And he shall have dominion from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth
Ps 71.8

Et il dominera de la mer a la mer, et depuis le fleuve jusqu'aux extremitiés de la terre
Ps 71.8

CANADIAN ORTHODOX MESSENGER

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Metamorphosis of Bishop's Residence A 'Small Miracle' Report Says

by Dr John Hadjinicolaou, Chairman, Metamorphosis Project Committee

For many years the Archdiocese of Canada OCA was without its own Bishop. In 1987 we were given one, and we are particularly grateful to God because He has sent us a true father to lead us in faith and spiritual growth. Bishop SERAPHIM is our symbol of unity in Christ in this vast Canadian landscape. In his face we see a reflection of our visions and aspirations as well as our concerns, joys and pains for the Church. His humility, care and affection remind us of the first Christian centuries, where the Christians had "wooden churches and golden bishops" instead of the modern era where the reverse is often the rule.

In March Vladyka gave a tour of his new office to several members of the Archdiocesan Council following the council's spring session in Ottawa. Shown with him from left to right are Fr Dennis Pihach, Olga Jurgens, Lorraine and David Grier, Fr Orest Olekshy, and Audrey Ewanchuk.

Background

In 1988 the Archdiocese bought a 28-acre farm in Johnstown, Ontario to be used as the "Bishop's Residence." The property included a main house and a number of adjacent buildings, all very old, but with great potential because of location and security from encroachment. In October 1991 a number of us visited Bishop SERAPHIM and saw that the run-down conditions in the main house were causing a very uncomfortable living situation. We realised that if we truly wanted to have our Bishop alive among us, we had to find the means to restore his "wooden palace" before it was too late. He has so many things to take care of and does not deserve the extra burden of arriving after long and overtiring trips all over Canada to a place where living is extremely difficult.

We decided to do something about this. We formed an ad-hoc committee of eight: Deacon Cyprian Hutcheon, Deacon Lambros Kamperidis, Evthymios Katsikas, Dr Thomas Kolivakis, Dr Katherine Berdnikoff, Mr Paul Miklachevsky, Dr John Foreman and myself. After initial research, we prioritised the needs and established basic goals. We named the project *The Metamorphosis of the Bishop's Residence.* The project aim was to collect enough monetary donations to address first the immediate needs, then the short-term needs, and finally the long-term needs of the residence.

Phase I : Goal $15,000

The first meeting of the committee, held early in October 1991, approved a letter of appeal that we sent to over 100 individuals and several parishes throughout Canada. People at the meeting contributed $5,500 among themselves to start the project. The responses started coming in November 1991. By the end of May 1992 we had received replies from more than 50 people or parishes with contributions totalling $16,800. Then an extra letter of appeal was sent on June 5, 1992. By October we had answers from over 70 people and parishes. Some people

Continued, next page . . .

. . . **Metamorphosis,** *continued from p. 1:*

offered to do some of the work themselves, giving of their time, skills and materials. Financial contributions then totalled $22,000.

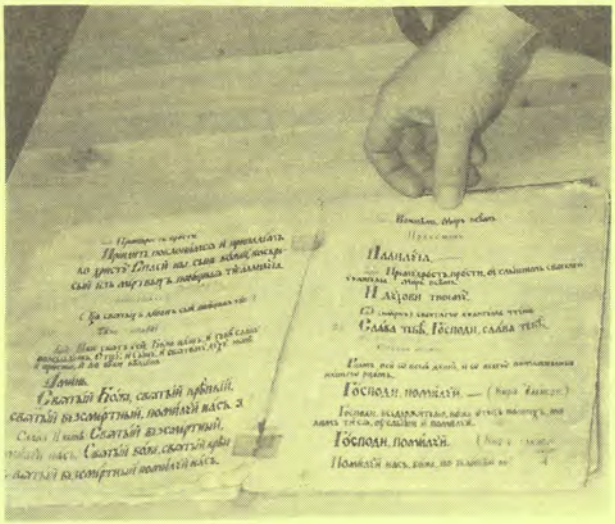
Work started on the residence with a planning meeting on December 3, 1991. The first hard labour was done December 19 on the kitchen floor by a volunteer group from the Montreal area: Mssrs Bob Nellis, Maurice Strokowsky and Joe Mouledoux. Work continued during January and February 1992 with the complete renovation of the kitchen: floor, cupboards, walls, plumbing, lights, table, windows. In March and April the laundry room and bathroom were completely renovated: floors, walls, shelves, toilet, sink, doors, windows. All of this work was done mainly by Mr Brent Laurence, a carpenter living close to the Bishop, being checked by Bob Nellis and supervised, as always, by His Grace.

All materials needed were bought at the Cashway store in Brockville, where we opened an account. A number of doors were bought also, which would be used later on for the new office, as well as some other useful household items. The water was tested and found to be good. By the end of October 1992, we had spent $8,077.83 for materials and $6,513.82 for labour, a total of $14,587.65. Phase I of the *Metamorphosis* had been completed very successfully.

Phase II : Goal $20,000

The plan of the second phase of the project was to transform the garage into a large office with an extension which would include a new entrance. The goal was to complete Phase II of the renovation by March 1, 1993. Another appeal was mailed out in November 1992.

At the same time we asked three individuals to submit bids. After evaluating their quotations we awarded the contract to Mr Stephen Judge for an estimated $23,500 + GST which included the supplies and installation of the following: Addition to existing garage approximate dimensions 8' x 15' and upgrading original garage to include studding, electrical, doors, counter top, shelves, carpeting, skylight, windows, vinyl siding, soffit, facia, eavestrough, excavation and drain tile.



An example of the archives now stored in the Bishop's eastern office. Shown here is a manuscript in Slavonic of divine services. It once belonged to Fr John Wasel.

The work started in July 1993 and was completed in October 1993. The total cost of the second phase was $23,540.00. By November 15, 1993 we had collected, since the beginning of the project in 1991, a total of $34,747.65.

Phase III and Summary Thus Far

As a result of the first two phases of the *Metamorphosis,* our Bishop has a home that befits his efforts on our behalf. The formerly most run-down portions of the house are now a comfortable setting for day to day living. The new office provides a pleasant and functional milieu where His Grace and the diocesan secretaries can work with computer, printer, facsimile machine, photocopier, telephones and the diocesan archives. There is a proper entrance to this office from the outside of the building and a foyer in which visitors to the office can sit and wait for an audience with the Bishop.

A new letter in the form of an appeal addressed to a limited number of people was sent out on December 2, 1993 in the effort to raise the remaining $3,480 needed to pay all previous expenses. Up until now (March, 1994)

Continued, next page . . .

At the other end of the office, Vladyka talks with Eastern Secretary, Olga Jurgens. Audrey Ewanchuk is at the photocopier. Also visible is Matthew Culhane, a librarian who organized the chancery's filing system.

. . . Metamorphosis, *continued from p. 2:*

considering the new contributions and the eventual return of 50% of the paid GST, the amount remaining to be paid is only $1,040.

This is a summary of contributions and expenses thus far:

	Contributions	Expenses
Phase I	22,000.00	14,587.65
Phase II	12,747.65	23,540.00
Phase III	2,340.00	----------
TOTAL	37,087.65	38,127.65

Remaining Balance Due: $1,040.00

An extraordinary success was accomplished through the generosity of faithful brothers and sisters over the last two years and a few months. As a general comment I am tempted to say that we have witnessed a small miracle!

Phase IV : Goal $20,000

There is still much work to do. The remaining parts of the house need renovations, including the stairs, two toilets and the upper rooms for visitors and the assistants. But most important is the chapel which is already dedicated to St Silouan the Athonite but not yet constructed. The chapel is our next dream and eventually it will be the jewel of the *Metamorphosis Project.* For all those who are sharing our latest dream and want to relive with us the miracle, we humbly ask—apart from their prayers—their financial assistance. Please send donations to Dr John Hadjinicolaou (for the Metamorphosis Project), 2875 Douglas Ave., Montreal, Quebec H3R 2C7. An income tax receipt will be issued by the treasurer of the diocese.

Dear brothers and sisters,

> *Whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you (Philippians 4:8).*

May the Lord be with all of us and keep us all in His embrace!

Dr John Hadjinicolaou, Project Chairman

Pastoral Notes

On 18 March 1994 **Priest Nicholas Kondrateyev,** on loan from the Moscow Patriarchate, was blessed to serve as second priest in the Yorkton Mission, AB..

Effective 10 May 1994, **Priest Leonid Misnik** is released from his duties as Acting Rector of Holy Trinity Sobor, Winnipeg, MB, and is attached, effective 15 May, to Christ the Saviour Sobor, Toronto.

Effective 1 June 1994, **Hieromonk Daniel (Baeyens)** is assigned Rector of Holy Trinity, Winnipeg, MB.

At the spring session of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America, the following **Synodal Paschal Awards** were made to clergy of the Archdiocese of Canada:

Nebedrennik: **Priests Peter Isaac, Stephen Kennaugh, and Peter SanFilippo; Hieromoine Marc (Pierre); and Priestmonks Raphael (Vereshack) and Symeon (Weare)**

Purple Skoufia: **Priestmonk David (Edwards)**

Purple Kamilavka: **Philip Speranza**

Gold Cross: **Priests Andrew Morbey and Andrey Somow.**

+ MEMORY ETERNAL +

As this issue of the *Messenger* was going to press, **Priest Marek Kocon,** Vicar of Holy Trinity Bukowinian Sobor, Ottawa, fell asleep in the Lord on 24 May 1994. More information will follow in the next issue.

Bishop Seraphim's Visitation Schedule
June – September 1994

Jun	11-12	Windsor, ON
	17-27	Manitoba (Winnipeg, etc.)
Jul	9-15	Quebec: Labelle, Montreal, St-Eusèbe
	30-31	Rawden, QC
Aug	1-2	Fitch Bay, QC
	26-31	Rural Alberta
Sep	1-8	Alberta
	9-19	British Columbia
	23-26	Washington DC: Bicentennial Celebrations

Communications Corner

An abundance of **positive remarks** creates a trusting environment within which concerns and criticism can be addressed truthfully. Recently our parish preparation day for Pascha reminded me of this important aspect of communication. We scrubbed walls, polished metal, shined windows, scraped wax, cleaned icons. Throughout the day, we freely pointed out spots on the windows that we had missed as well as how sparkling the chandelier had become.

I noticed how often people were complimenting one another. Receivers of the compliments seemed uplifted by the remarks and would go back to work with renewed energy. It made me realize how important such simple recognition really is and what a difference it can make. How often we forget to comment **positively** on the work of others.

Unfortunately the reverse is not so true—we tend to point out the oversights or errors of others without noting the value of their voluntary efforts. The time we give to the Church is done for the glory of God, but a positive word recognising our efforts encourages us to carry on with the good work.

People who dedicate their time to various parish events usually receive lots of "helpful" suggestions about how to do it better next time. But do they receive enough appreciation? If a parishioner feels valued within the parish, then he or she can deal with sensitive issues without taking offense because of the trust that has been established.

I feel strongly that we must communicate this sense of value and worth to our parishioners of all ages. For example, the children of a parish are often noted for causing disruptions in services, but do we remember, as well, to praise them when they are trying to be attentive?

Let's encourage each other to do our share to build a parish atmosphere, based on positive communication, where people feel comfortable to express their concerns and to get involved!

—Mary Ann Lopoukhine

For Diocesan Communicators

In order to plan ahead for articles or notices about your parish life which you may want to submit, please make note of the following **DEADLINES** for the next four issues of the *Canadian Orthodox Messenger:*

Issue	Deadline, articles	Deadline, notices
Sep '94	Aug 1, 1994	Aug 15, 1994
Dec '94	Nov 1, 1994	Nov 15, 1994
Mar '95	Feb 1, 1995	Feb 15, 1995
Jun '95	May 1, 1995	May 15, 1995

Generally speaking, **"notices"** would be anything of ***250 words or less,*** whereas **"articles"** would be ***anything over 250 words.***

Please submit material **by mail to:**
43 Newcourt Place, Kingston, Ontario K7M–6Y1;
or by fax to: 1-613-542-5832.

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Dedicated to the memory of
St Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow (+1925),
Archbishop Arseny (Chahovtsov),
and the other missionary labourers
of the Orthodox Church in America.

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From Bishop Seraphim's Desk . . .

News from Holy Synod, Spring Session, Mar 28–Apr 1

The Bishops, meeting under the leadership of Metropolitan THEODOSIUS, had a very full week, beginning with a half-day of reflection, led by the Rev Dr A Calivas of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Seminary. We heard the usual reports. The Central Administration feels the crunch of straitened economy as we all do. Great demands and expectations rest upon the few who work in Syosset, in fact steadily increasing demands, but also steadily decreasing funds to support the work required. So we should not complain too much if things are sometimes a little slow.

The establishment of an **Employee Assistance Programme,** funded through the dioceses, was blessed to begin 1 September 1994. This programme allows for clergy (and paid lay church workers) to find supplementary assistance in the various personal crises which may face them from time to time. It is not a substitute for spiritual direction. A problem faced in the United States regarding health insurance was addressed in the establishment of a **Health Insurance Board.** The nature of the type and extent of demands of employment for **clerics who work outside the Church** was discussed. It was reaffirmed that external employment must be undertaken always with the Bishop's knowledge and blessing. Such employment affects the life of the clergyman and the church.

SERAPHIM, Bishop of Ottawa and Canada

The report of the **Synodal Commission on Theological Education** was accepted. The report calls for: (1) the merger of St Tikhon's and St Vladimir's seminaries to one graduate school of theology; (2) the maintaining of St Herman's Seminary as a diocesan seminary with stronger links with St Tikhon's and St Vladimir's; (3) a more active role by the Holy Synod in overseeing the seminaries' life; (4) the full compliance with resolutions of the Holy Synod regarding the preparation and review of candidates for ordination who lack formal theological education. The existing Board of Theological Education was revised under the leadership of Archbishop KYRILL to begin work on implementing the above. The **Late Vocations Programme** has now been approved for implementation, together with a "standard examination."

The **Canonisation Commission** gave its report. **Archpriest Alexis Toth,** who led many thousands of uniats back to Orthodoxy, will be glorified as a saint at St Tikhon's Monastery, Pennsylvania, 29-30 May 1994. His feast day will be 7 May, when he reposed. **Archpriest Jacob (Iakov,** or **James) Netsvetov,** a priest and missionary in Alaska of part Aleut and part Russian ancestry, who enlightened the Aleuts, Yupik, and Athabaskan peoples, will be glorified as a saint at St Innocent Cathedral in Anchorage, Alaska 15-16 October 1994. His feast day will be 26 July, when he reposed. The **Martyr Priests Alexander Hotovitsky** and **John Kochurov,** who served in the North American mission but were in Russia for the 1918 Sobor, and who were among the very first martyrs of the communist yoke, will be glorified as saints (on our behalf) in October by the Russian Orthodox Church to whom they belonged and on whose territory they died.

There was a lengthy report on **International Orthodox Relations,** and on other external church matters, including the announcement of a gathering of all canonical Orthodox bishops in Pennsylvania 16-18 November 1994. **SYNDESMOS,** the international Orthodox youth organisation, will hold an international festival in Pennsylvania 25-31 July 1994 at Antiochian Village, and our youth are all encouraged to attend. (Photocopies of the brochure were mailed to Canadian clergy.)

The report of the **Administrative Task Force** was received. Its proposals were also implemented: (1) enhancing the role of the office of the Metropolitan within the framework of the canons, will be formulated and proposed by the Statute Commission at the next Council; (2) clarification of the relationship among diocese, parish, and Orthodox Church in America, will be undertaken through preparation of an encyclical; (3) re-examining the demographics, geography and diocesan boundaries to make whatever adjustments may be required; (4) enhancing the role of the dean through a commission to study diocesan structure and recommending any changes to provide consistent diocesan administrations; (5) replacing the Metropolitan Council by an executive committee of seven members to be formulated and proposed by the Statute Commission at the next Council.

The report of the **Bicentennial Commission** outlined the various celebrations in North America. The conclusion will be celebrated 23-25 September in Washington DC with all Bishops attending. The Bishops further request that a Thanksgiving Moleben be served in all parishes on Saturday 24 September to mark the first Divine Liturgy served on this continent in Alaska in 1794. The **Eleventh All-American Council** will be convened at Chicago, IL, USA 15-21 July 1995, and a commission was named to prepare for the meeting.

More from the Bishop's Desk, next page . . .

More from the Bishop's Desk . . .

Project Ukraine

As you will see in the letter below, the funds we are giving through ***Project Ukraine*** are bearing some good fruit! The method used in getting funds and supplies to the desired receivers in the Church in Ukraine is that of sending them with trusted people who are travelling there. At our recent Archdiocesan Council meeting, Fr Dennis Pihach told an anecdote about one situation in Ukraine where a doctor had been tempted by the many medications now available to him: he had begun to sell them. The priest's wife, hearing of this, took matters into her own hands—she took over the distribution of the medicines to those who produced a physician's prescription, and she herself maintains the stock of supply, to ensure proper distribution. Our brothers and sisters are not without their inner Christian vision and strength!

1 Jan 1994

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Your Reverence, Father Dennis:

At the outset I apologize for my delay in reply to your letter of Sept 22/92 but we wanted to exactly write how we used the money which Your Reverence sent to help us!

Last year was a very difficult to our church because we lost a lot of our temples and our clergymen, and believers were persecuted. Much time was spent to defend our lost Lutsk Church of the Intercession of the Virgin so that our Diocese could survive. We kept the money Your Reverence sent to us because we were at a loss how to better spend them.

Recently having talked things over with the priests of our Diocese we decided to spend this sum of money ($300) on buying church candles (one tonne). Having realized them [he means having realized the money from their resale to the faithful for use in divine services], we had money to repair the old half-ruined building of theological seminary and that of Diocese which the state gave us instead of what we have lost. The rest of money was used on buying bread and food products for the seminarists.

On behalf of all our Orthodox faithful, clergymen and me personally please accept our grateful appreciation for your help. We all were deeply touched by the kindness and generosity of all those who took part in the donation for our Church.

In Christ Jesus,
The Archbishop of Volyn and Lutsk,
The Most Reverend + Archbishop Nifont

Our Spirtual Warfare

Each year when we approach Great Lent, we understand that we will be in for some stresses by means of temptation. This year was certainly no exception. Everywhere it seems that the faithful who were trying earnestly to improve their focus in serving Jesus Christ, and Him only, were put to the test severely. In the face of these situations we learn to trust our Lord more and more. We learn how to endure faithfully. We learn how to be witnesses, even unto death (and did you know, even here in Canada, we have heard of some of our Orthodox Christians having so suffered for the sake of Christ?).

Then Pascha comes, and we generally set to enjoying our fast-breaking and feasting, unhappily usually more with food than with praise of the Lord. The time we are now in, post-paschaltide, can be even more dangerous. Just as the Lord warned us in the case of exorcism, lack of vigilance can result in the devil that was removed in the lenten house-cleaning going off and returning with seven others worse than himself. We must learn that what growth is achieved by our spiritual exercises in the fasting periods will not stay unless we are careful to keep our attention on the Lord.

With this in mind, let us consider the subject of repentance in the light of spiritual warfare. Let us also remember that ***this spiritual warfare is not something we simply do by ourselves: we do it together,*** whether we perceive this or not.

It is easy to see someone else's sins, but not so easy to see our own, nor to admit our own. That there might be lack of peace or harmony in any given community, family or relationship is not the fault of "someone else" alone. If we are honest, we must admit that in our own sinfulness we all participate in it, and we must all therefore repent. The way of Christ, the way of the Gospel, calls us to forgive. When we are hurt by others, intentionally or unintentionally, we must **not** hold a grudge, nor keep remembering the pain over and over. This is the fallen way of the fallen world. We must, as we sing in the Beatitudes, pray for those who do wrong to us, and forgive them in Christ (and I do not claim that this is easy!). ***If we are ourselves ready to follow the Gospel path, it opens the way for others who find it difficult to begin.***

If we are looking for peace and harmony in our communities, there must be more love and mutual trust in Christ. Although I often blame lack of clear communication for many of the troubles that afflict us, the real problems come from this: lack of love in Christ. We wage agendas on each other. We dare to judge each other's salvation, to make harshly critical comments against one another. We accuse one another of ill-will, or even evil activity or intent. What we do not see, and do not want to

Continued, page 12 . . .

"The Father of American Orthodoxy": Mitred Archpriest Alexis Toth

In 1994, the Bicentennial Year of the arrival of the first Orthodox missionaries to our North American shores, the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America is glorifying two saints of the Church who served in North America, Archpriest Jacob/James (Yakov) Netsvetov and Mitred Archpriest Alexis Toth. The service of canonisation of Fr Toth was held at St Tikhon's Seminary on May 29-30, and the service of glorification of Fr Netsvetov will be held in Anchorage, Alaska on October 14-15.

The editor of the ***Canadian Orthodox Messenger*** *wishes to thank the compilers and editors of* ***Portraits of American Saints, George A. Gray and Jan V. Bear,*** *for permission to reprint the following biography of St Alexis. Their biography of St Jacob was reprinted in the previous issue of the Messenger.*

Alexis Toth (son of Father George and Matushka Cecilia Toth) was born March 14, 1853, near Eperjes, Hungary (Slovakia). He studied in Roman and Byzantine Catholic seminaries, and eventually graduated from the University of Presov with a degree in theology.

Alexis was ordained to the United Greek Catholic priesthood in 1878. He served for two years as a parish priest, before being appointed by his bishop to be the diocesan administrator. In 1881 Father Alexis became the director of the Presov seminary, where he also taught canon law and Church history for the next eight years.

In 1889 Father Alexis was sent to America to serve as a mission priest. He began his American ministry in Minneapolis, at the new St Mary's Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church.

The parishioners of St Mary's were immigrants from the Carpathian Mountains of Austrian Galicia. These immigrants were known as Carpatho-Russians, Urgro-Russians, Galicians, Rusins, and Ruthenians. In the Carpathian villages their ancestors had originally been Orthodox, but the state church of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was the Roman Catholic Church, and so the people were forced to unite with Rome. As Uniates or Byzantine Catholics, they were permitted to follow the Eastern rather than Latin rites in their church services.The Roman Catholic Church in America at this time was involved in an internal controversy. Many of its bishops felt that Roman Catholic immigrants should become thoroughly assimilated into the culture of America. Yet Eastern European immigrants desired to retain their "old country" identity. This had a tremendous effect upon Greek Catholics who were forced to live under the jurisdiction of Latin-rite (that is, Roman Catholic) bishops. These bishops considered Greek Catholics to be an alien sect. But the immigrants simply desired to worship in a language and manner they could comprehend.

Upon his arrival in Minneapolis, Father Alexis visited his hierarch, Roman Catholic Archbishop John Ireland. That meeting is described in Father Alexis' own words:

"I was a Uniate when I came to America . . . . I appeared before Bishop Ireland on December 19, 1889. I kissed his hand according to custom and presented my credentials, failing, however, to kneel before him (which, as I learned later, was my chief mistake). I remember that no sooner did he read that I was a 'Greek Catholic,' his hands began to shake. 'Have you a wife?' 'No.' 'But you had one?' 'Yes, I am a widower.' At this he threw my papers on the table and loudly exclaimed: 'I have already written to Rome protesting against this kind of priest being sent to me!' 'What kind of priest do you mean?' 'Your kind.' 'I am a Catholic

priest of the Greek rite. I am a Uniate and was ordained by a regular Catholic bishop.' 'I do not consider that either you or this bishop of yours is Catholic . . . . I shall grant you no jurisdiction to work here.'"

Archbishop Ireland officially and publicly forbade any Roman Catholics from worshipping at services conducted by Father Alexis. So Father Alexis appealed to his bishop in Eastern Europe and then to Rome, but nothing seemed to get resolved. Other Uniate priests wrote to Father Alexis that they had been treated the same way by Roman Catholic bishops when they arrived in America.

"I made up my mind to do something which I had carried in my heart for a long time, for which my soul longed: that is, to become Orthodox. But how was it to be done? I had to be very cautious. The unfortunate Union [that is, the formation of the Uniate Catholic situation], the source of our decline and all our ills, had been part of our people for too long. We had already borne that yoke upon our shoulders for 250 years. I fervently prayed to God to grant me the power to make all this clear to my unenlightened parishioners." For the most part, the people needed little convincing. They suggested that he contact the bishop of the Russian Orthodox.

"Some said that he lived in Sitka; others said that he lived in San Francisco . . . I knew absolutely nothing. I only knew that in San Francisco there lived a Russian Consul. Therefore, using the name Andrew Potochnak, I sent the following inquiry to the Russian Consulate—'Is it true that a Russian Orthodox bishop lives in San Francisco? If so, what is his name and where does he live?' After 10 days a letter arrived addressed to Michael Potochnak, informing him that the name of the ruling prelate was His Grace, Bishop Vladimir, and that he lived at 1715 Powell Street North, San Francisco."

A representative from Minneapolis went to San Francisco to find out whether this bishop was really an Orthodox hierarch, or whether he was an Old Believer or a member of some Russian heretical sect. Bishop Vladimir (Sokolovsky) invited Father Toth to visit him in order to discuss the possibility of reception into the Orthodox Church. In the end, Bishop Vladimir traveled to Minneapolis, and in March of 1891, on the Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, Father Alexis and his community of about 361 Ruthenian immigrants were formally accepted into the Orthodox Diocese of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands. This was officially recognized and sanctioned by the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church and proclaimed at a special service at the Cathedral of St Basil the Great (as it was then named) in San Francisco on August 28, 1882.

Naturally, this action angered many of Father Alexis' Uniate associates. They considered him to be a renegade who caused division. Nevertheless, still other Uniate priests followed his lead and embraced the Orthodox Faith.

Within two years Father Alexis moved from Minneapolis to Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. The area surrounding Wilkes-Barre had been the major focal point for Carpatho-Russian immigration to America. Father Alexis continued to work with the immigrants. He helped see to the establishment of the Russian Orthodox Mutual Aid Society for the benefit of his people. In order to educate those whom he wanted to reunite with the Church, Father Alexis wrote a basic catechism of Orthodox Christianity, titled *Where to Seek the Truth*. By the end of his life, he alone had received about 15,000 Uniates.

For his efforts, Father Alexis was elevated to the rank of mitred archpriest. He received the Order of St Anna (for distinguished civil service to the Russian people) from Tsar Nicholas II, and the Orders of St Vladimir and St Alexander Nevsky (for distinguished service to the church) from St Tikhon, then the Archbishop of North America. Father Alexis is considered by many today to be the "Father of American Orthodoxy."

Father Alexis fell asleep in the Lord at the age of 56 on May 7, 1909. He is buried at St Tikhon's Monastery in South Canaan, Pennsylvania.

A Love Story

I'm not an extraordinary Christian. I don't pray ceaselessly . . . I don't read scripture faithfully every day . . . I don't recognize my sins and repent of them nearly often enough . . . I don't always love my neightbour, never mind my enemy. The list could go on, but you can get the picture. I tell you this so that as you read this story you won't imagine me to be someone I'm not. I struggle, and regularly fail, to live the Orthodox life in Christ to which we are called.

Still and all, I love God above all else. This story is about that love . . . and about His greater love for me.

On October 20, 1992 I learned I had cancer of the lymph system. I was a happy, energetic 42-year old, had a terrific 12-year old daughter (Jordan), worked full-time in a new, growing retail business, and had been blessed to be a part of the parish of St Herman's in Edmonton for about eight years. I said to God that first evening: "Whatever happens may it be to Your glory." When I turned to the scriptures I was led to Philippians 1:3-30. I remember talking with Jordan about St Paul's dilemma of being torn between two desires, and our discussing whether it's easier to die for Christ or live for Him.

The next evening I wrote these words in my diary, trying to describe what I had just experienced: "As I lay in bed, quietly, a few tears—in the stillness inside of me—not in my head (it ***wasn't*** a thought!) and not a feeling of being okay—but a pure somehow-articulated (?) (that's the closest word I can think of) **TRUTH** (that seemed to be in me and around me) that said: 'I will not die from this.' It was as if I heard the words and felt them but I didn't make them up; I didn't create the words or voice them—they were just ***there.***"

I knew it as Truth. And I believe God gave me to know that truth because He loved me and wanted me to know His will. My task in what was to come was to trust and have faith in His truth, His love, His will—in Him. And He would look after me. Looking back, that's exactly what He did—and continues to do. Here are a few "chapters" from the story.

Dealing with the News

I cried. But I truly never once thought "why me?" or was resentful toward or angry with God. I was never afraid of either dying or living through a healing process. No denial or despair. At first it didn't seem quite real, believable—I had to actively concentrate on telling myself "I have cancer." But I have to say an honest and real acceptance came quickly and with peace. From what I've read and understood, this isn't the usual case. I absolutely believe what made it possible came through and from our Lord.

Sharing the Good News

"Good" news is every time the Lord is working in our lives. When He is working salvation in the midst of the earth, we need to let others in on it. I felt an urging and a need to share my cancer news from the very beginning. The love and prayers and support of my family and friends—especially those at St Herman's—wrapped me and held me and made me know God's grace and love for me. But it works the other way, too. One day I wrote, "How often do we prevent another from coming closer to God because we won't let them share in our sadness, our troubles, our diseases, our fears . . . how selfish . . . sharing isn't just for joys." For those who took me, my cancer, my life, into their lives and held me up to God in prayer, I think they also came to know God's grace and love.

Decision Time

I was fortunate that the cancer was found so early that when I told the doctor I wanted time to consider everything, he set my next appointment a month later. The medical recommendation was weekly chemotheraphy for twelve consecutive weeks. Chemotheraphy wasn't an automatic choice for me. There was naturopathy and holistic medicine. As a Christian, I believe in miraculous healing and Holy Unction. Perhaps I was to do nothing?

Because I know that the Lord is in all things, for me it came down to "where am I to meet Him?" The answer I got? In chemotheraphy. I found it really hard to wrap my mind around the notion of voluntarily pumping a rotating menu of chemicals into my body every Wednesday for twelve weeks. I mean we're talking about a lifetime non-smoker, a health-conscious eater whose only drug in the house was a bottle of baby aspirin with a 1982 expiry date. In the time the Lord provided me, I came to understand living the words we say every week at Divine Liturgy: "We commend ouselves and each other and all our life unto Christ our God." This wasn't about "chemical cocktails" invading ***my*** body. There was no "my" anything; all of me was His. If I was truly His servant, I needed to embrace what was to come with that understanding.

Chemotherapy Side Effects

I received a page-long description of each of the eleven drugs with its chemical make-up, function and guaranteed and possible side effects. Major effects to look forward to were nausea, appetite-loss, hair and nail loss, tiredness, insomnia, nausea, temporary and permanent nerve damage, nausea, mood-swings, and more nausea. I went to Holy Unction before starting chemotheraphy and began every morning with holy water and a prayer. I had only about twelve hours in total of feeling ***really*** crummy with periods of nausea, and I missed eight days of work as three of the sessions left me very tired; but otherwise I worked full-time and ate normally throughout. I did have insomnia, and I lost fingernails and all of my hair (but thankfully not my sense of humor).

There were some great hair—or, make that hairless—stories from this time, such as the one when I

continued, next page . . .

. . . A Love Story, continued from p. 7:

greeted some trying-not-to-look-stunned guests without my wig on: my daughter subtlely tried to hint that something was amiss, I didn't catch on until she did a really obvious charade-kind of pantomime and then I rushed to put the wig on in order to spare our visitors any more discomfort; but as we recalled the looks on their faces, Jordan's gesturing, and my obliviousness, we started laughing hysterically as I jammed the wig on and headed back to the living room. But I had put it on crookedly, so there were the two of us sliding this wig around on my bald head, killing ourselves laughing while trying to get things under control. And then there was the time that a low-lying branch snagged my winter toque and took it and the wig up into the air. And all the hairball and shampoo jokes . . . my daughter saying she could track me anywhere by following the "loose hairbits" . . . melting and frizzing the wig hair when I looked into a hot oven . . . .

But enough; back to the side effects! My hands, fingers and joints often hurt. Sometimes even my skin hurt. I had mouth sores. I mean I wasn't immune, but I did notice some surprise on the part of the medical staff each week when they asked about side effects. They make it a policy never to speculate to patients which side effects might affect them and to what degree. So it wasn't until it was all over that the nurses and doctors I met with told me that the level of side effects I experienced was unusually low and "highly abnormal" (their words); I figure "normal when from on high" is closer to the truth! Sure it's all relative, but even today I don't know if I fully appreciate just how much easier it was for me than for most people. And everything got back to normal pretty quickly.

Life after Cancer

Medical statistics say if tests are negative for two years, prognosis is good that there will be no recurrence. That's comforting, but my assurance lies in the Lord. But I'm no saint, and my faith is not perfect. There are those twinges every once in a while where I first found the lump. Never mind twinges! Is that a lump again? I feel a little tired . . . is it a different kind of tired than usual? . . . I look at the veins on my hand and remember the IVs . . . . You can drive yourself crazy worrying, wondering, remembering.

I went to talk to Father Stephen about it, to sort out a response to it all. And I received another Truth from God through him. I was changed because of the cancer, the things I had to think about and deal with, the whole experience . . . but those things didn't change me. God did. The change was real and would always be a part of me, but more importantly, the Changer was real and in me. For me those twinges and recollections are not reminders of cancer, of side effects, of a past to forget or a future to fear. They are a living reminder that can be no closer—because it's in my very body—that God is real, that I have known His love and protection, and that He is faithful to those who love Him.

There were other "chapters" bearing equal witness to God's presence, and lots more are still to be written, I hope! But mine is not an isolated story. I don't think God does "limited availability only" love stories, to be experienced by only a select few. The Lord has—***is***—a love story for each of us. Mine included cancer. I might not have picked it that way, but having lived it, I wouldn't trade it. It drew me closer to God and became for my salvation. And for that I give thanks.

Every good and perfect gift is from above . . . if this story held some gift for you that touched your heart or mind or soul, give all glory and honour, praise and thanks to God, for truly it is ***all*** *the work of His hand.*

—Eleanor Gasparik, St Herman of Alaska, Edmonton

Archdiocesan New Briefs

Youngsters Present 'Zach Jr' at Holy Resurrection, Saskatoon

On Sunday evening, April 24, the youngsters of Holy Resurrection, Saskatoon, presented a musical play for the enjoyment of everyone. It was called *Zach Jr.*, and its music was very upbeat and fun to sing, and it had a very clear message about the difference Jesus made in the lives of Zach Jr., the son of Zaccheus, and of his friend Joel, the child who brought the loaves and fishes to Christ with which He fed the multitude. Children from four to twelve years of age participated, singing in the choir or in parts for solo, duet, or trio. Rehearsals had been held previously on Saturday evenings prior to Vespers by the enthusiastic participants. *—Lorraine Grier, Saskatoon*

Fr David Anderson Speaks at Alberta Lenten Retreat

A lenten retreat, *Growing in the Spiritual Life,* was sponsored by the Evangelism Committee of St Herman of Alaska Orthodox Church in Edmonton. We were blessed to have as the leader of this retreat Fr David Anderson, renowned author and theologian from Ben Lomond, California. The retreat was held on Saturday, March 26 at the Star of the North Retreat Centre in St Albert, Alberta. Seventy people from various Orthodox churches in Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon and rural Alberta attended and were blessed by the fellowship and teaching. Audio and video tapes of this retreat are available for anyone wishing to borrow or buy them. Contact St Herman's in Edmonton at (403) 435-3191. *—Audrey Ewanchuk, Edmonton*

Youths Meet in Quebec

Fun, friendship and a strong spirit of commitment to the Orthodox faith marked the recent Archdiocesan youth retreat held near Montreal on the weekend of May 15. The site was an ecological retreat centre on Cap St-Jacques, so in addition to the liturgical services, talks and group discussions usually found at such events, the teens were also given the opportunity of an ecological tour which emphasized water purification and animals native to the area.

Twenty-six youths* attented the retreat. Leaders were Fr Andrew Morbey and Heidi Krieger of Ottawa, Richard Schneider of Toronto, and Lesley-Anne Judge of Montreal.

Professor Schneider was the main speaker, and his talks on the theme "My Mind, My Body, My Soul" held the rapt attention of participants. On Saturday afternoon the youths formed into five small groups to discuss issues and pressures common to them (such as racism, suicide, smoking, etc.) and then made presentations, one topic per group, in the form of either seminars or skits.

The fair weather (and the shattering sound of the smoke alarms which, because of the censer, went off during the only liturgical service of the retreat which was held inside the centre), meant that services could be held in open air. As well, there was time for bonfires, walks in the woods, and quiet talking by the beach. All in all, it was a wonderful opportunity for Orthodox youth from the Ontario and Quebec deaneries to meet new people, renew friendships, and keep in touch with the wider Orthodox community.

Already there is talk of the possibility of a week-long retreat in Algonquin Park next summer—with the hope that some of the teens from the western part of the Archdiocese can join us! —*Katherine Zion, Kingston*

*The young people were, *from Toronto:* Andrew Kladnitski, Tina Parker, Vanya Schneider, and Urosh Simic; *from Ottawa:* Becca and Erika Derry, Buffy Su and Chuck Ho, Raphael and Sasha Lopoukhine, Josepha and Kathleen Morbey, and John and Mary Scratch; *from Kingston:* Cy Nadavallil, Harley Sarris, Jelena Vukomanovic, and Katherine Zion; *from Montreal:* Tina and Toni Diakogeorgiou, Alex and Natasha Hesketh, Despina and Seraphim Kamperidis, and Konstantin and Natasha Voronin.

An account with personal reflections:

'Love in Orthodoxy' is Theme of OTI Retreat

Approximately thirty people met from Thursday April 21 to Lazarus Saturday afternoon to consider the subject "Love in Orthodoxy," as facilitated and presented by Dr John T. Chirban at the 1994 Orthodox Theologcal Institute retreat in Chateauguay, Quebec.

Using scripture and Orthodox dogma as a base, with frequent patristic references, Dr Chirban presented the goal of love in Orthodoxy (theosis/freedom), and contrasted it with examples, from his own psychological practice, of love gone awry and its consequences. I was most impressed with Dr Chirban's ability to root out the truth in all the works he has studied (he holds two doctorates, one in psychology and one in theology), and to apply the light of Orthodoxy on them to bring to the fore not a presentation of modern psycho-babble (which often seems to excuse every action because of one's past), but a clear statement of the goal of love in Orthodoxy, the problems associated with attaining the goal, some suggestions for solving the problems, and, above all, the encouragement for us to become better lovers of God, so that we may love those around us as Christ has loved/does love us. We are called to transform modern society with the active love with which Christ calls us to love, and we are to

continued, next page . . .

Around the Archdiocese . . .

OTI Retreat, *continued from p. 9:*

strengthen our families with placing Him at the centre of our lives and our actions. We cannot be Orthodox Christians without actively loving, and loving involves communion and communication.

Dr Chirban was both humourous and challenging in his presentations, and his honesty, forthrightness, and deep personal love of God shone clearly throughout the retreat. May God bless him, and the retreat participants, as we try to manifest the love of God in our lives.

As a mother of three (ages 9, 7, and 2), I found that participation in the recent OTI retreat enabled me to experience so many good things. I was able to meet new people from outside my own parish experience, thus strengthening the bonds we all have as Orthodox faithful; to experience some mental and spiritual "stretching" inspired by the talks given by Dr Chirban; to participate in a liturgical cycle which would have been next-to-impossible to attend (and be attentive to) at home; to find moments in which I could not only reflect upon our family, but also catch up on journal-writing; and to share my eleven pages of notes with others back home.

It would be so good for all of us to set aside a few dollars a week as a "retreat fund," to enable attendance at at least one retreat during the next year. In the east, there are already three spring 1995 conferences/retreats in the works in the Montreal area alone:

- the 1995 OCW (Orthodox Christian Women) Conference, planned for Saturday 11 March 1995;
- the 1995 OTI (Orthodox Theological Institute) Retreat to be held 13-15 April 1995;
- and a "Conference with Bishop Kallistos (Ware)" to be held in late April/early May 1995 (date to be announced in Autumn 1994).

I would like to thank Fr John Tkachuk and his parish for making the OTI retreat possible, and I would especially like to thank my husband, Deacon Symeon Rodger, for making the retreat possible for me! *—Larissa Rodger, Annunciation/St Nicholas, Ottawa*

Participants in the OTI retreat gathered for a parting photograph.

More Archdiocesan News Briefs

Prodigal Performance

On Meatfare Sunday the parish of St Herman's, Surrey, BC held a special dinner and talent show. Virtually all the preparation for a spaghetti and meatball dinner was done by Carol Lastiwka, and tickets were sold not to fundraise but only to cover costs. Choir director Andrea Folster organised a full slate of entertainment by members of the parish. Reg Lastiwka engaged us all in the performance of a cowboy story, and other members performed music, read poetry and told jokes.The grand finale was a suitable prelude to Lent, a unique performance of "The Prodigal Son" by the St Herman's Not-Ready-For-Lent Players. Jennifer Reimer read the familiar tale in the not-so-familiar Anglo-Saxon, while actors pantomimed the story. We won't soon forget Gavin Campbell's stunning performance as the Prodigal, as he lost all his Monopoly money to the party girls, then tried to steal canned corn from a mechanical pig....Happily, of course, his father awaited his return in the person of Father Lawrence, who stood gazing hopefully down the road with the aid of a rolled-up paper telescope. So dig up your own talents, however small, and your parish too can go into the next fasting period with some laughter and good spirits to sustain you! *—Donna Farley, Surrey*

Historic Sunday of Orthodoxy in Saskatoon

A milestone in Orthodox history in Saskatoon came into being with the pan-Orthodox celebration of Vespers of the Sunday of Orthodoxy this year. Building on the

continued, p. 12 . . .

Theotokos Is Theme of OCW Conference

On Saturday, March 19, 1994 the Orthodox Christian Women of Montreal held their third annual pan-Orthodox conference. Over 90 participants attended from Montreal, the surrounding area, and Ottawa. Some even came from as far away as Nova Scotia and the United States. The conference was dedicated to the Mother of God and entitled "My Soul Magnifies the Lord." Fr Joseph Shaheen of the host parish, St Nicholas, opened the conference with a prayer service.

The keynote speaker was Mary Ann DeTrana of Virginia who, in speaking of the feasts of the Theotokos, showed how the events in Mary's life have practical implications for us today. She pointed out that the Theotokos is real: she is not an idea, symbol or myth to be analyzed. We looked at how her role as Mother of God has two sides to it: the side of obedience and the side of freedom. Mary freely chose her role. When the angel Gabriel appeared to her, she questioned him because she was free to say no. As Mary is an example of the proper response to God, her freely chosen obedience and submission are a model for all Christians.

Some participants at the OCW Conference

Using the Theotokos as an example, Matushka DeTrana talked about how being a woman in today's society brings constant changes. There is a time in every woman's life to be active, and another time to withdraw. The changes in our lives and society make it a complex time in which to live, but the Theotokos can be our guide. What matters most is how we live within our particular circumstances and challenges. We should live each day as if it were truly our last, and "bloom where we are planted." Throughout her talk, she showed us in practical terms how the Orthodox Church and Truth can help us to bloom, and how the life of the Mother of God can be our concrete model.

She also encouraged us to take care of ourselves, to make time for silence and prayer, because private time fosters independence and strength. Time for ourselves, along with physical exercise, is essential in helping us deal with both the "busy-ness" in our lives and the anxiety created by this "busy-ness." Anxiety destroys our peace of mind, wears us out and destroys our faith. Finally, we must remember to do the one thing needful, which is to follow the will of God.

In the afternoon Mary Ann Lopoukhine of Ottawa guided us through two workshops which continued the morning's theme. She also emphasised that we do not analyze the Theotokos: we learn about her through our relationship with her. Each of the workshops challenged us to think about our commitment, in all aspects of our lives, to Christ and the Church. We analyzed the various challenges that life brings to us at different stages, and looked at what we have said Yes to in life, and to what we have said No. Some examples of the affirmatives we have chosen are: God's will, Canadian winters, family values, the Church, ending an abusive marriage, taking care of ourselves and others, living out our beliefs and being responsible. Some of the negatives are to violence against women and children, excessive work, societal values, our own will, judging others and the need always to strive for "something else." In the end, however, it was decided that what we say Yes and No to is not as important as why we say Yes or No in any given challenge or situation. In the second workshop we asked: How do we magnify and praise the Lord in our lives? The answers were again varied: everything we do *should* praise the Lord; we should be able to thank God in all circumstances; we should pray; and we should have a positive attitude.

Many thanks go to both the committee which organised the conference, and to the St Nicholas parish of Montreal for the wonderful job they did again this year as hosts. And a final thank-you must be mentioned for the outstanding lenten lunch that was provided!

—Heidi Krieger, Annunciation / St Nicholas, Ottawa

. . . **From the Bishop's Desk,** *continued from p. 6:*

see or admit, is that all of this evil, this ugliness, this sin, is exactly what is ***in our own hearts.***

These are the very dangerous daily temptations that afflict you and me throughout the year, and it is into this dark, death-dealing evil that we are going to fall and be bound if we do not pay close attention to daily repentance. And if we do fall, we must immediately cry for help to God, to pull us up again. But more than this, we need in our daily prayers to pay closer attention to our responsibility for ***supporting*** our brothers and sisters out of their pitfalls too, not behaving as sharks and being bloodthirsty, or as chickens picking-to-death another who has fallen into injury or weakness.

So let us pray for and with each other, support one another in our path of repentance as we try together to be like Christ, to reveal Him to others, and to be transparent in His love!

Briefly noted:

Usually we have had an **Archdiocesan picnic** at the diocesan centre, *Fair Haven,* in the late spring. It has proved impossible to hold it this year because of the scheduling conflict with the pilgrimage to Ukraine. The picnic will appear again next year!

Some of our readers subscribe to *Novaya Ruskaya Slovo* from New York. For those who wish an alternative with a clearly Christian perspective, with news, art, literature, church life, etc., we recommend ***Russian Thought,*** published in Russian in Paris since 1948. One year's subscription by air in US dollars is $144.00. Address: La Pensée Russe: Russkaya Mysl', 217, rue de Faubourg St Honoré, 75008 PARIS France.

Seraphim

. . . **Sunday of Orthodoxy in Saskatoon,** *from p. 10:*

positive spirit and dialogue generated among the Orthodox faithful by common work and cooperation on the "Windows to the East" symposium (reported in the last issue of the *Messenger*), Deacon Phillip Eriksson of Holy Resurrection Church, boldly approached Fr Bohdan Demczuk of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada and Fr Bernard Funk of the Antiochian Archdiocese with regard to having a Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers service together. Upon contacting the hierarchs of the various jurisdictions for permission, they proceeded to approach the various churches in the Saskatoon area. Everything began to fall into place. Holy Trinity Orthodox Cathedral was offered for the service, and a pan-Orthodox Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers became a reality.

Present at the service were Archpriest Orest Olekshy, Deacon Phillip Eriksson, Subdeacon Terry Papish, and Readers James Davis and Leonard Herrem, OCA; Fr Bohdan Demczuk, Fr Sampson and Fr Wasylenko of the UOCC; Fr Sass of the Romanian Orthodox Church under the Romanian Orthodox Bishop of Sweden; Fr Bernard Funk and Deacon Wilhelm Friesen of the Antiochian Archdiocese; and over two hundred Orthodox faithful and guests. The service was celebrated for the most part in English, with each church doing a litany in their respective language. The cantoring was done in the same fashion with all cantors doing the English parts together. Following the service all were invited to the Holy Trinity Cathedral auditorium for a meal. Everyone seemed to be genuinely excited and optimistic about this ground-breaking event, and it is hoped that the fruit of it will be more positive dialogue among the Orthodox churches of the Saskatoon area in the future.

—Terry Papish, Saskatoon

Edmonton's **2nd Annual Orthodox Christian Education Conference** will be held Sat. Oct. 22 1994 at St Philip's Church (Antiochian), 15804 - 98 Ave., Edmonton T5P 4R9. Registration, which must be confirmed by Sept. 15, is $30.00, lunch included. Cheques should be made payable to St Anthony's Ukrainian Orthodox Church. For more information: contact either Ray Atallah at (403) 424-9054 or Tim Hawrysh at (403) 487-0142.

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