

Jacob's Well

ORTHODOX CHURCH
IN AMERICA

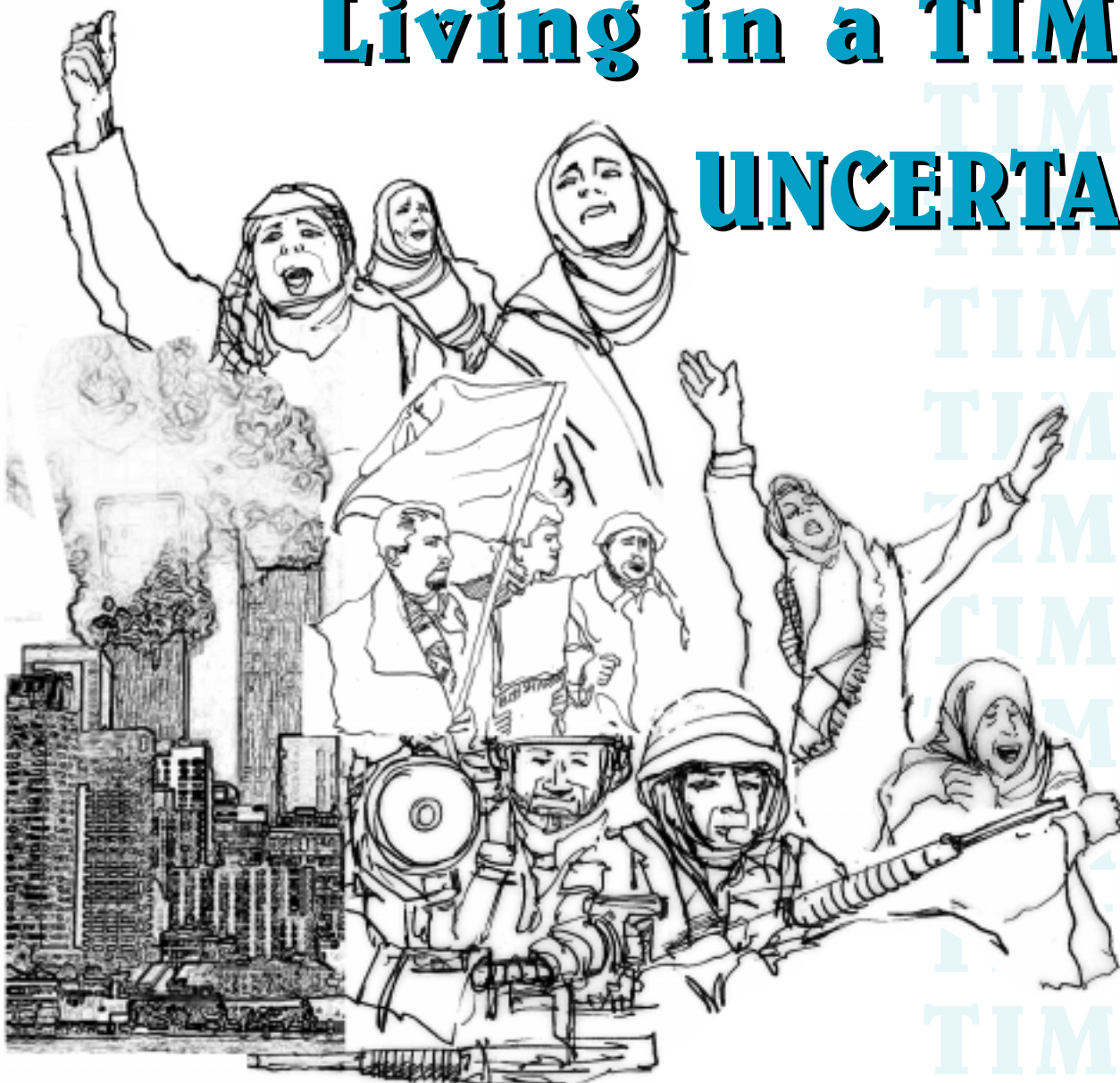
Spring/Summer 2002



DIOCESE OF
NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

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

Living in a TIME of UNCERTAINTY



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Living in a Time of Uncertainty

"I am a human being. Nothing human can be alien to me." - Terence (Roman playwright (185-159 BC))

by Fr. John Shimchick

Before September of last year it would have been referred to as the "site directly below, directly above, or at the point of detonation of a nuclear weapon." Since then it is known as the place where the World Trade towers collapsed - the site of destruction and horror. In April, some who had lost loved ones and friends in New York attended the anniversary of the bombing of the Federal building in Oklahoma City in solidarity with the people of Oklahoma - because it was "their ground zero." Perhaps as the definition of "ground zero" expands it will simply be known as "an experience or event which results in one's life never being the same again."

Some of us already understand what this means. But no doubt, all of us will come to know it, one way or another, eventually. It will be an experience alien to none of us. Humanly speaking, it will most likely take place through some profound loss or change: the loss of loved ones, or of a job, the breakdown in relationships, knowing someone whose memory is disappearing.

But whether we have known it through human experience, all of us have already undergone this experience spiritually. All of us, having been baptized, have undergone something which, if we would allow it, would prevent us from living our lives in the same old way. "We were buried with Him through baptism into death," wrote St. Paul in the text read on Holy Saturday and during the Baptism Service, "that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

Those of us baptized as children may have forgotten about the implications which this "newness of life" was meant to bring about. But for those baptized as adults, especially for those in the early Church, the significance of Baptism was profound. Fr. Alexander Schmemmann in his classic study, *Of Water and the Spirit*, wrote: "A Christian of the past knew not only intellectually but with his entire being that through Baptism he was placed into a radically new relationship with all aspects of life and with the 'world' itself; that he received, along with his faith, a radically new understanding of life."

In this issue and during this time of uncertainty, we are concerned with the theme of how are we to understand our life, when we can no longer - or should no longer - live it the same old way.

Our response begins with certain "rediscoveries." We look again at the "Sacraments of Entry" - Baptism, Chrismation, and the Eucharist - as the means by which God gives us life, purpose, and nourishment. Fr. Michael Plekon introduces us to Paul Evdokimov, an Orthodox theologian whose life and work encompassed many of the key crises of the 20th century. Dr. Daniel Gottlieb responds to the questions of where is God in the moments of suffering and what is the value of intercessory prayer. Dennise

Krause offers some suggestions for consoling those who have suffered pregnancy or new born loss.

We present an interview with our new Chancellor, Fr. Yaroslav Sudick, who has been working diligently to improve many areas of Diocesan life. Fr. Alexander Garklavs looks at the legacy of Fr. Alexander Warnecke - on the first year anniversary of his death. There are reviews of lectures, liturgical music workshops, and other parish activities. We also have book and movie reviews, poetry, and other features related to Diocesan reactions to the events of September 11.

Fr. Vasileios of Mt. Athos wrote: "The life of the monk is thus a losing and a finding." May the sense of loss which has changed so many lives, result in the finding of the One Whose suffering "sets us free from suffering," Jesus Christ, "the light which shines in the darkness." ❖

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THE MOST REV. PETER ARCHBISHOP
OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

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Archbishop Peter is grateful for the expressions of love and affirmations of prayerful support he has received since his illness of last summer and over the months of his recovery. He continues to become stronger, while remaining actively involved and concerned with Diocesan affairs. ❖

Trying to Make Things Better:

An Interview with our Diocesan Chancellor, Fr. Yaroslav Sudick

Would you first explain what is the function of the Chancellor and what are your responsibilities?

The responsibilities include: making sure that the Office of the Archbishop works in a very efficient manner, that order is kept in regards to the documents stored at the Chancery in Bronxville, and that the parishes are in compliance with all of the Statutes of the Orthodox Church in America.

Since the death of Fr. Alexander Warnecke, the previous Chancellor, and with the illness of Archbishop Peter there have been a number of administrative changes within our Diocese. Would you explain some of those changes?

First, we have had to find new deans for the New York State Deanery and the New York City Deanery (Fr. Christopher Calin has now been elected), for which I previously was Dean. In Bronxville, we have Fr. Joseph Hoffman serving as the new Secretary and the office hours are Monday - Thursday (10:00 - 4:00). A housekeeper/nurse has been hired to maintain the residence and to care for Archbishop Peter.

What can you tell us about the Archbishop's health?

After being in the hospital for three months last year he is still physically weak, but is nevertheless intellectually quite sharp and active. As he likes to say, "he administers with his brain, not his legs." In fact, he has written a response for the Patriarch of Antioch to the Pope concerning some issues related to Orthodox/Catholic relations. He offers a class in canon law at the Chancery for some students from St. Vladimir's Seminary.

Thanks to the care provided by Barbara his nurse, his diabetes is under control and he is gaining

strength and energy. Recently he was able to attend fully the Spring Session of the Holy Synod which was held at Syosset and he has attended services at the Holy Protection Cathedral in New York City.

In addition to administrative changes you have sought to repair the condition of the Diocesan Center. Tell us what kinds of things have been required.

The roof has been replaced and we are putting in new windows, which is a complicated process because the windows are of different sizes and need to be custom-made. We are altering the front walk-way so that it will be both easier to utilize and to maintain. We have upgraded the electricity in the house and have installed sensor lights in the front which will go on when someone drives in. The rugs have all been cleaned. We anticipate painting the inside and eventually replacing the carpets and drapes.

Do you envision the Center being used more as truly a center for our Diocese?

Absolutely, we anticipate more meetings taking place there. Archbishop Peter would like people to come over frequently as well, because now with a housekeeper present everything is more orderly and presentable.

One of the past criticisms has concerned the activity of the Diocesan Council and the infrequency of its meetings. Can you envision the work of the Council becoming more responsive and proactive in regards to the life of our Diocese?

Yes, after the last year's Diocesan Assembly in November, the Diocesan Council met in December, and in February - so meetings of the Council are set for every 2 months. Meetings with the Deans take place at least every month.

Conversations with the Deans take place regularly to understand what is going on - so we have a free flow of communication and we want all of our priests to know what is going on.

What would you say are some of the strengths and frustrations of our Diocesan life?

One of the most frustrating things that I can see not only within the Diocese, but in the whole life of the Church is that we don't seem to do enough for our people. We are a worshipping Church - which is absolutely wonderful - and we build beautiful churches, but somehow the Orthodox Church has never gone out into doing other things for people. Our elderly people need, for example, skilled nursing facilities. I think that it's a shame that once the elderly, who have served the Church all their lives, get ill, they often end up at facilities which are a distance from their church. Perhaps they are visited maybe once a month - if that - by a priest. But there is often no connection with the Church.

On the other spectrum, the Orthodox Church has never played a big role in establishing academic institutions for our young people to attend - no colleges or universities. Many other denominations have facilities to educate their young in their faith and in academics. We don't do that.

Remember what Professor Jaroslav Pelikan said at the last All-American Council that we will never become a reckoning force in America until we have these academic institutions to speak for us. This is something which I think is unconscionable.

Do you think we have the kind of funding to support those kind of organizations?

The money is out there. Over the 40 years of my priesthood I have found that if you're doing a worthwhile project, money will come. Our people are not poor - money is available. In addition, there is funding available from other means to do these things. You need to become aggressive and do things - then you'll see that money will come in. Money is never a problem when a certain mindset can be changed.

What about our strengths as a Diocese?

We have a wealthy Diocese, with many beautiful churches. We have many strengths - in particular,

a number of educated people who are willing to help us. In fact, I would like to establish a "yellow pages" of professional people who we would call in for consultation. For example when Archbishop Peter was ill, it would have been helpful to have had the advice of qualified members of our Diocese. I believe such a directory of our "human resources" would be valuable.

Over the years some within our Diocese have been frustrated with what might be called issues of trust and accountability in regards to Diocesan affairs and records. Is there anything that you would like to say to assure our people and to encourage their confidence in the Diocese concerning the changes that are going on?

We are trying to be open about everything that we do. You can see what we have done so far. We have a new Secretary and there are new people working in the office. We are trying to make sure that the office is very efficiently run. You can certainly be assured that we will do everything we can to make it flow in a very progressive manner.

Finally, although you have perhaps mentioned some of it already during this interview, would you as a summary, share with us your vision for our life as a Diocese? What would you wish for our Diocese if all things were possible?

If all things were possible, I would like to have a skilled nursing facility. I would like to have a college for our young people. Our parishes would grow because we would have something more to offer them.

In addition, we seem to be isolated from one another. We are very parochial and it would be more beneficial to have our parishes more interwoven with each other and to create a different mindset.

As soon as this would happen our people would begin to think in a bigger perspective, a bigger picture, they would see our Church moving in a positive direction rather than just looking at the past.

It seems to me that we Orthodox rarely have a mission plan. We are not futuristic people, we tend to talk only about the past. But among our concerns should also be the questions: Where we are going to go, and what is going to be our legacy?

The work is not easy, but I'm trying. ❖

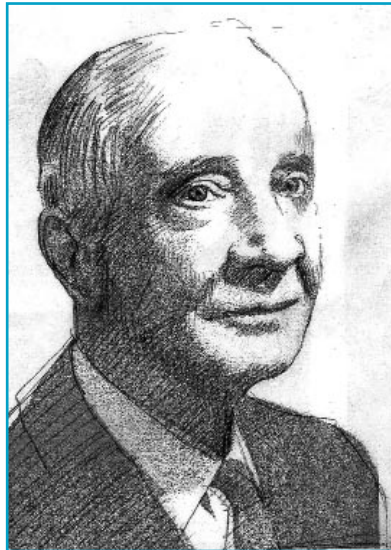
But among our concerns should also be the questions: Where are we going to go, and what is going to be our legacy?

A Theologian of God's Beauty, A Life of Service

by Fr. Michael Plekon

Jacob's Well
Spring/Summer 2002

Unswervingly faithful to the Church's Tradition, and genuinely out of love for the truth there preserved, Paul Evdokimov sought to listen to the anxiety and rage of the modern challenge to God, the revolt so characteristic of the entire 20th century. It was his century, and in every way imaginable, he was a person of it, living a full life as a father, spouse then widower and remarried spouse again, a counselor of distressed folk in his position as administrator of hostels for youth and refugees, and in the last two decades of his life, a theologian-teacher and writer.



Though he died in 1970, Evdokimov had lived long enough to know modern revolutionary consciousness from the Bolsheviks his family fled, leaving St. Petersburg in the 1920s, to the late 1960s counter-cultural activity, even the public turmoil in Paris in 1968. It seems quite a paradox that one described even by his family and close friends as an elegant Old World patrician, personally reserved and a bit remote, could nonetheless be in speech and writing a passionate and compassionate partisan of modernity, able to hear and converse with Third World immigrants, alienated young people, his own Russian Diaspora collection of characters, intellectuals and clergy of the most ecumenical inclusivity. Cosmopolitan, urbane, brilliant, he was most at home in the liturgy, surrounded by the company of the saints of the icons, wrapped by the swirl of the incense and liturgical chant, transported to heaven though still firmly planted on earth, in our time.

There is much that could be termed unusual, untypical and even contradictory about

Evdokimov and his work as a theologian. Like many others who formed the French Diaspora, he was rooted in the literature and life, the Church and piety of the pre-Revolutionary Russia, yet unlike some, his reverence for Russia never became obsession. Evdokimov's friend,

the theologian Olivier Clément, identifies the roots of his pervasive, self-defining faith in the completely natural lived experience of the Church, the liturgy, the feasts and icons, even the centers of monastic life provided by Evdokimov's mother within the regular rhythm of their family's life. Evdokimov's father, a military officer who had the reputation for fairness and for peace-making in a troubled time, was assassinated by one of his own men. Clément insightfully

traces this traumatic event later in Paul Evdokimov's theme of the sacrificial love of God the Father. Seeing the luminous dead face of his own father, placid in a death he knew he risked by remaining with his men, Paul Evdokimov would later speak of the smile of the One who allows Himself to be crushed in death for the life of many, for the life of the world.

Evdokimov lived in a home in which the icons and daily prayer were as expected and essential as eating and speaking. Later, he himself would be described as one for whom faith was more natural than breathing. His close friend, the equally untypical "monk of the Eastern Church," Fr. Lev Gillet observed in the homily at Paul Evdokimov's funeral liturgy, that he was more at home in the "kingdom of the invisible ones, of divine realities" than in that of earthly contacts and business.

Yet Evdokimov was anything but stereotypically "churchy" or inept in his daily existence, as the shape of his life strongly attests. Although enrolled in military school at first, his own leanings were toward theological formation, first in Kiev, then later in France, the ultimate home of exile. As fellow refugees, princes who drove taxis, scientists who waited tables and were kitchen help, intellectuals who worked in factories or on the railway, so did Evdokimov experience quite ordinary proletarian existence in supporting himself in the Russian Paris of the 1920 and 30s. He worked as a chef's assistant, in the Citroen factory, cleaning railway cars, among other jobs.

Meantime, he participated in the formation of the Russian Christian Student Movement, did his undergraduate degree in philosophy at the Sorbonne, and on scholarship, received his theological training at the recently formed Institut-Saint Serge. There he was most particularly shaped by Fr. Sergius Bulgakov, the brilliant and controversial theologian much in the line of Khomiakov and the philosopher Nicholas Berdiaev. Evdokimov married Natasha Brunel and they had a daughter and son, Nina and Michel, now a professor of comparative literature, scholar and Orthodox priest. In 1942 he completed a doctorate in philosophy and literature at the university at Aix-en-Provence, but he was neither to be ordained to the priesthood nor would he engage in academic activity fully until the 1950s.

During the war, Evdokimov worked with the Resistance and near its end began a long period of service work in hostels for the displaced, for troubled and homeless and unemployed people, later for Third World refugees and students. This service, which Evdokimov himself characterized as more than mere social work, actually a form of the priesthood of the baptized, a lay pastoral ministry to be sure, was done in residences run under the auspices of a

Protestant organization, CIMADE (Comité inter-Mouvements pour l'accueil des évacués). In the hostels at Bièvres, Sèvres and Massy, Evdokimov was not only the practical administrator but clearly a spiritual father; listener and counselor, parent and friend to those in the household for which he cared. It was as natural for him to mediate disputes, listen long into the night to stories of tragedy, as to lead evening prayers for a very mixed, ecumenical community. The reminiscences of Evdokimov by several who lived in these hostels as well as by other family members and friends reveal the character of a teacher without classroom, of a monastic elder who was married, of a true pastor who was a lay person, of an authentic theologian most practically occupied with everyday life.

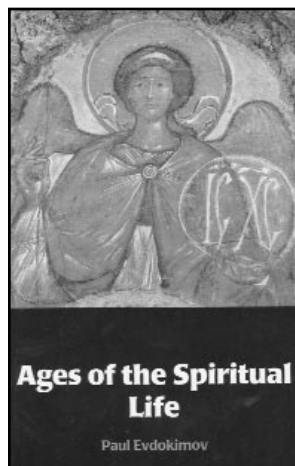
After Natasha Evdokimov's death in 1945, there was remarriage to Tomoko Sakai, and finally in the mid-1950s, Evdokimov was able

to devote himself more fully to writing and eventually teaching, first at the Institut Saint-Serge, and later at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey and at the Institut Supérieur d'Etude Ecuméniques of the Faculty of Catholic Theology in Paris. He was appointed official observer at the third session of Vatican Council II in 1963 and exerted significant influence on the Council's schema 13 on the Church and the world, *Gaudium et spes*. Although he had completed

for his thesis and published *Dostoievsky et le Problème du Mal* [*Dostoevsky and The Problem of Evil*] in 1942, it was not until the later 1950s that his writing, both journal essays and monographs began to flourish. A formidable series of publications proceeded.

At the Heart of Theology: The Lover of Man

Central to all that he lifted up in his theological writing is the identity of God and His orientation toward us, the God who is absurd in giving of Himself, foolish in emptying Himself, limitless in loving and forgiving us. God makes



Himself small and defenseless, "the Lamb immolated from before the foundation of the world," suffering for us in his weakness. In both the icon and the liturgical iconography of Holy Saturday and the Paschal Vigil, Christ descends into hell, searches for Adam and Eve and all their children, seeking us to save us. At the heart of the Church and the Gospel, the cause of paschal joy, is the suffering, risen Lover of humankind.

In all the kenotic imagery Paul Evdokimov employs, both from the Fathers and on his own, there is at first the shock of such to our habituated notions of the omniscience and omnipotence of God, perhaps even scandal to our measuring of his justice according to our own standards. Yet what Evdokimov reintroduces, echoing and further developing both Berdiaev and Bulgakov's bold intuitions, is the inversion so characteristic of the Bible, both the Old Testament and the New. God is constantly other than we make Him out to be. He consistently surprises us. He even frightens and angers us by the depth of his compassion, the freedom of His forgiveness, the generosity of his plans. God must be taken at His word, when the human creation is described as "in His image and likeness."

The liberty God gives to human beings is audacious. That God wants to be loved by His creatures, that He so lowers Himself to become one with them, one of them, even crucified by them, has always resounded dangerously in religious ears. The prophet Jonah is hardly the only one to rebel against such divine freedom and largess. He is joined by apostles, and later, by theologians, clergy and laity. The Church's history is littered with conflicts precisely over the outrageous compassion of God in the Incarnation, suffering, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The rejected, abused Bridegroom of Good Friday is the culmination of all the nuptial imagery of the Old Covenant, the passion of the Bridegroom for His Bride despite her infidelity. How many of us still recoil from the Father's unreasonable forgiveness to the prodigal son. How natural it is, like

the other, "good son" it is to despise the feast celebrated for the returned runaway, the reconciliation and resolution of all in the great wedding banquet of the Lamb.

Even the liturgy abounds with the pathos of God so forcefully expressed in the letter to the Philippians, the well-known hymn of kenosis. The often-quoted Good Friday sermon of Philaret of Moscow captures the Trinitarian suffering and compassion: "The Father is crucifying Love, the Son is Love crucified, the Holy Spirit is the invincible power of the Cross." In Johannine view, the Light shines in the darkness, even that of hell, and the darkness cannot overcome it. Even Judas carries a morsel, the Bread of life Himself, with him, out into the darkness of his treason, so the Holy Week liturgical texts and the Fathers claim. "God can do everything, except constrain us to love Him," so Evdokimov reverberates the consensus of the Fathers on the limitlessness of God's philanthropy, a certainty he shared with his friend, Fr. Lev Gillet.

Christians of the West and the East have a great treasure awaiting them in a re-discovery of Paul Evdokimov's work and life. He opens up the beauty of the icons and the liturgy. He sketches out how the life of prayer lived out in the Church of the past can be lived by people like ourselves today. He fosters a very important meeting of Tradition with our thinking and ways of living in the last years of this century. He does not allow us to forget that the life of prayer, our "liturgical being" is valid only when continued in the liturgy of lovingkindness and service to the neighbor. And at the heart of this entire vision lies Paul Evdokimov's proclamation of the "abyss" of divine compassion, the God whose love for us is limitless and all-powerful precisely in suffering and weakness.

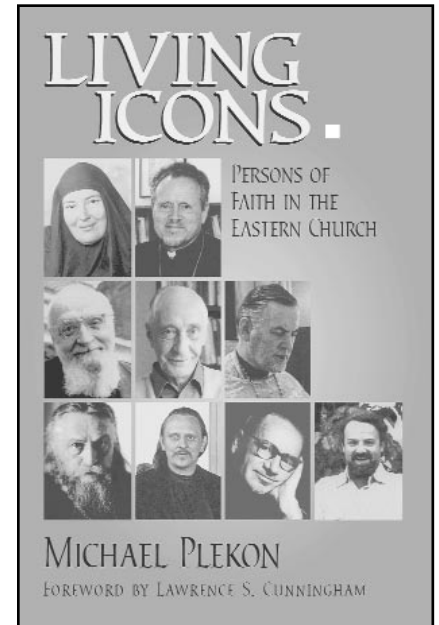
[This article originally appeared in a longer version with a different title, "The God Whose Power is Weakness, Whose Love Is Foolish: Divine Philanthropy in the Theology of Paul Evdokimov," Sourozh, 60, 1995, 15-26.] ❖

Living Icons presents an intimate portrait of holiness as exemplified in the lives and thoughts of ten people of faith in the Eastern Orthodox Church. In this inspiring volume, Fr. Michael P. Plekon introduces readers to a diverse and unusual group of men and women who strove to put the Gospel of Christ into action in their lives.

The “living icons” Plekon describes were, among other things, priests, theologians, writers, and caregivers to the homeless and poor. One was an artist who became the greatest icon painter in this century; another was assassinated for his teachings in post-Soviet Russia. These remarkable people of faith lived through times of great suffering: forced emigration, the Great Depression, World War II, and the Cold War. Many of them were criticized, if not condemned, by ecclesiastical opponents and authorities. Yet each demonstrate a unique pattern for holiness, illustrating that the path to sainthood is open to all.

With the fall of state socialism, Eastern Orthodox churches and monasteries are being reopened and receiving renewed interest from believers and nonbelievers alike. Plekon calls to our attention people like Saint Seraphim of Sarov (1759-1832), a monk, mystic, counselor, healer, and visionary; Father Alexander Men (1935-1990), a Russian whose writings after Glasnost ultimately led to his tragic assassination; Mother Maria Skobtsova (1891-1945), a painter, poet, and political activist who was killed in a concentration camp for hiding her Jewish neighbors; and Father Lev Gillet (1893-1980), one of the twentieth century’s greatest spiritual teachers.

MICHAEL P. PLEKON is a professor in the department of sociology/anthropology and the program in religion and culture at Baruch College, City University of New York. He is also an associate pastor at St. Gregory the Theologian Church in Wappingers Falls, NY. Abridged chapters from Fr. Michael’s book have appeared in past issues of *Jacob’s Well*. His book can be purchased from the University of Notre Dame Press on-line (with a 20% discount) at: www.undpress.nd.edu Search: Living Icons. It can also be purchased from St. Vladimir’s Seminary Book Store - (800) 204-Book. ❖



No Trust in God after Father's Death

by Dr. Daniel Gottlieb

Jacob's Well
Spring/Summer 2002

[Editor's Note: The following question and response appeared in The Philadelphia Inquirer from a column written by Dr. Gottlieb, a Philadelphia area clinical psychologist who specializes in family therapy.

The question - Why does God allow suffering? - is common to all people throughout history. Dr. Gottlieb's response, rooted in his devout Jewish faith, affirms the Scriptural testimony to this issue: God will not always protect us from suffering, but his pledge is to not abandon us. "My God asks for faith and offers companionship" is what Dr. Gottlieb has learned. This is the message given to Moses, that we hear as one of the Holy Friday Vespers readings: "My presence will go with you" (Exodus 33:14). It is the last affirmation proclaimed by Jesus to his disciples following his Resurrection: "And lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Matt. 28:29). It is the essential message from St. Paul read at an Orthodox funeral service: "So we shall always be with the Lord" 1 Thessalonians 4:18).

Dr. Gottlieb's words appeared in a secular newspaper and he utilizes at times a therapeutic language. But during this time of uncertainty, his response, directed to the kind of question which troubles many, can offer us as well a message which resonates with what we believe as Orthodox Christians.]

The Reader's Letter:

Dear Dr. Dan: I recently lost my father to spinal cancer. I turned to God for help. I begged, pleaded and cried on bended knee for a miracle, but there was none. I am at a point in my life now where I am very bitter and angry. I feel betrayed by a God who says he loves us and wants to help us, but when we do turn to him it is "No" or it falls on deaf ears.

After someone has passed away from a terminal illness, people say, "It's a blessing." Just once it would be nice to hear someone say, "Praise God for curing them and for a miracle."

My father was a gentle, kind and wonderful man who was stripped of all his dignity. If God wanted him so badly why didn't he just take him, instead of degrading him? It seems the more I prayed for help the worse he got. I thought prayer was supposed to help your cause, not hurt it. It will be a very long time before I get down on bended knee again and pray for help.

Dr. Gottlieb's Reponse:

Dear Reader:

I am sorry about your loss. Your father sounds like he was a nice man and I would have wished for him an easier passage. You sound like you are in terrible pain, and I'm guessing that your pain is because you carry both loss and resentment. To lose a loved one can be a terribly lonely experience. But to have your faith shattered in the process must feel even lonelier.

I noticed that you did not say you had become an atheist - just that you would not pray for help. That tells me you feel betrayed and mistrustful and that your faith was shaken, but not your belief in a higher power or spirit.

*What I ultimately
came to believe
is that when my
faith had both
strength and depth,
I was at peace.*

Your faith was challenged because your expectations were not met. So I suggest you take a look at what God means to you. Some people believe in a God who is a type of attentive life guide with influence over the small details - if we get a cold or win a raffle. Some believe in a God who is critical and judgmental and holds us accountable for even the slightest misdeeds. Yet others believe in a God who is all accepting and loves us no matter what we do. And anyone who has watched sports on television, of course, knows that many athletes believe God pays very close attention to the outcomes of sporting events.

When expectations are not met in any relationship, trust is jeopardized. But sometimes the problem is in the expectations.

Over the course of my adult life, I have endured much adversity. At first I was resentful and scoffed at the notion of a higher power - I felt much as you do. One day while leaving the cemetery after my wife's funeral, I looked at the sky and said: "I just can't take any more pain." What I heard back still lives: "Sure you can. You just don't want to." That's when I realized that my God would not protect me from suffering. I also realized that my pain was just that: As much as it hurt, it was an emotion that could be endured.

What I ultimately came to believe is that when my faith had both strength and depth, I was at peace. And when I had faith, I had a sense of companionship. My God asks for faith and offers companionship. I know I will endure great suffering before I leave this earth. I only hope that when I do, my faith remains intact throughout.

Research shows that faith contributes to one's sense of well-being and one's ability to recover from adversity. People with strong faith in any type of higher power tend to be happier, more peaceful and recover from adversity more quickly.

But it is important to understand that faith is different from belief. Belief in a higher power is an intellectual position. Faith requires trust. We use the term "leap of faith" because faith requires giving up control to something that cannot be seen or measured. Faith also demands comfort with the idea that the important things in life are not in one's personal control. That's why faith requires humility.

By sad coincidence I find myself on a path similar to yours. My beloved father is losing his health and has already lost his precious independence. This once robust and passionate man spends his days in his apartment under constant nursing supervision. I watch as he slowly loses his strength, vision, mental clarity and enjoyment of life.

As I am sure yours did, my emotions range from frustration to fear to impotence to guilt. But underneath these emotions is what feels like an aching, cavernous hole in the center of my chest that has no words. Is my faith intact? I can tell you with a combination of trust and hope that although I will soon be an orphan, I will not be alone.

I wish you wisdom, peace and companionship in this New Year.

This appeared in Dr. Gottlieb's column, "On Healing," The Philadelphia Inquirer, January 7, 2002. It is reprinted with his permission. ❖

Life, Faith, Understanding...

by Elizabeth Theokritoff

"Life, Faith, Understanding: A Discussion on Parish Life" was the subject of a day conference hosted by Assumption of the Virgin Mary Church in Clifton, NJ on September 29, 2001. The event was sponsored by the Education Department of our Diocese with the New Jersey District of the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America (F.O.C.A.), whose spiritual advisor, Fr. David Garretson, opened with some words of welcome; and one of its main aims was to get beyond a notion of Christian education as something meted out to children and perhaps classes of adults. While the day provided an opportunity to discover the wide variety of educational materials available - not just in the OCA, but also from the Greeks, Antiochians, and others - Education Department Chairman, Mary Ann Bulko, emphasized in her introduction the importance of prayer, worship, and liturgical life as ways of learning and growing in our faith.

Fr. Alexis Vinogradov, the first speaker, went to the heart of the matter when he challenged participants: What sort of Orthodox Christians are we producing? There is a difference between life in Christ and religion; and there is always a danger that what remains from a "Christian education" is not the life and love of Christ, but a devotion to rules as the paramount element in Christian life (Yes, concurs a voice from the floor, it comes from the fifth Gospel - the Gospel according to "YiaYia").

Giving poignant examples from his pastoral experience, Fr. Alexis showed graphically how the need to reach out to others on a human level in time of national crisis points up acute conflicts between rules and the law of love. Nor can we dismiss attitudes of self-righteous exclusivity as simply a misunderstanding of all one has been taught. It may not be unrelated to the problematic notion that we should be creating "members in good standing" - despite the fact that each of us, before the Chalice, confesses himself the first among sinners.

In contrast, Fr. Alexis presented images of a Christian formation that ultimately defies packaging into methods and programs. It is about meeting Christ; about constantly bearing witness to that meeting; about teaching with love, whether or not the subject is "religious"; about receiving people with joy, as ones sent by God, and at the same time leaving them space for their own encounter with God; about refraining from any sort of coercion in the name of other's best interests. But above all, Christian education is the Christian him or herself; not only the saint, but all of us who, like the "some [who] doubted" (Mt 28:17), have been found worthy with all our imperfections and doubts to go forth and preach. Fr. Alexis's talk provoked animated and serious discussion which could have continued far beyond the time available - and no doubt will.

In the afternoon session, Dr. Connie Tarasar introduced the new "Focus Curriculum," available on the OCA website. Divided into "levels" designed to provide something for everyone, from toddlers to grandparents, the curriculum aims to encourage whole families and whole parishes to be involved in educational activities; we were told that at least one parish had experimented with an "educational day" once a year. The curriculum makes a great effort to integrate liturgy and worship with all aspects of our lives as Christians and members of the Church, and to provide texts and explanatory material which people might otherwise not have at their finger tips.

The Conference enjoyed generous hospitality provided by parishioners of the Assumption Church; the Rector was unfortunately unable to be present, but in his absence Fr. George Hasenecz came to celebrate Vespers to conclude the event. The impressive attendance (some 70 people), the exchanges of ideas and experiences and the quality of discussion generated all suggest that the Conference met real needs. One disappointment was that despite the efforts of the organizers, participation from outside the OCA and FOCA constituencies was very limited. But it is to be hoped that the Diocesan Education Department will continue to sponsor activities, and may in time meet with a stronger pan-Orthodox response. ❖

*What sort of
Orthodox
Christians
are we
producing?*

The Sacraments of Entry: Baptism, Chrismation, and the Eucharist

by Fr. John Shimchick

Each Baptism provides an opportunity not just to witness an event taking place in the life of some other person or family, but to rediscover some very important things about one's own Baptism and about the Christian life. First, one learns what Baptism is not. It is not about magic. It is not a kind of insurance policy. ("I don't really understand or believe in it, but I better have my child baptized because something might happen.") It is not an entrance ritual required for membership in a club or organization.

If it is not these things, then what is it? Here a short story might help. There was an English sailor who yearned to discover the island of his dreams. Finally, after leaving England, having all sorts of adventures and travelling for years, he eventually did find that island which fulfilled all his desires - only to learn that, in fact, he had only re-discovered England. Baptism is something like that. It is the gift, given to us in the Church through the power of the Holy Spirit, of uniting our life with that of Jesus Christ. The Tradition of the Orthodox Church confirms that the older we get and the more we experience and grow in our spiritual understanding, the more we will discover (or "re-discover") the gift given to us when we first started, when we were baptized. Two saints, Kallistos and Ignatios, put it this way: "The aim of the Christian life is to return to that perfect grace of the Holy and Life-giving Spirit, which was given to us from the beginning in divine baptism." The poet T.S. Eliot, perhaps in a different context, nevertheless said the same thing: "We shall not cease from exploration / And the end of all our exploring / Will be to arrive where we started / And to know the place for the first time." Every baptism one attends marks both the beginning of this journey in the one being baptized and the possibility of re-discovery for those already baptized.

Although it might not seem apparent, movement is a key element in the sacrament. The first movement would be the change required in a person's life style. Our present form merges into about 45 minutes what would have taken considerable more time in the early church. Then, most people

being baptized were adults who would spend up to 3 years preparing as catechumens to be baptized. They would be required, in many cases, to make dramatic changes in the paths that their lives were taking. The service still begins in the back of the church with the theme that the one to be baptized is being received or *enrolled* with the official liturgical name of "*catechumen*," as one preparing to be baptized.

Next, four prayers of *Exorcism* are read. These prayers assume a particular view of the world. They affirm that despite the coming, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ - the world is still a place of sinfulness, distortion, and evil, effecting even the most beautiful and innocent newborn. The Prince of this world is still the devil. As part of this movement, one is required to turn, face the direction opposite the altar and (or the sponsor, speaking for the child, does this) "renounce Satan, and all his works, and all his angels, and all his service and all his pride." After this is done several times, the person turns toward the altar and pledges the desire to be "united to Christ." *The Creed* is read and the person to be baptized with the sponsors moves to the center of the church.

At this time a censuring of the Baptismal water is done and the person or sponsor is given a lighted candle. *The Great Litany*, petitions which ask for God blessings upon the world, the one to be baptized, and particularly the baptismal water, and the *Prayers for the Blessing of the Baptismal Water* are then offered. Following this, the child/person is anointed with oil, reminding us of God's reconciliation with Noah as represented by the olive branch brought back by the dove and of His strength. The child is *immersed in the baptismal water 3 times*. While the child is being dried and dressed, Psalm 32 is sung, upon which the child is then dressed in the baptismal ("christening") gown. At this time the sacrament of *Holy Chrismation* (known as "confirmation" in other Christian churches) is administered. The child is anointed with Holy Chrism (a form of specially consecrated oil) on the forehead, eyes, ears, hands, and feet.

In Memoriam: Fr. Alexander Warnecke

by Fr. Alexander Garklavs

Jacob's Well
Spring/Summer 2002

July 1, the Feast of SS Cosmas and Damian, will mark the first year anniversary of Fr. Alexander Warnecke's falling asleep in the Lord. There is no question that his impact on the OCA and on the Diocese of New York and New Jersey was monumental. While it may be too early to attempt a full assessment of his life, we would like to offer a few reflections and recollections about the extraordinary man.

Fr. Alexander was a gifted man, intelligent, with broad interests, and a remarkable sense of confidence. He was a genuine leader. While most of us are prone to more talk than action, he was a person who got things done. He was not afraid of making difficult and unpopular decisions. A man for whom the adjective "great" could be ascribed, he was respected from fear as much as from love. His accomplishments are almost legendary. There have been few, if any, priests in the history of the OCA, who have done as much in terms of institutional development (for example, St. Andrew's Camp, St. Andrew's School, SS. Cosmas and Damian Adult Home) or who had a greater scope of involvement (parish ministry, youth worker, seminary trustee, diocesan administration, pension board leader, adult home executive, etc.). Many people have benefited from these accomplishments, but we can also profit from coming to an understanding of the man.

Fr. Alexander was of member of the "greatest generation." He was blessed with good parents and a good upbringing. During World War II he served in Europe in the US Air Force and, with his knowledge of Russian, became a translator in the Intelligence Department in the Office of Military Government. After the war he enrolled at St. Vladimir's Seminary and Columbia University. He graduated, but in a sense he never left the seminary. He was immensely affected by the education he

received and especially by the Dean, Fr. Georges Florovsky. (I recall serving a Presanctified Liturgy with Fr. Alexander and questioning him about a certain liturgical point. He replied that "this is the way Fr. Florovsky did it and this is the way I do it.") He was ordained priest in 1950 and for a short while worked as Fr. Florovsky's assistant. Later he would be instrumental in the seminary's relocation to Crestwood. He was a member of the seminary's Finance Committee, chairman of the Buildings and Grounds Committee, and Corporate Secretary of the Board of Trustees. His devotion to St. Vladimir's was not just an emotional attachment of a faithful alumnus. He believed that the seminary had given him a profound theological vision of Orthodox Christianity. As a student of Fr. Florovsky, and working together with seminary Deans, Frs. Schmemmann, Meyendorff and Hopko, Fr. Alexander contributed much of his time, talent and financial support to make St. Vladimir's Seminary a major influence in shaping the character of American Orthodoxy.



In 1951 Fr. Alexander was assigned Pastor of SS. Peter and Paul Church, Syracuse, NY. He would remain there for the rest of his life. After but a few years in Syracuse he was instrumental in getting the entire church painted in a traditional Russian style by the famous iconographer Pimen Sofronov. The visual beauty of the church reflected the vibrant parish life that Fr. Alexander was responsible for creating. A unique person in many ways, he would develop a unique pastoral style, difficult to describe and impossible to imitate.

But he did possess two qualities that are fundamental for pastors. He loved the Church and he loved people. His love for the Church was unwavering and uncompromising. As pastor he was faithful to Orthodox liturgical tradition (including attention to facets like the church choir and altar servers) and had a conservative but balanced sense

about how liturgical life could be adjusted for contemporary use.

He also had an appreciation for the social dimensions of parish life. Fr. Alexander genuinely liked people, whether they were young or old, sick or healthy, rich or poor. He worked especially hard in fostering creative programs that would expose young people to religious principles and Orthodox tradition. For youth work he spared no expense of time or money. His encouragement and nurturing of youth workers continued until his very last days. St. Andrew's Camp, which Fr. Alexander was instrumental in founding in 1960, has produced hundreds of grateful alumni, many of whom are now active in the Church in various capacities. He did not overlook the needs of older people and was the driving force that made SS. Cosmas and Damian Adult Home in Staten Island, NY a reality.

Fr. Alexander was very much a "people person," with a jovial way about him and a quick wit. Spending time with him, especially over a casual meal, you could not fail to appreciate his fascinating and engaging personality. He knew many Russian and Slavic aphorisms and could always think of an appropriate quote.

For members of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey, Fr. Alexander was a force to reckon with. During the many years of his tenure as Chancellor of the Diocese, his influence and direction were felt everywhere. Working together with ruling Diocesan hierarchs, and for the last twenty years or so with Archbishop Peter, Fr. Alexander had a comprehensive understanding about diocesan life. Astutely instinctive, he was a person of boundless energy and enthusiasm, who used his talents in efficient and creative ways. There was something truly evangelical about him. He was instrumental in several mission projects and was always open to fresh ideas in matters of outreach. For years he traveled once a week from Syracuse to the Metropolitan area for Diocesan business. Even during the last few years, when declining health began to take a toll on him, he kept moving, traveling, attending meetings, not standing still for too long. He was not always easy to work with, but he would get results from people. Depending on the occasion he could inspire, compliment, cajole, disagree or discipline. If he criticized you he did so to your face and not behind your back. Fr. Alexander asked a lot from others, but was willing to roll up his sleeves to get

work done and never gave less than 100% to a project that he was involved in. He had the ability to overlook his personal feelings in working for the larger good and could come to a sense of compromise and cooperation when necessary.

The priesthood is a calling to a life of sacrifice, one way or another. There may have been a "golden age of theology" but for pastors it has always been the "time of the Cross." Today's Orthodox pastor is a strange phenomenon: held to a double standard by his flock, always concerned about the spiritual and physical welfare of the parish community, challenged by temptations and loss of confidence, fighting the influences of secularism and materialism, all this and addressing the needs and concerns of his own family. He must be traditional but also contemporary, firm and yet merciful, loyal and obedient but creative and imaginative, all at the same time.

This is the background on which Fr. Alexander Warnecke's life and work has to be considered. In a half-joking way Fr. Alexander often used to say, "It's hard to be humble." In fact, this is a profound truth. It is hard to be humble today, but it is an essential pastoral quality. Arrogance is the pervasive characteristic of our times and all good Christians struggle mightily against it. Perhaps it was not obvious to all, but Fr. Alexander struggled to maintain humility by never-ceasing to fulfill what he believed was his God-given vocation. He was a tireless worker and thoroughly committed to making the light of Orthodox Christianity shine as brightly as possible in the place and time where he lived. Following the lesson of the parable of the talents, he did not bury his gifts but used and developed them, fulfilling God's word and will. "As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who utters oracles of God; whoever renders service, as one who renders it by the strength which God supplies; in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 4.11).

The faithful steward of God, the Protospesbyter Alexander, has gone now to his eternal reward. May Our Lord Jesus Christ remember him in His heavenly Kingdom and may He enable us also to recall Fr. Alexander's many great virtues, and adopt and use them for the glory of His holy Orthodox Church. ❖

Seminarian Christmas Project

The need to aid married seminarian students was brought to the attention of the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America's (F.O.C.A.) executive board in 1996. Since that year, each child of a married seminarian receives \$50.00 from the Fellowship at Christmas. This past summer the need to further this appeal was brought to the attention of New Jersey District Michael Steffero. (An article written by seminarian Joshua Frigerio appeared in the OCJ last summer expressing a need for parishes to adopt seminarians for the scholastic year). After making contact with Joshua Frigerio and Father Martin Krause, the married student liaisons from St. Tikhon's and St. Vladimir's seminaries respectively, an "Adopt a Seminarian Christmas Project" was initiated by the New Jersey District F.O.C.A.



Wish lists were drafted by each family and were matched with 19 different chapters and parishes from the New Jersey District F.O.C.A. and the New York/New Jersey Deaneries. In total, 27 families with 45 children were "adopted" and St. Nicholas filled their wishes!

Several parishes put up a "giving tree" where each ornament had a gift or monetary amount on it. Parishioners were asked to take an ornament and purchase the item needed. "Our tree was put up before Liturgy and by the end of coffee hour all of our ornaments were gone!" Laura Johnson of SS Peter & Paul Church, Jersey City added: "We had such an overwhelming response that we took on an additional family."

Many parishes felt that this project benefited the parish as well as the seminarian students. Marge Kovach of SS Peter and Paul Church, Bayonne, NJ stated: "I know that many parishes have adopted needy families in their communities before, but extending yourself for fellow Orthodox Christians, especially those who have given up a great deal to attend the seminary, made it an extra special project. I truly experienced the meaning and just how good it feels."

The gifts were collected and distributed at the seminaries during the week of December 11th. The students and their families were overwhelmed by the generosity of the parishes. Words cannot describe the expressions of gratitude on the students' faces. Many were brought to tears by the outpouring of gifts from the parishes. Each family had a

"pile" that overflowed a table. The children were so excited to receive gifts and were reluctant to wait until Christmas to open them, but honored their parents' wishes in waiting. Many of the students and their families have started to visit the local parishes that have adopted them, thus furthering the bond between the parishes and students.

In addition to the Christmas project, several parishes have adopted their families for the entire scholastic year. Through coffee hour proceeds and donations they send monthly assistance to the families.

The chairperson, Allison Steffaro said, "This was the most personally rewarding project for me to chair. It enabled me to experience the true meaning of Christmas charity and to witness the generosity of our fellow Orthodox Christians. If we take the time to look at our lives, we see that we are truly blessed with many gifts from God that are not material. This project has shown that we (as Orthodox Christians) can give so much to others if we just take a moment to do so."

For more information of the "Adopt a Seminarian" Project contact Michael Steffaro at: michaelsteffaro@comcast.net ❖

Parishes which supported this project: (* indicates the parishes who have adopted families for the entire scholastic year)

SS. Peter & Paul, South River *
 SS. Peter & Paul, Jersey City *
 St. John the Baptist, Passaic *
 SS. Peter & Paul, Bayonne *
 Holy Spirit, Wantage
 Annunciation Church, Brick
 St. Gregory Palamas, Glen Gardner
 Church of the Holy Cross, Medford
 Holy Transfiguration Chapel, Princeton
 Holy Trinity Church, Randolph
 Church of the Holy Transfiguration, Pearl River
 St. John the Baptist, Singac (Patriarchal)
 St. John the Baptist, Campbell, Ohio *

Orthodoxy and Democracy: A Conference in New York

by Elizabeth Theokritoff

The events of September 11, as a conference participant commented, show the significance of religion on the world stage; and the global dimensions of the Orthodox Church make it potentially an important player. With this in mind, the conference on Orthodoxy and Democracy: Challenges after the Cold War (October 26-27, 2001), sponsored jointly by the Harriman Institute at Columbia University, Union Theological College, and the Dawson Institute for Church-State Studies at Baylor University, could hardly have been more topical.

The keynote speaker was Bishop Kallistos (Ware) of Diocleia; other speakers included: Fr. John McGuckin (Union Theological), Nikolas Gvosdev (Baylor University), Elizabeth Prodromou (Boston University), Aristotle Papanikolaou (Fordham University), and Paul Valliere (Butler University, Indiana). The discussion ranged widely over many aspects of church life and the lives of particular local Churches; it also frequently suffered from a lack of definition of "democracy."

As Bishop Kallistos stressed at the outset, Orthodoxy and democracy cannot be placed on the same level: the Church is in the world, but is not a merely worldly reality (a fact that was occasionally lost sight of later, notably in discussion of the disgraceful ecclesiastical mess in contemporary Ukraine). Like subsequent speakers, the Bishop saw "common ground" between Orthodoxy and democracy in the synodical structure of the Church and the notion of sobornost - though it was pointed out more than once that this is not always very evident in practice. Bishop Kallistos identified rediscovery of the "theology of the laity" as the greatest challenge to Orthodox living in democracies; he also underlined the two-way relationship which should exist between hierarchy and people, quoting St. Innocent's consecration speech in which he characterized the Bishop as both teacher and disciple of his flock.

Several speakers were sharply critical of the ignorant, but influential voices that characterize Orthodoxy as fundamentally incompatible with

democracy (the latter being assumed a priori as the yardstick by which any other belief or ideology is to be judged). It was also pointed out that educated people in traditionally Orthodox countries often see their own culture through Western lenses and risk accepting such evaluations uncritically.

Fr. John McGuckin offered a highly pertinent and cogent account of Byzantine political thought, showing its deep Old Testament roots and describing the Byzantine system as a "profoundly conditional autocracy" - i.e. conditional on the king's faithfulness to Christ and observance of the law of the Gospel in dealing with his subjects. He suggested that *symphonia* - a "harmony between the Church and civil authority" - was a model with much to offer the emergent democracies of Eastern Europe.

The continuing value of such a model was also discussed by Aristotle Papanikolaou, who contrasted the views on the subject of two contemporary American Orthodox ethicists, Fr. Stanley Harakas and Vigen Guroian. He himself argued that a different model - Church-state separation - was one the Church could live with, and did not necessarily mean "privatization" of religion. This point was supported by Elizabeth Prodromou's presentation, which underlined a growing recognition that "modernity" does not automatically entail secularization; it comes in various different forms. Furthermore, the role of religion in various emerging democracies will be different; Roman Catholic and Protestant models need not be normative. She underlined the danger of Orthodox thinkers being lulled into passivity by accepting that the trend towards secularization and "private religion" is inexorable and inevitable.

There was a recognition that the Church poses challenges to democracy, as well as vice versa. The Orthodox stress on the common good could serve as a valuable corrective to a democracy which has become "a system for shielding the rich from the effects of democracy"; the notion of persons in relationship comes as an antidote to the emphasis on the isolated individual.

In the recent history of the Russian Church, presented by Nikolas Gvosdev, we see an example of a Church considering seriously what it should contribute to the emerging democracy in its country. He cited its efforts to inculcate a sense of personal responsibility and to encourage responsible involvement in public affairs; and also its affirmation that the Church has no basic preference for any particular political or economic order. Like other speakers, he was clear that the Church can certainly accept a democratic political system, but cannot endorse the relativism which often accompanies democracy in its modern form: the Church affirms certain basic values which cannot be overturned by a majority vote.

The discussion during these two days was clearly of the sort that is not the last word on the subject, but may be the first. It challenges both the Church as body and the Orthodox Christian citizen to give serious and prayerful thought to our responsibilities within a new social and political structure - one sufficiently unlike anything the Church has experienced hitherto to limit the usefulness of historical comparisons.

[Conferences and lectures relating to Orthodoxy are organized periodically by the Harriman Institute. For information, or to be placed on the mailing list, please contact: Gordon N. Bardos - 212-854-8487 email: gnb12@columbia.edu] ❖

Our Man in Trenton

by Archpriest Thomas Edwards

Bright and early on the morning of January 7, 2002 some members of Holy Apostles Church in Saddle Brook, NJ and Holy Assumption Church in Clifton, NJ boarded a bus that took them to the State House in Trenton. The occasion was the swearing in of the new members of the 102nd New Jersey State Assembly.

The Holy Apostles and Holy Assumption parishioners were among the forty invited guests of New Jersey State Assemblyman, the honorable Peter Eagler, Subdeacon and Junior Warden of Holy Apostles Church. Assemblyman Eagler had won a decisive victory over a 15 year incumbent. His victory in the November 2001 election was all the more remarkable given that he did not compromise his sanctity of life position which some nay-sayers had predicted would work against him. Assemblyman Eagler won because of his record, his genuine concern for people, and his proven patriotism and religious faith.

A lifelong resident of Clifton, NJ, Peter Eagler, had from his early years a keen interest in both the Church and the political process. He has been a long time member of the Clifton City Council and for the last several years has been elected to the Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholders where he presently serves as Freeholder Director (for the second time) and, as such, is the highest ranking official of the Passaic County government.



*L-R: Seated - Matushka Mary Shafiran, Matushka Evelyn Edwards, Barbara Kluck
Standing - Fr. Paul Shafiran, Frank Zizik, Mary Zizik, Assemblyman Peter Eagler, Subdeacon Benjamin Kalemba, Fr. Thomas Edwards, Subdeacon Peter Salierno, and Walter Kluck*

For the last twenty-five years he has been employed by the Garden State Parkway Authority. He became a well-known figure in the New Jersey religious and ethnic communities during his tenure as Director of the Garden State Arts Center Ethnic Festivals. If ever an individual was eminently qualified for a particular position, Peter Eagler was without peer in his ability to work with such diverse groups as the Irish, Polish, Jewish, Slovak, and many other ethnic, racial, and religious groups. Being himself of mixed pan Slavic-Hungarian ancestry, Peter is

familiar with everyone's language and religion as well as their traditions, foods, dances, etc.

Peter's ability to work with the African-American community is well known through the state and he is so much admired by New Jersey's black population that he usually receives more of the "black vote" than the Afro-American candidate. Peter is a highly respected speaker in the "black churches" where he is welcomed with open arms as a sincere and committed Christian who transcends racial and ethnic divisions.

Born into a family of strong Roman/Greek Catholic Faith and active as a youngster in the life of his parochial school and parish church, he has felt equally at home in the Roman/Greek Catholic and Orthodox Churches. In the mid 1970's while in college, Peter began attending Holy Apostles parish, which in those days was conducting divine services in a Veterans' hall in Garfield, NJ. From day one of his reception into the Orthodox Church, he became a "parish leader" by his example of hard work, dedication, and extraordinary service not only to his parish, but other institutions within the Diocese of NY and NJ and the Orthodox Church in America.

He was an early and longtime supporter of the New Skete communities and was something of the late Bishop Basil's (Rodzianko) right hand man with the Holy Archangels Broadcasting Center of Washington, D.C. He was tonsured a reader and then a subdeacon by Archbishop Peter and is often called upon to serve the Church in this capacity. In addition to his parish council work, he has organized a variety of parish fund-raising and social pro-

grams. He is active in many parish works of mercy and is a leader in visiting the sick and shut-ins, bringing them a variety of homemade goodies, flowers, icons, and other reminders that they are not forgotten.

In addition to this Orthodox Church activities, Peter is well-respected and greatly admired within the Jewish and Moslem communities. While not compromising his own strong Orthodox Faith, he is supportive of the works of mercy and charity undertaken within not only churches, but also synagogues and mosques (Paterson, NJ has twenty-five mosques). With the recent tragic events in our country, Assemblyman Peter Eagler's election to the State Assembly is perhaps providential given his strong church ties and ability to work so well with the Muslim communities. While it is the responsibility of our President and Government to fight the war on terror and provide for our homeland security, it falls to someone like Peter Eagler to work for peace on the grassroots level.

Because of the tremendous responsibilities that he now carries, special prayers and a blessing were extended to him at the end of the Divine Liturgy on the Sunday following his swearing-in at the State House in Trenton. But even before this, prayers were said for him during a luncheon held at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Church in Trenton. Through the generosity of Fr. Paul and Matushka Mary Shafran, Peter's family and friends gathered at the Trenton Church and Daria Hall to celebrate the joy that a good and righteous Orthodox Christian is now "our man in Trenton." ❖

Bishop Kallistos in Princeton



Bishop Kallistos with members of the Princeton OCF

Bishop Kallistos Ware delivered the Florovsky Memorial Lecture on Tuesday, April 16 at Princeton University Chapel. His presentation, "Orthodoxy and Western Christianity in the 21st Century," emphasized the need for the development of a new Orthodox/Christian anthropology, based not on the individual self but on the relationship of love as expressed in and by the Trinity, in order to face the social, political, and environmental challenges of the new century. ❖

Helping to Meet the Needs of the Orthodox Chapel at West Point

by Archpriest Thomas Edwards

Iconographer Maria Tarassoff, upon learning of the need for new icons at the Orthodox Chapel at West Point, donated an icon of Christ in Gethsemane to St. Martin of Tours chapel at the U.S. Military Academy. Maria had painted the original of this icon for her own parish church of Holy Trinity, Randolph, NJ.

During a West Point vacation time, this icon was blessed by the Orthodox Chaplain Fr. Joseph Frawley, following the Divine Liturgy at Holy Apostles Church, Saddle Brook, NJ. The icon blessing was done at Holy Apostles because several parishioners had donated toward the appropriate framing of this and other icons to be donated by Maria Tarassoff.



L-R: Dr. Peter Tarassoff, Iconographer Maria Tarassoff, Christopher Tarassoff, Fr. Joseph Frawley, Subdeacon Monroe Causley, Sonia Armentani, and Subdeacon Peter Salierno.

Last fall Subdeacon Peter Eagler and Mary Zizik combined their concerns and efforts in working with Fr. Frawley on preparing new coverings for the alter, oblation table, and tetrapod in time for the chapel feast day of St. Martin of Tours that was celebrated on November 11, in conjunction with the fortieth anniversary of the Orthodox presence at West Point. Subdeacons Monroe Causley (Holy Trinity Church in Randolph, NJ) and Peter Salierno (Holy Apostles Church, Saddle Brook) assisted for the chapel feast. Following

the Divine Liturgy all participants were invited to a festive brunch at West Point's famed Thayer Hotel, the guests of Major Douglas Matty, himself an Orthodox Christian and member of the Orthodox community there.

Twenty-six visitors from SS Peter and Paul Church in South River came for the liturgy of April 7, 2002. They had donated purple lenten covers for the alter, oblation table, and tetrapod. Fr. Joseph Frawley noted that, "the choir, augmented by many more voices than usual, never sounded better. That morning's Liturgy was especially uplifting and joyous."

After the Liturgy, the guests were taken to the Mess Hall for brunch and to see how the cadets are fed. Then Maj. Douglas Matty (from PA) gave the group a mini-tour of the campus, pointing out various monuments and the cadet barracks. Maj. Matty who is an instructor in Mathematics at the Academy, will be leaving the community this year for another assignment.

The following liturgical items are still needed:

Blue, Green and Red Alter covers

Priest vestments (in good condition) green, blue, red, white & gold

To contact Fr. Frawley for more information about donating items, please call (201) 342-7052. ❖

On Icons and Transfiguration

by Mary Ann Bulko

His Grace Kallistos (Ware), titular Bishop of Diokleia celebrated Divine Liturgy at Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, Randolph, N.J. on Sunday, October 28th with host pastor Fr. George Hasenecz. The community was doubly blessed to hear both a homily during the liturgy and an afternoon talk .

The homily was based on the scriptural reading (Luke 8:26-33) regarding the Gerasene demoniac and his encounter with Jesus Christ. Bp Kallistos defines the possessed man's pathetic state as one of isolation, loneliness, driven into the wilderness by the devil, cut off from friendship and love. The demoniac speaks to Jesus with a denial of relationship, a refusal of communion or personal contact. He wants nothing to do with the Lord or anyone else. "He is no longer a real human being but rather an 'un-person'. He is living in a foretaste of hell," said Bp Kallistos.

After Christ heals the man, He restores him to human relationship by telling him to go back to his home. Christ creates and restores relationships while the devil destroys relationships. "If we are in the realm of Christ, then we are together with others; we are each a person in relationship. If we are in the realm of Satan, then we are alone and we refuse relationship," continued His Grace. "The gospel reading then draws our attention to an essential element in our human personhood. Loss of relationship means loss of personhood."

The center or heart of our Christian faith is the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. 'God is love,' says St. John. True love is not self-love but mutual love, shared love - an 'I' and 'thou' relationship. God is love - a love of three in one - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - from all eternity there is an unceasing movement of mutual love. The reciprocal love between the Father and the Son, and the Son and the Father, is sealed by the Holy Spirit.

Quoting contemporary theologian Metropolitan John Zizioulas of Pergamon, Bp

Kallistos said, "The Being of God is a relational Being. Without the concept of communion, it is scarcely possible to think about God." The doctrine of the Trinity teaches that God is relationship, communion, sharing, exchange, self-giving.

We, as human beings, are made in the image of Christ, but also in the image of the Trinity. We are called to reflect in ourselves the nature of the Trinity. We are to apply to ourselves all that we say about God. We are called to live in a relationship of 'I' and 'thou'. We cannot understand ourselves unless in terms of relationship and communion. "The doctrine of the Trinity is a way of saying there can be no true person unless there are two persons in communication with one another." The doctrine of the Trinity signifies..."I need you in order to be myself."



The demoniac in isolation was in extreme opposition to the Holy Trinity. Fr. Pavel Florensky, who died in a Russian prison camp under Stalin said, 'Between the Trinity and hell there lies no other choice.'

Either we love one another after the image of the Holy Trinity, or we shall be like the man possessed by demons. We shall have lost all joy and all meaning.

Bp Kallistos concluded the homily with these words - "May Christ heal all of us, heal us into mutual love, heal us into relationship, and make us transcripts of the Trinity."

He developed his afternoon lecture, "Holy Icons on the Transfiguration of the Word," around three questions: What do icons tell us about Christ? About ourselves and human nature? About God's creation and the world around us?

Utilizing the defining words of St. Stephen the New, an 8th century martyr, Bp Kallistos referred to an icon as a door, a means of entry into the heavenly kingdom, the communion of saints. We come face to face with Christ, with the Mother of God, with the Saints. They are made present to us and

us present to them - a two-way door. An icon then is a theology of presence. It transmits a divine grace to us and to those who pray with a sincerity of heart. It helps bring us to theosis, to deification, to life in God.

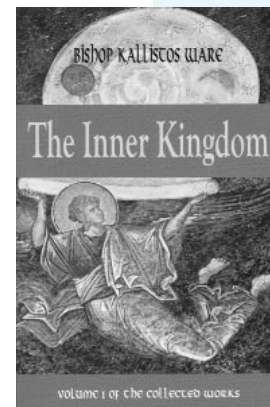
In a meticulously delivered narration by His Grace, he referred to John 1:14 - 'The Word became flesh.' Jesus Christ took "human soul, human feelings, human body," he said. Christ was totally involved in our human life, one of us, our brother. If it is possible to depict a human body, it is possible to depict Christ. You deny the fullness of the incarnation by denying icons. "Christ our God, our Creator, is also one of us..." continued Bp Kallistos, "it is this truth that the icons are concerned to defend." Christ is salvation made manifest...visible, audible, palpable. His salvation, by sharing in our human life is in order that we might share in divine life. "If involvement of Christ in our human life is impaired and undermined, that will impair and undermine the integrity of our salvation," said His Grace. And so, Holy Icons are central to Holy Tradition and protect the Christian doctrine of Incarnation and Salvation, the very essence of our Christian Faith.

In discussing the difference between human beings and animals, Bp Kallistos said, "The animals live in the world and they glorify God simply by being themselves." But animals do not create and make things by conscious and deliberate choice, rather by instinct. Humans consciously and by deliberate free choice can alter and fashion the world and offer it back to God. Although the world is in a sinful and fallen condition, "we have the power to endow the world with new joy, and wonder and glory - to transfigure...we also have the power to disfigure the world, to destroy and to pollute. So in both directions, we can do what the animals cannot do," said His Grace. We have made the rivers poisonous and the air foul. Made in the divine image, we can transfigure or as sinful persons, we can disfigure.

Bp Kallistos continued speaking about icons and man and the capacity for both to convey an element of joy and warmth. Regarding scientific inquiry and technology, if carried out in a Christian spirit, these too express our creative power given by God. The gifts we offer to God for the eucharist are not mere wheat and grapes, but rather these too are transfigured and transformed into bread and wine

by man's creative ability. In sharp contrast to Dostoyevsky's characterization of the anti-human, Bp Kallistos proposed that 'the best definition of a human being is a creature with two legs and a sense of gratitude.' "Only human beings can utter blessings. That is their distinctive privilege and marks them out from the other animals. The human animal is not so much a logical animal as a eucharistic animal," said His Grace.

Regarding Holy Icons and creation, Bp Kallistos referred back to Genesis. All that was made by God was not only good, but beautiful and full of His glory. Citing St. John of Damascus, iconoclasts underestimate the spirit-bearing potentialities of material things. God is not worshipped only through the mind and with words. Matter is used as well to glorify God. St. John's point is that Christians, in a sense, are only true materialists. God uses something material to bring about something spiritual - our salvation. "Nothing is contemptible that God has made." Living as we do in an era of ecological crisis, we need to reaffirm that all God made is good; that the whole world is a sacrament of divine presence. Through material things we can worship God and learn about Him. Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory!



"God is present in the icons and also in the Eucharist, but the manner of His presence is different," said Bp Kallistos. The Eucharist is the reality of Christ, His Body and Blood and can be worshipped. Icons are not to be worshipped but shown honor. They are a means of grace - matter used to manifest God's glory.

"And so icons safeguard our faith in the fullness of the Incarnation, our faith in the creativity of the human person made according to God's image, our faith in the intrinsic holiness of all material things. God is good - He is Goodness itself. God is true - He is Truth itself. God is beautiful - He is Beauty itself," concluded His Grace. Holy icons underline divine beauty. Beauty is attractive and draws us to itself. Beauty calls to us and draws us to itself. Icons show the attractiveness of God. They are our door to eternity. Icons help us understand the very Glory of God! ❖

The Road Back Home

By Nina Robinson

As I sat in the nave of the church surrounded by icons depicting the history of Christ, as they had for centuries, telling a story which is as breathtaking today as it has ever been, I felt a warmth and a strange sense of familiarity. It was not the intense, piercing eyes of the icons, expressing feelings beyond my scope of understanding, nor was it the olive coloring of their skin, more like mine, and unlike anything I had ever seen on any other religious representation. It was something else that made it feel like home to me but I couldn't put my finger on it.

I had been absent from church for many years and I was only in this one at the behest of my son and daughter-in-law. Effie and Damian married on June 2, 1996, after a long, long-distance courtship. They had met in Mykonos, Greece while Damian was on a short-term international assignment for his job with American Express Bank. It was Pascha and Effie took Damian with her to the midnight service. He loved it.

Damian had never been baptized but as his love for Effie grew, his desire to be baptized into Christ grew and on Palm Sunday, two months before their wedding, he became an Orthodox Christian. (I always tease Effie by telling her that it took Damian's traveling halfway around the world to find her and to find God.)

In July of 1996, Damian returned to the United States with his new bride. They had two priorities: to buy a home and to find an Orthodox Church to attend. Soon after they settled into their new home and church, they added the priority of gently introducing me to the church and to Orthodoxy.

I didn't attend church every Sunday but once in a while Damian or Effie would call and ask me to join them and I'd say, "Okay, if you want me to." I'd dread thinking about getting up early to go to church but I did it for them (or so I thought). So

there I was, a stranger in what seemed like such a familiar surrounding.

After a few months of these on-again, off-again, visits to church, Damian asked me when I was going to make a commitment to Orthodoxy? I was stunned. I didn't know what to answer. I had no idea that my attendance at church was leading to something more permanent in my son's mind. What was I to do?

Finally I answered, "What do you mean make a commitment? Are you saying you want me to become an Orthodox Christian?" Damian answered, "Yes, mom. It's what I've wanted since I found the true faith." Thinking that it couldn't hurt and it could only make Damian and Effie happy I said, "All right. I'll do it. I'll become Orthodox."

I thought it was for Damian and Effie but the second, the very second I said I'd do it, something happened to me and all of a sudden it was no longer for them. Suddenly, I couldn't wait for it to happen. I

couldn't wait to be baptized. I wanted it more than anything.

The next week I started catechism classes in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania with Damian's and Effie's spiritual father, Father Michael Varvarelis, who then became my spiritual father. And again, I had this sensation of familiarity. As I read the pages of the book and learned about Orthodoxy, I began to feel more and more like this was home for me. I still hadn't a clue as to why I felt this way but I was soon to find out.

To look at me, with my brown skin, one would never know that my mother (who is deceased) was Russian. She was born in Odessa, by the Black Sea, in 1912. She married my Black American father (who was a famous entertainer in Russia) and after a few years escaped to the United States, in 1939.



Effie, Nina, granddaughters Jade & Jordan, and daughter Lauren

After returning from the Soviet Union, my father had no proof of his American citizenship and the United States government had tried to deport him and my mother several times, which frightened my mother so much that she was afraid to speak her language around anyone or to practice her religion (Orthodoxy). My father died in 1945 and my mother raised my four sisters and me by herself in a land where few people around her spoke her language, where she, and people from her country, were considered the enemy, and where she had no family and few friends.

My mother was also afraid that if she raised her brown daughters to speak Russian, too much attention would come our way, so she didn't. And we didn't attend church (for the same reason). I didn't even know that we were Orthodox. But our customs were Orthodox. It was all my mother

knew so it is what we grew up knowing. Our Christmas and Easter were always different than that of the other kids we grew up around but I didn't know that had anything to do with Orthodoxy, I thought that had to do with my mother being Russian. In fact, I didn't even know what Orthodoxy was...not until I had lived half a century, not until Damian met Effie. Now that I am baptized into Christ and have put on Christ, I can understand why it all feels like home to me...because it is what I have always known. And I am truly blessed. Sinner that I am, I thank God every day of my life that He has loved me enough to bring me back to the path of righteousness, as often as I have fallen from it, and that He has led me back home.

[Nina Robinson attends Mother of God, Joy of All Who Sorrow Mission, Rocky Hill, NJ.] ❖

A Moslem Woman's Prayer for America

[Note: Sponsored by the Russian Gift of Life, Deshi Edisheva and her son, Ayub, Moslems from the Russian Republic of Chechnya, stayed with parishoners from Our Lady of Kazan Church in Sea Cliff and the Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross in Medford, NJ during the summer of 2000, while Ayub underwent heart surgery in Philadelphia. This fax sent from the city of Nalchik - in the Kabardino-Bakkovia Republic of southern Russian, was received and translated by Fr. Leonid and Mimi Kishkovsky. Deshi and Ayub returned to the United States this Spring for additional testing.]

From: Deshi Edisheva
To: the Russian Gift of Life
15 September 2001

My dear and esteemed - Father Leonid, Mimi, Zhenya and Alexander Alexandrovich, Natasha Lusin, Volodya and Valya Kowalenko, Diana, Rachel, Jessica, Svetlana, Father John, Anna Novitzky, Larisa, Joseph, Helen, Warren - and in your persons, all Americans, accept sincere condolences from our family for all those whose life was tragically cut short in this monstrous catastrophe.

Believe me, we share very deeply your pain, because for believers (no matter what religion they confess) there is no such thing as pain that is foreign. You know that you and your country, America, mean a great deal to me. Because, thanks to your efforts, your generosity of soul, your prayers -with God's help the doctors gave Ayub the gift of a second life.

I came to love all of you, and remember you forever!

During these difficult days for America I grieve as you do for the innocent victims who have been killed, I feel your pain and share it with you. I weep with you, I am with you, I pray for you. And, believe me, if my life had been required to prevent this tragedy - I would have been ready to give up my life without hesitation!

I very much hope and very much want, and always ask God that all of you may be safe and sound.

We kiss you and embrace you!
Ayub, Islam, Deshi (*Islam is the name of Deshi's other son*) ❖



Ayub

Honoring our Heroes: Benefit Concert by the Spirit of Orthodoxy Choir

by Doreen Bartholomew

On Sunday, January 20, 2002, almost 200 people filled the Holy Virgin Protection Cathedral in New York City for a benefit concert for the families of firefighters from nearby fire stations who lost their lives in the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center.



His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius, as well as Protospesbyter Robert Kondratich, and many diocesan and local clergy attended the concert by *The Spirit of Orthodoxy Choir*.

Anticipating that the audience for this concert might be largely non-Orthodox and unfamiliar with Orthodox musical traditions, the choir presented a wide variety of compositions reflecting the spiritual range and styles of Orthodox liturgical life. An audience of several hundred listeners, including, in the front row, a group of NYC Firefighters, attended the concert. The Cathedral hosted a reception afterward in its hall.

The concert was a highly emotional event for both the choir and the audience, especially when Fr. Christopher Calin, Dean of the Cathedral, read the names of the deceased firefighters and a bell tolled for each name, 23 in all. As if to highlight the fact that a firefighter's job means being on duty twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, the firefighters' walkie-talkies came alive often, forcing those in attendance to leave and do a job that most people wouldn't want to do and reminding us that they are always on the job, no matter what the circumstances.



The benefit raised approximately \$6,000 with additional funds given by the Orthodox Order Knights Hospitaller, represented by Count Nicholas Bobrinsky. ❖

Orthodox Victims of 9/11 Attack Remembered



Evgeniy Kniazev

One of the casualties of the World Trade Center bombings was an Orthodox man, Evgeniy Kniazev. In a speech delivered last fall at the Russian Embassy in Washington, D.C., Russian President Vladimir Putin stated that Mr. Kniazev, born in Russia but living in the United States with his wife, was considered to have saved about 70 people before he perished when the building he was in collapsed.

Though his remains have not been found, a mutual friend asked Fr. Boris Slootsky, pastor of the Church of the Mother of God in Mays Landing, to serve a funeral service. Fr. Boris, in remembrance of Mr. Kniazev, also built a container for Holy Water (seen to the right side of the picture) for use in the Mother of God parish.



Another victim of the Trade Center Bombing was Abraham Allen Bodarenko, whose mother, Mary, is a very active parishoner at the Transfiguration Cathedral of our Lord in Brooklyn. ❖

Church Music Improves in East Meadow

by Doreen Bartholomew

Jacob's Well
Spring/Summer 2002

I said to Fr. Alexander Garclavs that I thought the quickest way to improve the overall quality our choirs was to teach the choir members to read music. He agreed, and on September 29, 2001, Holy Trinity Church in East Meadow, New York, hosted a workshop that did just that. Reading Notes and Reproducing Intervals was led by David Drillock, professor of music at St. Vladimir's Seminary in Crestwood, New York. We could not have picked a better leader for this workshop. His knowledge of the subject was obvious and his wonderful sense of humor made it fun, putting everyone at ease even when called on to sing alone.

Realizing how important it is for our church musicians to have the skills needed to complement their ability, we decided the goal of the workshop should be to give choir members the basic musical tools they need for a better technical understanding of the music they were singing. I think we succeeded because as Professor Drillock was explaining the basic musical concepts, I could hear people saying things like "Oh, so that's what that means!"

The first half of the workshop consisted of basic music theory such as note values, key signatures, time signatures and rhythm. Professor Drillock started out by showing the treble and bass clefs and explaining how to understand time signatures and count note values based on those time signatures. The students then began to practice elementary

rhythmic patterns, which got progressively difficult as they went along. He then explained about the different keys and their relationship to one another and to the C-major scale, showing how the sharp, flat and natural signs change the sound of a scale.

The second half of the workshop was devoted to learning intervals and putting the students' new-found knowledge to work by sight singing various pieces of music. He explained that the words we sing have a natural rhythm of their own and, before we start a piece of music, we need to read it over to determine the stressed and unstressed words. If we do this, he said, our singing will make more sense to us and to the people listening. By using the Cherubic Hymn words "Let us who mystically represent the cherubim" as an example, he stressed the need to be thinking about the word "mystically" and to move the music towards that word, not lingering on the first words "Let us." If we do not de-emphasize these words, we tend to end up singing about a green, leafy vegetable called Lettuce. I'm sure none of us ever thought of it like that.

The workshop ended with a review of the materials presented and a big round of applause for Professor Drillock. I think the people attending had a fun time, as well as learning a great deal about basic music theory, and it is my hope that this kind of workshop will be repeated in the future. ❖

The Art of Singing

by Doreen Bartholomew

On March 30, 2002 the parish of Saint John the Theologian in Shirley, New York with support from our Diocesan Liturgical Music Department hosted a workshop called The Art of Singing. The workshop was led by Sharmila Daniel, a professional singer who is currently working on her M.A. in vocal performance. Among Ms. Daniel's other accomplishments, she was a guest artist with the Harlem Opera and a performer at the Music Festival of the Hamptons.

The workshop's goal was to provide basic voice instruction to choir members, which included breath support and vowel pronunciation. The day began with basic scales and other warm-up exercises, which led into the physical aspects of producing a good vocal sound. After lunch Ms. Daniel gave individual instruction to each participant and the day concluded with some choral work. By the end of the workshop, many of the participants had a noticeably improved vocal quality and, even more important, they were more confident about their singing abilities. Fr. Jonathan Ivanoff, rector of the parish, said: "It was heartening and very edifying to see the workshop participants respond to the vocal training in the way they did. I think many of them may even have discovered that, in a way, liturgical singing can be not only beautiful and God-pleasing, but even fun and enjoyable in ways they did not perceive before." ❖

**Meditation on
United Airlines Flight 93**

(crashed near Pittsburgh, September 11, 2001,
presumably from passenger resistance to hijackers)

By Richard Dauenhauer

- in grief for and in prayerful memory of all who
died in the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001

*We shall all be changed, in a moment, in the
twinkling of an eye. . . . The dead will be
raised imperishable and we shall be changed . . .
and this mortal nature must put on immortality.*

-1 Cor. 16:51-53

Of that day and hour no one knows.

-Matt. 24:36; Mk. 13:32

We pray these litanies, so often without
really thinking, knowing what they mean:
"Let us commend ourselves and each other
and all our life unto Christ our God,"

"A Christian ending to our life: painless,
blameless, and peaceful, and a good defense
before the dread judgement seat of Christ
let us ask of the Lord." I ask myself,

"How do I want to die?" How many times
has each of us reflected on our end?
To die in sleep? Or suffer long, lingering
death? Or just a few conscious minutes to

reflect, take action? If unaware, let God
sort it out, weigh moments of our life
spent in prayer or contemplation, struggling
with sin, or falling, falling, falling far

from God, distancing ourselves by choice?
If opportunity for action, how
would each of us respond? Because we fail
so frequently, we pray, "Don't test me, Lord!

"Don't temper my belief with choice." Some rise,
when facing terror, take command, and die.

-September 14, 2001, Elevation of the Cross ❖

Great Lent, April 2002

*By a member of the
Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross, Medford, NJ*

"Nothing is so beautiful as Spring - "
begins the poet-priest Hopkins in May of 1877,
still in the loveliness of Wales, before
being sent to the grey landscapes of the cities.

I, too, saw Spring again this morning -
The trees in their bridal array
The lime green of the new leaves
Clarity of blue sky, sweetness of the air -
How is it possible, year after year?

And how is it possible that in this new Spring
in so many places across the world
There is only fear and death, and the terror of war?
No beauty, no stillness, no peace -
only noise and carnage, and the killing and destruction
of the families of mankind.

When did it begin? With Cain?
When will it end? At the Judgment?
When will man learn that arrogance of power,
Greed, and hatred have brought centuries of war,
Persecution, and genocide - breeding over and over
only more of the same?

In these war-filled times, Almighty God,
We are asking from our prodigal hearts
for your forgiveness:
Forgiveness for the sins of our entire lives, Father -
our anger, our resentment, violence, our lack of love
before You and against our neighbor.
If you forsake us, O God - even though You have the right -
where else can we go? We will be lost.

You know our hearts, Lord, and that we are wondering:
Is it Your time yet to assemble the leaders
at the place, called in Hebrew, Armageddon?
Is it time to send Your legions to intercede
in the bloodshed and evil, the pain and the suffering?
Is it time for the Lamb to reign? ❖

Comforting Those Who Have Lost a Baby During Pregnancy or Shortly Thereafter

by *Dennise Krause*

Blessed are those that mourn; for they shall be comforted (RSV Mt:5:4). All too often couples experiencing pregnancy loss, especially an early loss, are left to mourn the loss of their baby alone and in silence. One in four pregnancies will end in miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy or stillbirth. Most people, however, are unaware of how this loss, the death of their baby, affects the parents and those close to them.

Many family members and friends do not even know what to say. They use clichés such as, "You can have other children," or, "Good thing you didn't lose the child after he/she was born," or "Good thing you weren't pregnant for long." What most people don't realize is that the mother and the father begin to bond with the baby from as early as conception. And it is important to know that it is a fundamental Christian belief that life begins at conception. God knows the name and age of each person from their mother's womb - this is what we pray during the Liturgy of St. Basil. Pregnancy loss is not about tissue, or fetuses, or any other medical term - a pregnancy loss is the death of a child, a human being.

After giving birth to two beautiful children, my husband and I experienced the deaths of two babies during pregnancy. Our second baby died while we were attending St Vladimir's Seminary. The support that we received from the community has aided in our healing. It is my hope and prayer that enough people will be educated so that no parent will have to grieve their loss alone. Below are some guidelines to help you support and comfort "those who mourn."

- The first and likely the most important thing you can do is realize that a baby has died and this death is just as "real" as the death of an older child. The parents' grief and healing process will be painful and take time, lots of time. They may not be recovered or done "thinking about their baby" after a month or even a year. Realize that the parents are sad because they miss their baby, and that he or she can never be replaced by anyone else, including future children or children they may already have.

- Let the parents know that they and their family and the baby are in your prayers. Call or send a sympathy card. You don't have to write a lot inside, a simple "You and your baby are in my thoughts and prayers" is enough.
- What the parents need most now is a good listener and a shoulder, not a lecture or advice. Listen when they talk about the death of their baby. Don't be afraid, and try not to be uncomfortable when talking about the loss. Talk about the baby by name, if they have named the child. Ask what the baby looked like, if the parents saw the baby. Let them talk about the baby - most parents need and want to talk about their baby, their hopes and dreams for their lost child.
- It is okay to admit that you don't know how they feel. A good thing to say is, "I can't imagine how you feel and I just wanted you to know that I am here for you and am very sorry."
- Give a hug, this is a sign of love and concern. Even if this is all you do, it's a nonverbal way of saying "I'm sorry" or that "I'm praying for you."
- Offer to baby-sit their other children, often there are follow-up doctor's visits and the parents need a chance to be together as a "couple" as well.
- Offer to bring over meals; often mothers have no "energy" to do even basic things.
- Offer to go food shopping, help clean the house, do laundry. Anything that lightens the burden of daily chores that need to be done. This is especially helpful if the mother is still waiting to miscarry the baby. That process may take days and is physically and emotionally draining.
- Be careful not to forget the father of the baby. Men's feelings are very often overlooked because they seem to cope more easily. The truth is that they are quite often just as devastated as their partner.
- Try to remember the anniversary of the death and due date with a card, call, or visit. Anniversaries can trigger grief reactions as strong as when the loss first happened. Months down the

road a simple "How have you been doing since you lost your baby?" can give much comfort.

- Give special attention to the baby's brothers and sisters. They too are hurt and confused and in need of attention which their parents may not be able to give at this time.
- If the children want to talk about the death, don't be afraid to engage them in conversation. Children have a natural relationship to death; and they are open and direct with adults they are comfortable with. When children are allowed to share their dreams and thoughts openly, they are not usually impacted by death in a negative way.
- If you are pregnant, it may be hard for the bereaved parents (especially the mother) to see or even talk to you. You will need to be very understanding and extra patient with them. They still love you and are happy for you, but it is just such a huge reminder of what they have lost. Some may not be able to talk to you right now. If this happens, please don't take it personally - it is just that to

avoid pregnant people at the moment may save your friend's sanity. Your bereaved friends may even feel a little jealous of you (especially after your baby comes), and then feel angry at themselves for feeling that way because they don't really begrudge your happiness, it's just that they are mourning the loss of their's.

- Remember that any subsequent pregnancies can be a roller-coaster ride of joy, fear and bittersweet memories.
- Remember also that mourning puts a tremendous strain on relationships between family and friends.

Your help, comfort, and sensitive support can be very influential in how the parents cope with the death of their baby and how they recover. You are important; they need you now more than ever.

[Dennise is currently writing a book providing an Orthodox perspective, information, and guidelines for ministering to couples who have experienced the loss of a child during pregnancy, or shortly thereafter.] ❖

Continued from page 12

The next movement is represented by a small procession around the center table by the priest, the child, and sponsors while the choir sings, "As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). This movement is reminiscent of the *Procession* made by early Christians from the special place where they would have been baptized into the church building, entering now as part of the community, something that would have been done particularly on Pascha and other great feasts.

The *Scriptures* are now read (*Epistle* of St. Paul to the Romans 6:3-11 and *Gospel* of St. Matthew 28:16-20). The priest then *washes off the Holy Chrism* with a small sponge and the tonsure takes place. This act, the cutting of a small amount of hair, represents a first offering to God. The final action is called *the Churching*. The priest will take the person to the back of the church and then, reciting several verses which emphasize entrance into the Church, will bring the child forward toward the altar (and around it if a male), returning him/her to his mother's arms. This will conclude the service, although the entrance will truly be complete when the child partakes of Holy

Communion at the next Divine Liturgy (receiving a small amount of the wine, if just a baby).

The Service of Baptism inaugurates the child's reception of three Sacraments - *Baptism, Chrismation, and the Eucharist* - allowing that person to have the same potential as any of the greatest saints. Nothing more can be added. *Baptism* is one's personal acceptance of the feast of Pascha. It celebrates one's unification and identification with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. *Holy Chrismation* marks one's acceptance of the Feast of Pentecost, in which the Holy Spirit descended upon the gathered disciples. It celebrates the consecration and dedication of a person's uniqueness and talents - all in the context that "God's Holy Name might be glorified" in the life of that person or child. The gifts of Baptism and Chrismation prepare one for the true possibilities of communion, life, and nourishment that God provides in *Holy Communion, the Eucharist*.

These Sacraments of Entry mark the opening moments of Christian life: the beginning of a life in Christ which leads from "glory to glory" and to continual re-discovery and joy. ❖

The Rings Have Arrived

by Jack Wheeler

Jacob's Well
Spring/Summer 2002

The first installment of J.R.R. Tolkien's long-awaited trilogy is here. The first installment is of course: *The Lord of the Rings - The Fellowship of the Ring*. Now if you're not a Tolkien fan, and you know nothing of the trilogy, here's what you need to know. J.R.R. Tolkien, a professor of anthropology wrote a trilogy of books in the late-1940s entitled *Lord of the Rings*. This series of novels consists of *Fellowship of the Ring*, *The Two Towers*, and finally, *Return of the King*. The story is set in a land called Middle-earth, a world that predates our own. Middle-earth is home to an assortment of races that include elves, wizards, orcs, hobbits, dwarves, and humans. The first chapter of the series begins with the hobbit, Bilbo Baggins (Ian Holm), on his 111th birthday. The reason he's so old is that he possesses a magical ring that he found over 60 years ago. However, this ring has a secret, it was forged long ago by a dark lord, Sauron, who made it in order to bring all of Middle-earth under his command. It is said that it will corrupt the mind of anyone who comes in contact with it. When Bilbo decides it's time to leave home, The Shire, behind, he leaves the ring as well, and it comes into the possession of his nephew Frodo.

About a year has passed, and it has come to the knowledge of the wise wizard, and old friend of the Bagginses, Gandalf (Ian Mckellan), that Sauron is returning and will stop at nothing to get the ring back. Gandalf realizes the only way to stop Sauron is to destroy the ring, so he goes and informs Frodo of this. However, the only way that the ring can be destroyed is if it is cast into the fires of Mount Doom in the land of Mordor, the same place it was forged. He assigns this task to Frodo, and so Frodo along with his hobbit friends, Sam, Merry, and Pippin set off on a long journey to Mordor. Meanwhile Gandalf goes to visit an old friend, a

wizard by the name of Saruman (Christopher Lee), to ask him what can be done about Sauron's return. But then it is revealed that Saruman has succumbed to the power of the ring himself, and has become himself evil, so he captures Gandalf. Meanwhile, Frodo, back on his journey, is being pursued by a group of black hooded riders (or Ring Wraiths as they're called), who work for Sauron, and want to kill Frodo for the ring he possesses. After a brief run in with the Ring Wraiths the hobbits stop in the town of Bree, and there they meet a mysterious ranger known as Strider (Viggo Mortensen). He tells them he's a friend of Gandalf's and so they follow him on the rest of their quest.

That's basically what the first half of the film is like. I don't want to give away the rest. The movie is really something though. Everything about it is great, the acting is wonderful, the special effects are dazzling, the cinematography is stunning, the scenery and costumes are meticulously crafted, and the story most of all is one as old as time. That story of course being the never-ending battle between good and evil. But the greatest aspect of all, are the fight scenes. In an age where it seems that every director tries to copy *The Matrix*, it's nice to see some originality. The most breathtakingly spectacular scene is probably the opening battle, set 2000 years before the story begins. With that epic plot, and the film's epic qualities, it joins the ranks of such classics as *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Star Wars* (particularly *Empire*), *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, and *Brazil*. Director Peter Jackson has proved himself to be a true storyteller, and with *Fellowship* we can only imagine what he has in store for us in the next two films.

FINAL VERDICT: A. ❖

St. Andrew's Camp

St. Andrew's Camp Program, for ages 7-14, will take place between June 30th, 2002 and August 10th, with a special Teen Week from August 11th-17th. For more information call (315) 383-2686 or (732) 329-8588.

Deadline for next issue:

SEPTEMBER 1, 2002

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Book Watch

Reviewed by Bob and Bonnie Flanagan

Breck, John. *Scripture in Tradition: The Bible and its Interpretation in the Orthodox Church*. Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001.

Mathewes-Green, Frederica. *The Illumined Heart - the Ancient Christian Path of Transformation*. Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2001.

Schmemmann, Alexander. *Our Father*. Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002.

In the days following the horrifying events of September 11th there was an upsurge in attendance at church and religious events of all kinds, including Orthodox. That surge petered out as many people became acclimated to the conditions of a post-September 11th culture, yet from conversations we've had with a variety of people and from our own experience there is a changed atmosphere unrelieved since that day but covered over by a thin membrane of forgetfulness and wishful thinking. The three books reviewed here are examples from the Orthodox perspective of the attitude and practices essential in both avoiding anesthetic forgetfulness and at the same time seeing such events in their proper place.

The attention of the heart, an attitude taught by Scripture and the teachers of the Church, is difficult to come by in modern culture even with the provocation of the events of last fall. We still need current masters to teach us the way to that attention, people who are familiar with the deceptions of our culture and can speak out against them while illuminating our minds and encouraging our fainting spirits.

Each of these three attempts to accomplish this goal are very different from the other.

The writings of Fr Alexander Schmemmann have been an inspiration to the Orthodox Church in America. *Our Father* is the fourth collection of sermons given over Radio Liberty to listeners in the Soviet Union. Earlier collections focus on the Creed, the Church Year and the Virgin Mary. Like the others it delivers the essentials of the topic under discussion in short messages designed for an

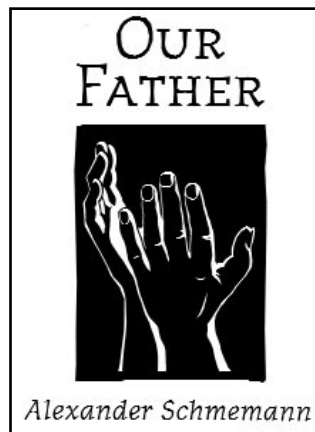
audience with limited exposure to the Church and Christianity and faced with constant propaganda aimed against its practice. This describes the Soviet Union of the 70's and 80's to which Fr Alexander's sermons were directed, but it also describes the contemporary monolithic culture of the West. So it is timely for these sermons to appear, and important that they address the fundamental prayer taught to Christians by Jesus.

The tone of these sermons is very different than the theological texts of Fr Alexander. There is a warmer tone, a gentleness and patience that is not always obvious in the more academic works. At first the reader

is struck by the difference wondering if one had come across a very different side of the author. Very soon though, one recognizes the same theme that was always so important to Fr Alexander: the fight for a full and complete understanding of the fundamental concepts of Christianity, the kingdom of God, the name of God, joy, sustenance, sin and evil.

This battle for right understanding is especially relevant to our time in one particular section - some words on the section of the prayer "Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from (the) evil (one)."

The awesome force of evil does not lie in evil as such, but in its destruction of our faith in goodness - our conviction that good is stronger than evil. This is the meaning of temptation. And even the very attempt to explain evil by virtue of rational arguments, to legitimize it, if one can put it this way, is that very same temptation, it is the inner surrender before evil. For the Christian attitude



towards evil consists precisely in the understanding that evil has no explanation, no justification, no basis, that it is the root of rebellion against God, falling away from God, a rupture from full life, and that God does not give us explanations for evil, but strength to resist evil and power to overcome it. And again, this victory lies not in the ability to understand and explain evil but rather in the ability to face it with the full force of faith, the full force of hope, the full force of love. For it is by faith, hope and love that temptations are overcome, they are the answer to temptation, the victory over temptations, and therefore the victory over evil.

Here lies the victory of Christ, the one whose whole life was one seamless temptation. He was constantly in the midst of evil in all its forms, beginning with the slaughter of innocent infants at the time of his birth and ending in horrible isolation, betrayal by all, physical torture, and an accursed death on the cross. In one sense the Gospels are an account of the power of evil and the victory over it - an account of Christ's temptation. (pp 78-80)

The Illumined Heart is a very different book sharing similar aims. It seems to be aimed at contemporary persons unfamiliar with Orthodoxy, and even unfamiliar with Christianity. The subtitle's reference to the ancient Christian path of transformation seems to place the book in opposition to a "non-ancient way," or a non-Christian way, or a non-transformative way, and Mathewes-Green may have wanted all of those oppositions in play. What the book is, however, is an inviting and readable presentation of the everyday faith practiced by Christians of the fifth or sixth century. It presents simply but solidly the concerns of a couple of that time, all the while asking why the answers for them are not relevant for us. In doing so it highlights the basic themes of Christianity in a clear straightforward format.

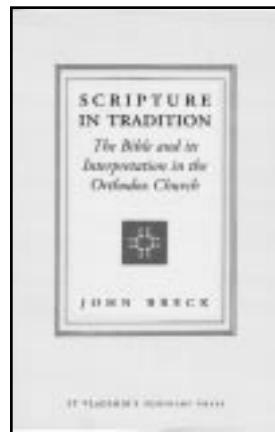
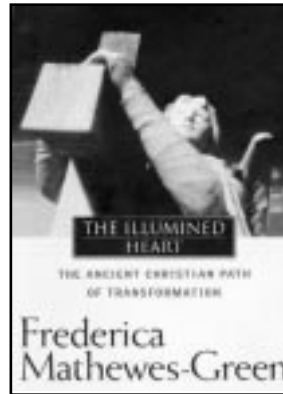
Mathewes-Green avoids the question of how the difference in cultures and times affects the

practice and life of Orthodox Christians and certainly that question needs to be addressed. It may be she is leaving that for others to do but it is an urgent question and needs to be addressed by non academics such as herself. On the other hand these are fundamental attitudes and practices that must be held on to regardless of the times and these are what she addresses. The author is trying to present to us the same mindset as in earlier generations. There can be differences in cultures but it is the same power of the Holy Spirit who works from generation to generation.

These two books are very different in tone, and addressed to different audiences. At this time, however, we are in need of the concentrated wisdom of Christianity, whether it be addressed in its fundamental prayer or in its traditional practices. Both books fulfill this need.

The one criticism that could be made of *The Illumined Heart* is the notable lack of encouragement to read the Scriptures. This is especially glaring because the title of the book is taken from the prayer in the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom just before the proclamation of the Gospel: "Illumine our hearts, O Master...and open the eyes of our minds to the understanding of your Gospel teaching...." As a corrective to that omission Fr Breck's *Scripture in Tradition* can be recommended. Especially relevant in this regard is the book's fourth chapter, "In Quest of an Orthodox Lectio Divina." In this chapter Fr Breck uses texts from the Fathers and Mothers of the Church, including especially texts from the Philokalia, to encourage a serious and prayerful reading of Scripture by Orthodox. We realize how great a lack there is in this type of practice among the Orthodox, so Fr John's encouragement and instruction is important and needful.

Here, then, are three books that address the needs of today. They are the needs of every day so the teaching herein will be of use both in season and out. ❖



Though The Lord Himself Slay Me

by Fr. Stephen Siniari

I work with uncertainty everyday at the shelter, kids and staff. "I don't know where I'll be staying tonight; and what do you care; you put me out?" "Her behavior left no choice. I hate this work. I don't want to do it anymore." Okay. It is what it is.

She sliced him with a razor-knife; you stepped in, now his blood's all over you. Don't go near your wife or kids 'til the test results come back. Two weeks. Yes, you'll have to tell your wife. You just have to live with it 'til we know. I have no visible cuts or open wounds. But what if? Then what? I don't know.

I live with uncertainty myself, all the time. At the parish I tell my Confessor. "All this prayer... Is it a sin to think, does it do any good?" Who would I fool if I lied?

There are days when I am uncertainty. I embody it, when I think about it: My body is like a time bomb, what's it doing in there, three score years and ten? I have a fluctuating faith. One day I want to serve Him, the next day I want to run. I blow with the wind, fashion, education, politics, pleasure, society, science...

For twelve years I've worn a clergy collar in the trenches. No, it isn't a cassette, that would be awkward crawling through the abandoned buildings and

on the avenue, but it offered some little iconographic hope: Even here, He calls his servants, out of the depths I cry and He remembers my name, He sends someone, even here... But now the purveyors snicker in the coffee shop, "Hide the little boys." So I leave it in the car. Well, the work of the Gospel is more than a shirt, isn't it?

What's certain in this life anyway? The wits of the world answer, taxes and death. Oh yeah, and suffering, say the boys who sip coffee and sell candles during Liturgy. Great. Big deal. Thought that up on your own, boys? You put your red eggs in the basket of this world and they get broken. Who doesn't know that? Think like that and what's the point of living, temporary pleasure? Go be a pirate. Small consolation if you ask me. You sell out easy. An antidote, you ain't got.

What I'm talking about is that thing you had as a kid, that invincible, eternal thing. The part that sometimes still inexplicably hopes it's going to see the good days again. The part of the child that refuses to go to bed, hates the dark, wants the light left on. The part in you the darkness keeps trying to extinguish. What about that? Let me ask you a question, which part you dancing with, the darkness or the light?

Perhaps we who bear the Name of Christ have an offering in that regard. And I think we do. But how do we give a gift and not get in the way? How do we offer a gift people may have been robbed of the capacity to receive?

Perhaps we prepare a garden for the brokenhearted, a small world in from the storm. Refuse the cultural lie that makes trivial those who bear the gift of being human. Offer a liturgical interval where portals to a peaceable kingdom may be illumined. Confess, beggar to beggar, we too, have been beguiled by the malice of the snake. You can listen another's soul into existence. Hesychia, the Fathers say. Try it. Live loving wisdom that tempers trust with discernment. Weed doubt. Plant faith. Anoint the desecration in the Name of Jesus Christ. Wordless icons speak.

Say with your lips to the uncertainty in your heart the words of Blessed Job. *Though the Lord Himself slay me, yet will I trust Him.* Spit in the devils face. Pray and move your feet for another 'til your heart forgets uncertainty and believes. Embrace the sacramental mystery. Be embraced in the Antidote, say heal my soul. Grow in your calling, take one step, be Comforted, He'll meet you, Taste & See. ❖

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