

# Jacob's Well

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**ORTHODOX CHURCH  
IN AMERICA**

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**Summer 2000**



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**DIOCESE OF  
NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY**

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

**Stories: Yours, Mine & Ours**

**listen**

# Dedicated to Peter Mikuliak

by Fr. John Shimchick

Our teen class was gathered around the conference table at Covenant House in Philadelphia, where Fr. Stephen Siniari and his co-workers minister to street kids. "We meet the kids wherever they are," said Noel, our initial guide. "Then we invite them to our outreach center. There they can get food, clean clothes, take a shower. We get them to sit down, to feel safe, to talk, and to know that we will care for them - no matter what. We say to them, 'We want to know your story.' They're on the street usually because no one has cared for them or wants to know who they are."



up hope for playing third base on the Brooklyn Dodgers." "But they're in L.A. now," one son noted. "They'll have to move back to Brooklyn for me to play for them," he said. Those words captured so much that I found astonishing in him. He was both pragmatic and concerned for the moment (measuring his life in well-tended garden seasons), yet global and unpredictable. An avid student of history and of respect for the past, he prided himself on his achievements in developing up-to-the-minute skills for use in designing webpages. He moved ahead and stayed in the past at the same time. He was both practical and a dreamer. He was gratefully in love with his wife, Pamela. His broad life experiences left him no less in love with God and the Church. He remained ever-hopeful.

The need to tell and hear stories is essential for everyone. They allow us to explain and understand how we have been formed as people. They help us put into words why we do or no longer consider as important our membership in families, in ethnic groups, and as Christians - in the Church.

This issue is dedicated to Peter - minstrel and storyteller - who in the words of the writer Leskov, was "condemned to live one life, while a thousand lives burned within." ♦

Archbishop Peter helps us understand why the recent canonization of St. Raphael, Bishop of Brooklyn is important for the story of Orthodox Christianity in America. Jessica Rose, an Orthodox psychotherapist from Oxford, England, presents how an appreciation for "your" and "my" story is essential in developing a Christian relationship. The Christian Story, expressed in the Scriptures, is proclaimed most succinctly in the Eucharistic Prayer during the Divine Liturgy. Yet, how can it be understood and affirmed if it is not heard, if it is not read aloud? The article, "Saying 'Amen' to Our Christian Story," explains what has happened. Finally, the place of stories is, in a way, THE "story" of our times. There are many who doubt that there are any stories that can truly be essential in the development of morals, in the affirmation of truth, in the formation of faith. Fr. Joseph Woodill explains "how stories matter."

We include a number of book reviews, special features, and we celebrate events in our Diocesan life. In particular, we fondly remember the remarkable ministry of Fr. Steven Belonick, former editor of *Jacob's Well*, who with his wife, Deborah, has left parish ministry to work at St. Vladimir's Seminary.

As this issue was being completed, it was learned that Peter Mikuliak, a beloved friend to many in our Diocese, lost his battle against cancer. He died on September 5 in Idaho, where he had been living with his wife Pamela. One can think of Peter in many ways: a Peace Corps veteran, a linguist, a world traveler, a local community and pan-Orthodox organizer, a wonderful teacher and preacher, a multi-lingual folk singer, a devoted fan of baseball, a lover of "local culture," and as one who while getting older, remained ever-youthful and ever-zealous.

In a recent phone conversation, when my sons mentioned to him about their interest in baseball, Peter replied, "I've never given

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## Reflections on the Canonization of St. Raphael

by Archbishop PETER



Bishop Raphael Hawaweeny was canonized in the Spring of this year, 85 years after his dormition. The decision was made by the Synod of the Orthodox Church in America, working in close connection with the local Archdiocese of the Antiochian Patriarchate.

The religious press and especially the Orthodox Church in America have thoroughly described the event and my intent is not to duplicate materials already published on that subject. I would like only to share some thoughts with the readers of *Jacob's Well* about the contemporary significance of the recent canonization for Orthodoxy in our country.

The life of St. Raphael reflects accurately the catholic unity of the Church and his pastoral ministry remains an example for priests and bishops everywhere. I do not intend to recount his life which has been published together with the liturgical service in his honor, but I would like to shed light on some points which have nowadays a special significance for the Orthodox Christians living in America.

Undoubtedly his ethnic origin and the religious education he received seems to have predestined St. Raphael for his future ministry as is rightly emphasized in a phrase of his kontakion where he is called "son of Syria and glory of North America." Then the idea of overlapping episcopal jurisdictions had not yet come to maturity. Such an attempt against Church order had been solemnly condemned by a council held in Constantinople in 1872 which coined that heresy as ethno-phyletism (ecclesiastical nationalism). The missionary work in North America had been initialized and organized by the Russian Church during the eighteenth century. St. Raphael took

care primarily of the Arabic-speaking Christians in North America while belonging to the Russian Church which was, according to the canons, the only existing jurisdictional entity. Moreover, he publicly stated in front of St. Tikhon, his archpastor that the latter had been sent to America "to tend the flock of Christ: Russians, Slavs, Syro-Arabs, and Greek."

Having passed away in 1915, he did not witness the devastating impact of the Bolshevik Revolution on the life of Orthodoxy in North America. To be sure, the Revolution was not the only factor of the ensuing canonical disorders in our country. Nevertheless, it was the starting point in the process of jurisdictional fragmentation and the very fact that such deficiencies have not already been overcome should be a matter of reflection.

Holy Hierarchs are praised in the Church as Rules of Faith and Images of Humility. Let us fervently pray to St. Raphael in order that he supplicate the Lord God for the good order of His Church in America. ♦



## Your Story and Mine

by Jessica Rose

So, as they disagreed among themselves, they departed, after Paul had made one statement: "The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet: 'You shall indeed hear but never understand, and you shall indeed see but never perceive, for this people's heart has grown dull, and their ears are heavy of hearing, and their eyes have closed; lest they should perceive with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn for me to heal them.'" Acts 28: 25-27 (RSV)

With these words St Paul concluded his preaching to the Jews at Rome.

Story (in this case the stories of the Jewish people themselves and of the coming of Christ, and Paul's own personal story in relation to these) is usually a matter of disagreement. Sit down with half a dozen participants in any event and ask them each to describe it and you get half a dozen different accounts. This well-known phenomenon, the source of such frustration to the lawcourts, is nevertheless a sign of richness. It is an inevitable consequence of each one of us being a unique person who brings to any event not only our cultural, psychological and genetic background, but also a personal autobiography which is nowhere replicated.

It is through relationships with others that we learn to sift the truth of our situation: how we are living our lives, what changes we need to make, what other possibilities are, how we relate to the wider community and to humanity itself, and above all what it means for each and every one of us to be in relationship with God.

In the work of a psychotherapist, one to one relationships play a crucial part. One way of describing it is to say that we take what is going on between people in everyday life, and put it into a laboratory so we can study it more closely: hence the importance of setting up consistency of time and place so that everyday distractions are removed. Anyone who enters into this kind of relationship does so with a story. It may be the story of something current or recent that is disturbing. Sometimes it is an unknown story which

is manifesting itself through a sense of discomfort or repeated difficulties which never seem to be resolved. Often healing begins with being able to tell one's story as slowly and as often as is necessary to someone who can really listen. This person does not, of course, need to be a professional, but good listening is a much rarer quality than is generally supposed. As soon as we start to listen carefully to another person we find ourselves deeply in relationship with them. One person's story begins to interact with another's. There will be parts which are similar, and parts which are different. A new story is also in the making through the sharing. This may well be a good and warming experience, but it may also be difficult or uncomfortable, and this is where both parties may need to take care if it is not to become damaging for either or both of those involved.

Most people in modern western society will be familiar with the concept of psychological repression: the idea that an experience which is too traumatic to manage becomes buried in the unconscious. It seems more and more clear to me that a great many of life's insolubles: our compulsions, our mistaken choices, and our psychological *disease*, as individuals and communities, are driven by story, particularly by forgotten story. Repression of trauma protects us, but it also turns into *oppression*, unless we can at some point provide each other with enough love and security to allow it to emerge, and find the courage to face it.

Through this mechanism of repression, any one of us will have areas of the heart which have grown dull, eyes which have learned not to see, and ears which have learned not to hear. Opening up these areas of buried story may be extremely painful, and it is an enormous help if there is another person who can participate without getting caught up in it; who can understand without identifying; who can recognize without re-writing the story. This process, whether between friends or family, between members of a church community or within the mental health services, itself becomes part of the story of those involved.

Relationships are risky things. We have an instinct for those whose wounds resonate with



our own, and this instinct guides us both to those who can heal us and those who can destroy us. Any relationship can carry potential for healing, and this healing is a mutual matter. For anyone involved in the caring for others an awareness of this mutuality is crucial.

An illustration comes from someone whom I shall call Elizabeth, who sought help with a life-long depression and disturbing mental experiences. After we had worked together for some time, her mother went through a long period of physical and mental illness and eventually died. This was devastating for Elizabeth, who loved her mother dearly and had always relied on her to contain her own fragility. Shortly after her mother's death, my own mother died, and I took some unexpected time off. Elizabeth, who was already grieving, now had to cope with my unexpected absence as well.

During those weeks she wrote me an extraordinary letter, in which she expressed her sadness for me, but also the fact that my bereavement had made her realize that grief was a fact of human existence. This did not take away what she was feeling, but changed it. For the first time in her life she understood as a matter of felt experience that she was fundamentally not alone. She is an artist, and two years later she mounted an exhibition based on the work she had done during the grieving process. It was visited by a great many people who expressed gratitude for the way in which her work released grief which has been painfully blocked in them. I visited the exhibition on what would have been my mother's seventy-ninth birthday, and was both moved and saddened, and deeply heartened by what I saw.

Returning to St Paul, he tells us that when he remonstrated with Christ about his own imperfection he was told, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). When we enter into helping relationships with others, it is of course important that we treat those relationships with all the care and loving attention they deserve (in the words of Irving Berlin: "It's not my watch you are holding, it's my heart"). But the healing lies not with us as people or even as communities but with Christ, who may nevertheless be using us as his eyes and ears and hands in this world. Our own care and attention

is vital to building secure and loving relationships, but is only part of the process. In my work with Elizabeth, I was reliably there at the same time each week for several years, only being absent with warning and preparation, and she relied on this very deeply. Yet it was at the moment when I became unable to sustain this that she discovered something much more valuable.

In the kind of work that psychotherapists do, people are seeking relationships that will improve things; often they look to the therapist to provide the relationship they have sought all their lives. There may be a sense in which the therapist performs a kind of re-parenting. The person sitting across the room may be well into their fifties, but for this part of their lives they are a few months or a few years old, and the quality of the relationship has to adapt to that. At the same time this baby or child needs to catch up with the adult whose story has its own validity. The eyes and ears that have become shut are opened and the dullness of the heart is brought to life, often with great pain. The relationship can appear all-consuming - positively or negatively - to the person seeking help, and this is part of what has to be lived through. Something else is achieved however, when one finds oneself in the presence of something which does not wish to be shared, not because it is buried through trauma, but because it is so deeply personal to the client that it represents access to their deepest self - perhaps what Thomas Merton referred to as '*la pointe vierge*' which in its purity belongs only to God.

In his work as a psychotherapist, the psychologist Carl Rogers discovered something crucial to the whole enterprise: that when we arrive at what is most deeply personal, we are also at the point of what is most universal. A community which regularly celebrates the Liturgy together comes to this truth from a different angle. No one can celebrate the Liturgy alone; as soon as we try to make it a matter of personal piety we have lost contact with what is really going on. Yet the participation by the community itself somehow enables each member to come closer to their own unique, personal encounter with Christ in communion.

Elizabeth's grief touched such depths in her because it went to the core of her own particular relationship with her mother. In doing so, it

opened her up to shared experience of loss - my own, and that of the whole of humanity. In the Liturgy, we, as infinitely varied individuals, participate in the prayer of the whole of creation, and we gradually become aware of how connected we are to everyone and everything, whether we like it or not. We pray with and for both the living and the dead.

For this reason, it seems to me important to bear in mind that how we relate to each other in the ongoing story of our relationships also has relevance across the familiar dimensions of time and space. What goes on between us here and now can

also affect previous generations, and people a long way off. It is only the dullness of our hearts and the shutting of our ears and eyes which conceals this truth from us. To glimpse this is awe-inspiring, and touches parts of us which we are reluctant to expose to Christ's healing love. Yet it is only in allowing ourselves to experience our own vulnerability that in our weakness we can begin to be made strong through grace.

*[Jessica Rose is a psychotherapist and teacher of pastoral care and counseling. She is a member of the Orthodox parish in Oxford, England.]♦*

## How Stories Matter

by Fr. Joseph Woodill

Recently, one of my children came home from school and told me about a problem discussed in class. "Well, Jesus taught that...", I began to say, but my son, interrupting, said that his teacher and class would be interested only in what anyone would do. What difference, he said, would someone's religion make? I asked him, but doesn't it matter where you are from?

Nothing is so characteristic of modern ethics, philosophy, education, and even theology, as the attempt to ground these in what is universally acceptable. Immanuel Kant, the "Father" of modern ethics, was convinced that only an autonomous will governed by universal principles could adequately anchor moral life. To tell Kant what your father had taught you or what your people said would have been to reveal yourself as tutored and, so, as not yet free. To be enlightened was to be liberated, to be free of such things. America has, until quite recently, been in pursuit of such liberation. We have imagined ourselves to be a people free from all encumbrances. Our "story" has been either that we need no story or that we will pick one, for our own reasons—that's private, as we say. Nothing has been more American than to tell our children that they owe us nothing and are completely free of our commitments, our story. But recently that account has been waning and Americans have become obsessed with particularity. Once people left churches because they were too particular or eth-

nic, now people join churches because they have discovered whence their relatives hailed.

The "universal viewpoint" (called by some the view from anywhere, by others the view from nowhere), that the local high school was teaching my son, has actually been under attack for quite some time. The Danish philosopher Kierkegaard rejected Hegel's universal spirit because it dissolved the concreteness of life. The intellectual terrorist Nietzsche caused us to consider if the will to power lay disguised in our story of liberation. Freud undermined our presumption to know our own minds, without recourse to narratives that we have suppressed. In popular culture (and education) it was Alex Haley's story of Kunta Kinte that marked our rejection of standing everywhere—which is to stand nowhere—and signaled a return to what is particular. The rediscovery of particularity is most evident in the recovery of the importance of stories: Bill Bennett publishes books of stories for conservatives, while the First Lady describes the village that it takes to raise a child. I think that recent interest in the place of stories is important, but story may also be used to trivialize. Let me suggest a little of each possibility.

At one level, stories from the Scriptures, of saints and heroic people ought to be told to develop moral imagination. By "imagination" I mean gaining skill at seeing how things are, especially for others. *Tending the Heart of Virtue*, by Vigen Guroian, and *The Holy Fire*, stories of the Fathers

by Robert Payne, are good examples of enriching the imagination by story. But the moral imagination needs more than just hero stories. For those Orthodox Churches where people of color are seldom seen, stories like that of Kunta Kinte enrich our moral imaginations where icons of Moses the Brigand have failed.

I noted that story might also be used to trivialize. Story might serve to indicate that in the end everything is simply made up by us. Seeing this as analogous to liturgy might help. I don't think liturgy that is simply made up can ever secure us anymore than a made-up love. Liturgy does change, this is undeniable, but it changes within the tradition as a real struggle with and for God and one another. Story, like liturgy or love, if it isn't trivial, is received as a grace, as a gift, and then must be answered as it makes its claims on us. As with liturgy and love so with story, we do contribute to the "story" and even its change, but only by being incorporated by it.

I believe, then, that thinking about the faith in terms of story is helpful-but neither exhaustive nor without risks. It is helpful to think of Orthodox Christianity as the story of God's love. It is the story recounted in the Bible, in Liturgy, in Tradition, in living and in suffering. It is the story of God's love as revealed in Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus comes to take us into a great Passover, the Pascha which is the lived narrative of God's love. By receiving the story and living by it, I remember (recapitulate, as St. Irenaeus put it) creation as called into being by the Father, in

Christ, by the Holy Spirit. Liturgy might be understood as that story performed, as a love story enacted. In some sense we choose and even make our love stories, but more importantly we are made by our loves. Church is a particular story, but a story which opens upon a self-giving love reaching out to renew the Spirit in all of creation.

Returning to the first paragraph, yes it is important where you come from, who you are, and what story has captured your imagination. The last century has shown that giving one's life up to a story entails great risk-fascism and communism are also stories. So a story that has the power to enliven us must have resources from which to be critical of its misuse and misappropriation-by others and by myself. It must offer passage beyond myself. The story of Trinitarian love is all of this because it comes from beyond me, from what is not limited by me and, yet, calls me back to myself. The story that captures my heart will make all of the difference. Which is, perhaps, why both the first and final word of that story can only be love. Stories of particularity, recently embraced by so many Americans, seem so often to isolate us one from the other. The story of Orthodox Christianity ought not to do the same. We have but one story: Trinitarian love as revealed in Christ. That story has but one sign: the cross, by which we mark our story as hidden in Him.

*[Fr. Joseph Woodill, formerly of our Diocese, now serves Holy Virgin Church, Waterbury, Connecticut.]♦*

## Saying "Amen" to Our Story

*by Fr. John Shimchick*

It began in the middle of the sixth century as a liturgical innovation. The Emperor Justinian had learned that certain priests throughout Constantinople and its provinces were beginning to recite eucharistic and baptismal prayers silently (in an inaudible voice). He protested vigorously and, as an effort in 565 to confront this and other abuses in the life of the Church, issued his *Novella* 137, part of which stated:

Moreover we order all bishops and priests to say the prayers used in the divine oblation and

in holy baptism not inaudibly, but in a voice that can be heard by the faithful people, that the minds of those who listen may be excited to greater compunction. [1]

Despite these efforts, Justinian was unable to stop this practice. This result "opened the way to a fundamental change not only in liturgical practice but in popular eucharistic piety." [2] From this time on, a more allegorical understanding of the liturgy was developed. Each action, which earlier had sometimes only practical significance, now

acquired other meanings, often related to the life of Christ: the first entrance as his public ministry, the great entrance as his burial. Moreover, where the vision of the liturgy from its initial descriptions in the *First Apology* of St. Justin the Martyr (155 AD, Sections 65 & 67) **had stressed the action of what the faithful (the clergy and laity) did together**, emphasizing the words “us and we,” there now developed - while using the same words - a vision of **what the priest does in front of the people**, giving his every action a symbolic meaning.[3]

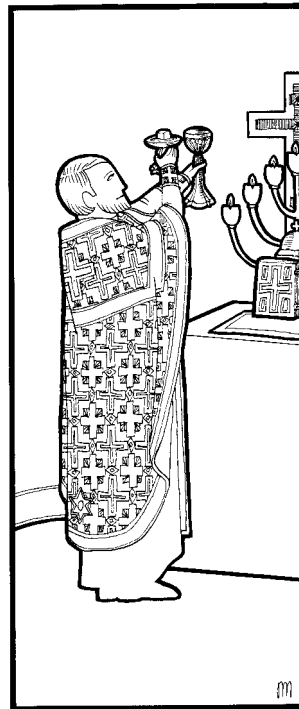
Also, whereas St. John Chrysostom could write that, “There are cases when a priest does not differ from a layman, notably when one approaches the Holy Mysteries,”[4] it would now be possible to show how a “vision” of separation grew between the clergy and laity, a vision which would have theological, sacramental, and even architectural dimensions. In reflecting on his experiences of worship in the Russian Orthodox Church, Fr. Alexander Schmemmann wrote in his *Journal* that, “During the service, everything which could reach the consciousness of the faithful is carefully hidden from them; any semblance of meaning.” (March 15, 1976).

Why should the eucharistic prayers be heard by everyone? It is important because within these prayers the Christian Story, our Story is announced and affirmed. In St. Justin’s account of the liturgy mentioned earlier when “bread is brought, and wine and water, ...the president similarly sends up prayers and thanksgivings to the best of his ability, and the congregation assents, saying the Amen.” (section 67)

To use the Hebrew word, “Amen,” is to say, “This is true. So be it. Yes.” It is to say Yes, in Jesus Christ, “For all the promises of God find their Yes in him,” says St. Paul (2 Cor. 1:19-20). To say, “Amen,” affirms the desire to become one’s true self in Christ. St. Augustine wrote, “To that which you are - say Amen and thus seal it with your answer.” When the congregation says, “Amen,” at

the end of the eucharistic prayers it remembers and affirms all that God has done and will continue to do in the ongoing Story of His People.

The prayers offered by the bishop at the time of St. Justin were spontaneous, delivered “to the best of his ability.” Gradually, they were formalized, expressed most fully at least in the Byzantine tradition in the liturgies of St. John Chrysostom and St. Basil the Great. The eucharistic prayers in these liturgies combine the “triune intuition” of the Scriptures, the themes of creation, fall, and redemption, with an underlying emphasis on God’s steadfast love: “Thou it was who brought us from non-existence into being, and when we had fallen away didst raise us up again, and didst not cease to do **all** things until Thou hadst brought us up to heaven.” (Anaphora of St. John)



The Anaphora of St. Basil, which is served primarily on the Sundays of Great Lent, is a “tapestry” of Scriptural references, developing in more detail “all” that God has done. Fr. Andrew Morbey sees the *Anaphora* as a place to begin the preparation of catechumens: “Here may be found, in summary, an account of all that is important in what the Church has to say about God as Trinity, about the Son and the Spirit, about creation, man, the world, the work of Christ, the activity of the Spirit, the life of the Church, the character of Christian living. It is a compelling and moving vision.”[5]

The “silent” or “secret” practice of reading these prayers would exist unchallenged for centuries. In the 19th and early 20th centuries Russian theologians, historians, and liturgists began re-examining the foundations of Orthodox worship, producing (in some cases) still classic studies in the liturgies of St. John and St. Basil, the *Typikon*, and the Secret Prayers. In 1905, A. P. Golubstov listed some of the reasons why the prayers ceased to be read publicly:

1) In an effort to reduce the growing length of the liturgy, the prayers were read silently by the priest



as the deacon was intoning the petitions.

2) The secret reading became incorporated into the *disciplina arcana* ("secret discipline") whereby it was felt that those who were "uninitiated" were unable to hear about the mysteries of the faith or of worship. This encouraged the previously mentioned division between the clergy and laity.

3) It was closely related to the period when the practice of frequent communion ceased.[6]

In 1905, each Russian Diocesan bishop was requested by the Holy Synod to offer suggestions for discussion at the proposed All-Russian Council (Sobor - which would eventually take place in 1917). Half of the sixty-four bishops raised liturgical concerns: the need to produce a Typikon for parish usage, a re-examination of Church Slavonic or implementation of the Russian language, etc.) Several, including Archbishop Tikhon of the Aleutians and North America, recommended that the secret prayers be read aloud. Bishop Nazarius of Nizhni-Novgorod wrote that, "in order that those present would completely understand the structure of this most important liturgical service, by experiencing it in all of its wholeness and seeing how it develops, it might be desirable to permit the secret prayers to be read aloud. This would even be in agreement with the practice of the Early Church. The public reading of the priestly prayers would uplift the prayerful spirit of the worshippers." [7] Around this same time, Fr. John of Kronstadt, known for his conservatism in many areas, was concerned that many people had a careless attitude towards the services and were ignorant of the "secret prayers." He wrote that, "The priest or the bishop recites many prayers to himself; it would be much more interesting and profitable for the minds and hearts of Christians to be aware of the full text of the Liturgy." [8]

Within the Russian Church to this day a serious re-examination of liturgical questions has been hampered by the turmoil of the Revolution and an idealization of pre-Revolutionary Russian life. The consideration of some legitimate reforms such as the reading of the "secret" prayers and the liturgical usage of Russian is no doubt further stifled by their association with the schismatic movement in the 1920's known as the "Living Church."

Despite this, Orthodox theologians in the West would continue to affirm the connection

between these prayers and the participation of the laity in worship. Boris Sove, in his article, "The Eucharist in the Ancient Church and Contemporary Practice," observed that, "Following the introduction of the secret reading of the Anaphora, the Liturgy remained and could not do otherwise, a corporate Divine Service, but somehow the responsibility for the corporate prayer and offering was taken away from the laity." [9]

If we as Orthodox Christians would ask as one father did: "Where are the stories that tell us what kind of people we are as human beings," [10] we could conclude that they are found in our worship and, in particular, the divine liturgy. The liturgy, in fact, is the act by which the community remembers, celebrates, and affirms - each time - the retelling of the "good news" in its entirety. In hearing it, in saying "Yes" we acknowledge not only what we believe, but we say "Amen" to our Story as God's people.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Hugh Wybrew, *The Orthodox Liturgy*, (SVS Press, p. 86)
2. Ibid.
3. Fr. Pavlos Koumarianos, "Symbol and Reality in the Divine Liturgy, *Sourozh*, May 2000, p. 14.
4. quoted in Alexander Schmemmann, "Holy Things for the Holy," in *Great Lent*, p. 117.
5. "Adult Catechesis: A Complementary View," *Canadian Orthodox Messenger*, Autumn, 1997, p. 9.
6. "The Reasons for and the Dates of Replacing the Audible Recitation of Liturgical Prayers with Secret Recitation," *Bogoslovskiy Vestnik*, Sept., 1905. Translated by A. Smirensky. Available at: jacwell.org (Supplements)
7. John Shimchick, *The Responses of the Russian Episcopate Concerning Worship - 1905 and the Liturgical Situation in America*, Unpublished Master of Divinity Thesis, St. Vladimir's Seminary, 1980, pp. 75-76.
8. Bishop Alexander, *The Life of Father John of Kronstadt*. (SVS Press, 1979) p. 50.
9. In *Living Tradition*, Paris, 1937, p. 18. Translated by A. Smirensky. Available at: jacwell.org (Supplements)
10. Andrew Walker, *Telling the Story*. (London: SPCK, 1996) p. 2. ♦

## The Nuns' Story

by Mary Ann Bulko

It is interesting that this issue of *Jacob's Well* should be devoted to storytelling. I was a recent OCMC mission team member to Guatemala and one of the first papers received for preparation aptly referred to "learning, serving, and storytelling" as part of a model of ministry. My experience at the

Hogar Rafael Ayau Orphanage with its children, the staff, their country, my fellow missionaries, the journey, the Monastery, and especially the Sisters, has left me with dozens of stories nestled in my head. I shall begin here by sharing just one.

The five Sisters that make up the Monasterio Ortodoxo Lavra Mambre are an incredible group of women with multiple gifts, energy, fortitude, generosity and patience. In an age when role models might seem in short supply, I found their resourcefulness and faith to be a tremendous source of inspiration. Their sense of humor along with a sound sense of administrative order is indeed worthy of emulation. They are strong yet gentle women. And they have a love for God and the children in their care that defies the imagination.

One afternoon, Mother Ines, Abbess of the Monastery, and essentially responsible for the well-being of the orphanage, sat down with our team of eight missionaries. She had heard we were asking many questions. "What would you like to know?" she asked. For three hours of unhurried conversation, we listened, we questioned, we dialogued. It left all of us breathless. If anything was lacking in our queries, it was our own loss. Madre was extremely gracious and kind and a joy through it all!

The Hogar (home) was founded in 1856, five generations ago, by the great-great grandfather of Mother Ines. In fact, his last name Ayau is the same as hers. He and his wife along with their six children ran the orphanage. After a period of time, they required assistance and Rafael Ayau secured the aid of the Sisters of Charity to help run the orphanage.

In 1917 an earthquake hit and the Sisters of Charity were able to rebuild the church that stood on the grounds. In 1974 another earthquake struck and the government helped rebuild, but the Sisters were unable to handle all the needs. The orphanage, fairly well-run and well-known, was maintained up until 1980 but the time came when government began taking over institutions. There was mismanagement and there were problems. The orphanage was closed.

Mother Ines and Mother Maria were originally Roman Catholic nuns. One from Guatemala and one from the Philippines. Because of the political situation in her country, Mother Ines went to the Philippines. Mother Maria was principal of a high school there and both practiced in the Byzantine rite. (She adds, almost tongue in cheek, at that time they didn't acknowledge that Orthodoxy existed!) After a few years, and with a decline in monasticism, both began searching and looking for alternatives. Mother Ines went to Jerusalem to study with the Dominicans. While there she found a "lavre" (monastery) and phoned Mother Maria who came to join her in Upper Galilee. Their search was almost complete. They decided to return to Guatemala and ultimately made contact first with a priest, then a Metropolitan in Chambessey, Switzerland; and eventually an Orthodox Bishop who would take them under his wing (within the Antiochian Archdiocese).

The two women began teaching at a local university in order to raise funds to build a monastery. They lived with the parents of Mother Ines for six months. Per chance, they met a wealthy man at the school who was interested in helping them and donated land for the monastery. They've been working and building ever since.

"Miraculous things began," said Mother Ines. "They removed seven hundred tons of earth!" Meanwhile, the two Sisters rented a hut from Franciscans, three little rooms that included a chapel. They lived there for two years while continually working at the university. They were just across from the monastery construction site. Mother Ivonne, who had raised all her siblings after



the death of her parents, would come to meet the two Sisters and join them. They eventually moved from the little hut to the house. "It was very dangerous to build in this area, everything would be stolen," Mother Ines continued. But a prefabricated dwelling was created. Work took years and simultaneously a clinic was established with medicines and herbs and plants with medicinal value. At this time Sister Beatrice, an advocate of homeopathy joined them and then there were four. The nuns slowly gained support in their monastic endeavors and their clinic.

Years passed and the latest government power was searching for help with its overcrowded orphanages. The Sisters were approached. At about the same time, the Metropolitan had suggested the nuns find a church within the city limits. There was a match! An agreement was reached whereby the government gave permission for the property in Guatemala City to be used as an orphanage for a 50 year period and the Sisters agreed to oversee it as long as there was no governmental interference. With financial help from family, a bank, and a hither-to unknown trust, renovations began. Sister Lucia, originally from Honduras, meanwhile also learned about Orthodoxy in England and then joined the group during this period as well.

And so the Hogar Rafael Ayau Orphanage, a private but official recipient of government-sent children, required some six months of reparation. As the doors opened, the Sisters received one hundred fifteen children on October 13, 1997 and hired some much needed help. As of this date some five hundred children have passed through its doors.

The nuns of the orphanage having made remarkable strides still have much to do and far to go. Mother Maria, who holds a Masters in Business Administration and a Degree in Theology is praised by the Abbess: "She can manage the whole orphanage with one eye!" Mother Maria in speaking about the children's participation in church explains, "The prayers they hear are like raindrops. In time, they are saturated in it." Mother Ivonne, who could put any NYC taxi driver to shame with her maneuvering skills in city traffic, is a biochemist and delves in research and cures for what ails you. She works along with the support and expertise of Sr. Beatrice (who made my headache

go away without benefit of aspirin!) Mother Ivonne also claims to be able to discern an Uzzi from a .44 caliber as shots are often heard in the night outside the orphanage walls. Sr. Lucia works with the children, health-related issues, and devotes some time to ornithology. It is worth noting, however, all these achievements have not come easily. Guatemala is basically a Roman Catholic country and there have been negative repercussions. I would venture to say that there is some persecution of the nuns. But I also believe God is blessing them daily and directing their steps and labors, the fruits of which we have seen.

And then there is Mother Ines, who blends a mix of therapy, medicine, humor, and a spiritual life for the healing of children. She indeed knows how to treat the entire being and can soften the hardest of hearts. She has remarkable discipline, stamina and patience, and boundless love for the children. She still has many dreams, one of which is a summer camp for the children near the monastery, outside the fortress walls that surround them now. I firmly believe that this dream will one day come true. Although we along with the Sisters and the children spent three to four hours each day in church services at the orphanage, the heart of this nun wishes to dwell on the Monastery grounds. But for now, they strive to do God's will wherever they may be. I like to affectionately refer to Mother Ines, as a 'spiritual CEO' - it was truly a privilege and a blessing to have met her, the children, and the Sisters of the Hogar. ♦

***For more information on Missions:***

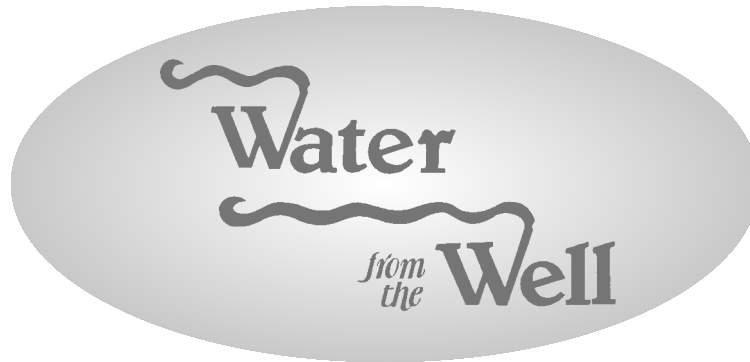
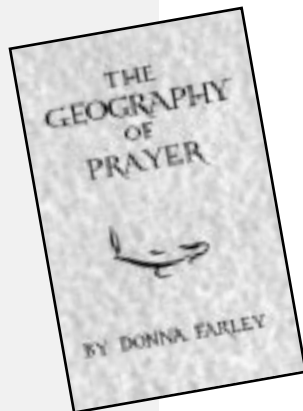
Write: OCMC, P.O. Box 4319,  
St. Augustine, FL 320805-4319

***or for Monetary Donations to the Orphanage:***

Hogar Rafael Ayau, Attention: Mother Ines,  
Section 2619, P.O. Box 02-5339,  
Miami, FL 33102-5339

FOR ADOPTION INFORMATION  
CONTACT THE ABOVE





## The Geography of Prayer

by **Donna Farley**

[from: *The Geography of Prayer*, 1999]

my midnight wakeful prayers  
the gift of insomnia  
I hold a globe cradled in my hands  
and the wave of prayer begins:

a slingshot drawn back to the west coast  
then as if the daylight terminator reversed itself  
sweeping eastward with mercy, healing,  
over the homes of people I know  
and people I don't  
mission in Comox, monks on the Sunshine Coast

members of our parish asleep in their homes  
awake with a sick child  
worried about losing a job  
waiting for labour pains

siren-wailing emergency  
workers in the night outside our window  
my own girls in their rooms, storing up  
dreams for school the next day  
wounded husband with arm splints  
and orthopedic pillow in the bed beside me

prayers undulating southward like the aurora  
borealis  
touching the Colorado high school horror  
passing a gentle hand over the slumbering brows  
of clergy families and writing acquaintances in  
San Francisco, L.A., El Cajon

leaping the Rockies in a single bound  
crossing the prairies like a speeding locomotive  
running roughshod over the Canadian Shield

scattering unseen mercy on all below  
passing unnoticed over

family and friends  
and lawmakers through time zone  
after time zone  
*a mari usque ad mare*

a southern detour  
rolling along tornado alley  
down to the Caribbean where our foster child  
is already awake and at school

leapfrogging the pond to the Old World  
where cousins of mine are hard at work midday  
and Aberfan is unforgotten  
on yet to the wound that bleeds most profusely  
now,

Kosovo  
beyond that to missionary friends in China,  
former foster children in India and Myanmar,  
my karate master in Japan

Paused on the Pacific Rim  
I remember I have left some holes in my web  
having no pins of my own to hang the threads upon  
in Mexico or South America or Africa  
I have to borrow Mel Gibson in Australia,  
and a National Geographic writer  
who fled the ruins of his marriage  
to cycle on pilgrimage around the  
edge of the continent  
and I can only imagine what few isolated  
research stations shiver in the Antarctic



But I can't be the only one who lies  
awake nights like this.  
Like lines of magnetic force  
caressing the world I imagine prayers  
emanating from the faithful  
wrapping the world up like string  
wound around the core of a baseball  
(will it bounce when it smacks  
up against the millennium?)

Faster than the internet they go  
not at the speed of light  
but at the speed of love

A deep breath and I launch myself  
back across the International date line  
remembering those that go down to the sea in  
ships  
and Leviathan and all the others too

Home again as the earth rolls away eastward  
revealing the morning sun.

Matushka Donna Farley lives in Surrey, British Columbia with her husband, Fr. Lawrence Farley (St. Herman of Alaska Mission). Her poetry has appeared in such diverse magazines as *Cornerstone*, *Our Family*, and *Epiphany Journal*. She is poet editor and seasonal columnist for *The Handmaiden*.

Her new poetry chapbook, *The Geography of Prayer* (from which the above was taken), explores the world of prayer. To order a copy, send a check or money order made out to Donna Farley for \$5.00 Can. or \$5.00 US (includes postage and \$1.00 donation to St. Herman's Building Fund) to:

9642-139 St.  
Surrey, B.C. V3T 5H3  
Canada

or order online from Skysong Press:

<http://www.bconnex.net/~skysong>

To inquire about readings or writers' workshops, contact Donna Farley at [lrfarley@sprint.ca](mailto:lrfarley@sprint.ca) ♦

## The Ongoing Story of Matushka Olga of Alaska

Bess Chakravarty is a member of the chapel at St. Vladimir's Seminary. Between 1997-1998, she studied iconography at St. Herman's Seminary with Daniel Ogan, himself trained by master iconographers in Russia. While living in Alaska she was able to travel and observe native life, spending some time in the village of Kwethluk, located on the Kuskokwim river. There she observed the gradually increasing local veneration for Matushka Olga Michael, deceased since 1978, the wife of the village's former pastor.

Matushka Olga's life was first made available in print by Fr. Michael Oleksa in his book, *Orthodox Alaska* (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1992, pp. 203-205). Based on this material and augmented with the accounts of Orthodox women who had experienced personal encounters (healing dreams and visions) with Matushka Olga, an article, "Matushka  
*cont'd. on next page*



Olga Michael: A Helper in Restoring the Work of God's Hands," appeared in *Jacob's Well* (Spring/Summer, 1997, pp. 5-7, available online at: [http://jacwell.org/articles/1997-SPRING-Matushka\\_olga.htm](http://jacwell.org/articles/1997-SPRING-Matushka_olga.htm)).

Matushka Olga's "ministry" may be considered a "living icon" of the Gospel used on the Sunday of the Last Judgment (Matthew 25:31-36). Her consoling presence has been offered on behalf of Christ to the "least of the brethren," to those who have been abused and marginalized, a sign of hope to those who have or will soon experience the death of loved ones. Her life of simplicity and generosity can inspire, energize, confront and challenge those

of us who struggle to live as Christians in this materialistic and egocentric society.

While the official recognition of Matushka Olga's sanctity and her canonization are up to God and will take place only in His time, Bess has offered this image of her as an aid for personal veneration. It is not intended for liturgical piety. Those interested in obtaining color copies may contact her at:

Bess Chakravarty  
33 Stonegate Rd., Ossining, NJ 10562  
914-945-0458  
Email: Besschak@aol.com ♦



## Scenes From St. Andrew's Camp



## New Pastor Assigned to Pearl River Parish

Hieromonk Joseph Hoffman has been assigned as pastor of the Orthodox Christian Church of the Transfiguration. He graduated from St. Vladimir's Seminary in 1991 and was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by His Eminence, Archbishop HERMAN at St. Tikhon's Monastery and to the Holy Priesthood by His Grace, Bishop TIKHON at his home parish of St. Nicholas Church, Mogadore, Ohio that summer.

He has served St. Michael the Archangel Church, Pueblo, Colorado; Holy Virgin Mary Cathedral, Los Angeles, California; Christ the Saviour Church, Byesville, Ohio, and most recently, Holy Trinity Cathedral, Chicago, Illinois, where he was dean.

He was tonsured to the rank of Stavophore Monk by His Eminence, Archbishop HERMAN at St. Tikhon's Monastery and given the name JOSEPH after the Venerable Joseph, Abbot of Volokolamsk in 1995. ♦

## Women's Retreat at St. Tikhon's

by *Jacqueline Jury*

On a beautiful Saturday, August 5th, the sixth annual Women's Retreat was held at St. Tikhon's Seminary in South Canaan, Pennsylvania. This event is sponsored by the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania's Department of Religious Education. Of the 150 women present, the majority were from within the Diocese, but there were also participants from other areas, including New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Ohio, and Connecticut.

The presenter this year was Frederica Mathewes-Green, columnist, commentator, and the author of several books: *Real Choices: Listening to Women, Looking for Alternatives to Abortion*; *Facing East: A Pilgrim's Journey into the Mysteries of*

*Orthodoxy*; and *At the Corner of East and Now: A Modern Life in Ancient Christian Orthodoxy*.

Ms. Mathewes-Green spoke about her journey to Orthodoxy, and gave readings from her latest book, *At the Corner of East and Now*, with additional commentary and testimonies.

In his closing remarks for the gathering at the end of the day, His Eminence Archbishop HERMAN, reminded the group that we must remember to rely upon and embrace the Holy Scriptures and the traditions of the Holy Orthodox Church, and above all, to try to live daily according to the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ and to love one another as He has loved us. ♦

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## Holy Resurrection Church Presents Scouting Rewards

On Sunday, June 4, 2000, twelve children of Holy Resurrection parish in Wayne, NJ were presented with a religious scouting award after arduous efforts during the Lenten season. The recipients are pictured here with Father Paul Kucynda (rear, center), their pastor. Third row recipients of the Chi-Rho Award for grades 4-5 (left to right): Clara Tosi, Scott Langlands, Joshua Tosi, and Maryanna Tosi. Second row (l to r) Krista Virgilito, (the following children earned the St. George Award for grades 1-3) Kristina Mijaljevic, Jason Langlands, and Larissa Tosi. Also awarded the St. George Award in the front row are (l to r): Kyra Reger, Edmund Moore, Anastasia Moore, and Marcus Virgilito. The scout mentors for each respective group were David Tosi and Lawrence Tosi. ♦



## The Gift of Life

The message from Fr. Leonid Kishkovsky mentioned only a need for help in providing "humanitarian aid." For the parishioners of the Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross in Medford, NJ it became the opportunity to participate in the gift of life. Deshi Edisheva and her son, Ayub, came to the United States from their home in Shali, Chechnya so that Ayub could have emergency surgery on his heart at St. Christopher's Children's Hospital in Philadelphia. While the primary arrangements were made by the Russian Gift of Life organization,

*Cont. 'd on next page*

## Fr. Steven Belonick Honored at Testimonial Dinner

by Michele Constable

An outpouring of love from his spiritual children surrounded Fr. Steven Belonick at a testimonial dinner given in his honor at St. Michael's Recreation Center in Binghamton, NY on June 11, 2000. Fr. Steven has faithfully served the Dormition of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church in Binghamton for 17 years and the parish is profoundly grateful to God for these many years of service. Fr. Steven has been our teacher, example of faith, spiritual guide, and friend, while always being a loving spiritual father to each of us.

Evidence of this love and friendship was seen at the dinner as representatives from parish organizations presented gifts and good wishes. Master of ceremonies Michael Soroka showed his creativity in leading a barbershop quartet in songs with

words directed toward Father about the joys of Binghamton. Senior Steward Bob Carpenter presented Father with a testimonial plaque, with words chosen by Michael Sopchak and signed by the parish council, a monetary gift, and a watch. Those who

hear Father Steven's sermons think they are wonderful and inspirational; in fact, Father was presented with tapes of the last four years' worth of sermons with which he fed us the word of God. Occasionally, however, he

is teased about the length of his sermons, and the watch will remind him of that.

Father was given two memory books. One was compiled by Marlene Yacos and included general pictures of church activities as well as personal pictures, prayers, thoughts, letters, and good wishes from individual parish families. The church school children also made a book with each child writing his thoughts or drawing a picture for Father. Anastasia Handwerk helped present this book and expressed her feelings of appreciation for the welcome she felt in coming to Dormition Church. She and her family have become very involved in the life of the parish since coming to us a couple of years ago, but she expressed her concern that at the beginning she wasn't sure how she would be received since she was not Russian. Fr. Steven drew a chuckle from the audience when he said he felt exactly the same way when he first came.

There were many sincere tributes during the day from a grateful parish family, and the assurance that we will keep Fr. Steven and his family in our prayers as he will remember us always. After spending the past year serving the Binghamton parish and working part time at St. Vladimir's Seminary, Fr. Steven will begin his full time duties there in August, serving as Director of Recruitment and Public Relations. His wife Deborah will also be working as Associate Editor of the Seminary Press.

Dormition Parish has been blessed with their presence and we wish them many happy years! ♦



Fr. Steven and Matushka Deborah with their sons, Daniel and Paul

### *Gift of Life...from previous page*

Deshi and Ayub's pre and post surgery accommodations were provided almost exclusively by parishioners of the parish, particularly: Anne Novitzky, Svitlana and Thomas Lane, and Diana Pasca. Josef Gulka, the church choir director, offered a great deal of time and energy in coordinating these efforts.

The ongoing tragedy in Chechnya seems so far away from the concerns of most Americans. As Moslems, Deshi and Ayub provided the chance to see another side and face of the story and to hear about the details of war from the perspective of innocent civilians. The differences of religious background did not diminish the mutual affirmation of God's gift of life to Ayub.

Deshi and Ayub returned to Russia in late July. ♦



## Newly Ordained & Assigned Pastors

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*Fr. Michael Medis and family (Matushka Kim, Rebecca, Charity, Grace, Andrew and Hope) of St. Gregory Palamas Church in Glen Gardner, NJ (formerly known as Flemington) photographed here with his family prior to his ordination to the Priesthood.*



*Fr. Stephen Miller of St. John Chrysostom Mission in Clermont, NJ with Matushka Jackie and their sons, Joseph and John.*

## Long Island Parish Raises Funds For Orthodox Christian Mission Center

*by Lisa DeLuca*

"[As a mother] it was difficult to witness the birth of a child [who would lack] basic necessities. So we distributed care packages containing infant outfits, mother's clothing, blankets, [medicine, formula] and necessary baby supplies to 300 women. More than half of the women had nothing when they came to the hospital. The majority of women didn't have their husbands to comfort them."

This letter was written by an Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) worker, stationed in maternity hospitals in war-torn Albania. Her letter was shared with attendees at a fund raising dinner organized by The Orthodox Church of St. John the Theologian in Shirley New York. More than \$1,000 was raised for the OCMC charity. Eighty people attended the sold-out event at the Holiday Inn in Ronkonkoma.

A raffle was held which was responsible for most of the event's profit. Dozens of prizes were given away including a basket of top-shelf liquors, baskets of cosmetics, ethnic cookbooks, and bottles of wine. All of the prizes were donated by parishioners and parish organizations such as the Sisterhood.

John Paterakis, former Treasurer of the OCMC, was the featured speaker. He shared with the audience stories from OCMC missionaries who run programs in 25 countries. He described the

OCMC's efforts to educate more than 500 children in Haiti; care for orphaned children in Mexico, Slovakia, Ethiopia, Madagascar, and Guatemala; provide emergency food and shelter for women and children in Cleveland Ohio; provide health care to the poor in Indiana, Haiti and Kenya; and give food and medicine to destitute children in India.

According to Mr. Paterakis, the OCMC derives much of its operating support from small, local fundraisers like the St. John's event. Mary Ann Noon, a member of the St. John's Parish Council coordinated the event. "We weren't sure how much we could help the OCMC - we are a small parish but we are growing. But the generosity of many people showed us that the interest in supporting the OCMC is clearly there. It was a good start and we hope to build on this next year." ♦



*Sal Del Gigante, and Mark and Natalie Jekel enjoy the festivities at a fund raising dinner and raffle organized by St. John the Theologian in Shirley, New York. The event raised more than \$1,000 for the Orthodox Christian Mission Center. (Photo by: C. Katechis)*

## St. Vladimir Orthodox Catholic Church Marks Its 85th Anniversary

The 85th Anniversary of the St. Vladimir Orthodox Catholic Church of Trenton, New Jersey was observed on Sunday, July 16. The Divine Liturgy was celebrated by the Pastor, the Very Rev. Paul Shafran, the Very Rev. Sergius Kuharsky, and the Rev. Deacon Michael Sochka. Responses were sung by the a capella choir directed by SaraLee Pindar. A festal procession with Church banners, icons, intercessory prayers and readings from the four Gospels was formed around the exterior of the Church following Divine Liturgy. At the conclusion of the liturgical services a photograph of the parishioners was taken in front of the Church. The banquet that followed was held in Daria Hall adjacent to the Church. During the banquet Father Shafran related the history of the parish in chronological order. He also introduced parishioners who were children when the parish was organized. These included: Nadia Rilik Boschuk, Pauline Sadowsky Denko, Olga Guretsky Conte, Nadia Chebunin Waters, Mary Chady Sikos, Zinna Shalagin Kusnirik, Anastasia Rusetsky Kean, Zinaida Venslavsky Cook.

The Committee responsible for preparing the anniversary celebration consisted of the following:  
Dinner - Anna Cheslock and Nina Laushell;  
Decorations and Table Arrangements - Zinna Kusnirik, Dorothy Lovchuk and Dorothy Kish;  
Printing of Program - Ludwig Koerte and Dorothy Luvchuk;  
Tickets - Mildred Skubanicz and Ann Walczak.

The Church of St. Vladimir was erected in 1916 on the corner of Grand and Stanton Streets in Trenton, NJ. The Church building was enlarged twice - 1952 and 1968. The interior of the Church is richly decorated with Byzantine iconography executed by the renowned Iconographer Pimin Sofronov. Last year, after two years of tedious and professional expertise, the sixty year old iconography was cleaned and renovated. Presently, the crossed and cupolas on the roof are being repaired, gilded and painted. ♦



## 18,000 Dolls Later

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Fr. Yaroslav Sudick, pastor of Holy Trinity Church, Yonkers and parishioner, Bob Piwinski travelled to Russia earlier this year to offer the proceeds of a tremendous fundraising effort. Raising \$15,000 from the sale of 18,000 small matryoshka dolls and an additional \$10,000 from a benefit concert held last fall they brought funds which will be used for food, medicine, and vitamins for Russian orphans. After visiting orphanages in the cities of Moscow, Cherepovets, Yaroslav, Vladimir, and Pskov with Fr Yaroslav, Bob Piwinski commented that, "The sheer number of kids was so sad. Most orphanages looked like warehouse - bars on the windows and a big iron fence around the property - but the people there seemed to care about the children."



Additional funds are hoped to be raised from the sale of tapes of last year's concert, featuring the Dessoff Choirs in a performance of Rachmaninoff's "The Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom." These are available for \$10.00. ♦

## A Weekend in Cambridge

By Dr. Elizabeth Theokritoff

*The Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies* will not be unfamiliar to readers of *Jacob's Well*. The main initiator of the project, and now principal of the Institute, is Fr. John Jillions, rector of Holy Trinity Church in Railway until 1994; some will have heard the presentation on the work of the *Institute* which he and Bishop Kallistos gave at last year's All-American Council.

In January this year, the *Institute* began its second term with another of its intensive weekend courses intended to lead to a diploma in theology for part-time students. I delivered the course entitled, "Worship as Theology." It followed weekends on interpretation of Scripture (Fr. John Breck), introduction to liturgy (Fr. Gregory Woolfenden) and the doctrine of the Holy Trinity (Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia).

Like many features of the *Institute*, these weekend courses are not quite like anything else in Orthodox education. On Friday evening, some 40-50 students race from their weekday jobs to converge on Wesley House, where the *Institute* has its offices (an indication in itself of the fruitful spirit of inter-Christian cooperation within the Cambridge Theological Federation, to which the *Institute* belongs). A few students are local, with several more from London (little more than an hour away by train), and many from further afield

- such as the Greek-American dentist now studying theology in Durham, some 200 miles to the north. A few come regularly from abroad - the world travellers' award going to a couple from Seattle, who come over for the weekend once a month during term-time! Even on the level of part-time students, the international significance of the *Institute* is already becoming clear.

Worship and prayer are central to the life of the *Institute*, and thus before the first lecture, students and staff gather for Vespers in the little church of St Peter, some half a mile from the lecture hall. In this simple stone building where God has been worshipped for a thousand years, one is first of all reminded of the vital function of candles in church services, regulating the interplay of light and darkness - for there is no other source of light here. With parts of its structure dating back to Saxon times, this fine historic church has recently been restored after standing derelict for some years, and has providentially been made available for use by the Orthodox community in Cambridge. Worshipping in a place where the prayer of so many generations has permeated the very walls is in itself an extraordinary experi-



Fr. Jillions, outside of the *Institute's* entrance at Wesley House.

ence, a sobering testimony to man's capacity and vocation to make all God's creatures, down to the very stones, vibrate with the hymn to His glory.

Two characteristics of the student body are most striking: their diversity, and their unity. Ranging in age from 20s to 60s, they represent virtually all the Orthodox ethnic groups present in Britain - and include at least one Oriental Orthodox as well as some non-Orthodox Christians. Their educational background is similarly varied, from Bulgarian exchange students reading theology in Oxford to Cypriot lorry-drivers from London; they include doctors, physicists and computer experts fascinated and sometimes frustrated by a totally new way of thinking. These very varied levels and backgrounds make for an unusual and exhilarating group, as well as presenting a challenge to the lecturers and more particularly to the academic staff, Fr. John and Mother Joanna, who work with the students individually and guide and mark their written work.

But the unity and cohesion of the student body is no less impressive. One comment keeps recurring among those who have participated in weekends so far: "everyone was so happy to be together." The significance of this "being together" needs to be underlined. With the exception of the Russian patriarchal parishes, most Orthodox congregations in Britain are largely first-generation immigrant (and have no educational activities for adults), and converts to the Church are poorly integrated into their dioceses: against this background, a forum has at last been created in which Orthodox of all backgrounds gather on an equal footing to explore together the faith that unites them. There can be little doubt that for the students here, getting to know each other is an important part of discovering the unsuspected riches of the tradition they share under so many differing forms. And it is clear that such a discovery is in process. After some of the lectures, the students divided up to work together in small groups, often with spontaneous guidance from the more knowledgeable of their number or from one of the *Institute's* full-time graduate students; and listening to snippets of their animated discussion, one could only be moved to see them discovering, through detailed examination of texts we hear year by year, something of the mind of the Church

Fathers and the scriptural language in which they composed "the harmonious hymn of theology."

Perhaps the most significant comments on the *Institute's* courses so far, echoed by several of the students, express profound appreciation of the balance achieved between academic rigour and spiritual life. It is for this above all that the *Institute* exists, and for which it is particularly well-placed with its ties both to Cambridge University and to Orthodox parish life: to promote scholarship and study which is honest and courageous, and at the same time dedicated to building up the Church and allowing her members to grow in knowledge of God.

In this first year of operation, the *Cambridge Institute* faces all the hurdles of a radically new venture - and, furthermore, one operating on a shoestring, with no regular sources of income. These weekends are both exhilarating and draining, and the dedicated team of *Institute* staff and volunteers (some of them doubling up as students) have to be everywhere. When they are not organising or attending lectures, they are preparing buffet-meals, arranging choir practices or running other errands. Little, at this stage, is straightforward or simple. We saw a graphic image of this when the Sunday Liturgy rapidly gave place to something like an ecclesiastical version of Burnham Wood coming to Dunsinane, as candle stands and anolois, lately rooted firmly in the church, progressed down the path to Matushka Denise's waiting car to be whisked over to the church used by the parish for weekday services, there to be reassembled with minutes to spare before an Anglican service began.

To be involved in any way with the *Institute* in these early days, to share even at a distance in the dynamism and enthusiasm of a new venture carried forward by a group of people with vision and energy, is a rare privilege, and an experience to be remembered with keen nostalgia in years to come. But these are also times of uncertainty and unremitting hard work, while the project lives by the prayers, and the material help in various forms, of those who are convinced that it has a vital role to play in English-speaking Orthodoxy.

[Dr. Theokritoff is a parishioner of Holy Trinity Church, Randolph, NJ.] ♦



# Psalmic Music in Orthodox Liturgy as Foundation, Movement, and Ministry (PART 1\*)

by Mark Bailey

## Introduction

The meaning of any given text relies heavily on its content, structure, and style. The psalms are especially rich in these elements, encompassing through the eyes of a great king the multi-dimensional and sometimes brutally honest reality of humanity's relationship to God, and God's relationship to humanity.[1] Orthodox Christians, among others, also propose that the Gospel message of Christ further enhances and amplifies psalmic meaning, stressing thematic continuity and linkage between pre-Christianity and Christianity itself. That Christ fulfilled written law and prophecy emphatically suggests that He also fulfills all things currently, and that life for the Christian is always experienced by virtue of His illumination. Therefore, it is a natural Orthodox inclination to look beyond exact historical boundaries and conditions as they might be revealed in the Old Testament to discover other dimensions of meaning in the context of an ongoing faith.

Meaning, concerning the psalms in particular, can exist on more than one level. This especially occurs when the auditory dimension is added to the literary component, i.e. when the psalms are actually sung and heard in worship. Conditions such as liturgical circumstance - what in worship is appointed to take place and why a certain psalm is chanted - alongside musical setting structure, and even use of cantorial, choral, or congregational singing in any particular form or combination may add significantly to the message of a particular psalm as it is encountered in the ears of the faithful listener. In other words, specific aspects of textual or literal meaning may remain unchanged, but the actual faith encounter with meaning may broaden and re-shape as the psalms are enacted within the context of liturgy. One may ask, therefore, what more can a psalm actually mean when it

is sung by a certain person or group of people in worship, at a certain point, linked to a certain act of event? Furthermore, what are the ramifications of multi-dimensional psalmic meaning for North American Orthodoxy today?

## Early Christian and pre-Christian influences

To explore all levels of functional meaning in the psalms first requires an examination of when and how psalmic function was originally assigned within the early Christian community. Of particular importance is that these texts, as inherited from the cult of Israel, were meant to be sung, which is honored in many Christian traditions even today, especially by the Orthodox. While a justifiably



broad historical survey lies outside the scope of this paper, a couple summary points elucidate the matter.

To start, early Christians of the pre-Constantinian era needed to hear their faith, since they lived their lives in an intensively auditory environment, and since their encounters with Christ had not yet been canonically documented in what would become the New Testament. Belief, in the formal sense, was primarily communicated through gathering, preaching, and spontaneous proclamation — in other words a charismatic oral encounter enlivening the image and message of

*Many of the topics within this article helped to provide the framework for an interactive workshop Mark Bailey led at Christ Our Saviour Church in Paramus, New Jersey, entitled: "Vocal Technique and Musical Awareness in Orthodox Church Singing." The participants worked on vocal and choral techniques, sang through several antiphonal settings, and discussed the impact liturgical awareness has on how church music is perceived and sung.*

Christ. In fact, as Edward Foley writes, “oral performance...[is]...at the heart of the early Christian message, and [it] generated the new religious form of truth known as the gospel. It was only through this auditory kerygma...that belief was possible.”[2] In worship specifically, music played a central role in the expression of that Christian auditory kerygma. Foley also writes, “to celebrate worship without music would be completely unintelligible to Christians of the first centuries. In order to enter into the world of early Christianity and comprehend the place and function of music in that world, we have to imagine and penetrate an auditory environment very different from our own.”[3]

Therefore, to utter and hear the words and meaning of faith was essential to early Christians, as was music in their worship. But, how does this relate specifically to the psalms? In other words, how did the psalms initially manifest themselves in early Christianity, and how did they continue to function during this period? It is beyond dispute, as mentioned, that the psalms were originally written to be sung by the ancient cult of Israel, but the assumption that they were written to be sung exclusively in worship is, as some scholars have recently discovered, a problematic proposal.[4]

An eye opening reality, in fact, is that chanting the entire Psalter in worship as a comprehensive liturgical songbook is perhaps a uniquely Christian phenomenon only after the third century. Beginning with pre-Christianity, not all psalms were necessarily written for temple worship in the ancient Hebrew world.[5] Foley elucidates this point:

the psalms were intimately related to Israel's cult...[but]...[t]his does not mean...that all or even most of the psalms were related to Temple worship. Very few of the psalms have specific or identifiable liturgical references that allow them to be linked with any certainty to worship or, more importantly, to worship in the Temple.[6]

In fact, formative Christianity i.e. the first century shows relatively little evidence that the psalms were officially or comprehensively used in sung worship as well, although perhaps they were emerging as liturgical readings, as text fragments referred to in preaching, as part of the early

Christian table ritual or Eucharist, and as a traditional and structured poetic biblical source now reinterpreted in light of the Jesus experience.[7]

The second and third centuries, however, brought “ample witness to the singing of Davidic psalms in various Christian gatherings,”[8] and after the third century, they take on unavoidable liturgical presence and shape. Therefore, while not all psalms may have been written and appointed for liturgical use in the temple, they all were eventually embraced as part of the core auditory expression of faith in fourth century Christianity, i.e. the time when Christian worship was legally recognized and eventually favored by the state.[9] In fact, a famous quote attributed to St. John Chrysostom not only suggests the popularity of the psalms in fourth century worship, but implies that they also served as a pervasive and relevant presence throughout Christian culture and everyday life:

If the faithful are keeping vigil in the church,  
David is first, middle, and last.  
If at dawn anyone wishes to sing hymns,  
David is first, middle, and last.  
In the holy monasteries, among the ranks of the  
heavenly warriors,  
David is first, middle, and last.  
In the convents of virgins, who are imitators of  
Mary,  
David is first, middle, and last.  
In the deserts where men hold converse with  
God,  
David is first, middle, and last.[10]

To underscore further the importance of Byzantine Christian psalmody, the quote actually mimics poetic psalm structure with a common refrain written into the text, as one finds in Psalm 136.[11] Therefore, ancient Byzantine Christianity, which is the great liturgical ancestor of modern Orthodoxy, comprehensively embraced the psalms at the heart of Christian expansion, rooted in Constantinople and then spreading throughout the empire.

***Psalmic Music...as Foundation***

Orthodox worship as a series or cycle of structured ritual events can vary slightly or greatly from nation to nation, from region to region, or even from one neighboring community to the

next. Even those traditions that are direct ancestors of Hellenic-Byzantine Christianity - Slavic Orthodoxy for instance - sometimes embrace rubrical practices at certain points in worship that boldly distinguish these traditions liturgically from their ancestors (the question of language and musical style aside).[12] Yet, there is enough common liturgical material and action across the board to make Orthodox worship generally recognizable in spite of particular cultural differences. Perhaps the most important quality, again in terms of rubrical structure, is the prominence of the psalms in each service. In fact, one can even navigate worship by the psalms. They often introduce major liturgical segments and prepare or accompany major liturgical acts, between which other liturgical components such as litanies, special hymns, or prayers move the faithful from one portion of worship to the next.[13]

More striking, perhaps, is that numerous other textual structures, such as troparia and stichera, written to honor and elucidate Orthodox feasts, saints, and other historical acts of faith, often attach themselves to the psalms, usually between the verses. This affords the assembly the unique opportunity to embrace psalmic meaning not as the faith of Israel that anticipated a Messianic coming, but in light of a Messiah who has already come. Consider the Paschal antiphon that begins with "Let God arise..." (Ps. 68:1) to which the troparion, as refrain, replies, "Christ is risen..." As David Drillock writes, "[this] functions as the Church's interpretation of the psalm...[t]he resurrection of Christ from the dead is the fulfillment of the prophecy uttered by the psalmist." [14] A second level of meaning, as previously described, is therefore quintessentially apparent in this example. One could not

encounter psalmic meaning in light of an actual Messiah, a risen Christ, simply by reading through the psalm text per se. It is a level of meaning one only encounters by singing and embracing these interpretational psalm components that blend pre-Christian and Christian texts in worship, thus articulating and stressing the fundamental revelation that Christ fulfills the law and the faith of Israel.

### *Psalmic Music...as Movement*

The singing of psalms, especially for the ancient Byzantine church, often indicates movement by procession. The idea that one would have entered into the worship space and stood almost motionless for the duration of the service would have been a foreign, if not ridiculous, notion to the early Byzantines. Processions portray a church with sacred destinations and common points of arrival. On Holy Friday, for instance, the faithful solemnly accompany Christ's body in procession so that they may rest him in the tomb. For a time

in Byzantium, the faithful would arrive at the great Hagia Sophia for Divine Liturgy only after having moved in procession throughout the city, stopping at various other churches and holy places along the way to celebrate stational services. Once at the monumental church, the processions continued: the people entered singing Psalm 95 and the patriarch then continued to his throne to the singing of "Holy God," originally a responsorial psalm antiphon. A little later, after the Gospel had been proclaimed and preached, the Great Entrance took place - and it was just that - to the singing of the Cherubikon, also a responsorial psalm

antiphon originally. Finally, during the Koinonikon or Communion psalm antiphon, the faithful would move in procession to the chalice.

Today, movement seems to exist noticeably for many Orthodox churches only on special occa-



sions, such as Pascha or at a funeral service; that is to say, processions in the fullness of their physical dimensions and liturgical relevance, by and large, are now absent from the regular Sunday gathering.[15] Two conditions, among others, help explain this. First, today's churches are generally smaller with less room for movement (which can be further inhibited by pews where they exist). Second, Orthodox services are now directed to take place almost entirely inside the church building, under one roof, so to speak. A second level of psalmic meaning, however, is sacrificed as a result. A verse such as "Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving" (Ps. 95:2), as it might have been chanted at the introit or little entrance during the third antiphon, should not only conjure a mental image of the faithful standing before God the King and Creator, but should actually compel them to move into the liturgical space designated as His kingdom on earth.[16] And the rest of the verse, "let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise" can equally be seen in this context as a liturgical direction acknowledging and reflecting the musical nature of the entrance. What our Christian ancestors seem to be saying is that, as psalms are chanted in procession, they not only enable and guide liturgical movement as their textual meaning reaches the hearts of the faithful, but they can also compel the physical response, thus engaging those gathered in worship multi-dimensionally.

### *Psalmic Music...as Ministry*

Based on historical precedent, Orthodox Christianity is a responsorial faith. In fact, the uniquely responsorial nature of the Christian assembly is evident in several ancient manuscripts, especially the New Testament. Early Christians were known to respond enthusiastically with acclamations such as "Amen," "Alleluia," and even "Hosanna." [17] These responses were brief, emphatic, and they indicated the interactive and charismatic nature of early Christian worship. [18] They also portrayed the Christian faithful engaged in dialogues of faith. To internalize the gospel message on hearing it was not enough: it had to be audibly confirmed through response.

The responsorial psalm antiphon - as the most popular and extensively employed performance structure used to sing the psalms in Byzantine wor-

ship - fit perfectly the dialogic character of early Christians. [19] As well, it formalized the ministry of the liturgical singer. In responsorial performance, according to the ancient model, the cantor or cantors would announce a particular appointed psalm through intonation, and in the same manner the psalm's refrain - which was either a text fragment from the psalm or an "Alleluia" (troparia refrains came slightly later). Then they would chant the verses, to which the assembly as liturgical respondents would sing the response. The refrain, therefore, as the element of consistent textual repetition, supplied the framework of common thought and response for any series of unique and contrasting psalm verses. And since the refrain text was drawn from the psalm itself, the thematic connection between it and the verses was unavoidable.

This ancient practice reveals several things about the character of Byzantine Orthodox liturgical execution. First, it underscores the continuing role of the congregation to listen and to respond as a unified body gathered in a common dialogue of faith. This role is at the heart of the congregation's liturgical ministry to confirm audibly their scriptural faith on behalf of all. As well, the singers fulfill two primary roles as part of their own ministerial offering: 1) to prepare and execute those textual and musical components that change from verse to verse, and furthermore from week to week, feast to feast, and season to season; and 2) to introduce, to lead, and to support the assembly in the singing of its own responses. Therefore, a second level of meaning evolving from the execution of the psalms in traditional responsorial format describes and clarifies both the ministry of the liturgical singer, as well as the ministry of the liturgical congregation. [20]

The psalms, from a slightly different perspective, also minister to worship itself. Often a particular psalm is sung in preparation of a liturgical event. The prokeimenon, for instance, prepares the Epistle reading; likewise, the following psalm verses and Alleluia refrain prepare the Gospel reading. As responsorial psalm antiphons, these two components engage the entire assembly in a liturgical dialogue as previously described, thus collecting the worshippers into a dynamic and unified body, perfectly prepared to receive the scriptural



message. That the textual content of a psalm from the Old Testament can prepare for the reception of revelation from the New Testament underscores the church's interpretation of fulfillment in Christ, again, a comprehensive meaning attainable only when the psalms are carefully placed and actually sung in worship.

The difference between the psalms as written text and as liturgical performance, therefore, has profound impact on worship and the spiritual enrichment of the faithful. As Gerald H. Wilson points out, "What might otherwise seem overly repetitious in a written text achieves great energy when recited orally in antiphonal form, drawing the participants into the ethos of thanksgiving and driving home the major theme of the psalm in a powerful way." [21] True, Wilson is referring specifically to the aforementioned Psalm 136 where the refrain is actually written into the text, but the concept applies broadly to any psalm that is captured on paper in whatever literary form that one may simply read. The psalms not only communicate meaning more dynamically and multi-dimensionally in auditory antiphonal performance, but they add immediacy to worship as well. When the gathered faithful actually "discuss" a psalm through antiphonal singing, an historic document turns into a renewed expression of living faith. That is to say, when the faithful gather at Pascha, hear the clergy intone "Let God arise," and then proclaim in song, "Christ is Risen..." it is not so much that they are making an historical acknowledgment as it is an immediate and profoundly powerful expression of a faith which is alive today.

*\*The second part of this article will be printed in the next issue of Jacob's Well. The following endnotes have been abbreviated. For the complete article and endnotes, please visit the Supplements section on the Jacob's Well website at [www.jacwell.org](http://www.jacwell.org).*

**ENDNOTES**

[1]. Similarly, George Barrois writes, "the goal of the psalms is to promote an immediate relationship with God; and, even when...[the psalms]...reflect the concrete human predicament, they depend less on temporal conditions." See George A. Barrois, *The Face of Christ in the Old Testament*, (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Press, 1974), 136.  
[2]. Edward Foley, *Foundations of Christian Music: The Music of Pre-Constantinian Christianity*, (Collegeville,

Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 23. This article relies heavily on Foley's important and unique book on early Christian music.  
[3]. *Ibid.*, 5.  
[4]. *Ibid.*, 37-38.  
[5]. *Ibid.*, 37.  
[6]. *Ibid.*  
[7]. Foley, *Foundations*, 75  
[8]. *Ibid.*, 94.  
[9]. Foley offers an interesting hypothesis on why the psalms "became a constitutive element of Christian worship after the third century" in *Ibid.*, 67.  
[10]. Pseudo-Chrysostom, *De poenitentia*, PG LXIV, 12-13, in David Drillock, "Liturgical Song in the worship of the Church," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 41:2-3 (1997), 186.  
[11]. The refrain being "for his steadfast love endures forever." (RSV).  
[12]. Among many examples, the Slavs sing the Beatitudes (Matt: 5:3-12) as the third antiphon of the Divine Liturgy (non-festal), the Greeks do not.  
[13]. One may travel through Great Vespers by way of the psalms, for instance. "Come let us worship" - a reference to Ps. 95:6 - is followed by "Bless the Lord" (Ps. 104), which is followed by "Blessed is the Man" (Ps. 1 etc.), which is followed by "Lord I Call upon Thee" (Ps. 141 etc.) - with the insertion of "Gladsome Light," which is followed by the prokeimenon (a psalm text that generally depends on the day of the week) and so forth, with litanies and special prayers linking one psalmic component to the next.  
[14]. Drillock, "Liturgical Song," 192.  
[15]. There is a greater sense of procession or liturgical movement when a hierarch is present for Liturgy.  
[16]. See Paul Meyendorff, ed. and trans., *St. Germanus of Constantinople: On the Divine Liturgy* (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Press, 1984), 19.  
[17]. Foley, *Foundations*, 77  
[18]. *Ibid.*  
[19]. See Robert Taft, SJ, *Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding*, (Washington, D.C.: The Pastoral Press, 1984), 157-159.  
[20]. This thesis, and the accompanying material within this portion of the paper, is based on Mark Bailey, "The Ministry and Song of the Liturgical Assembly," *Jacob's Well*, (Spring/Summer 1998), 26-27.  
[21]. Wilson, "Types of Psalms."  
[22]. Taft, *Beyond East and West*, 175-176.  
[23]. Simon Azar'in and Ivan Nasedka, "Zhitie I pogvigi arkhimandrita Dionisiia" [The life and exploits of Archimandrite Dionisiy] in Vladimir Morosan, *Choral Performance in Pre-Revolutionary Russia* (Madison, Connecticut: Musica Russiaca, 1986), 37.  
  
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## WHITHER ORTHODOXY IN AMERICA?

by Fr. Robert Dick

To St. Innocent, the sale of Alaska to the United States was providential, a divine gift presenting Orthodoxy with an evangelical opportunity, a chance to permeate the plurality of peoples and cultures that inhabit North America. Yet, a century later, in spite of our robust numbers, the eminent sociologist Peter Berger has observed that “Orthodoxy has remained virtually invisible” [1] on the North American cultural landscape. Why has our evangelical witness foundered in a pluralistic context? If we are to fulfill the Gospel mandate to teach all nations, how do we overcome the unique barriers presented by pluralism? These questions were central to a dialogue, convened on May 17 in Boston, between Orthodox clergy and sociologists entitled “*Orthodoxy in the American Pluralistic Situation.*” This consultation was made possible through the generous support of Joann and Charles Dickinson. If Orthodoxy is to be a force in shaping American culture, then we must begin to grasp the nature and power of pluralism.

Peter Berger, head of the *Institute for the Study of Economic Culture* at Boston University, under whose auspices this consultation convened, opened the day-long conference with a presentation on the nature of pluralism and its effects on public institutions and consciousness. The term “pluralism,” coined in the 1920s, was applied to “the co-existence, under times of civic peace, of people of different ethnic backgrounds.” The hallmark of pluralism is “demonopolization,” a change from a homogeneous to a heterogeneous worldview. Consistent with this shift toward plurality is the tendency for all worldviews or beliefs to be consciously relegated to the realm of personal preference.

The result of this tolerant “pick and choose” environment is a “patchwork” religion. Each believer will tend to embrace those tenets that resonate with his or her personal worldview and reject the rest. In short, the pressure of pluralism pushes every believer toward heresy. Instead of receiving God as He has revealed and continues to reveal Himself in time and space, the believer constructs a god according to his or her image and likeness, thus, domesticating God’s Word within a relativistic

mindset. In such a milieu, the Word of God is reduced to merely one among many, part of an internal cacophony deprived of transfiguring power and unable to transcend the self. Such secular thinking has permeated Orthodox Church life. This was the realization of Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, who thirty years ago grappled with the corrosive effects of secularism in a series of articles outlining the liturgical, canonical and spiritual problems arising from the encounter of Orthodoxy with American pluralism.

In the second presentation of the day, Fr. Robert Arida, rector and dean of Holy Trinity Cathedral in Boston, re-examined Fr. Schmemmann’s clarion call to American Orthodoxy in “*A Retrospective of Father Alexander Schmemmann’s Analysis of Orthodox Spirituality in America.*” [2] As an illustration of Fr. Schmemmann’s concern for the health of the Orthodox Church, Fr. Robert directed attention to the rise of the “religious” corporation and its debilitating effects on Orthodoxy. In such a schema, the business world replaces the Kingdom of God as the paradigm of ecclesial organization. Following this model, the priest is reduced to the status of employee, the spiritual health of the parish is determined by the size of the bank accounts whose preservation and enhancement is the sole work of the governing board, and the worship life exists to fulfill the personal agendas of the corporation “shareholders.” All of this is promoted as essential to the “renaissance of parish life.” Yet, such polity is “antithetical to the very renaissance” of Orthodoxy in America, and symptomatic “of a deeper crisis, i.e., the capitulation of Orthodoxy to secularism.”

Fr. Robert noted that secularism presents Orthodoxy with a great opportunity—to bear witness to the sanctifying and saving Gospel free from political entanglements. Historically, Orthodoxy has sought alliance with the State. This symphony created the popular notion that the aims of Church and State were one and the same. To counter this distortion, the rise of monasticism “reminded all Christians of their calling to be living martyrs—to be a people who courageously maintain a creative tension between God’s kingdom and the world.”

In America, Orthodoxy must confront a new situation. The First Amendment of the Constitution allows the Orthodox Church to be faithful to the Gospel free from government interference. It is this newfound freedom, however, that seems to have propelled the Church into crisis. The historical model is no longer applicable, yet, we continue to live as if nothing has changed. We petition the civil authorities on behalf of the Mother Churches with Old World concerns all the while shunning engagement with American culture. In our continued romanticization of past glories, we deny the presence and operation of the Spirit here and now. Such denial blunts any attempt at evangelical outreach. One only need examine the Protestant experience in this new land to see the frightful harvest of anthropocentric faith that accommodation with the State has produced, a faith denuded of content. Father Robert concluded by pointing out that "Father Alexander was a sober voice reminding us that if we are to be faithful to our calling as the Church in America, we must overcome the fear of American secularism." The transfiguration of this new land depends upon it. Otherwise, we are destined to inhabit only the margins of American culture, being regarded as an oddity like the Old Order Mennonites in a religious sideshow.

The Protestant theologian, Charles Dickinson, challenged the assembled to regard the plurality of Christian voices in America in a more positive light. Instead, he sees the presence of Orthodoxy in America as another color on the cultural palette. The plurality of Christian voices is a sign of health, not crisis, a diversity that gives witness to the transcendent power of the Gospel. Through this common witness, we are united.

The afternoon session began with a consideration of the question "*Is Jurisdictional Pluralism adequate for the Orthodox Mission to America?*" Father Alkviadis Calivas from the Greek Archdiocese noted the efforts that culminated in the gathering of the Orthodox bishops of America at Ligonier in 1995. They proposed administrative unity as a necessary first step to a united Orthodox presence in North America. Tragically, through misunderstanding and personal intrigues, this call went unheeded. The failure of Ligonier reminded all of our relative infancy, of the importance of the Mother Churches in any move toward unity, and of

the pivotal role that the Ecumenical Patriarchate might play in such a move, an idea put forward by the late Fr. John Meyendorff. Fr. Calivas closed his remarks with the sober warning that "the treasures we are in danger of losing are not the glories of the past, but the gifts of the Spirit."

Dr. Robert Haddad of the Antiochian Archdiocese, Professor emeritus of Smith College, took issue with the centrality of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in any move toward unity, reminding the participants of the continued inaction of Constantinople in spite of repeated calls for a resolution to Orthodox disunity. It is imperative, he argued, that jurisdictional pluralism be relegated



to the past. For any spiritual, canonical or liturgical claim to oneness and catholicity is undercut by the prevailing tribalism of American Orthodoxy. Failure to grapple with jurisdictional pluralism can only lead to a more entrenched tribalism, the Orthodox version of Protestant denominationalism, further eviscerating any claims to catholicity. If unity is essential to the missionary witness of American Orthodoxy, then we should proceed with or without the Mother Churches.

Father Michael Plekon noted that there is a plurality of ethnicities already present within the Orthodox Church in America, a plurality that, in part, bears witness to the vibrancy of the American Church, a unity in diversity that is the Body of Christ.

Adam Seligman, a colleague of Peter Berger's at the *Institute*, posed two pertinent questions concerning the mechanism and legitimation of change. Before engaging the culture of pluralism, the Orthodox must have a sure sense of identity because pluralism ultimately unsettles these bound-

aries. We may desire to present a unified Orthodox witness to the surrounding culture while minimizing our jurisdictional plurality. Such disunity, however, is not hidden from view. Our identity is thus shaped both by internal and external forces. If we are to enter into dialogue with American pluralism, our inner life must transform the outer manifestation of Orthodoxy. Otherwise, our existence becomes schizophrenic, a condition not conducive to effective evangelization.

In the free-ranging discussion that ensued, the direction of further consultations was considered. One suggestion was that dialogues like this one are not necessary. In time, the jurisdictional chaos will resolve itself as some groups decline while others ascend. When there is maturity, there will be unity. Others suggested that a letter to SCOBA proposing unity would be a catalyst for continued dialogue. Still others suggested that further meetings could focus on issues of personhood, gender, interpersonal relations and dialogue with non-Christians. While there was no clear consensus among participants as to the future of such a con-

sultation, all agreed that this gathering proved beneficial in illuminating the impact of pluralism on ecclesial life and institutions.

The encounter of Orthodoxy with pluralism, an encounter still in its infancy, gives rise to both hope and caution. On the one hand, we have the opportunity to bear witness to the life-creating Word of God unencumbered by State pressures. On the other hand, failure to contend with the secular mindset that accompanies pluralism, a force that distorts and reduces the living Word, will speed the erosion of the transformative power of Orthodox witness.

The question "Wither Orthodoxy in America?" demands an answer. In our response, let there be "Life Forevermore."

1. Peter L. Berger, *The Heretical Imperative* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1979), 58.

2. Printed originally in *Jacob's Well*, Fall 1999/Winter 2000: 4-6.

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## For More Information on the Theme of Stories. . .

### *please consult the following*

[\*indicates these are available on the Jacob's Well webpage at: jacwell.org (Supplements sidebar)]

- Jenson, Robert. "How the World Lost Its Story." From *First Things*.\*
- Walker, Andrew. *Telling the Story: Gospel, Mission, and Culture*. (London: SPCK, 1996).

### ***On the Story of Orthodoxy in America***

- Erickson, John H. *Orthodox Christians in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

### ***On preparing a Parish Oral History***

- Silk, Eleana. "Oral History for Parish Use," From: *The Resource Handbook*. \*

### ***On the "Silent/Secret" Prayers & Other Liturgical Reforms***

- Golubtsov, A. "The Reasons for and the Dates of Replacing the Audible Recitation of Liturgical Prayers with Secret Recitation. From: *Bogoslovskiy Vestnik*.\*
- Koumarianos, Pavlos. "Symbol and Reality in the Divine Liturgy." From: *Sourozh*.\*
- Meyendorff, John. "Russian Bishops and Church Reform in 1905." From: *Catholicity and the Church*.\*
- Schmemmann, Alexander. "On the Question of Liturgical Practices - A Letter to My Bishop." \*
- Shimchick, John. *The Responses of the Russian Episcopate Concerning Worship - 1905 - The Complete Texts*. \*
- Sove, Boris. "The Eucharist in the Ancient Church and Contemporary Practice." From: *Living Tradition*.\*
- Zernov, N. "The Reform of the Church and the Pre-Revolutionary Russian Episcopate." \*



## Matter Used in Church - What is it?

by *George Theokritoff*

Even the least attentive of churchgoers would be aware that matter, the stuff of the cosmos, is used by the church sacramentally and in other ways. Such use of matter has an important connection with the Incarnation but it is less well known that it also has a connection with the cosmos, with the whole of the visible creation. For a start, let us briefly review some of the ways in which the church uses matter.

### A. WATER

Water is used in baptism, in the ritual washing of the bishop's hands at the Great Entrance; it is added to the chalice, and also blessed and distributed at Theophany.

Out of all the forms of matter used by the church, water is the only one that is used in its naturally occurring form; it is not "worked" by human labor. Out of all the forms of matter used by the church, water is the only one that was present in and on the early Earth in its formative stages when it was very hot. Under these circumstances, water would have been released into the atmosphere as steam to condense later, forming the oceans. Additional water may have been added to the Earth by impacting comets.

### B. PLANT IN ORIGIN

- Wheat to make bread used in the eucharist, antidoron, artos distributed on St. Thomas Sunday, litia
- Grapes to make wine used in the eucharist and litia
- Olives to make oil used (with spices) to make chrism, in lamps, in anointing for healing (see the parable of the Good Samaritan)
- Flax to make linen
- Wood to make icons, church construction, church furniture, paper
- Resins with added perfumes to make incense
- Flowers, green branches and fruits to decorate the church at the appropriate feasts

In all these cases, the "raw material" is derived from plants but is "worked" to varying degrees by human labor.

### C. ANIMAL IN ORIGIN.

- Eggs to make tempera for painting icons
- Silk to make vestments, the epitaphion, etc.
- Wool to make the bishop's omophorion
- Beeswax to make candles
- Sponges for use on the altar

Strictly speaking, the "raw material" is initially derived from plants but is "worked" by animals to make eggs, etc.

### D. MINERAL IN ORIGIN.

- Mineral pigments for icons and frescoes
- Stone for construction of churches
- Gypsum to make plaster for frescoes
- Metals for altar vessels, Gospel covers, church construction

In contrast to water, a product of the vegetable, animal or mineral kingdoms is worked by humans before being offered. For instance, wheat is ground into flour which, with additions, is baked into the bread that is offered in the Eucharist; silk and wool are woven into cloth; stone is properly dressed before being used for construction; mineral pigments are finely ground before being mixed with carefully prepared egg-yolks. Apart from the small, isolated, communities around hot, mineral-rich vents on the deep ocean floor, all living things, whether plant, animal, fungus or bacterium, depend on the energy of sunlight captured and fixed by photosynthetic organisms: green plants and photosynthetic bacteria.

As an example, let us consider a vine that produces grapes. It captures and utilizes the energy of sunlight in its green leaves, draws carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and derives water and other nutrients from the soil. Here, we already see the sun, the atmosphere and the soil participating in the preparation of the grape harvest.

But it is instructive to examine the soil in a little more detail. Soils typically consist of two components: organic and mineral. Because it retains moisture in the soil, the organic component is vital. It is made up mostly of plant debris which is eventually broken down to a colloidal state by the action of decomposers (non-photosynthetic micro-

organisms). To obtain energy for their own use, the decomposers break down the complex substances that plants cannot utilize, releasing simple substances that are available to plants. Decomposers complete the cycling of nutrients through the organic community.

The mineral component of the soil is derived from the bedrock. The bedrock is broken down into smaller pieces by the action of frost, tree-roots and burrowing animals. Once in smaller pieces, the increased surface-area available enhances the chemical alteration of the bedrock. Here, naturally occurring acids play a key role, releasing nutrients (e.g. potassium, calcium) in soluble form available to plants. Such acids include carbonic acid (carbon dioxide dissolved in water); nitrous and nitric acids; and humic acids made by plant roots.

The matter that is used by the church is obtained from the Earth, our planet. The heavy

elements that make up the Earth, in contrast to the lighter elements hydrogen and helium that predominate in the stars, are the product of the death of generations of stars. The temperatures and pressures developed within dying stars convert the lighter elements into the heavier which are then flung out into space when the star explodes. Eventually, under gravitational influence, the dispersed heavier elements are either incorporated into new stars, going through the cycle again, or cluster into bodies called planets. The Earth, then, and everything on it is made up of the dust of generations of stars; its ancestry is truly cosmic.

In a real sense therefore the entire cosmos participates in the preparation of the matter used by the church sacramentally and in other ways. Even at the physical level, the eucharist and every other action of the church are truly cosmic events. ♦

## REFLECTION ON TRUST

*by Jacqueline Mullen Niederberger*

"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man." (Psalm 118.8)

Chuck brought a two-seater Cessna plane home in one hundred and forty pieces. He spent one year putting his dream together. One warm day he took me up in his dream. We got to the local airport, unhitched the plane from its tie down, checked the oil, gas, wind velocity and got the "go ahead" from the tower. The engine refused to turn over. "Give the prop a few turns", Chuck hollered to his son standing beside the Cessna. Soon the motor roared, the propeller whirled and we began to literally rumble down the runway sounding (and I thought looking) like a rolling tin can. I clutched the edge of my seat as we began our climb into the sky. Now I knew why Craig, my son, said, "No thanks, I'll wait on the ground" when he got a look at the plane.

At one thousand feet it seemed as though we were standing still, but the roar of the throbbing engine (thank God it was throbbing) reminded us that we were not. What a ride! I kept checking our distance from the shore line as we flew over the

Atlantic ocean, wondering if I could possibly swim that far back to land! My fingers hurt from clutching them under the seat! It would take a crow bar to pry them loose!

Prayer kept escaping from my clenched lips! Chuck finally gave me the thumbs down message that we were going to land. It was so noisy in the cockpit you had to use hand signals! At last we bounced jarringly back to earth. Thank you Lord! I didn't have to swim!

Safely back on the ground again, I thought how readily I had put my life in the hands of another and quietly whispered a prayer of thanksgiving. Somehow Chuck had assured me that I would be safe in this bit of aluminum and Fiberglas and I had believed him. How often I did not trust my Heavenly Father to guide me through difficult and trying situations and yet He is more to be trusted than silver or gold, relatives or friends.

REFLECT ON: "Prayer is the fruit of joy and thankfulness." (Evagrius the Solitary, *The Philokalia*, Vol. 1, page 58). ♦

## BOOK REVIEW: The Journals of Father Alexander Schmemmann,

edited by Juliana Schmemmann. Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2000.

*By Robert Flanagan*

When reading a published journal the reader always hopes to be privy to the inner life of the writer. Most often, though, writing is done to be read and so there will be a certain amount of shaping, self-censorship, even. In Father Alexander Schmemmann's *Journals* there is quite a lot of shaping, and it seems clear from the selection and manner of presentation of details that he expected the journals to be read by others who would not be familiar with his life. Indeed, the very first entry of these journals seems to be a 'preface' to the whole. "What is there to 'explain'?" Fr Schmemmann asks of his desire to begin these journals, and goes on to respond:

The surprising combination in me of a deep and ever-growing revulsion at endless discussions and debates about religion, at superficial affirmations, pious emotionalism and certainly against pseudo-churchly interests, petty and trifling, and, at the same time, an ever-growing sense of reality....Always the same feeling of time filled with eternity, with full and sacred joy. I have the feeling that church is needed so that this experience of reality would exist. Where the church ceases to be a symbol, a sacrament, it becomes a horrible caricature of itself. (p 1)

In addition to his own personal shaping for the eyes of others, these journals are edited by Fr Alexander's widow, Juliana Schmemmann. Editing by someone so close to the writer raises the possibility that the text might be edited to protect the

author's memory, to present him at his best. It is also published by the press of St Vladimir's Seminary, which, as the home and workplace for many years to Fr Alexander, would naturally also be interested in the author's reputation. And so there are (at least) three layers between the reader and the inner life of the author.

This having been said, the publication of the *Journals* by Matushka Schmemmann and St Vladimir's is an act of courage. There is no shying away from the darkness that often seems to have been strongly present in Fr Alexander. There is much that, in isolation, could be used against him by his detractors. In one place Fr Alexander is very honest about his prayer life, not 'traditional' by any means, and in many others is critical of monasticism, of bishops. He is most often critical of a certain type who play acts Orthodoxy, taking the Orthodox costume and a shallow maximalism above the substance of the life in Christ. There are many instances in the journals

of what seems to be depression, sometimes almost despair, in regard to the situation of Christianity, the Orthodox Church in particular, and even more, the Orthodox situation in America.

But O, how wondrous, how luminescent, is the joy, the light, the hope that shines against the dark background of these journals. It is this contrast, and it is a multi-toned contrast rather than simply black and white, that is the tonality of these *Journals*.



The source of false religion is the inability to rejoice, or, rather, the refusal of joy, whereas joy is absolutely essential because it is without any doubt the fruit of God's presence. One cannot know that God exists and not rejoice. Only in relation to joy are the fear of God and humility correct, genuine, fruitful. Outside of joy they become demonic, the deepest distortion of religious experience.... Somehow 'religious' people often look on joy with suspicion.

The first, the main source of everything is 'my soul rejoices in the Lord...' The fear of sin does not save from sin. Joy in the Lord saves....Joy is the foundation of freedom, where we are called to stand. Where, how, when has this tonality of Christianity become distorted, dull - or, rather, where, how, why have Christians become deaf to joy? How, when and why, instead of freeing suffering people, did the Church come to sadistically intimidate and frighten them? (p. 129)

The reader has the sense that joy was not easily come by for Fr Alexander, but a constant struggle, and when it appears it is always seen against the darker background, the forces that would rob Christianity of the one thing necessary, especially the forces present within the Church itself.

This criticism of those forces, including its Orthodox manifestation, is repeated again and again in these pages. There is a wonderful set of entries from Holy Week in 1981:

**Monday, April 20**

Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday services were especially joyful....the Epistle of all Epistles: "Rejoice...and again I say, Rejoice!" Truly the Kingdom of God is among us, within us. But why, except for a momentary joy, does all of it not have more effect? How much anger, mutual torture, offense. How much - without exaggeration - hidden violence.

**Tuesday, April 21**

What has Christianity lost so that the world, nurtured by Christianity, has recoiled from it and started to pass judge-

ment over the Christian faith? Christianity has lost joy - not natural joy, not joy-optimism, not joy from earthly happiness, but the Divine joy about which Christ told us that "no one will take your joy from you" (John 16:22). Only this joy knows that God's love to man and to the world is not cruel; knows it because that love is part of the absolute happiness for which we are all created....

The world is created by happiness and for happiness and everything in the world prophesies that happiness; everything calls to it, witnesses it by its very fragility. To the fallen world that has lost that happiness, but yearns for it and - in spite of everything - lives by it, Christianity has opened up and given back happiness; has fulfilled it in Christ as joy. And then dismissed it. So that the world began to hate Christianity (the Christian world) and went back to its earthly happiness. But having been poisoned by the incredible promise of an absolute happiness, the world started to build it, to progress toward it, to submit the present to this future happiness....

...Some say, "How can one rejoice when millions are suffering? One must serve the world." Others say "How can one rejoice in a world lying in evil?" They do not understand that if for just one minute (that lasts secretly and hidden in the saints) the Church has overcome the world, the victory was won through Joy and Happiness.

**Holy Thursday, April 23, 1981**

Christianity is beautiful. But precisely because it is wonderful, perfect, full, true, its acceptance is before anything else the acceptance of its beauty, i.e., its fullness, divine perfection; whereas in history, Christians themselves have fragmented Christianity, have started to perceive it and offer it to others "in parts" - quite often in parts not connected to the whole.

**Holy Saturday, April 25, 1981**

I am writing before leaving for my most beloved of all loved services: the Baptismal, Paschal Liturgy of St Basil the Great, when



"Life sleeps and Hades shudders..." I write just to say it again. It is the day of my conversion - not of unbelief to belief, not of "out of the Church" to "Church." No; an internal conversion of faith, within the Church, to what constitutes the treasure of the heart - in spite of my sins laziness, indifference, in spite of a continuous almost conscious falling away from that treasure, in spite of negligence, in the literal sense of the word. I don't know how, I don't know why - truly only by God's mercy - but Holy Saturday remains the center, the light, sign, symbol, and gift of everything. "Christ - the new Pascha..." And to that Now Pascha, something in me says with joy and faith: "Amen." (pp. 289-293, *passim*)

The note of joy is always present as in this series. Elsewhere he insists that joy is the only possible attitude of a Christian. And in almost every year there is a comment on the words of St Paul in the epistle for Palm Sunday: "Rejoice, and again I say, rejoice..." And what is the source of this unflinching joy? It is the eschatological dimension of Christ's saving act, the Kingdom of God now present in the Church. It is the presence of the Kingdom, here and now; the 'last things' - judgement and coming in glory - present here and now. We stand with a foot in either world, this one and the Kingdom, and it is our duty to keep each foot planted in its own place. We do not escape by the liberal fantasy of a possible utopia nor by the reactionary otherworldly grasping on to a disembodied ascetic and romantic view of a church that never was.

There are many examples of this presence of the Kingdom in this world in the *Journals*. In one entry Fr Alexander contends with the failures of his beloved Church, and then bursts into one of the many small epiphanies of his daily life:

My perpetual conclusion: If theology, spirituality, etc. do not return to a genuine Christian eschatology (and I don't see any signs of one) then we are fated not only to remain a ghetto, but to transform ourselves, the Church and all that is within it, into a spiritual ghetto. The return - and this is my other perpetual conclusion - starts from a genuine understanding of the Eucharist, the

mystery of the Church the mystery of the New Creature, the mystery of the Kingdom of God. These are the Alpha and Omega of Christianity....

What is real? All that I mentioned earlier, or this moment:

An empty house flooded with sunshine; trees in full bloom behind the window; far away little white clouds floating in the sky; the peace of my office; the silent presence - friendly, joyful - of the books on my shelf. (p 330)

These small epiphanies are bright stars in deep night. Along with what often seem to be mini-essays on the many serious subjects dear to his heart - the liturgy, Solzhenitsyn, the émigré community, modern culture, Russian literature, and many others - there are the delights in the presence of his family, his wife Juliana especially; the liturgies and services of the Church year, especially the Vespers of Holy Saturday, the double feast of Lazarus and the Palms, the Annunciation, the Akathist to the Theotokos; his early life in Paris and teachers; summers in Labelle and each day's bringing of the Divine presence in the natural world.

There are many other aspects of Fr Alexander's *Journals* that are of great beauty, joy and wonder: Music, literature, the love of teaching, the appreciation of positive response to his books, especially by those whose faith was strengthened by them, Scripture, the Eucharist. There are many others not so bright as well - the struggle to write, difficulty hearing confessions, disappointment with students.

In this world we can only approach beauty. But when we do it is an approach to wonder, perfection, fullness. To read these *Journals* of Fr Alexander's is such an approach by virtue of seeing the fullness of a human life in 'this world', struggling to make the Kingdom of God real, and the connection of Christ's Church to it strong, vibrant, and meaningful. ♦

## The Eucharist and Unity Among Christians

By Rev. A. Edward Siecienski

Beginning with the traditional Moleben to the Holy Spirit, *Oriente Lumen IV* opened on June 19th with its theme, "Eucharist: A Prayer for Unity." The one week gathering of Orthodox, Eastern Catholics and Roman Catholics, held in Washington DC, has become an annual opportunity to discuss important ecumenical issues in an atmosphere of trust and true fraternal charity. Jointly sponsored by the Society of St. John Chrysostom and the Catholic University of America, previous conferences have hosted such speakers as Archbishop Peter of New York, Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver and Edward Cardinal Cassidy of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

This year's presenters were asked to speak on some aspect of the Eucharist, focusing on those issues which unite (or divide) Eastern and Western Christians. After a divine liturgy served by Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia and Archbishop Vsevolod of Scopelos (both frequent participants in OL Conferences), Archimandrite Robert Taft of the *Pontifical Oriental Institute* spoke on the role of the Holy Spirit in the Byzantine tradition. In his typically frank manner, Father Taft challenged participants to examine their respective traditions and re-discover some long-forgotten truths about the nature of liturgy. Later that evening, at St. Nicholas Cathedral, Bishop Kallistos presented a paper, "The Liturgy: who offers what to whom?" Drawing on the fathers and the Byzantine liturgy itself, Bishop Kallistos reminded listeners that the Eucharistic sacrifice must be understood chiefly as that place where we offer God "Thine of thine own, in behalf of all and for all."

The next day, Mar Bawai Soro (of the Assyrian Church of the East) gave the most controversial presentation, suggesting that intercommunion between separated churches may be an appropriate way of deepening unity. Although this view was not shared by other speakers (Catholic and Orthodox), Mar Bawai felt that "among brothers" differing views could be shared without recrimination. That afternoon Rev. Raymond Collins and Chorbishop John Faris, both of the Catholic University, shared insights on Eucharist from the

New Testament and the Canon Law of the Eastern Churches. The following day, prior to the conclusion of the conference, Rev. Thomas FitzGerald of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Seminary reviewed the Orthodox and Catholic dialogues on the Eucharist, and the hopes for future rapprochement.

However, it would be a mistake to reduce *Oriente Lumen IV* to merely a set of presentations, excellent though they were. Visits from Metropolitan Theodosius and William Cardinal Keeler, added to the written greetings of so many others (including the Vatican and Ecumenical Patriarchate), showed the deep pastoral interest that hierarchs from both churches take in such encounters. The liturgical services, including the Divine Liturgy (served by the Orthodox, Roman Catholics and Melkites in turn) and the Akathist Hymn, reinforced the fact that this conference was more than an academic exercise. The pain of being unable to receive the Eucharist at each other's liturgies (a pain expressed so beautifully in the prayer of Sergius Bulgakov used by Bishop Kallistos) seemed to make the quest for restored communion all the more urgent.

Yet despite that pain, the mood of the conference was optimistic and manifested a true spirit of Christian fraternity. It was particularly gratifying to witness the warm relationship enjoyed by Eastern Catholics and Orthodox Christians, especially when the situation in Eastern Europe remains so contentious. For many other participants, several of whom were previous OL Conference attendees, the experience was merely a foretaste of the future unity which we all desired so deeply. As the week came to a close and we prepared to leave, another *Oriente Lumen* Conference already scheduled for next year, the prayer of Christ once again became our own: "That they may all be one." (John 17:21)

[Rev. A. Edward Siecienski, SS is a Roman Catholic priest and former faculty member at St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park California. He is currently doing graduate studies at Catholic University of America in Washington DC.]♦

# Movie Review: X-MEN

by *Jack Wheeler*

Jacob's Well  
Summer 2000

The film *X-men* is based on the popular comic book or graphic novel (as they sometimes deserve to be called) first created in 1963. It is about outsiders who don't fit in because of their mutations (their super or non-human characteristics).

*X-men* has perhaps become the most popular comic book of all time, selling more than *Batman*, *Superman*, and even fellow Marvel super hero, *Spiderman*. The series is so popular because many readers feel like outsiders themselves and can relate to the characters in *X-men*. So when news got out that it was being made into a film the Internet buzz got going until the film was released on July 14.

*X-men* is a different kind of action film - not the usual explosive, special-effects laden, shoot em' up features (in fact there aren't even any guns). The film's dialogue is "three-dimensional"; its language is rich and has an authentic quality, not like so many others that seem flat and dry. The film also has a real plot to it. That's probably because it was directed by Bryan Singer who made the terrific 1995 Indie-thriller - the independantly produced, *The Usual Suspects*.

The film starts out in Poland in 1944, and introduces us to the later-to-be villain Magneto (Ian Mckellan) as a boy torn away from his parents in a Jewish concentration camp. We see his power when he pries open a gate without touching it. This sequence is meant to show why Magneto (who has the power to move metal objects with his thoughts) has such a pessimistic view of the world and why he hates all humans. The film later takes us to the present where we are introduced to the human villain Senator Kelly, who wants all mutants to be registered because he believes they pose a threat to the American people. We are also introduced to Professor Charles Xavier (Patrick Stewart), a mutant with the power to communicate telepathically. He is the antithesis of Magneto and wants mutants to use their powers for good and forgives humans for their flaws. He runs a school for mutants in Westchester, New York that includes Storm (Halle Berry) with the power to control the weather; Cyclops (James Marsden) who wears a head band that allows him to control and shoot his

laser-like eyes; Jean Grey (Famke Janssen), who like Professor X is telepathic; Wolverine (Hugh Jackman) who has the power to regenerate when wounded and metal claws that come out of his fists when he gets angry; and Rogue (Anna Paquin), who when her skin is touched can take all of a person's thoughts and abilities.

Magneto heads a group of nasty mutants known as the Brotherhood of Mutants. They include Mystique (Rebecca Romijn-Stamos) a blue "shape shifter" who can change into anyone, copying their voice, and their fingerprints; Toad (Ray Park) who can climb walls and slings a near 6-foot long tongue at his victims; and Sabertooth (Tyler Mane) the villainous counterpart of Wolverine, who has constant rage, increased sense of smell, claw-like hands and like Wolverine - the power to regenerate.

Magneto concocts a plan and develops a machine which will mutate all of the world's political leaders at a gathering they will have on Ellis Island (this enables the climactic fight scenes to use the Statue of Liberty as a prop).

Although most of the plot twists get wrapped up, the ending is left unresolved. This was a real letdown. The film leaves many questions unanswered and poses as a mere commercial for the sequel to come. However, if the film has a sequel the story will probably go more into depth and the characters will be more developed.

The film has a good message though. It shows how people choose to handle certain situations. Professor X and his group of mutants learn to forgive a society that hates them, while Magneto and his band of mutants are full of hate and want revenge on those who have persecuted them. True to all superhero movies the heroes seem to be triumphant, but unfortunately we will have to wait until the sequel to experience this with the *X-men*.

Final Grade: B.

*[Jack Wheeler is a student at Huntington (Long Island) High School and interested in pursuing film studies.]*◆

## Two Backpage Stories: Wilted Flowers and Limestone Pillars

by Fr. Stephen Siniari

The bus pulled to the curb like a shimmering mirage. A boy said it was Tarzan-hot. Jungle-hot. Her old knees liquefied, barely lifting her up the steps. The driver pinched the rumpled transfer, damp with perspiration, from her hand. There was no seat. News-radio said many elderly were dying from the heat. She believed it. Her dress stuck to her. Sweaty palms slippery on the vertical handrail. The final leg in a ninety minute three-bus relay. Two weeks running. Her husband comatose in a hospital far across the city.

Fifty years of marriage. Good companions. The house was lonely without him. He drove the car. Took her shopping. Cut the grass. Checked the windows at night. Complained about TV and the price of shoes. Even his complaining, she missed. They loved the Church. Very faithful, those two, about the Church. Both of them always there, doing one thing or another. She missed the Liturgy. A beautiful Flower Basket the Ladies Society had sent. Very expensive. She'd been part of committees who'd sent them to others. Say it? Never. But she thought it was a waste. A sin almost. So many people needed help. There must be a better way to put that money to use. She could just picture the basket on her dining-room table. After a week the flowers were somewhat wilted. She scolded herself for not remembering to throw them away. But she had so much to do.

Morning to evening with her husband. Bathed him. Talked to him. Kept an eye on the feeding-tubes. Arranged his bedclothes. Turned him over. No bedsores on her boy, not on him. She was determined. Brushed

his hair. Kissed his forehead. Staff was amazed at her faithfulness.

She read him Morning Prayers. Akathists to Our Master, and to His Mother. Prayed aloud before the Icon of his patron Saint taped on the oxygen apparatus above the bed. She knew both he and God heard her prayers. She knew it. And she sang to him. And he heard it. Though he couldn't tell her, he loved her company and her voice. She ate breakfast, lunch, and dinner at the hospital. Fell asleep in the chair next to his bed, held his hand and dreamt of when they were young.

8am. She struggled from the bus. Her day of service to her husband was just beginning and already she was exhausted. From behind, she felt cool air on the back of her legs. A taxi door had opened. An elderly woman in a blue sweater got out and said, "Hello." She was carrying flowers to her husband. Same air-conditioned taxi, same time... And home again, each evening.

I could never afford a taxi, she thought and hobbled through the revolving-door scolding herself once more for not remembering to throw away those wilted flowers. "Got to be a better way," she thought, "to put that money to use..."

...On an ivy-league campus, a Roman-era limestone column from ancient Palestine is lying on a lawn. Behind it a homeless American teenager makes her bed. The column was donated by the "Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on the occasion of the American Bicentennial, 1976..." The soil she sleeps on provides sustenance for the bush that grows and covers her. The same soil

from which Orthodox people in America derive a living, build homes and churches, feed families, educate young and nurse the old; the same soil that receives us when we are called to give account for our talents.

How shall we give thanks to God for placing us in this bountiful land? How should we react when the children of this nation sleep in the streets? Why has God placed us here? What does His Beloved Son empower us by the Holy Spirit to do? What does He ask of us?

Seven Priests considered. Basically good individuals, they resolved to proceed independently and continue the practice of sending their separate parish collections directly overseas where they felt sure it would be in the hands of those who knew what to do.

They had received a letter asking their people to support the efforts of the church's international relief agency in ameliorating the suffering of victims on both sides of an ethnic war. They decided, no. Military planes from their country had bombed the countrymen of their forefathers and the church's relief agency had fed the children of the enemy.

Next to be considered, an appeal to help provide shelter for homeless youth in their town. "No." They said. "If we help them, the religious group who sponsors that work will get the credit, and not us."

The girl curled beneath the bush read the sign of dedication and thanked God for the donation of an ancient Roman-era Palestinian limestone pillar by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on the occasion of the American Bicentennial, 1976. ♦

### JACOB'S WELL

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