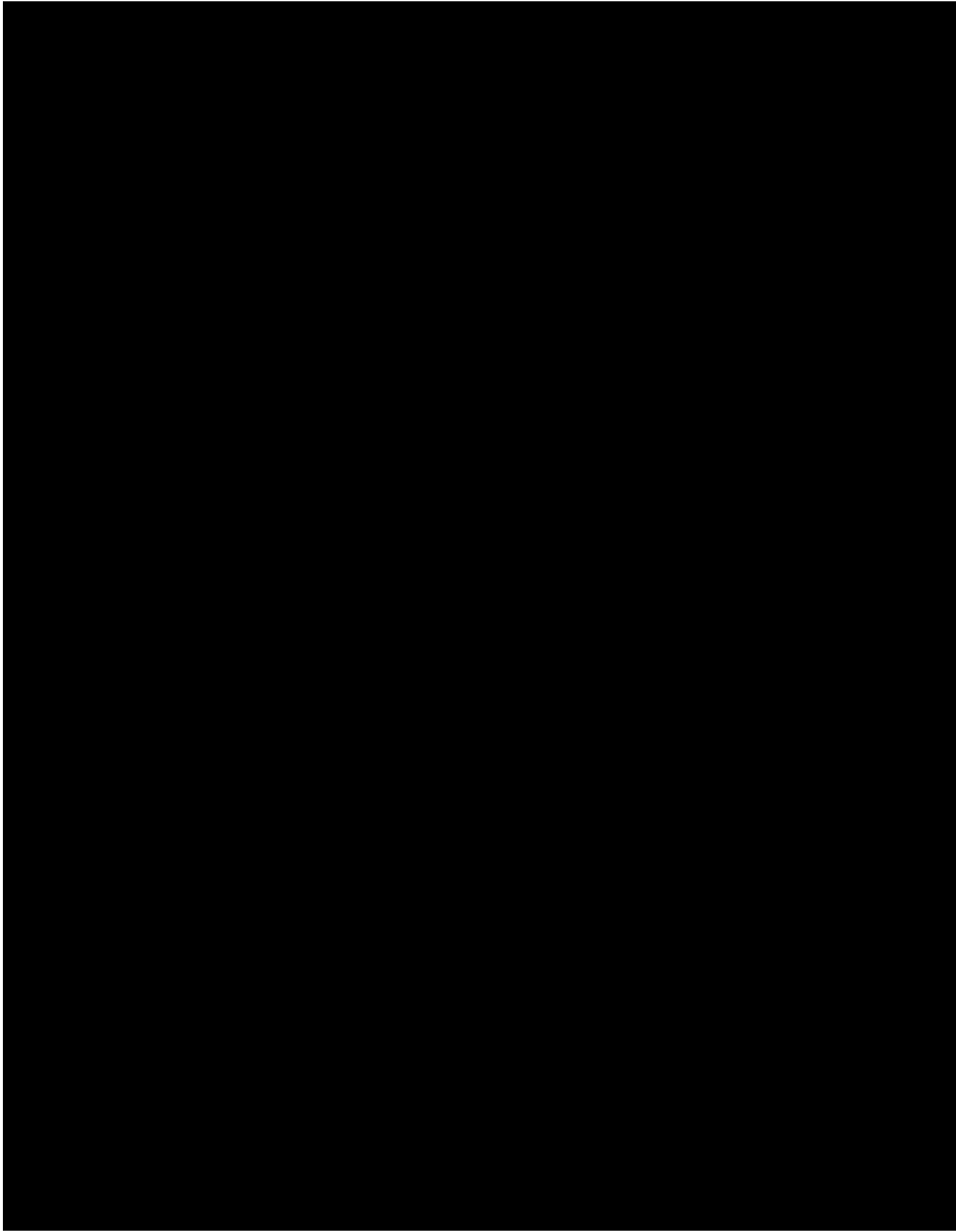
Please send me _____ copy(s) of *My Lenten Journey* at a cost of \$7.00 (US funds) per copy. Please include \$2.00 for postage for orders under \$20, or 10% for larger orders (U.S. only). For orders to Canada and Overseas, please include \$4.00 postage for orders under \$20.00 or 20% for larger orders. I have enclosed US \$ _____. Send to:

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ARABIC





IN DEFENSE OF AN ARAB ORTHODOX CHURCH

IN DEFENSE

Continued from page 5

press. Journalists were told that the Task Force was dismayed at the closure of St. James church and expressed their determination to re-open it, using all legal measures possible, since Jordan's constitution and laws guarantee human rights and freedom of worship.

The greater number of questions raised by the press concerned the sale of church land and properties to Israel by the Jerusalem Patriarch. Journalists wanted to know the position of the Jordanian government. Dr. Madanat said the Task Force obtained copies of the documents of land sale by the Patriarch, despite his specious denial of such sales. Jordan is investigating this problem further, after having received the report of a five-member committee it sent to the Holy Land, with which the Patriarch did not fully co-operate. The Arab character of the Orthodox people of Jordan and the Holy Land was emphasized and their co-operation with their Muslim brethren throughout history was shown. Rev. Dr. John Benefiel said that he and all the hundreds of American churches he represents support the Arab Orthodox people in their efforts to have their own church, and that he had written to King Abdallah II and his Prime Minister defending the human rights of the Arab Orthodox people. He added that he would write again.

On Tuesday, December 19, the Task Force succeeded in obtaining an appointment with the Minister of Interior, Dr. Awad Khleifat, on Tuesday afternoon following their meeting at noon with lawyer Najib Al-Rashdan, who kindly offered to defend the re-opening of St. James Church without retainer fees, as a service to a national cause. A team of other lawyers suggested by the church's legal committee will help him.

The Minister of Interior listened carefully to the presentation of the Arab Orthodox cause by Dr. Madanat and other members of the delegation but insisted that his closing of St. James Church was a legal act. He said that the Arab Orthodox

community is divided and added that Dr. Raouf Abu-Jaber and members of his Orthodox Society had visited him earlier and spoke in an opposite manner than the Task Force regarding St. James Church. He advised that the rift within the ranks of the Arab Orthodox people should be healed, because Jordan would like to see them united. He did not accept the claims that the Jerusalem Patriarch was not complying with Law 27 of 1958 and that he sold church lands to Israel, and asked the Task Force why they had not presented evidence in the past. He also resented the claim that Jordan was violating human rights, and said that Fr. Farhat could pray at home or in other private homes but not in public places.

The last activity of the Task Force delegation was to go to St. James Church for vespers at 5:00 p.m. The delegation remarked how simple and bare the church was, and yet how disturbing to the Jerusalem Patriarch its idea has been. Bishop Demetri led the prayers, helped by Fr. Constantine Nasr and Fr. Nicola Dahdal. Fr. Kamal Farhat was pre-

sent. Rev. Dr. John Benefiel said a prayer also invoking divine help for the Arab Orthodox Christians seeking freedom in the Lord.

Later that evening and the next day, Task Force members took various flights back home to USA and Canada.

Dr. George Madanat and Dr. Issa Boullata stopped in London for a couple of days and had a previously arranged meeting with the members of the recently registered Orthodox Society of the Holy Sepulchre in Britain, whose aims were similar to the Task Force's. The meeting was held at the home of André Bullata, and members of his Society present were Fu'ad Sam'an, Shukri Jad'on, Edmund Kuttab, Jamil Bullata, and Mazen Khoury — all originally from Palestine. Dr. Madanat reported to them on the Task Force delegation's activities in Amman. They sympathized and expressed their desire to co-operate with the Task Force. Dr. Madanat welcomed their desire and said he would send them the publications they requested and the information regarding theological education in USA for Arab Orthodox men.

Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Eastern Region Parish Life Conference

July 4th-July 8th, 2001

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45TH ANNUAL ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE CONVENTION

**ST. NICHOLAS ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CATHEDRAL, LOS ANGELES
CENTURY PLAZA HOTEL
JULY 23-29, 2001**

Dear Members and Friends of the Archdiocese,

WE ARE EXCITED TO PRESENT a new format for the commemorative convention book. The convention planning committee is dedicating this journal to honor both Metropolitan Philip and Sayidna Antoun. Sayidna Philip will be celebrating the 35th anniversary of his episcopacy. He was elected Archbishop of New York and all North America by the Holy Synod of Antioch on August 5, 1966, and enthroned as Metropolitan and Primate of this great Archdiocese on October 13, 1966. Sayidna Antoun will be celebrating his 50th year in the priesthood in the service of our Lord. This jubilee celebration commemorates his ordination to the dia-

conate on October 28, 1951. He was consecrated to the episcopacy on January 9, 1983. Their complete biographies will be featured in this journal.

This publication will be a keepsake and reference book befitting the dignity of our honorees. In addition, we will include photographs of all Archdiocese clergy. For this reason and to keep the book an acceptable size, we are restricting the type of copy that will be published. The journal will contain only images of icons, churches and clergy. No other photos or commercial logos will be printed. It is our hope that all advertisement content will address either His Eminence, The Most Reverend Metropolitan Philip, His Grace, The Right Reverend Bishop Antoun, or this the 45th Antiochian Orthodox

Christian Archdiocese Convention, the first Archdiocese Convention of the new millennium.

The commemorative journal will include two main categories: full-page dedications or specially designed pages featuring messages of two lines. The full-page dedications will appear following the Icon selected. The two-line messages will appear on the page according to the level selected.

We encourage and welcome the participation of all members and friends of the Archdiocese in this fine publication and sincerely ask for your generosity. If you have any further questions, please call Carol Attyah, Commemorative Journal Coordinator, at 1-562-861-3737.

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- + Bridegroom Matins of Palm Sunday Evening
- + Bridegroom Matins of Great Monday Evening
- + Bridegroom Matins of Great Tuesday Evening
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- + Passion Matins of Great Thursday Evening
- + The Hours of Great Friday Morning
- + Descent from the Cross Vespers of Great Friday Afternoon
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OR REGISTER ONLINE at www.antiochian2001.com

45th Antiochian Archdiocese Convention
 St. Nicholas Cathedral, Los Angeles
 Century Plaza Hotel, CA July 23-29, 2001
 REGISTRATION FORM

"Behold, I make all things new" (Revelation 21:5)

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1. List each family member in either the top grid (adults) or bottom grid (youth)
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