

Go therefore and make disciples of
all nations
Mt 28:19



Allez, faites de toutes les nations
des disciples
Mt 28:19

CANADIAN ORTHODOX MESSENGER

Founded by the blessed Archbishop Arseny (Chahovtsev), 1866 – 1945
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New Orthodox president of CCC: an interview

In its 1973 encyclical on ecumenism, the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America wrote:

In its ecumenical activity, the Orthodox Church can have no other norm of judgment than the Orthodox Christian Faith as revealed by God, lived by the saints, and recorded and testified to in the Holy Scriptures and Tradition of the Church. On this basis, there are at least two fundamental norms which guide the Orthodox in our relations with other men. In the first place, we must deny what is wrong wherever we find it. This means that we must refuse to identify ourselves and our Church with those elements in the non-Orthodox communions which are contrary to the Scriptures and Holy Tradition. In the second place, we must take all that we find in the non-Orthodox which conforms to the faith and life of the Orthodox Church as the basis for our positive meeting and cooperation. We must recognize all those who have faith in Christ and who have preserved elements of Orthodox Christianity as our fellow Christians and rejoice in that which we share in common with them.

On the basis of this understanding, the OCA has been, and continues to be, a member of the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches (USA), and the Canadian Council of Churches. During the many decades of this membership, only two persons from the OCA have held top executive positions in the organizations. The first, the Very Rev Leonid Kiskovsky, was President of the National Council of Churches for two full years in 1989 and 1990. The second, Professor Richard Schneider of Toronto, was elected in May 2003 to a three-year term as President of the Canadian Council of Churches.

Professor Schneider is an associate professor in History and Humanities at York University, where he specializes in church history and medieval cultural history, iconography, and critical methodology in history. For three years he has also been a visiting professor of

iconology at St Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary in New York, and for two years a visiting professor in the graduate programme of Eastern Christian Studies at St Paul's in Ottawa. He is also a member of both the OCA's Metropolitan Council and the Canadian Archdiocesan Council. He is married and the father of seven children, all adults now, scattered from Bali to Toronto, and working in such varied fields as computers, Montessori teaching, and university primate-research. One of his sons is a monk at Holy Transfiguration Skete in Gibsons BC.



Professor
Richard
Schneider

In November 2003, after having just completed a term as president of the parish council of Christ the Saviour Sobor in Toronto, he was interviewed in his home in Toronto by the editor of the *Messenger*:

COM: Professor Schneider, how long have you been involved in the CCC?

RS: A little over a decade. It was the mid-90s, and I got involved with committees which were helping to formulate and work out the "forum" idea—first attempting to define the concept theologically, and later working out the model in practical terms. Later on, I became a member of the Governing Board, and under this new Forum model, I was always responsible to speak

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with “the mind and voice” of the Orthodox Church which I represented as a delegate from the OCA.

COM: What is this “forum” concept?

RS: I am happy to say that although Forum was a *concept* in the mid-90s when I started, it is now *the official, practical reality of how we do dialogue in the CCC*. As I reported to the Archdiocesan Assembly as early as 1996, Forum is a revolutionary change for ecumenism: where the goal used to be that of trying to find (or worse, to create) a common ecclesiology which would make possible the reunion of all Christians, the new model of Forum makes each delegate a responsible witness for the community of faith in which he or she encounters Christ. The duty of every delegate is now to bring that witness boldly to the discussion table, and then also to listen—lovingly, humbly, respectfully—to the witness of fellow Christians in order to hear what truth can be learned from their grasp of salvation. In the old agenda, the central body defined and set common programmes for all the members. In the new Forum agenda, the represented Christian groups themselves set the priorities. Thus the CCC is not some “super church.” Instead we are many Christian groups dialoguing to find common ground.

In the old ecumenism, there was a spirit of compromise. The attitude was something like “What can we give up, and what can we keep, in order to unite into one church?” This was an attitude that the Orthodox could not support, nor could the Roman Catholics, nor some of the Evangelicals.

But in the Forum model of ecumenical dialogue, there is no need for compromise, nor any need to be defensive and/or antagonistic. Instead, each Christian body which is represented emphasizes the truth as it knows it. It is because of this new model that the Roman Catholic Church is now a full member of the CCC (the only place in the world where this is the case). Of course we do not always agree, nor do we compromise. Each delegate is responsible for witnessing to the faith of his or her member Christian body, speaking with the mind and voice of that body. When we do not agree, we cannot speak with a common voice. When, however, through dialogue we realize that we do agree, our common voice can be powerful.

COM: What are some examples of this common ground, of this common voice?

RS: I’ll give two recent examples. First, in the area of biotechnology, the CCC, along with the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, has successfully challenged Harvard University’s attempt to patent the “oncomouse,” a genetically altered mouse for cancer research, at Canada’s Supreme Court. An account of the theological

issues involved in this case is in the CCC’s recent publication *Life: Patent Pending*, a PDF copy of which can be downloaded from the CCC’s website at : www.ccc-cce.ca.

Second, the CCC’s letter against Canadian participation in the American invasion of Iraq was cited by Prime Minister Chrétien as a factor in his government’s refusal to join the “coalition” for invasion.

I might add also that the CCC has just completed a booklet entitled *Becoming Human*, which contains a common understanding of Christian anthropology. It will be published in 2004.

COM: One hears from time to time from some Orthodox people that “ecumenism is a sell-out of the One True Church.” They believe that the Church is compromised when the Orthodox take part in ecumenical dialogue. How would you address such persons?

RS: I believe that we must witness to our Faith. If the One True Faith is the reality that shines through the Gospel—that is, the Word or Christ Himself—there is no way that that can be *limited* to what the Orthodox already know. Our Faith in Christ the Truth is always an eschatological vision, an ever-unfolding vision responding to life in history, and this means that we have something to learn, as well as something to teach.

When I hear a theologically and spiritually perfect homily from a Baptist minister on the Governing Board about the woman who wipes Christ’s feet with her tears and hair, is it my duty to close my ears, and my heart? Or is it my duty to listen with a “broken and contrite heart” (Ps 51:17)? And when a United Church colleague on the Governing Board can come to me and say that after years of our dialogue he now prays more fully and intently with the aid of an icon, should I respond “Glory to God,” or should I tell him that unless he converts to Orthodoxy, he has no hope of salvation?

In my view, both of these examples are what can happen when one speaks with the mind and voice of Orthodoxy. There is no question, on any issue, of abandoning or compromising the Truth of our Faith—not on the Trinity, Christology, same-sex marriage, abortion, the environment, or anything else. In fact, in speaking firmly in dialogue from an Orthodox point of view, one is able to provide exactly the kind of witness that is Christ’s mandate (Mt 28:19-20). But if I do this in a spirit of triumphalism, all I create is hostility and defensiveness, and further the fraction of the Church that the East-West split began and the Reformation continued. What’s wrong with the attitude you are referring to is this: it’s triumphalistic. As Orthodox Christians, it is our duty to be there

in the ecumenical dialogues—with love, patience, humility, truth and strength. It is our *duty* to be there, not to run away, because by honest witness, we draw others closer to the Truth.

COM: How do you understand your being a layperson in relation to your position as President of the CCC?

RS: It is traditional in the CCC to have many representatives who are lay people, both men and women. And of course, Orthodoxy has always had a tradition of lay theologians, women and men, who are taken seriously. I value my lay status. Orthodoxy, being iconographic, looks very much to role models, and I want to be a role model for other laity because the lay role is invaluable in the Orthodox mix of both clergy and laity. This idea of conciliarity (“sobornost”) is the model from which both North American and Western European Orthodoxy have drawn so much strength.

COM: Has anything changed for you since you became President of the Canadian Council of Churches?

RS: Yes. Where before my responsibility was entirely to represent as fully as I possibly could the Orthodox point of view, now my main responsibility as President is to find consensus, where it exists. I find it a challenge to listen to the prophetic voice from wherever it comes. And as an Orthodox Christian it is also a challenge for me to constantly remind the CCC that the Truth is the criterion, not convenience. I am happy that I have for several years been mentoring our new OCA delegate to the Governing Board, David Wagschal (the Secretary of the OCA’s Department of Interchurch Relations and Ecumenical Witness). I have great confidence in him and his ability in speak with the mind and voice of Orthodoxy. It is he who takes the place and responsibility which I formerly had.

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Patriarch of Moscow (+1925),
Archbishop Arseny (Chahovtsev),
and other missionary labourers
of the Orthodox Church in America.*

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Archpriest Svetislav Balevich

31 May 1934 – 28 November 2003

There is the word “svet” in the name Svetislav, meaning “light.” How fitting that someone who was so transparent, who brought so much joy to many would have borne such a name! His buoyant ways and light, natural humour truly fitted with his name. How was it that the Lord placed him in the midst of Canada, in southern Saskatchewan, hailing as he did from so great a distance across the world?

Fr Svetislav was the youngest child of Alexander and Maria Balevich, whose first child Nina died in prenatal life as they fled from Russia during the Communists’ rise to power. Five sons and two daughters were born in Belgrade to this cultured Russian family. As the eastern European governments crumbled under Nazi domination, the family fled to Austria and then to Venezuela, living in Valencia. There the young Svetislav served as an altar boy, getting his first experience of liturgical service.

Fr Svet (or as parishioners would later call him, Fr Sam) was always full of interesting anecdotes. Here is one from his life. In Venezuela, he completed high school and *exactly one day* of university. Then the family left for Toronto with Svetislav and Leonilla. Svetislav obtained work in the Photogrammetry Division of the Ontario Department of Highways where he remained until he enrolled in St Tikhon’s Orthodox Theological Seminary, South Canaan, Pennsylvania in September, 1967. He often recalled his days at St Tikhon’s very fondly.

At seminary he met his wife, Eva (Lazorack), whose family lived near St Tikhon’s and attended the monastery church. What a busy year 1967 was! They were married in June. Father was ordained to the diaconate in Montréal, to the priesthood in Toronto and assigned to the parish named in honour of the Holy Trinity in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan by the end of August! The Baleviches would remain at this parish of first assignment, right to the end, with Fr Svetislav as the only OCA priest serving all of Saskatchewan (Kayville, Stenen, Maple Creek, and even Sandy Lake, Manitoba) for a time.

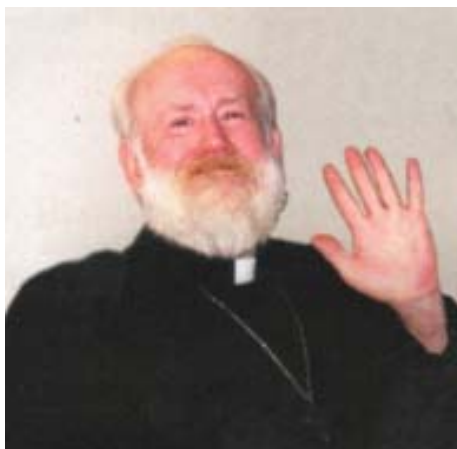
In Moose Jaw they raised their two sons: Nick, now a city planner who lives in Sanford, Florida, and Igor, an actuary who lives in Stamford, Connecticut. Parish life kept the Baleviches busy; they cared for their aging flock with much love and practical consideration. So many heartfelt events occurred over the three and a half decades! One that comes to mind is the time the youth of Holy Resurrection, Saskatoon took a bus to Moose Jaw, attended vespers on Saturday, camped in the hall overnight and then continued with worship and feasting the next day. Fr Balevich thoroughly enjoyed it (and Matushka taught the children

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folk dancing). As we got on the bus to return, Father got on, too. He took a seat and looked at all of us and said, "Oh, don't go! Can't you all just stay here?" and he looked at all of the children with such affection.

Fr Svetislav retired as priest of the Moose Jaw parish in 2002, with many other clergy and well-wishers joining in liturgical worship and a good potluck. Since then the Baleviches have been busy caring for their "back 40" gardens of considerable size at Riverhurst, where they grew many organic vegetables to share with others. Upon request, Fr Svetislav occasionally came to Saskatoon to take services for Fr Bernard Funk of the Antiochian Archdiocese. On those occasions, many would attend to hear his practical words of encouragement, and his dear habit of addressing the one before him according to their Christian names. His "Good Morning, King David. Hello, St Catherine" so typically "Fr. Svetislavian," brought many chuckles and smiles!



*Fr Svetislav
Balevich*

His health was waning and it was harder to serve, but still he did it, by God's strength. He seemed to enjoy talking quite a lot about the past, and prepared a box of archives, which he diligently brought to Saskatoon for eventual deposit at the Archbishop Arseny Archives. Then he fell ill in late November, and was cared for in the Moose Jaw Hospital for more than a week. He reposed in the Lord on November 28, 2003.

His funeral was served on December 2-3, 2003 with great peace by many loving clergy, with family, parishioners and friends filling the Moose Jaw Church to overflowing. It was officiated by His Eminence, Archbishop Lazar (Puhalo) of British Columbia and our Chancellor, Archpriest Dennis Pihach. The Funeral Office of a Departed Priest was offered by Frs Stacey Richter, Bernard Funk, Orest Olekshy, John Mancantelli, Brent Kuzyk, Constantine Turcoane, Anatoly Melnyk, Robert Kennaugh, Daniel Nenson, Rodion Luciuk, Spyridon Vandoras and Mirko Malinovic, with cantor, Monk Tikhon (Green) and reader, Michael Luciuk. Fr Svetislav's body was interred in Pennsylvania, at St Tikhon's Monastery Cemetery.

Our heartfelt condolences and love are extended to Matushka Eva at this time, and to Nick and Igor. Vechnaya Pamyat' to the dear man of God, Fr Svetislav. We are all the richer for having known him. We will never forget him.—*Kathy Szalasznyi, Saskatoon*

Serge Troubetzkoy

15 December 1906 – 26 October 2003

Serge G. Troubetzkoy, a former member of both the Canadian Archdiocesan Council and the parish council of Montréal's Sts Peter and Paul Sobor and builder of St Sergius Chapel in Labelle, QC reposed in the Lord at the age of 96 on October 26, 2003 in New York. He faithfully served the church in numerous capacities over many decades, perhaps most notably as secretary to Metropolitans Ireney and Theodosius and as OCA Archivist.

Prince Sergei Grigorievich Troubetzkoy was born in Moscow on December 15, 1906 into one of the most illustrious families of the Russian nobility in Imperial Russia. He was the last survivor of the five sons of Prince Gregory Nikolayevich Troubetzkoy, Councillor of State, and Maria Constantinovna Bouteneff. Following the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution that toppled the Czarist regime in Russia, the Troubetzkoy family was forced to flee Russia into exile, eventually settling in France. It was there that Serge Troubetzkoy received his education, graduating from Grignon University as an agricultural engineer.

In 1933, he married Princess Lubov Alexeevna Obolensky in New York City, where the young couple soon settled. His professional career was largely devoted to sales of farm machinery. During World War II, he was employed by the US State Department and sent abroad on loan to the French government as part of the "Harriman Mission," assisting in plans for the country's post-war agricultural reconstruction. After the war, he served in the US Air Force Reserve, retiring as a Major.

In 1950, the Troubetzkoy family moved to Montréal, where he worked for a major agricultural machinery firm. In Montréal, they became active parishioners of Sts Peter and Paul Sobor. A few years later, Sergei Grigorievich was elected to the parish council as one of the assistant wardens of the Cathedral. In the early 1960s, he was also elected to the Archdiocesan Council. It was in these positions that he played a significant role in facilitating the transfer of the Archdiocesan see from Toronto to Montréal and the expansion of the cathedral building in Montréal.

He additionally assisted Archbishop Sylvester in his immigration from France and resettlement in Canada. With the restructuring of the governance of the North American Metropolia, he also became the Canadian Archdiocese's first lay representative to the Metropolitan Council from 1964 to 1971. During this period, it was also customary

. . . *Memory Eternal* . . .

that either the clergy or lay vice-chairman of the All-American Church Sobor would necessarily be from the Archdiocese of Canada. As a result, Mr Troubetzkoy served as lay vice-chairman of the All-American Sobor in 1963. At the 1967 Sobor, he was again nominated as vice-chairman but declined in favor of another Canadian delegate.

When he retired from secular employment in 1970, Serge Troubetzkoy was appointed secretary to the late Metropolitan Ireney, manager of the OCA Chancery property in Oyster Bay Cove (Syosset), NY and eventually also assumed the functions of OCA Archivist. Upon the retirement of Metropolitan Ireney, he continued his service as secretary to Metropolitan Theodosius and in his other capacities at the OCA Chancery. It was in his activities as a historian, particularly of his family's legacy, and as OCA Archivist that his labours reached their fullest fruition. He painstakingly and continuously compiled several chronicles of his family history, some of which have been published in post-Soviet Russia. He also wrote and published many articles on church history. Additionally, his labours in organizing the OCA Archives provided the foundation upon which the work of the OCA Department of History and Archives continues to this day.

Upon his retirement as secretary to the Metropolitan and OCA Archivist in 1983, "Mr.T" (as he was affectionately called by the chancery staff) was named OCA Archivist-Emeritus. Even in retirement, he continued working in the OCA Archives on a part-time basis, providing invaluable assistance to the archives staff and sharing his vast knowledge and experience until 1997, when deteriorating health made his almost daily presence at the OCA Chancery impossible. However, as his encyclopedic mind remained sharp almost to his final days, he continued to provide wise counsel and information to the Department of History and Archives until the end of his life, and his legacy will inspire the department's work for many years to come.

On the occasion of his 85th birthday in 1991, in recognition for his long and faithful service to the Orthodox Church in America, Serge Troubetzkoy was awarded the Order of St. Innocent by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius.

An important aspect of his life for more than 60 years was centred on the rural village of Labelle, Québec where in the early 1940s, he was able to purchase inexpensively a farm house on a large piece of property. This became a summer home for his family. Some of his relatives and members of his extended family, including several faculty members from St Vladimir's Seminary, as well as other Russians from Montréal and New York built their summer homes there in the following decades. In the 1950s, he constructed a chapel there next to his home, and when the chapel burned down in a fire, he immediately constructed another one. Fr Alexander Schmemmann, a close friend of the Troubetzkoy family, and Fr John Meyendorff as well as many other clergy served there every summer for many years. Labelle soon

became a haven where many would come together in the summer to relax and rejuvenate themselves, both physically and spiritually. Summers in Labelle have been and continue to be a crucial revitalizing force in the lives of many, over several generations. Without Serge Troubetzkoy's foresight in creating the extended family and church community there, the comfort and joy it has provided would not have been possible. It will doubtless live on as his legacy for generations to come.



Serge Troubetzkoy is shown on the right, with his wife Luba, on the left, and Metropolitan Theodosius.

Serge Troubetzkoy's cheerful, humble and noble manner, his selfless willingness to assist in any situation, his intelligence and his tact earned him love and respect throughout the world. He was always willing to listen to anyone, treating everyone with equal and utmost respect. His kindness and unpretentious gentility in all situations were truly inspiring. It can certainly be said that he had no enemies but was beloved by all and will be greatly missed. Luba, his wife of 58 years, predeceased him in 1991. He is survived by a son, Alexis, of Toronto, Ontario, and two daughters, Elizabeth of London Ontario, and Mary of Glen Cove, New York, as well as six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

A memorial service at Our Lady of Kazan Church in Sea Cliff NY was served by Fr Leonid Kishkovsky on Monday evening, October 27. Retired Metropolitan Theodosius and six priests concelebrated the funeral service at the same church the next evening. On Wednesday, at the same church, Metropolitan Theodosius presided at a Memorial Divine Liturgy, assisted by nine priests. Metropolitan Theodosius, Frs Sergei Bouteneff, Leonid Kishkovsky and Alexis Vinogradov preached homilies at these services eulogizing Mr Troubetzkoy. The burial, presided by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, followed on Wednesday afternoon at Saint Tikhon's Monastery Cemetery, South Canaan PA.

May our Lord and Savior grant rest eternal in the mansions of the just to his faithful servant, Serge, and may his memory be eternal!—*Alexis Liberovsky, OCA Archivist*

OCA presence in Nova Scotia: a mission and a hermitage

St Vladimir's Mission in Halifax was founded in the early 1990s by Fr Vladimir (Tobin) and a small group of the faithful. In 1994, Fr Roman (Bonnel) was tonsured a monk in the Brotherhood of St Seraphim of Sarov by Bishop Seraphim, who blessed the Chapel of the New Hieromartyr Vladimir of Kiev in Halifax. Some time later, the Mission was received into the OCA. In 1998, a young man was tonsured a monk as Fr Cassian (Marek), and with Fr Roman, founded a kellia in the city with a chapel dedicated to St Sergius of Radonezh.

Today the Mission is composed of around twenty people with Fr Vladimir as Rector. Sheltered by the monks since 1998, the Mission is now ready to move into its own locale, in the church hall of St George's Anglican Church, in downtown Halifax. The group is composed of Canadians of mixed ethnic backgrounds. On his recent visit to Halifax on January 11, 2004, Bishop Seraphim blessed the continued growth of the community and tonsured several readers and subdeacons. As a small church, the faithful are struggling to maintain the English-speaking Orthodox presence in Halifax and need the prayers of all.



From l. to r.: Fr Roman, Bp Seraphim, and Fr Vladimir

On January 11, 2004 His Grace also ordained Fr Roman to the Holy Priesthood. Around Pascha 2004, the two monks will leave Halifax for the countryside of Nova Scotia where the Bishop has blessed the foundation of the Hermitage of the Annunciation. The secluded property will enable the monks to live a life in silence, solitude and prayer.

Sherwood Park, Alberta mission has new deacon

In a joyous liturgy, Subdeacon Maurice Beecroft was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Bishop Seraphim on December 26th, 2003, at St Athanasius Mission in Sherwood Park, Alberta.

To celebrate this wonderful sacrament with Dn Maurice were his wife Vivian and their sons Colin and Andrew. Also in attendance were guests from St Herman's Orthodox Sobor in Edmonton, the parish where Dn Maurice and Vivian were chrismated in 1987. By God's grace, they were introduced to Orthodoxy by their friend, Dianne Storheim. Being a graduate of St Vladimir's Seminary, Dianne was able to assist Dn Maurice in completing the OCA Late Vocations Program. The Beecroft and Storheim families have known one another since childhood, and grew up just houses away from each other in Edmonton. Their friendship continues to this day.



Newly ordained Deacon Maurice and his family with Bp Seraphim.

The Beecrofts are founding members of St Athanasius Mission. The community, worshipping together since September of 2002, currently gathers in the chapel at the Glenwood Memorial Gardens funeral home in Sherwood Park, a suburb community just east of Edmonton. Under the spiritual direction of Fr Ron Poworoznik, the mission now has forty members with many young families and numerous children. The ordination of Dn Maurice will aid the small community in continuing to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all those in Sherwood Park and the surrounding area. May God bless Dn Maurice, Vivian, Colin, and Andrew, as they enter into this new ministry for Christ and His Holy Church.

Primate visits Toronto; Archpriest celebrates 25th

During the weekend of October 17–19 2003, His Beatitude Metropolitan HERMAN paid his first primatial visit to Toronto, and to Canada. He accomplished three main purposes during this visit.

Metropolitan Herman inspected the Sheraton Hotel on Queen Street in Toronto Centre. This hotel will be the site of the 2005 All-American Council, and a great number of participants is expected. He found it to be an excellent facility to receive the hundreds of delegates expected. All the more will it be an opportunity

for Canadians to attend this Council. Although it is demanding economically, it is much more affordable for many of our people than such a meeting in the USA. We, this Archdiocese, and this country of Canada are the hosts of this Council. It is strongly recommended that as many of the parishes, clergy and faithful—both delegates and observers—set aside the third week of July, 2005, in order to

participate. A great deal is learned, and there is no other equivalent opportunity in North America to worship together daily *en masse* with so many faithful from throughout the continent.

His Beatitude visited on Saturday morning the Mission Parish of St Tikhon of Moscow, the Podvoriye (embassy parish) of the Moscow Patriarchate in Toronto. This parish serves as a kind of bridge between the OCA and the Moscow Patriarchate as a representation from the Patriarchate to the Holy Synod. This community of

newly-arrived Russian-speakers worships in a very historic, small Anglican chapel in Scarborough, and is led by the Moscow Patriarchate representative, Archpriest Sergei Rasskazovski. His Beatitude and his delegation were very warmly received, and there was time over food for conversation and questions.

On Saturday evening and Sunday morning, Vigil and Primatial Hierarchical Divine Liturgy were served at Christ the Saviour Sobor in Toronto. His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, and His Grace, Bishop Seraphim served the Divine Liturgy together with Protopresbyter Rodion Kondratick, Chancellor of the OCA, Archpriest Dennis Pihach, Chancellor of the Archdiocese, Archpriest Oleg Kirillov, Rector of the Sobor, Priest Miroslaw Wojtiuk, Priest Stephan Kapitanoff ; Archdeacon Alexy



Metropolitan Herman with Archpriest Oleg Kirillov

Klimacheff of the Metropolitan's staff, and Deacon Alexander Sukalov, along with the altar-servers and singers of the Sobor. It happened to be the occasion also of the celebration of the 25th anniversary of ordination to priesthood of Father Kirillov. The celebration was joyous and well-attended, and the dinner afterwards much enjoyed. His Beatitude was accompanied also by Jason Vansuch, his aide at Syosset, Martin Pawluch, his aide at St Tikhon's, and John Mindala, the OCA photographer and manager of the OCA.org website.

†Seraphim

2003 Western women's retreat: spiritual warfare

Scripture, scripture, scripture. The references and quotes came quicker than we could write them down, but not to worry: Joy Corey had handouts for the approximately 80 Orthodox women meeting at Entheos Retreat Centre near Calgary on the last beautiful weekend in September 2003.

Scripture was our speaker's first focus at the opening of the retreat, because it was the foundation for the weekend's theme of "Spiritual Warfare." For attendees from our Archdiocese, it made an appropriate prelude to the theme of next summer's Archdiocesan Assembly, "Promoting Scripture in Parish Life."

Canadian-born Joy Corey, author of several articles in *The Word*, is a member of St John the Baptist Antiochian parish in Post Falls, Idaho. A graduate of the St Stephen's Course of Theological Studies she has amassed many years of diverse service to the Church: leading women's groups, Bible studies, Church school, stewardship workshops, prison ministry and much more. But in addition to this broad and deep experience she brought her life's engagement in spiritual warfare, which is the subject of a book she is currently writing. Gradually over the sessions, Joy revealed the numerous catastrophic events of her personal life, events many would call tragedies. Instead, she told of how studying the book of Job in order to teach a Bible class helped prepare her to deal with the spiritual onslaughts of her life—loss of her mother, young sister and brother; widowhood leaving her with two young children; addictions and alcoholism in her family; and the accidental death of her son.

Joy's presentations moved both hearts and minds over the weekend. Why, she asked—when the Bible is one of

our chief tools for combating the world, the flesh and the devil—why is it sitting in a dusty corner in so many of our homes? She went on to feed her listeners with solid Biblical and patristic teachings about the passions that assail us and the tools God gives us to combat them.

These tools include humility; guarding the thoughts; rebuking the demons; praising God continually; prayer and fasting; church attendance and communion; St Michael and the angels; and the sign of the Cross. The final Saturday afternoon session had participants breaking into small groups to examine spiritual warfare scenarios, considering which passions are involved and which tools could be used to fight them.

In addition to the teaching sessions, liturgical services played a strong part in the retreat, with leadership from area clergy: Frs Taras Krochak and Patrick Powalinsky of the Ukrainian Church, Fr Ibrahim Chahoud of the Antiochian Church, and Fr Larry Reinheimer of the OCA. Throughout the weekend, fellowship blossomed and blessed us over meals, with roommates, and out in the fall colour of the trails on the grounds.

This was the 3rd annual retreat held for Orthodox women in the Calgary area, and was attended by women from parishes in British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan. The Entheos Centre has already been tentatively booked by the committee for the same weekend in 2004. For information about next autumn's retreat, contact Myra Reinheimer (403) 938-4929—*Matushka Donna Farley, Surrey / Langley, BC*

The 2003 retreatants.



Women's lenten retreat Planned in Eastern Ontario

On March 26 – 27, 2004 a retreat is planned for women of the Eastern Ontario–Western Quebec region. With the theme "The Kingdom of God is at hand: sanctifying time in busy lives," this will be a true retreat, not a conference or a workshop with a speaker, but a drawing away from busy routine to spend time listening to God, nurturing faith and enjoying fellowship. The venue is Camp IAWAH, a retreat centre near

Kingston ON. Much will be unstructured (being alone and/or with others, indoors and/or out, talking, reading, thinking, listening, resting, wandering by the lake or on wooded trails), but there will be brief introductory comments and selected materials to focus on the church's daily liturgical rhythm, personal prayer, and personal parables.

For further information or to register, please contact: Ms Susan Gander at (613) 273-5745; or email: dgander@rideau.net; or mail: Box 577, Westport ON K0G 1X0.

‘Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also’

Once again the financial report for our Archdiocese of Canada of the OCA shows that we are running in the red this year. We have had a couple of years of just skimming by in the black and hopes were that this was a trend, but The root of this problem is very disturbing. There really is no escaping the reality, that our commitment to Christ and to His Church is only lip service unless we are seriously giving our time and treasure to the Kingdom of God. It is stated very clearly in Luke 12:34 that “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Some have said that we need to be actively using three books to work out our salvation : our Bible, our book of daily prayers, and our checkbook. Looking up our checkbook entries will expose our heart’s refuge.

As Orthodox we sometimes tend to be a little smug when comparing ourselves to our less “fully developed” brethren in the Protestant and Evangelical denominations, or even of the Mormon congregations. After all, we have the “fulness” of Christ’s Church as our heritage. Yet in both the Evangelical and Mormon cultures, the concept of “tithing” is far better understood and practiced than it is in most Orthodox circles. The large churches and social help projects that these cultures produce are a direct result of practicing tithing, and the financial support that tithing makes available.

But is “tithing” Orthodox? St John Chrysostom in commenting on Ephesians 2:10, regarding the good works we are to walk in, says:

For what did not they of old do? Thy gave tithes, and tithes again upon tithes for orphans, widows, and strangers; whereas some one was saying to me in astonishment of another person, ‘Why, such an one gives tithes!’ What a load of disgrace does this imply, since what was not a matter of wonder with the Jews has come to be so in the case of the Christians? If there was danger then in omitting tithes, think how great it must be now!’ (Volume xiii, page 69, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers).

Has the church changed in Her understanding of tithing? The proper Orthodox understanding of stewardship really is much fuller than the “tithing” concept. We really do not “own” anything—it is all on loan from God. To view everything we own as God’s, is a much bigger commitment than the 10% tithe viewpoint. (That viewpoint teaches that you are robbing God if you do not give Him back His 10%, but everything else is then legitimately yours to use as you wish). Our Orthodox viewpoint certainly includes the validity of tithing, but it is just much more encompassing. It is similar to our understanding of the seven Sacraments theology of the Roman Catholic Church. These seven Sacraments are

certainly very important, and we would embrace all of them fully, but we see everything as Sacramental, so it seems artificial and limiting to define only seven. In both tithing and our view of the seven Sacraments, the danger is that we do not treat them with the respect they individually deserve because we have the “bigger picture.”

In almsgiving, tithing is always a good place to start so that the practice of giving becomes real, and does not perpetually get put off until we can “afford it.” I have never met anyone who can really afford to tithe, but once tithing is put into practice for a time, somehow the bills still get paid, and strangely, finances seem to get more manageable. It is just like everything else in the Kingdom of God: quite counter-intuitive. The first will be last, the weak will be strong, the more you give the more you have to give, and the more you will receive.

Why have we been given possessions, talents and abilities? The prevailing North American culture would teach us that the main purpose is to build up our own comfort and status, and to create our own mini-kingdoms while we are here on earth. In the extreme, it goes something like “He who dies with the most toys wins.” As Christians we are quite concerned with what we are likely to “win” should we embrace this philosophy. Or perhaps we wish to leave an empire for our children; but will they use this for Godly purposes? The scriptures and Church tradition are very clear. We have been given material possessions, talents and abilities for the building up and edification of the Church, the Body of Christ and the Kingdom of God, and to help the widows and the poor. Any use less than this misses the mark. To quote Mother Teresa of Calcutta: “The dying, the cripple, the mental, the unwanted, the unloved; they are Jesus in disguise.” Of course, living in this very affluent culture, where even the least wealthy half of our society live a life that is the envy of the vast majority of the world’s population, we all constantly fall short of the mark.

We tend to be quite stingy in giving back our time and money to the very One who gave them to us to use in the first place. We often even feel we are doing God a favour and have earned some sort of merit in being a “good Christian” when we do offer back our 10% (or less) of the material gifts we have been given. The truth is that God really doesn’t need our tithe. He already owns everything. We slowly learn to trust God through sacrificial giving (giving more than is comfortable or “reasonable”). This is about working out our salvation

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during this very short journey. We will lose complete control of all our material possessions soon enough. All reports from the other side would suggest that the treasure we can “take with us” will be that which we gain by making truly solid investments in our eternal savings account, where compounding interest is measured in changed lives. There are no stock market crashes in this investment realm!

So stewardship is not about paying the bills in the Church—these will be easily met when we are practicing stewardship—but about seeking to be transformed into the image of Christ through seeking God’s purpose with our time and resources. As a parish and as a diocese we have hardly started in our support. There are so many needs. In Canada there are entire communities of tens of thousands of people with no Orthodox presence. Mission work, seminary student support to equip these missions, Orthodox education centres, Orthodox senior care facilities, help for the poor and homeless . . . the list is unending of what we should be doing. Other “Christian” denominations are filling all of these needs and more. Should the Orthodox Church be doing any less? At the present time we can hardly even consider these badly needed projects. We cannot even come up with a few thousand a month to provide support for a badly needed executive assistant for our beloved bishop. Many of our parishes are outgrowing their facilities. As the priest said the other day, “We have good news and bad news. The good news is that we have found the funds to put up our new building. The bad news is that it is still in your wallets.”

I would encourage all committed Orthodox Christians to open up a separate checking account for tithing and offerings today. Begin by taking the first 10% of all income that comes into your hands, and put it into this account for the Lord’s work. If you have never before considered your Christian responsibility in this area, and you just cannot imagine starting at 10%, start at 5% for a year or so, to get used to *regularly* giving to the Lord the *first* portion of all your income. Remember, this is the starting place, not some unreachable goal. There should be some sacrifice involved, as sacrifice is the basic ingredient of growth in Christ. Consider leaving a minimum of 10% of your estate to the Church in your will. For many of us a 50% split of our estate may work even better in ensuring that our treasure continues to work for the Kingdom of God once we are gone. If the majority of Church members were to follow this practice alone, the Canadian OCA would quickly leave their financial problems behind, and we would be able to start functioning in a manner worthy of our calling!—*Brent Applegate, Senior Warden, St Peter the Aleut’s, Calgary*

Pastoral Notes

On 24 October 2003 Bishop Seraphim blessed the establishment of a Mission Station in Morristown, NF, in connexion with the Mission Station in St John’s NF.

On 24 October 2003 Bishop Seraphim blessed the establishment of a Mission Station in Port Hardy, BC.

On 1 November 2003, subsequent to Deanery Elections, **Priest Rodion Luciuk**, retaining all other responsibilities, was released from his responsibility as Dean of Saskatchewan. **Archpriest Orest Olekshy**, retaining all other responsibilities, was appointed Dean of Saskatchewan for three years. **Priest Robert Kennaugh** remains Dean of Manitoba for three years.

On 15 November 2003, the Mission Station in St John’s NF was named for the Icon of Our Lady of St Vladimir.

On 29 November 2003, Bishop Seraphim blessed the Domestic Chapel of St John the Evangelist at the home of the **Priest Mark Korban** in West Charleston VT.

On 26 December 2003, at the Divine Liturgy at St Athanasius’ Mission in Sherwood Park AB, Bishop Seraphim ordained **Subdeacon Maurice Beecroft** to the Holy Diaconate. He is attached to St Athanasius’ Mission.

On 1 January 2004, **Priest Miroslaw Wojtiuk** was released from his attachment to Christ the Saviour Sobor in Toronto ON, and was attached to the Bishop’s Chapel of St Silouan in Johnstown ON.

On 11 January 2004, at the Divine Liturgy at St Vladimir’s Mission Church in Halifax NS, Bishop Seraphim ordained the **Hierodeacon Roman (Bonnell)** to the Holy Priesthood. He is assigned to the Communauté Monastique de St-Séraphim de Sarov in Rawdon QC, with responsibility for the Monastic Chapel of St Sergius of Radonezh in Halifax NS.

On 11 January 2004, Bishop Seraphim blessed the establishment of the Hermitage of the Annunciation, together with its Chapel of St Sergius of Radonezh, in Walford-New Germany NS. The Hermitage is a part of the Communauté Monastique de St-Séraphim de Sarov.

Recent celebrations in two Montréal parishes

Saint-Benoît-de-Nursie

Le 14 septembre 2003, jour de la fête de l'Exaltation de la précieuse et vivifiante Croix, plus de 40 paroissiens et amis de la paroisse Saint-Benoît-de-Nursie de Montréal ont effectué un pèlerinage au Saint monastère de la Panagia Parigoritissa (de la Vierge Consolatrice) à Brownsburg (Québec), près de Lachute à environ une heure de route au nord de Montréal. Ce monastère de femmes sous la juridiction de l'Archidiocèse grec du Canada a été fondé en 1993, grâce aux efforts de leur père spirituel l'archimandrite Ephrem, de Philotheou. Il s'agit d'un monastère cénobitique suivant la règle ancienne des monastères du mont Athos.

Les cellules des moniales, la chapelle, la cuisine et le réfectoire sont regroupés dans un vaste bâtiment. Tout près, une construction moderne et agréable qui s'élève au milieu d'un charmant jardin agrémenté d'une fontaine, abrite la boutique où les moniales vendent leur excellent fromage de chèvre, des friandises et d'autres bonnes choses, ainsi que de belles icônes montées à la main et d'autres articles religieux. On peut également visiter sur les lieux l'étable avec son troupeau de chèvres et de moutons bien soigné ainsi que l'atelier de montage d'icônes, un lieu calme et bien organisé.

Il existe également un atelier de couture où les moniales confectionnent des ornements sacerdotaux et des habits religieux. Le cimetière, près du potager, accueille quelques tombes d'amis orthodoxes défunts qui ont contribué à l'établissement du monastère. Un petit ruisseau serpente à travers le terrain boisé. De l'autre côté du pont, légèrement en hauteur une hôtellerie imposante est en construction. Mère Thekla, l'higoumène, a la charge spirituelle de quinze moniales, la plupart issues de familles grecques de Montréal, mais également d'autres traditions orthodoxes. Les moniales parlent le grec, l'arabe, le français et l'anglais.

La paroisse Saint-Benoît-de-Nursie a décidé de faire ce pèlerinage d'un jour au monastère pour rendre grâce dans l'allégresse pour le ministère de son recteur, l'higoumène Irénée (Rochon), qui a célébré le 25^e anniversaire de son ordination à la prêtrise le jour de la Transfiguration (ancien calendrier), le 19 août. La plupart sont arrivés à l'Orthros chanté par la communauté monastique et célébré par le chapelain, le père Daniel Giubega. Tandis que la superbe chapelle ornée de fresques se remplissait de pèlerins et d'invités, notre clergé a été gentiment invité à concélébrer la Divine Liturgie.

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The Sign of the Theotokos

The 25th Anniversary Celebration of The Sign of the Theotokos Church, Montréal culminated with the Altar Feast and Banquet-Luncheon on the last weekend of November, presided by His Grace Bishop Seraphim and joined by His Beatitude Metropolitan Theodosius. Now retired, Vladyka Theodosius was the first primate to visit The Sign back in 1979.

After Vespers on Saturday 29 November, a commendation was presented to the parishioners of The Sign on the occasion of its 25th anniversary. Individual citations were also presented to Protodeacon Cyprian Hutcheon, for editing the new 25th Anniversary Book, and who will be celebrating the 20th anniversary of ordination early in 2004; and to Choir Director Lesley-Ann Judge for her continuing dedication to the parish. A number of visitors joined parishioners for the wine and cheese reception in the hall afterwards, which was beautifully decorated for the occasion. The Anniversary Book was released at the reception: 2500 copies were printed, so this book will serve as the "welcome kit" to all friends and visitors for many years to come!

On Sunday morning the Metropolitan was vested ceremonially in the middle of the church. After the Liturgy, both bishops greeted parishioners and gave them their blessings. Instead of the usual Coffee Hour, a festive Banquet-Luncheon was held at the Hotel Intercontinental in Old Montreal, attended by 121 adults and 16 children. After the blessing, Protodeacon Hutcheon proposed a toast and served as master of ceremonies.

At the banquet, Fr John Tkachuk burns the mortgage!



Bishop Seraphim spoke about The Sign, highlighting the varied connections the priests in attendance had to it

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The Sign of the Theotokos, *continued from p.11:*

(Frs John Jillions, Lambros Kamperidis, Gregory Nimijean and Irénée Rochon); and introduced Metropolitan Theodosius, who spoke of the continuing mission of Orthodoxy in North America. The mortgage of \$120,000 which was paid-off earlier this year was

symbolically “burned” outside by the pastor and the protodeacon, and the Tkachuks were presented with a gift of a digital camera by the parish, for which they thank all who presented it. The festivities were concluded with the pastor’s being asked to speak, and he thanked all the “faces” through which we “see God.”—*Archpriest John Tkachuk*

Saint-Benoît-de-Nursie . . . *de p. 11:*

L’higoumène Irénée, le hiéromoine Marc (Pierre) le hiérodiacre Amvrosi (Mlodzik) et le diacre Juan-Pablo Ruiz-Gomar ont donc rejoint le père Daniel autour de l’autel richement paré. À la demande de la mère higoumène, la Divine Liturgie a été célébrée en plusieurs langues, le français arrivant en second juste après le grec. Un moment mémorable fut, à la fin de la Divine Liturgie, l’Élévation de la Croix, sur sa couronne de basilic odorant, des pots de ce même basilic parfumant toute la chapelle.

chemin de la ville, intimement convaincus que leur foi orthodoxe avait été raffermie par cette visite à la communauté monastique, non seulement par l’accueil souriant et amical des moniales, mais également par l’obéissance et la prière qui semblent tout baigner de leur douce lumière.

L’auteur de ces lignes chérit un souvenir en particulier, une image — celle de l’higoumène, mère Thekla, au volant du robuste véhicule tout terrain du monastère, cahotant sur le chemin de terre menant à la



Les paroissiens et des amis de St-Benoît au saint monastère Panagia Parigoritissa. L’Higoumène Irénée est au milieu.

La Divine Liturgie fut suivie du dîner — pour certains dans le réfectoire des moniales, accompagné de lectures appropriées à la fête solennelle du jour, et pour les autres à l’extérieur, autour de tables à pique-nique. Vers la fin de l’après-midi, les paroissiens se sont réunis autour du père Irénée pour lui lire des hommages et lui offrir des présents et d’autres témoignages de leur soutien et de leur affection indéfectibles. Tous ont repris le

nouvelle hôtellerie, agitant la main et lui criant de revenir. Ce jour, les moniales du saint monastère de la Panagia Parigoritissa se sont véritablement gagnés l’amitié de toute une paroisse dont les membres se souviendront d’elles dans leurs ferventes prières.—*Hiérodiacre Amvrosi (Mlodzik)*

[Le saint monastère Panagia Parigoritissa, 827, Chemin de la Carrière, Brownsburg (Chatham), QC J8G 1K7, Canada. (450) 533-4313 (et fax) Mère Thekla, higoumène].

Repentance: a meditation

It is springtime, and once again we are in Great Lent. In our holy Orthodox tradition, Great Lent is the liturgical springtime of repentance in which we are called to participate individually by efforts, and as a whole/corporate action by all of us. In the words of Fr Alexander Schmemmann, "Great Lent is indeed a school of repentance to which each Christian must go every year in order to refresh the understanding of his faith. It is a wonderful pilgrimage to the very sources of Orthodoxy, a rediscovery of the truly Orthodox way of life." It is a journey of discovery of a person's true vocation—the joy of being Christian, of rediscovery of the Faith, and of the rediscovery of one's true humanity. It is achieved by means of repentance. The Orthodox experience of repentance provides an ongoing, continuous opportunity for a person's renewal, for changing one's way of life, and it leads to a great journey of spiritual growth.

Both our Lord Jesus Christ and his Forerunner, St John the Baptist, began their ministries with exactly the same words: "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Mt 3:2; 4:7). This is the starting point of the Gospel—the New Testament good news of repentance.

In the Old Testament, man was portrayed as struggling, generation after generation, between the two poles of sin (disobedience to God, which is "missing the mark") and repentance (the "turning back" to God, "changing one's mind"). The essence of sin was seen as offence against the loving and merciful God, and man is clearly shown as unable to return to Him by himself. The Gospel of the New Testament demonstrates, however, that in His love, forgiveness, and desire to reunite sinful mankind into a loving, living communion with Himself, God sent His only-begotten Son. His Son, as the bringer of God's forgiveness for all humanity—a living example of this forgiveness during His life on earth—brings something entirely new and revolutionary: the defeat of sin, the trampling down of death with His own death, offering new life to all.

This new life on earth for those who believe is, nevertheless, no utopia. Christ's coming was the *beginning* of the establishment of the Kingdom, the beginning of the last times of judgement and salvation. True, the Lord's compassion over and over again forces back the realm of evil and sin. This is revealed in the many acts of exorcism and in miracles, as in the healing of the paralytic in the Gospel of St Matthew, one of the best

examples of the encounter between Christ and sin (9:2-8). But the complete destruction of sin will be fully realized only at the end of time. In the present Kingdom of God, lived in the Church, man is given an opportunity to overcome sin and its demonic powers in order to be changed and saved. This is achieved by the repentance which the Lord pointed out as being a necessary condition for life in the Kingdom.

The Lord desires the sinner's repentance and salvation. He says that "Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish" (Lk 13:15). During His public ministry he actively sought out sinners. He conversed with them, went to their homes, ate and drank with them. He used every opportunity to call them to repentance, to heal them and restore them. For Him, sinners were those who "sat in darkness" (Mt 4:16), the sick in need of the Physician. He offended the Pharisees by His association with the dishonest tax collectors, the harlots, the sinners. In reply to the Pharisees He said, "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Lk 5:32). He also made it abundantly clear that entrance into the Kingdom is for the receptive (which is often the small, the insignificant, the helpless) and above all for the "poor in spirit" (the opposite of proud and self-righteous).

The new element of Jesus' preaching of repentance is this: God's promise that was carried by the prophets of the Old Testament for a new heart and spirit in man, becomes at last possible. In their messianic expectation, the people were looking for miracles. Jesus announced that the time is fulfilled, the Kingdom of God is at hand: "Repent and believe the Gospel" (Mk 1:15). In the New Testament, repentance is no longer only a demand. It is also now a real possibility.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was and is the Friend and Guest of sinners (Mk 2:13-17; Lk 5:29-32; 7:34; 15:1-2; 19:7). In order to fulfil the divine purpose of salvation, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even unto death on a cross" (Phil 2:8). His fundamental attitude towards sinners now is carried by the Church. The Church calls for mankind's repentance, but depends on man's humility to recognize his sins. With faith in Christ, the humble man repents, that is, he "changes his mind" and "turns back" for mercy and forgiveness to Him Who is the Incarnate Forgiveness of God. And with the help of God's grace, he reorients his life in Christ.

In conformity with the Old Testament, the writers of the New Testament also understand sin as a drama both between God and man, and between man and men,

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for there is is not just a personal, but also a social aspect of sin. The foundation of the social life consists of man's love for others and his ability to forgive their offences towards him. Thus repentance is linked with love, mutual charity, forgiveness of others, and sharing with them. The best example of the interrelation between forgiveness of our sins by God, and our own repentant attitude towards others, is given by the Lord Himself, when He taught his disciples to pray, "forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Mt 6:12).

Throughout the history of the Church many went to the desert to weep for their sins. Repentance is understood not as a momentary attitude, but as a life-long process. St Mark the Ascetic insists that

No one is so good and merciful as God, but even He does not forgive the unrepentant . . . All the wide variety of God's commandments can be reduced to the single principle of repentance . . . We are not condemned for the multitude of our transgressions, but for our refusal to repent . . . For great and small alike, repentance remains incomplete until the moment of death.

And St John Climacus defines repentance this way:

Repentance is the renewal of baptism and it is a contract with God for a fresh start in life. Repentance goes shopping for humility and it is ever distrustful of bodily comfort. Repentance is critical awareness and a sure watch over oneself. Repentance is the daughter of hope and the refusal of despair. Repentance is reconciliation with the Lord by the performance of good deeds which are opposites of the sins. It is the purification of conscience and the voluntary endurance of affliction. The repentant person deals out his own punishment, for repentance is . . . the flogging of the soul into intense awareness.

In Church tradition repentance, in Greek *metanoia*, means "change of mind," "change of heart"—not just a regret, a sorrowful feeling about one's past sins, but an essential change in one's outlook, a new way of looking at oneself, at others, and at God. Repentance is not an emotional crisis, or a paroxysm of remorse and self-pity, but a conversion, a total transformation, the recentring of man's life upon the life of the Holy Trinity.

For St John of Kronstadt, repentance is knowing that there is a lie in our heart, but we cannot detect its presence unless we are aware, or already have a sense of the truth. Unless we have seen the light of Christ, the Truth, we cannot really see our sins, we cannot

distinguish between truth and falsehood. In other words, only when we are aware of Christ, when the light of Christ has entered in our life, has shone upon our hearts, only then are we able to see our weaknesses and sinfulness, and to repent. Thus repentance is an illumination, a transition from darkness to light. To repent is to open our eyes to the divine radiance—not to sit pitifully in the twilight, but to greet the dawn.

Bishop Kallistos (Ware) has emphasized that repentance is not a negative thing; it is altogether positive. It is not a crisis, but a recentring; not despondency, but eager expectation; not despair, but hope; it is not to feel that one has reached an impass, but to take the right way out. In the light of this positive interpretation of repentance, we can understand that it is not just a single act but also a continual attitude of a person. In our personal lives each of us faces decisive experiences and moments of conversion until the last breath. This turning, or recentring of one's life is continuous, and it is not only self-regenerating, but renewal in itself.

Repentance is an art, a healing, a process of purification and spiritual growth in man, realized within the sacramental life of the Church, the communion of Faith. It has present and future/eschatological meaning. It is concerned not only with the vision of the Last Things at the End of the Age, but at the same time applies them to the present, to how we actualize our life today, this very moment. To repent is to recognize that the Kingdom of Heaven is in our midst, at work among us, both in each of us personally, and together as the Body of Christ, and that if we accept the coming of this Kingdom, all things will be made new to us.

The teachings of the holy fathers and mothers of the Church is in continuity with Christ's call for repentance. Salvation depends on our choice in responding to His invitation to cast off the burden of sin, and to accept His yoke, and to find His peace and joy; for He said, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Mt 11:20-30).

Repentance is the means of salvation. In His teachings the Lord Jesus Christ did not establish a direct programme of how one must change. He stressed the elements that constitute repentance. He left it to us to choose between salvation through repentance, or condemnation by remaining in our sinful state. This Great Lent, which will we choose?—*based on notes of Antonina Dunn, Christ the Saviour Sobor, Toronto*

Mission impossible? An iconostasis in one weekend !

—by *Matushka Jenny Hainsworth, Victoria BC*

I have to admit it. I didn't think it could be done. My husband often gets these—ahem—ambitious ideas. But I could tell by that swirly-eyed visionary look on his face that he wasn't going to be put off this one. We were going to build an iconostasis in one weekend.

Our parish, All Saints of Alaska Orthodox mission, was reestablished in August 2001 after a dormant period of about two decades. My husband, Fr John Hainsworth, was assigned here to Victoria after graduating from St Vladimir's Seminary earlier that year. We arrived in the city with the phone numbers of four people we knew would want to be at the first service, that of the Feast of the Dormition. A year and a half later there are about thirty core members, with many more visitors and inquirers.

We began life as a mission using a tiny but beautiful Anglican chapel in the very quaint, leafy heart of the city. During the week it was used as an archives office for the Diocese of Vancouver Island, so we shared what little space there was with a collection of desks, file cabinets and bookshelves. It became apparent before long that if we wished to remain sane we had better find a bigger space quite quickly. After a couple of dead ends, we were advised to check with a Baptist church, which had just built a new temple and were looking for a suitable group to rent their old one. Upon meeting, we seemed to be a perfect fit, and we moved in on November 1, 2003. The building required very little to “Orthodox-ize” it. Indeed, the 1940s church is ideal for us — bright and clean, easy on the eyes, and with room to grow, but not so much that you feel lost in it. It is only ten minutes' drive from our previous location, and sits on a hill facing the beautiful Elk Lake. It has a very large basement encompassing kitchen, storage and lounge areas (and a ping pong table!) and there is yet another hall with a gym floor and huge windows.

The first order of business was to build stairs where the royal doors were to be, since the existing stage was too high for Father to take in one step (there were already stairs on either side of the stage, where the deacons' doors are). We enlisted a local carpenter to build some three-sided, three step stairs out of fir, a typical

wood from this region. Our first weekend in the new building was served with these glorious new steps but our icons were still on their rickety black collapsible easels. It was a bit of an aesthetic emergency. Of course we needed to build an iconostasis, but we were a bit stuck as to how to go about it. Funds were limited, as always, and we wanted this to look like a proper Orthodox church as soon as possible.

That's when my husband cooked up his scheme for an iconostasis in one weekend. We would plan it all out ahead of time, down to the details of who would do what as soon as they arrived. We would invite some skilled friends from other parishes on the mainland and up island; we would provide food, drink and fellowship; and we would go for it. Have them bring their kids and everything! It would build our community as well as the iconostasis. An Orthodox barn raising!



The framing begins to go up.

I could see there was no point in arguing, so with the theme music from *Witness* ringing in my head, I agreed to have a go at designing the iconostasis—okay, I made them let me—while Fr John and the project coordinator, Al Hargreaves, dealt with the host of other details. Among Al's many tasks was turning my impressionistic drawings into something you could actually build.

We bought the wood and other materials and laid it out in the back of the church on the Thursday. When

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. . . *Another step in the life of a new OCA mission* . . .

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everyone rolled in the next evening, we gathered at the site to do what turned out to be some really excellent standing around with hot beverages and talking. Well, that and eating a slap-up dinner of borscht and bread. At first we were disappointed at how little got done, considering we had to be finished by Saturday night, but we realized later that it had been necessary to get our bearings before leaping in. In retrospect, that time spent may have kept us from making some serious, haste-related mistakes.

On Saturday morning some men of the group got together for a 7:00 breakfast at a local restaurant (the kind with comfy booths and glossy menus showing pictures of the food, I believe), in order to get an early start on the power tools, the project, that is. Others trickled in throughout the day, although personally I waddled, being one week away from having our second child. We worked flat out until lunchtime, when a gorgeous Greek meal was brought in, the gift of some friends of the parish who own a restaurant. We took time to sit down together, catch our breath and catch up.

The entire day was characterized by a kind of wonderful harmony. Each person, even the smallest kid, seemed to find his or her perfect niche and how best to spend the time, given their abilities (or lack—my husband wisely stuck to sanding, and I didn't touch anything all day except pencils and cookies). There were those who sawed, cut and hammered; those who served snacks, cleaned the kitchen and made coffee; those who took photos and video; and those who ran around generally endangering themselves and others and eventually settling down to watch *Jungle Book* in the church basement whilst cleansing the area of anything good to eat.

At about 5:00 pm we cleared a space on the nave floor and served Vespers. My enduring image of that event is that of adults and children, piles of wood and power tools, illuminated alike by candlelight, the fragrance of incense mingling with the earthy smell of sawdust.

Then, after a chili dinner, taking kids home to bed and many more hours of work, it was finally finished. Fr John and Fr Deacon Kevin Miller hung up the oil lamps

at about 1:30 am, and after staring in disbelief at the completed iconostasis and playing with the lighting for about half an hour (oh the temptation of several sets of



Upon completion, the iconostasis is ready for icons!

dimmer switches under such circumstances) we headed home, exhausted and exhilarated.

Later that morning we returned to celebrate the Divine Liturgy. Indicating the new iconostasis, stairs, altar, indeed the new building provided for our use, and the four new catechumens received that very day, Fr John asked in his homily, "Is there any doubt that God wants an Orthodox church in this city?"

Our mission has become a strong and growing community. Although we are always in need of funds and often improvising for liturgical items which we don't have, the sense of excitement about the Orthodox Christian faith taking root in a new city and new place in the world is apparent in everyone. However, it has also been apparent from the beginning that any advances of the faith here have been greatly helped by the support of the larger body of the Orthodox Church in America. Over the last eighteen months we have been given liturgical items, financial support, spiritual guidance, resource material and encouragement from the Department of Evangelism, and much more. We face many challenges and hard work, but we are heartened by the promise of the Lord that He will be with us always, "even until the end of the age," and by the active support of the larger Church, labouring as well with the Lord to build His house—a house in which to worship Him in the beauty of His holiness, awaiting the coming of His Kingdom.

Junk food for the soul

—by Archbishop Lazar (Puhalo), All Saints of North America Monastery, Dewdney BC

Junk food is artificially flavoured and coloured, excessively sweetened and highly addictive. It is harmful to physical and mental health and its consumption interferes with or even deprives one of beneficial, healthful nourishment.

Television is an almost precise spiritual equivalent of junk food. The entire content of its programming is unedifying, un-nourishing, opposed to sound mental and emotional health, and filled with value-training which is diametrically opposed to a sound and healthy society. The life styles and ideals it portrays are artificial, corrupt and undesirable. Moreover, television is highly addictive.

Even cartoons designed especially for children instil uncompassionate, aggressive and violent attitudes which are definitely reflected in children's behaviour in school and at play. It has been repeatedly demonstrated, by University of British Columbia studies, and by several studies and commissions in the United States and Europe, that television viewing imparts negative ideals and behaviour patterns to young people, and that children tend to accept the TV version of life and behaviour as acceptable norms. In addition, television commercials, which are designed to increase and exploit every human passion, are very popular with children. It has been shown repeatedly that television advertisements have a powerful residual effect not only on the impressionable minds of children, but on adults as well. These advertisements do succeed in initiating, building, strengthening and then exploiting the passions of every sort.

If one carefully examines the moral content of television programs, including that of children's cartoons and the commercials, one will see that they are precisely the opposite of Orthodox Christian ideals. Having contemplated this, stop and compare the number of hours both adults and children spend under the influence of television with the amount of time spent in church, prayer and the reading of the Divine Scripture and other spiritually edifying books. Thus, the heavy influence of Satan and his ideals in the lives of our children begins at a very early age, and in our very own homes.

This problem is often compounded by the sorrowful fact that many parents who are proud of their colour television set are ashamed of the ikon of our Saviour. The television set is given a place of prominence, almost a place of honour, in our homes, while often there is no ikon corner to be found, and if there are

ikons, they are hidden away out of the main room of the house, where they will not "cause any embarrassment." Many parents who will consent to their children's spending hours glued to the television set, will not spend so much as ten minutes together with their children praying before the ikons. The Saviour and His saints are embarrassments, not entirely welcome guests, while the liturgy of the evil one, served daily on television, is given a place of singular honour in the household. Families which would never think of reading together the life of a saint or from the Scripture, will eat in front of the television, just as pagans shared their feasts with their idols—and often such families even neglect to bless the food before the meal.

Later, the parents of such families will bemoan the moral and spiritual state of their offspring. How often do you read the lives of the saints to your children? How much time does your family spend together at the ikon corner in prayer? How often do your children catch sight of an ikon of the Saviour or the saints in your home? On the other hand, how much time do they spend with violent, aggressive and uncompassionate cartoons? How much time do they spend with loud, aggressive, sensual and immoral anti-heroes on television?

No one is foolish enough to suppose that a physically and mentally healthy child can be raised if his intake of junk food exceeds or even equals that of healthy, natural, beneficial food. Why would someone be so foolish as to suppose that one can raise an emotionally, mentally and spiritually healthy child on spiritual junk food?

Television, like so many of man's inventions, has been consecrated to the demon of greed and envy, and it is manipulated primarily for the purpose of increasing and exploiting every human passion. Even the occasional "decent" program is more than counterbalanced by commercials designed to feed, and to feed on, human passions. Some people have asserted, with good reason, that it is better to have a television set in one's home, where TV watching can be controlled, than to have one's children watching television elsewhere, in uncontrolled circumstances. There is considerable truth in this. But stop and consider for yourselves whether your television set takes precedence over your ikon corner, whether TV is given a greater position in the lives of your children than is Christ. Are you feeding your children more spiritual nourishment than spiritual junk food? The knowledge that parents must answer before the Judge of All for the manner in which they reared their children ought to be enough to make them pause for serious consideration of this matter, even if parental resolve is too weak to do so.

'Roughing it in the bush' : liturgy held in snowbound kellia

On Saturday, January 17th, the Feast of St Anthony the Great, thirteen brave (or fool-hardy?) Canadian souls gathered from far and near, bundled against the record low temperatures (-30° Celsius) that had prevailed all week, to tramp two kilometres through the snowy forest, up a mountainside, to St Anthony's Hermitage, near Westport ON. There they joined resident Monk Pierre (Vachon) in the tiny, rustic "Ocatagon," made cozy inside by a diminutive wood stove, where Fr James Griggs of Kingston and Fr John Jillions of Ottawa, co-celebrated the Divine Liturgy in honour of its patron saint. Following the service everyone trekked back out and met at the neighbouring country home of one of the Ottawa Cathedral's more remote families for their house blessing and a pot luck feast.—*Sue Gander, Westport ON*



It's not too early To think of summer camp!

"The LORD be between you and me forever" (1 Sam 20:23). On this scriptural foundation rests the life of each year's St Peter the Aleut's Camp, which has assembled for one week every summer in Alberta since 1991 to minister to our youth. Originally, the camp met at Moose Lake and staff consisted of Fr Larry Reinheimer, Presbytera Myra, and nine other staff. Since then, the camp has moved location, and now meets south of Thorsby at the Bar-V-Nok campground, which is owned by the Ukrainian Orthodox community. The roster has also grown from 37 campers in 1991 to a record number of 23 staff and 52 campers in 2003.

Drawn from St Peter the Aleut's Church in Calgary and St Herman of Alaska's Sobor in Edmonton, the staff are all volunteers, which lends a unique spirit of devotion and goodwill to their ministry. Most of the campers are Orthodox youth of the Alberta Deanery, but a significant number are from other Christian confessions or else from various secular backgrounds. In this way, the camp forms an important bridge between Orthodox churches, as well as offering an essential evangelical and ecumenical outreach to the wider community.

Every year is dedicated to a different theme : 2003's was "Friendship," and in teaching sessions throughout the week the campers explored the Biblical foundation of the love of friends, from the friendship of David and Jonathan to our Lord Himself who said "I have called

you friends" (John 15:15). The exploration of friendship was not limited to teaching, however. The youth had a number of opportunities to interact in craft-making sessions (which included making icons and decorative picture frames for their favourite photos), and in canoeing lessons on Pigeon Lake.

Overarching everything was the simple fact of community life. For a week, the campers prayed and played and worked together, sharing their joys and sorrows and truly learning what it means to love one another. Days began with morning prayer. Following breakfast were hour-long rotations of crafts, canoeing or teaching. Sixth Hour Prayers preceded lunch. Afternoons consisted in another rotation of activities, followed by a canteen, swimming, free time, then daily Vespers and supper. Each day ended with camp-wide games and camp-fire singing. On a practical level, campers were assigned clean-up duties after each meal, and clean cabins and personal hygiene became the subject of some competition, with prizes given at the end of the week. In these ways, the camper were able to partake in the life of early Church, when "all who believed were together and had all things in common" and "day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts" (Acts 2:44, 46).

Please pray for this important ministry in our Church. If you want to be involved as a staff volunteer or to register your child for 2004, you may contact Fr Larry Reinheimer in Calgary at (403) 938-6393. —*Richard Rene, St Vladimir's Seminary*

From the Bishop's desk:

In the process of finding qualified nominees for Auxiliary Bishop for the Archdiocese of Canada, in order to present a list to the Holy Synod of Bishops of the OCA for their consideration and decision after our Archdiocesan Assembly in July, we now offer below brief autobiographical sketches of all the men who have been formally nominated by members of the Archdiocese and carefully vetted by the Search Committee. The sketches are given in alphabetical order, and the selection of information which each gives is of his own choice.

Protodeacon Cyprian (Robert) Hutcheon

Although both his parents were born and raised in Saskatchewan, by an "accident of history" Robert Hutcheon was born (1943) in Brandon, Manitoba while his father, then a rookie lieutenant in the Canadian Army, was training for overseas service. Robert and his mother spent his first three years with his grandmother and an aunt in Sardis BC and then, in 1946, following his dad's return from the European war, he and his parents came home to Saskatoon where he spent the next 21 years of his life. The family grew to include his two sisters also.

Between 1949 and 1961, he attended schools in Saskatoon before entering the University of Saskatchewan. During his high school years, he was active in student government and a variety of extra-curricular activities. One of these was the Young People's Union at Westminster United Church, an originally Presbyterian congregation whose founding members included his Ontario-born maternal grandparents. He says that his family were by no means "religious" in the traditional Protestant sense in that they rarely (if ever) prayed or read the Bible together. However, he was fortunate to have several inspiring Sunday School teachers, and he "joined the church" when he was 13 or 14.

In 1965, while he was in his second year as a medical student at the University of Saskatchewan and while his father was serving as the newly-installed Dean of Agriculture at the same institution, his family life was altered radically and permanently by his dad's sudden death from a heart attack at the age of 48. He says that he has only realized in retrospect how completely "bowled over" he was by this event and how restricted his grieving was by his immersing himself totally in his medical

studies. As a result of the latter, when he graduated (MD) from the U of S in 1967, he was chosen as that year's Rhodes' Scholar for Saskatchewan, an opportunity which sent him to England's Oxford University in October, 1967.

In order to attend Oxford for two years, he deferred his paediatric post-graduate medical training until 1969 (when he moved to Montréal where he still lives). At Oxford, he majored in Biostatistics (of potential application to a future career in medical research) and enjoyed a variety of new experiences that included a trip to the USSR with a British student group, and attendance (in Oxford) at his first-ever Orthodox Divine Liturgy (whose celebrant was the future Bishop KALLISTOS Ware). During this time, while firmly convinced of the truth of the Christian revelation, he was basically an infrequent church-goer who was searching for "the Church," but it was only in 1972 (while working as a paediatrician in Kenya) that he read (and re-read) Bishop Kallistos's book, *The Orthodox Church*, and came away with the strong conviction that this was where God was leading him.

However, it took seven more years (two of which were spent back in Kenya) before he finally entered the Orthodox Church. In November, 1979 (almost despairing of ever being able to find some sort of "non-ethnic" Orthodoxy in Montréal), he chanced upon an article in a Montréal newspaper that talked about a new English-speaking Orthodox community which was about to celebrate its first anniversary by holding a Vespers and "open house" to mark the occasion. He went along, he says, with joy and expectancy in his heart and was blessed to

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discover The Sign of the Theotokos Mission (now Church) where in March, 1980, he was chrismated and where he has made his “church-home” for the past 24 years.

A few years after his coming to The Sign, the pastor, Fr John Tkachuk, approached him to inquire if he had ever thought of becoming a deacon. He says that he had not, but after thinking and praying about the matter for nearly a year and with Fr John’s encouragement and support, he was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Metropolitan THEODOSIUS (then *locum tenens* for our diocese) on February 12, 1984. Since (and prior to) that date, he has played an active role in the life of his home parish. In addition to exercising his diaconal ministry in various ways, he served on the parish council in several different capacities and, for a time, was even a back-up choir director. In the later 1980s, he was chosen as a member of the Archdiocesan Council, and served as such for nearly ten years (many of them as

the recording secretary). In 1993, he was elevated to the rank of Protodeacon by His Grace, Bishop SERAPHIM.

Since he had had no formal theological education prior to his diaconal ordination, in the mid-80s he began studying theology part-time at Montreal’s Concordia University where he obtained a Diploma in Theology in 1991. In 1995-96, he took a leave of absence from his physician duties at the Montreal Children’s Hospital and spent one academic year at the Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies in Ottawa. Thereafter, he did an M.A. in theology at Ottawa’s Saint Paul’s University (with which the Sheptytsky Institute is affiliated), and this past year, in October 2003, he became the first person to receive a Ph.D. in Eastern Christian Studies from Saint Paul’s University after defending a pastorally-focused dissertation on the Orthodox Funeral Service and its potential role in promoting healthy bereavement.

Priestmonk Vladimir (Lysack)

Priestmonk Vladimir (Lysak) was born April 11, 1969 in Drayton Valley, Alberta, the youngest of four children of a blended family. His father, Steve Lysak, was Orthodox, growing up within seven miles of the Pochaev Monastery. His mother, Leah Lysak, was baptized Orthodox in 1994. Fr Vladimir was baptized William Paul Lysak July 4, 1971 at St John’s Ukrainian Orthodox Sobor in Edmonton, Alberta. He grew up in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, but he says that he felt that the church was not looking after all of his spiritual needs. He therefore found his home within the Orthodox Church in America at St Herman of Alaska’s Orthodox Church in Edmonton. He became a full and very active member of the Church on November 17, 1990.

Hieromonk Vladimir has earned two academic degrees: one is from the University of Alberta, Edmonton (B.A. in English Literature, minor in Russian Language, 1990) and the other is from St Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, NY (M.Div., 1995).

Fr Vladimir’s life experiences and employment experiences have been many and richly varied. He

has been a freelance journalist, and he was also a personal care attendant to his father while he was dying. He has been a cook for a Canadian construction company in Yakutsk, Siberia, and he has been an accomplished baker of cheesecakes. Most recently, however, he has become a prolific iconographer. He began studying iconography with Canada’s foremost iconographer, Heiko Schleiper, in 1996, and he helped him to paint the wall paintings of St George’s Ukrainian Catholic Church in Edmonton.

His desire to study iconography led him to New Valamo Monastery in Finland on June 6, 1999. Since arriving in Finland, he has studied iconography with Archimandrite Arseni, Auli Martiskainen, Slava Mihailenko, Helena Nikkanen, Egon Sandler, Ulla Tschurbanoff, Alexander Wikstrom and Natalia Aldoshina. Fr Vladimir was blessed as an iconographer on December 7, 1999 by Bishop SERAPHIM of Canada. He now teaches iconography as well as paints : he teaches children and adults the technique of egg tempera icon painting, and he has somehow managed to paint over two hundred icons in the four

years of his living at New Valamo Monastery. His icons can be found all over the world, from New York, London, and Nairobi, to Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton and Helsinki, in both private and church collections.

It was through living in New Valamo Monastery that his desire to become a monk was

recognised and fulfilled. With the blessing of Bishop SERAPHIM, he was tonsured a monk on November 23, 2000, ordained a deacon on November 23, 2000, and ordained a priest on September 16, 2001 by Archbishop JOHANNES of Finland. He actively serves in New Valamo Monastery, and has many spiritual children throughout Finland.

Archpriest Orest Olekshy

The Archpriest Orest Olekshy, the Rector of Holy Resurrection Sobor in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, is now in his thirty-eighth year of faithful service to the Lord. His experiences are long and varied. In youth he learned of the faith from his maternal grandfather, Theodore Fuhr, a lay reader who loyally served the church. This grandfather donated land for the building of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Ascension and worked to establish St Mary's Russian Orthodox Church in Nisku SK in 1902. In the same year, Bishop (later Saint and Patriarch) TIKHON visited the Fuhrs and the young parish.

Evdokia Fuhr and Stephen Olekshy, Fr Orest's parents, lived in the Calmar SK area and together established a devout home. In his early years his mother and father would explain the significance of each feast day service to which they were travelling. As the rural parishes did not have a resident priest to serve, they often travelled to churches in Edmonton.

In 1959 Orest Olekshy enrolled at St Andrew's College, Winnipeg, graduating in 1963 with a Bachelor of Theology degree, and then supplemented his education with courses from the University of Winnipeg. During these years he met Oksana Onufreychuk, an arts student of considerable operatic talent who shared his deep spiritual concerns. They were married in the fall of 1965. After suffering with chronic kidney failure for many years, Oksana reposed in the Lord in 1997.

Following his 1966 ordination to the priesthood at Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral in Winnipeg, Fr Orest travelled across Canada on behalf of the Youth Mission Department of the Consistory to endorse the aims of CYMK. His next

assignment was serving missions up to the Ontario border, while also serving as assistant at Holy Trinity Cathedral. Then he spent three years in Willingdon, Alberta serving nine rural parishes. While at Willingdon, his and Oksana's daughter, Ilaria, was born.

In 1970 the Olekshys moved to Saskatoon to serve All Saints' Ukrainian Orthodox Church at Mohyla Institute. There were many youth involved in this parish and many hours were spent in theological discussion and prayer. Their zeal and concern for spiritual things also showed in a desire to reach out to non-Slavic people with the gifts of the Orthodox faith. This would mean English language services.

And so, Fr Orest was suspended from duty in the Ukrainian Consistory church. This resulted in the establishment of an English language Orthodox mission parish—the first in Saskatoon. The flock sought spiritual covering in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of America under the Patriarch of Constantinople. Later Holy Resurrection joined the OCA. Fr Orest made a commitment to this flock while it was still a mission, and has remained as pastor for twenty-nine years.

In his constant focus on Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, Fr Orest has also supported and encouraged many parishioners as they entered the ranks of the clergy. As a result, today there are four priests and a deacon serving the OCA in Canada and the USA who came from his parish: Fr Dennis Pihach, Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Canada; Fr Robert Polson in Juneau, Alaska; Fr Rodion Luciuk in Yorkton SK; Fr Phillip Eriksson in

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Edmonton AB; and Deacon Taras Papish in Saskatoon,

Fr Orest has been instrumental in establishing "Windows to the East," an annual lecture series in Saskatoon that brings together leaders of Eastern Rite and Roman Catholic churches, the OCA and the Ukrainian Orthodox churches. He also participates in local ministerial groups representing the Orthodox faith in his church's neighborhood and in the city. He also supports the local St

Vladimir's Institute in Saskatoon each year either via organization, attendance, or both.

He has served on the Archdiocesan Council and as Dean of the Manitoba/Saskatchewan Deanery in the past. In the fall of 2003 he was once more elected as Dean of Saskatchewan and will serve on the Archdiocesan Council. The parish of Holy Resurrection Sobor, under his leadership, will be [for the second time in fourteen years] hosting the triennial Assembly of the Archdiocese of Canada in July of this year.

Archpriest Dennis Pihach

Fr Dennis Pihach, the present Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Canada, was born in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan on June 27, 1952, the son of Alexander and Elizabeth Pihach. His parents are both now deceased, but he has two younger brothers. Fr Dennis completed elementary and high school in Saskatoon, where he was actively involved in his Orthodox parish as both a youth leader and an altar server, and where he was a member of the youth choir.

In 1973 he graduated from the University of Manitoba's St Andrew's College in Winnipeg. In that same year he was ordained a subdeacon by Bishop BORIS (Yakovkevich) in Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral in Saskatoon, where he also worked as a church secretary and youth worker. Continuing his studies at the University of Saskatchewan, he graduated in 1979 with a degree in both Sociology and Slavic Studies.

Fr Dennis was a founding member of Holy Resurrection Orthodox Sobor in Saskatoon. While in this parish he was ordained to the holy diaconate on July 20, 1986 in St Nicholas Orthodox Church, Narol, Manitoba, and then to the holy priesthood on November 16, 1986 at Holy Resurrection Sobor in Saskatoon. Both ordinations were done by His Beatitude, Metropolitan THEODOSIUS. Soon he was assigned to do missionary work in the Manitoba/Saskatchewan Deanery. In 1987 he began a mission station in Yorkton, Saskatchewan that became St Mark's Church, and he served as rector of St Mark's until December 1998, when he was transferred by Bishop SERAPHIM to St Herman's

Sobor in Edmonton, where he remains to the present time.

A professional social worker, Archpriest Dennis was employed by the Province of Saskatchewan for over eight years in several varied positions, gaining experience in the fields of corrections, mental illness, and troubled youth. From 1979 - 1981 he was a social worker in the province's Corrections Department. From 1981 - 1988, he was director of a psychiatric group home. Finally, from 1989 - 1997, he was an addictions counsellor and chaplain in the Whitespruce Youth Treatment Centre in Yorkton, Saskatchewan.

Fr Dennis was elected Dean of the Manitoba/Saskatchewan Deanery in 1994, and in 1998 was appointed by His Grace, Bishop SERAPHIM to be Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Canada. He has travelled in official delegations to represent the Orthodox Church in America to the churches of Ukraine, Georgia, Russia and Poland. He is a founder of the Canadian diocese' Project Ukraine, a charitable organization giving aid to the canonical church in Ukraine for the help of bishops, parishes, seminaries, and orphanages. As well as being Chancellor of the diocese, he has concurrently held the positions of Acting Dean of Alberta from 1999 and was elected Dean of Alberta in 2002.

As Rector of St Herman's Church he saw in 1999 the new altar and church consecrated, and in 2001 the church was elevated to a Sobor. This Sobor has grown in number of faithful and in responsibilities within the Archdiocese. St Herman's, under the

Rector's leadership, has seen three missions form from the Sobor in the last three years, as well as the reception of a parish into the Archdiocese in the greater Edmonton area. The Sobor is also the home base for the fourteen rural parishes outside Edmonton, with the priests of these many parishes attached to the Sobor. The number of clergy in Fr Dennis' Deanery has tripled in the past five years.

The Chancellor's office has established an insurance and health benefits plan for the

Archdiocesan clergy within the last two years. Fr Dennis sees his main interests as mission work and church administration. The administration of this Archdiocese needs, he says, to have a solid financial base on which to continue the growth it has experienced in the last number of years. This includes the need for auxiliary bishops in this vast diocesan territory who can help His Grace, Bishop SERAPHIM, he says, in "rightfully discerning the Word of His Truth."

Higoumène Irénée (Rochon)

Fr Irénée (Rochon) was born on December 25th, 1948. His parents, Théodore Rochon and Cécile Grenier, gave him the name Richard. He lived his younger years in Rawdon, Québec where members of his family owned a hotel in the middle of town. His grade school and high school education was done in English schools, although French was the language used at home. It was in 1961 that he attended his first Orthodox service in Saint-Séraphim's Chapel in Rawdon. What he had witnessed there would give him a new direction in his life.

When he turned eighteen, he was received into Orthodoxy by his Excellency, Archbishop VITALY of Montréal (ROCOR). During the following years he was actively involved with the McGill University Orthodox Christian Fellowship. After he completed his university degree at the University of Ottawa, "fate" led him to Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, New York. He arrived in October of 1971 and attended classes at the seminary there. In July 1973, he was blessed as a novice by Archbishop AVERKY and given the obedience of serving him as cell-attendant. He also worked at the book bindery of the printing shop. His spiritual father was Archimandrite Kiprian, the iconographer.

During the first week of Great Lent, 1974, he was tonsured a rassophore monk by Archbishop AVERKY and the following year he was tonsured to the lesser schema (stavrophore), this time by Bishop LAURUS, because the Archbishop was ill in hospital. He was then ordained a subdeacon and served the Archbishop until his repose.

In February of 1978, he was blessed by Bishop LAURUS and Archimandrite Kiprian to go to serve the French parishes in Europe. Subsequently he was ordained hierodeacon in Brussels on May 19, 1978 and hieromonk in Geneva on August 20 of the same year. He was attached to the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Geneva, but his obediences had him serving two parishes in Lyon, France: Saint Nicholas was the Russian parish, and Saint-Jean was the French-speaking one. He also served isolated Russians throughout central and southern France, as far as Carcassonne, where he organised a mission which he visited every two months.

It was in 1982 that he was granted a canonical release to return to Montréal to serve there and organise a French mission parish, Saint-Grégoire-le Dialogist. With the help of Hieromonk Marc (Pierre) who had been ordained a deacon by Archbishop VITALY, the parish grew. At the same time Fr Stephen Bigham was also struggling to serve a mission, Saint-Benoît-de-Nursie. It was in 1986, that Fr Marc and Fr Irénée asked to be received into the OCA so as to combine their efforts with those of Fr Stephen. Hieromonk Irénée then began to serve as a supply priest for the Canadian Archdiocese. He served for some time at Christ the Saviour Sobor in Toronto and for a short while at the Cathedral in Ottawa. He also helped out at The Sign of the Theotokos in Montréal. For two years also he helped out at Saint-Georges Antiochian Church in Montréal.

When Fr Marc retired as rector of Saint-Benoît, Fr Irénée was assigned by Bishop SERAPHIM as

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the new priest-in-charge of the parish. Since then he was also asked to take care of the Russian cemetery in Rawdon after Archbishop SYLVESTER fell ill. When Fr Oleg Boldireff also fell ill, he was asked to serve Saint-Séraphim's Chapel in Rawdon.

Along with all his above-mentioned duties in Montréal and Rawdon, he is also both the Dean of Québec and the igumen (abbot) of the St-Séraphim Monastic Community in Rawdon. In addition, he has also been working secularly at a Montréal hospital for the past fifteen years in various positions throughout that institution.

National Oral History Project

With the blessing of Bishop Seraphim, the Dean of the Archdiocesan Cathedral in Ottawa, Fr John Jillions, is exploring the possibility of beginning a national Oral History Project, to record the life of the Orthodox Church in Canada. The aim is to recruit and train interviewers from parishes around the country who will be able to interview people who have helped shape the life of the Orthodox Church in their area (the unknown and the well-known, laypeople, clergy, men, women, monks, nuns, etc.). With permission, some of these stories would be collected, edited and published from time to time. The project will work with the Archdiocesan and OCA Archives departments (as well as those of other Orthodox Churches in Canada) but at this stage the first step is to determine what oral history material and expertise is already "out there."

Please contact Fr John (jaj@jillions.net) if you know of oral history projects already underway in Orthodox parishes in Canada; and/or if you have experience in this field, in doing interviews, in transcribing or would like to be trained. Eleana Silk, the Librarian at St Vladimir's Seminary in Crestwood, New York, has written a good introduction to oral history in the OCA's *Resource Handbook (Vol II, 1990)* in the "Parish Development" section. This is also available on-line at the OCA's website (www.o.ca.org). For more information on the field of oral history take a look at the website of the Canadian Oral History Association (<http://oral-history.ncf.ca/>) and Indiana University's Center for the Study of History and Memory (www.indiana.edu/~cshm/index.html).

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