

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

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Our Archdiocesan Cathedral : a progress report

—by Leslie Still, *Communications Ministry Coordinator,*
Annunciation Orthodox Cathedral, Ottawa

What a busy, exciting, and challenging year it has been for the parishioners of the Annunciation Orthodox Cathedral! After several months of negotiations with the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Ottawa, and with the help of the OCA Archdiocese of Canada, the parish purchased a church in the heart of Ottawa's lively Chinatown district. By September 2005, we had sold our tiny building in the Glebe and moved into our new, much larger location.

The Cathedral had long had a pressing need for larger premises : as the Bishop's National Cathedral, the parish plays host to many events on local, national, and international levels. For example, in March the pan-Orthodox Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers was held at the Cathedral ; in April the Parish hosted a youth retreat with the youth from Montreal ; and in 2007, the Diocesan Assembly will be held here. Not only does it help to increase the visibility of The Orthodox Church in America in the National Capital Region, but the larger site also allows the Bishop to host guests from other jurisdictions and countries in an appropriate manner.

The first few hectic weeks in the new location were spent preparing for the Dedication Service on October 1st: Pokrov, the Feast of the Protection of the Theotokos—an appropriate date for a temple dedicated to the Mother of God. Volunteers worked at a frantic pace to prepare the building for this holy occasion.

Safety was a primary issue, and after a meeting with the Fire Prevention Officer, smoke detectors were installed in the rectory ; batteries were tested and replaced for the entire emergency lighting system ; the fire alarm system was tested, repaired, and certified ; and a fire department key lock box was installed. Immediate

problems with the electrical system were addressed, such as fixing breakers, replacing panel boxes in the kitchen and rectory, adding switches to be used in place of breakers, and installing a stove receptacle in the church hall kitchen.

Security was another immediate concern: locks were added, replaced, and re-keyed. The deteriorating



On the occasion of the Pan-Orthodox Vespers served by local Orthodox clergy in the new Cathedral for the first time on the Sunday of Orthodoxy 2006, Bishop Seraphim (l) presented to his distinguished visitor, Archbishop Marcel Gervais of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Ottawa (r), an icon of the Theotokos, in thanks for his help in negotiating the purchase of the temple complex. At centre is the Rector of the Cathedral, Archpriest John Jillions.

garage and side doors were replaced with secure doors ; burned-out lights were replaced ; and motion-sensor lights were installed.

Another area that received a lot of necessary attention was the heating system. The boilers and radiators were cleaned ; some boiler components were

continued, next page . . .

. . . continued from p. 1:

replaced ; and water pipes were insulated. A reset control was added to ensure better control on the heating of the boilers. Programmable thermostats were installed, as was a new natural gas meter.

All of these essential, expensive, and time-consuming tasks went on behind the scenes ; much more evident was the cleaning that was going on to prepare for the Dedication. Volunteers filled up a large dumpster as they cleaned their way through the garage, kitchen, bathrooms, janitor room, tool room, sheds, furnace room, coal room, church hall, and the many rectory rooms. By Pokrov, the altar was set up ; the choir area was in place ; icons and lampadas had been hung ; and many of the pews had been removed. All this in the space of a month!

Once the Dedication had taken place, the work did not slow down. The Stations of the Cross were respectfully removed and the walls re-plastered ; the walls of the nave were freshly painted ; and steps for the deacon doors were built. Windows were washed, and broken windows replaced. The seized sump pump was also replaced.

An incredible amount of work was done in the rectory, in order to prepare apartments for renting. In addition to cleaning, a wall and a door were added to create another apartment ; walls and ceilings were patched and painted ; lighting changed ; and a shower was installed. Tenant lease agreements were created and insurance was secured. As a result, the Cathedral is now renting five apartments as an additional source of income. The Bishop's apartment in the rectory is being furnished lovingly and simply, ensuring that he always has a comfortable home-away-from-home.

Meanwhile, the Cathedral office was set up, starting with a second-hand computer and printer. Wireless Internet access and an e-mail account were created. Volunteers currently staff the Cathedral Office from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Tuesday to Friday. In addition to answering telephone calls and e-mails, our energetic "office divas" provide assistance to persons coming in off the street ; guidance for the many workmen who turn up ; and support for a wide variety of administrative projects that need attention. The Cathedral library and bookstore have also been set up in rooms just off the church hall.

The Cathedral has worked to increase its visibility in the local community. A striking gold-lettered sign now graces the front of the temple, and another sign has been painted on the glass above the side entrance door. Six municipal "Orthodox Church" directional signs have been placed in the area pointing visitors to our new location.

By March the Cathedral was in a position to host Ottawa's Pan-Orthodox Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers. This was the first time the event has been held

anywhere other than at the Antiochian and Greek parishes. In addition to many clergy and parishioners from other Ottawa-area Orthodox jurisdictions, Archbishop Marcel Gervais from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Ottawa attended. After the Vespers service, His Grace Bishop Seraphim blessed a large icon of the Theotokos, which was later mounted in a striking frame designed, built, and stained by a loving parishioner. It now takes the place of a statue of the Virgin Mary in a small courtyard outside the Cathedral, and it is hoped that persons in the local community will continue to visit the spot for prayer and meditation. Some already do.

Not all of the changes at the Cathedral have involved the building itself. It quickly became apparent after the move that the new Cathedral could not be run in the same manner as had been done on Clarey Street. For months a Parish Life Task Force (PLTF) laboured to examine the question : "What makes for a vibrant parish"? The PLTF has since developed a Mission Statement based on core values and key principles, and has recommended the adoption of a new governance structure, one with proven results in other Orthodox parishes—notably, that of St Peter the Aleut's Church in Calgary, Alberta. This new governance structure was introduced to the parish at a meeting on the Lenten Sunday of St John Climacus, and will be fully implemented in September 2006.

What's ahead? One of the most important needs felt by parishioners is for an iconostasis. The building still retains quite a western appearance despite the icons and lampadas. It had been hoped that the iconostasis from Clarey Street could be used initially in the new building, but it was overwhelmed by the huge space in the new temple. A new iconostasis is currently being designed, and Heather MacKean has been hired to write the icons. Heather was a founding member of Holy Transfiguration Mission which, together with St Nicholas Church, later grew into Annunciation Cathedral. So it is particularly fitting that she will be writing the icons. Naturally, this will be a long and expensive—but essential—project for the Cathedral.

There are many more things yet to do to transform the former Roman Catholic church into a proper Orthodox Cathedral. Very many persons—and their patient families!—have lovingly given of their "time, talent, and treasure" to transform the Cathedral in so many ways, large and small, seen and unseen. It is a great responsibility for a small parish, and we ask for your prayers and support as we continue our work in building up the Cathedral for the Archdiocese. To follow the changes at the Cathedral, or to make a donation, check out the web site at www.ottawacathedral.org.

Parishes mark Bishop's 60th birthday

At least four of the larger parishes of the Archdiocese of Canada observed His Grace Seraphim's 60th birthday with joyful celebrations: St Herman's Sobor in Edmonton held a banquet on the actual day (January 25), but three others observed the event close to this time with festivities in his honour: Sts Peter and Paul in Montréal, Annunciation Cathedral in Ottawa, and The Sign of the Theotokos in Montréal. The following is an account of the event held in Edmonton:

An unexpected warm spell made Edmonton feel like April rather than January as hierarchs, and an impressive number of clergy and faithful from five provinces, gathered to celebrate the 60th birthday of our



At the banquet in Edmonton, shown from l to r are Bishop Nikon, Bishop Seraphim, Metropolitan John, Bishop Iov, and the diocesan Chancellor, Fr Dennis Pichach.

most beloved Shepherd and Ruling Hierarch, His Grace Bishop Seraphim, January 24-25, 2006 at St Herman's Sobor. The favourable weather fully complemented the familial warmth, deep love and torrents of good humour that were so much a part of this delightful commemoration of Vladyka's birth and his years, which, in the course of the event, were fêted in both of Canada's official languages.

The three hierarchs present each paid heartfelt tribute to our Vladyka. His Grace Nikon, Bishop of Boston, New England and the Albanian Archdiocese, brought loving greetings and reflections from the Holy Synod of Bishops of the OCA. His Grace Iov, Bishop of the Moscow Patriarchate Parishes in Canada, warmly conveyed the personal congratulations of His All-Holiness, Patriarch Alexei II, prefaced by the thought that when the Bishop has a birthday, everyone within the diocese celebrates because we are the Bishop's life, as he has no personal or separate existence apart from his people. His Beatitude, Metropolitan John of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada brought blessings and words of brotherly kindness.

Both the evening molieben and next day's liturgy were immensely moving, and in between the two were a sumptuous banquet, a varied programme and a Powerpoint presentation of Vladyka's life from his earliest years to the present made by his sister, Dianne Julianna, who has no small talent for humour. Fr Dennis Pihach, our Chancellor, brought greetings and birthday cards from every parish across Canada. The Master of Ceremonies, Fr John Hainsworth, dressed in a kilt, presented His Grace with a haggis in honour of Robbie Burns' day, and Vladyka, true to his Scottish side, was asked to read one of Burns' poems in his best brogue. Rod Tkachuk treated all to his own song, "Oh, Oh, Oh, Oh Canada" and "Will You Still Love Me When I'm 64." The evening was entirely mirthful and light, an atmosphere picked up again at the luncheon at the

Continental Inn that followed the liturgy.

We are so grateful to God that He has allowed Vladyka Seraphim to continue in good health, honour and safety unto this measure of length of days. "Many, many years, O Master" will resound in our hearts regularly throughout this special

year of his life. Let us take up Vladyka's own words ("by your prayers") as the call to remember him fervently in the many activities (trips abroad and across Canada, innumerable tasks of love and phone calls) he somehow miraculously manages to do on our behalf, asking God that this might be so for a multitude of years ahead.—Katya Szalaszni, Holy Resurrection, Saskatoon

An account of the commemoration held at Sts Peter and Paul, Montréal, was also received by this newspaper:

Il est maintenant devenu une tradition pour son Excellence Monseigneur Séraphim de visiter la paroisse de la Cathédrale Orthodoxe Russe de St-Pierre et St-Paul à Montréal afin d'y célébrer la Nativité de Notre Seigneur les 6 et 7 janvier.

Cette année n'a pas fait exception, sauf pour le fait que la visite de Vladyka a précédé son soixantième anniversaire de naissance d'à peine trois semaines. La paroisse a donc décidé de célébrer l'événement par anticipation.

à suivre, p. 4 . . .

. . . de p. 3:

A la conclusion de la Divine Liturgie, l'archiprêtre mitrophore Anatoliy (Melnik) a félicité son Excellence sur son anniversaire prochain et lui a remis un livre de service d'évêque dont s'était servi durant de nombreuses années son Eminence feu Archevêque Sylvestre (Haruns).



Son Excellence Monseigneur Seraphim et l'archiprêtre mitrophore Anatoliy (Melnik).

Vladyka s'est joint au clergé et paroissiens pour le repas qui a été servi dans la grande salle. Au dessert, un grand gâteau a été présenté sous le chant de « Mnogaja Leta ». Vladyka, visiblement touché et surpris, a remercié tous et chacun pour leurs vœux et a parlé chaleureusement de la paroisse. La fête s'est poursuivie avec le chœur qui a présenté son concert de cantiques de Noël.—Michael Woinowsky-Krieger, Sts Peter and Paul, Montréal

Memory Eternal :

Mitred Archpriest Basil Butchko

The Rt Rev'd Dr Basil M Butchko, a retired Mitred Archpriest, who served St John the Divine's Church in Windsor, Ontario as his last parish, reposed in Christ on 23 September, 2005, near Detroit, Michigan. He was born in Scranton, Pennsylvania in 1918. Ordained to the Priesthood in 1943, he served in various parishes in Pennsylvania, Illinois, New Jersey, Indiana, Michigan, and Connecticut. Although he was officially a priest of the Moscow Patriarchate in the USA, in semi-retirement, he had served the parish of St John the Divine in Windsor from 1986 to 1994, together with his wife Ann, who reposed in 2003. They did this, commuting from Detroit. A strong



Fr Basil and Matushka Ann, 1989

personality, with a sense of humour, Fr Basil was an energetic man, building some churches and beautifying others. He was a strong supporter of catechetical instruction of children and adults, and he believed that a full cycle of services in parishes is important. Indeed, some of his disciples became Priests. He was interred at St Tikhon's Monastery at South Canaan PA, beside Matushka Ann.

Pastoral Notes

On 6 Jan 06, Bishop Seraphim blessed the naming of the Mission Station of St Aidan of Lindisfarne in Cranbrook BC

On 10 Feb 06, the Mission Station of St John the Evangelist in Vancouver BC was renamed for St John of Shanghai.

On 10 Feb 06 a Mission Station in Vancouver, to support the University Chaplaincy at UBC, was blessed.

On 10 Feb 06 **Priest Justin Hewlett's** assignment as Second Priest at St Herman's Church in Surrey BC was changed to "attached" to the same Temple.

On 10 Feb 06 **Priest Christopher Rigdon-Briscall** was released from his attachment to St Herman's Church in Surrey BC, and attached to Holy Resurrection Sobor, Vancouver BC.

On 5 Apr 06, in view of the various circumstances, the nomination to the Holy Synod of **Archpriest Cyprian Hutcheon** for Auxiliary Bishop was withdrawn.

On 13 April 06, The Mission Station in Vancouver which supports the University Chaplaincy of the Holy Cross, was named for St Nina, Equal-to-the Apostles, Enlightener of Georgia.

On 23 Apr 06, Paschal Diocesan-level awards were given : *Double Orar*—**Deacon Kevin Miller**; *Nabedrennik*—**Hieromonks Roman (Bonnel)** and **Basil (Paradis)** and **Priest Justin Hewlett**; *Purple Skoufia*—**Priest John Hainsworth, Mark Korban, Geoffrey Korz, Alexis Nikkel, and Michael Schaplowsky.**

On 29 Apr 06 **Deacon Juan Pablo Ruiz-Gomar** was ordained to the Holy Priesthood at Sts Peter and Paul's Sobor in Montréal QC. He was attached to St Seraphim's Church in Rawdon QC as Deanery Supply Priest.

On 15 Aug 06 **Priest Daniel Guenther** will be released from his duties as Acting Rector of Holy Resurrection Sobor in Saskatoon SK; he will remain in the same Temple, assigned as Second Priest.

On 15 Aug 06 **Archpriest Cyprian Hutcheon** will be released from his duties at The Sign of the Theotokos Church, Montréal QC, and assigned Rector of Holy Resurrection Sobor, Saskatoon SK.

Pan-Orthodox lenten conference Led by Ottawa speakers

In Montréal on Saturday, March 4, 2006, over 85 people met in an Antiochian Orthodox church where they were challenged “to enter eagerly into the treasure house that is within you, and so you will see the things that are in heaven” (St Isaac the Syrian). The Orthodox Christian Women of Montréal sponsored their fifteenth annual conference on “Paradise Within,” led by Presbytera Denise Jillions with Fr Symeon Rodger, both from the Annunciation Orthodox Cathedral of Ottawa.

Faithful from Montréal and Ottawa of many jurisdictions were inspired by Presbytera Denise’s words. She said that she felt humbled to speak with us, and shared her journey through many Orthodox parishes in the world. As a student, missionary, single person, and finally as the wife of Archpriest John Jillions and mother of three active boys, she has used her talents to serve the Church, in whatever place she has found herself.

Both the positive and the hurtful experiences in her life and in parishes, she said, have taught her that “God gives us moments in our lives that are signposts of a deeper reality. The Kingdom of God is with—and within—us.” In both her talks, the central message was that “no matter how impoverished one’s inner life, it is about grabbing on to those moments when God has visited you, seeing those times as evidence of His existence, and building a life, even a theology, on that certainty.”

Ms Jillions discussed three essential attitudes of the heart—for both individuals and parishes—that help us find paradise within :

1. Gratitude or a generosity of heart : we give because God has given us blessings without measure. Remember to be exceedingly generous with one another. We must not second-guess God’s will, but rather have confidence in God’s mercy.
2. Forgiveness : Jesus Christ was categorical about the need to forgive one another. This requires the courage to tackle our own weaknesses, and to have the vision to see beyond our own limits. At the parish level, we should have a deliberate policy of “forgiveness” to demonstrate our love.
3. Purity of Heart : we should regularly ask ourselves, “Am I living from the inside out?” She reminded us that “If I see with the eyes of Christ, I can see into the heart.”

Fr Symeon Rodger, who is assistant priest at Annunciation Cathedral and who also holds a doctorate in theology, provided many sources from our vast Orthodox tradition to answer the essential question: “How are we meant to live our life?” He quoted St Seraphim of Sarov: “Our aim is acquiring the Holy Spirit of God.”

In an engaging manner, Fr Symeon provided a range of tools from Holy Scripture, the Fathers, and the lives of the saints to help us find the paradise within. His quotes reminded us that we must put forth a maximum effort to transform our mind, heart and even our body—so that God can enter in and provide us with the gift of life in His kingdom.



Presbytera Denise Jillions and Fr Symeon Rodger

We are grateful to God for the speakers’ wisdom and the efforts of the organizers, led by Matushka Masha Tkachuk of The Sign of the Theotokos Parish in Montréal.

Recordings on CD are available for \$35 from Masha Tkachuk by e-mail masha@pusinka.com
—Mary Ann Loupkhine, Annunciation, Ottawa

Fr John Chryssavgis keynotes Montréal Orthodox colloquium

“The Desert and the City : the power of silence” was the attractive title of the 2006 Colloquium/Colloque de la Faculté de Théologie, d’éthique et de philosophie de l’Université de Sherbrooke, held at St Michael’s Greek Orthodox Church, Montréal, on April 1, 2006. The meeting was graced with the presence of Metropolitan Sotirios, Bishop Christophoros, and Bishop Seraphim. The speakers were Fr Dn John Chryssavgis (now teaching at Holy Cross), Fr Lambros Kamperidis, and Paul

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continued from p. 5:

Ladouceur, with Fr Symeon Rodger and Christian Roy introducing their recent work (“Traditional Festivals” and “Paradise Within”) at the end of the afternoon session.

Fr John discussed the topics of solitude, silence, and stillness, in the context of the letters of Saints Barsanuphius and John, which he has recently translated. He proposed the questions What is silence? What is silence for? How does silence connect with evangelical charity? After a brief historical overview of the letters and their background (850 letters survive, from the early- to mid-sixth century), he proceeded with a lively and illuminating exploration of these questions, showing in

Fr Lambros Kamperidis spoke on “Le désert: une utopie surévaluée ou une réalité sous-estimée.” Expanding on Fr John’s remarks about the extent to which the desert became a city with the monastic settlements that grew up, he contrasted the Essene communities described by Philo, who prayed and fasted in anticipation of the Messiah, with the Christian communities which lived the eschatological life of the Kingdom. Both sought solitude to find Truth. Fr Lambros emphasized the paradoxes in the monastic life : we go to the desert to find silence, but there we hear the Voice ; for solitude, and we find “a city.” The desert is a means of revelation, also the place of the Kingdom, separation from all that is attached

to the soul. The Church is a church of wanderers, pilgrims. “Parish” derives from a Greek word meaning “stranger.” We need to integrate the desert experience into our life in the world.

Paul Ladouceur spoke on “Le désert dans la cité : vers des nouvelles formes de monachisme.” He outlined the lives of some who lived their monastic vocation in the world: Fr Alexander Bukarev, Paul Evdokimov, St Maria of Paris, Fr Lev Gillet, and Mother Gavrilia, showing that a wide variety of styles and forms of community life are possible within the Orthodox spiritual tradition.

A number of questions brought out further insights, on youth and silence ; the connection of silence and charity ; and the need for more monastics in North America. Fr Lambros noted that the Church is barely rooted yet—monasticism needs roots to flourish. It must not be imposed “out of ideology.” We are saved in the world.—Jane Szepesi, *Annunciation, Ottawa.*



Bishops, faculty of the certificate programme, and presenters: 1st row l to r, Barbara Frank, Vice-Rector Fr Jean Desclos, Bishop Christophoros, Bishop Seraphim, Dean Marc Dumas; 2nd row, l to r, Christian Roy, Fr Ihor Kutash, Paul Ladouceur, Fr César Vasiliu, Fr Symeon Rodger, Fr Lambros Kamperidis, Fr Deacon John Chryssavgis, and John Hadjinicolaou.

particular how the letters have great relevance for our lives in the world today. The hermit is “apart from all, yet a part of all.” By not opening his door to his questioners, he has opened it (through the letters) to all of us. The heart of the message of Barsanuphius and John is not “I’m OK, you’re OK,” but “I’m not OK, you’re not OK, and that’s OK.”

The essential quality of solitude is awareness ; of silence, listening ; of stillness, intimacy. “How can I hear what you are saying if I am not silent?” It is important that we “take time to read our hearts,” begin to practice silence and love, break our bad habits and build new ones. Self-knowledge is not self-absorption. It involves arduous struggle and continuous effort, but we do not do it alone. We are like a person who wants to build a house : we gather together the materials and let the professional builders do the job. Firm faith makes supporting walls, and Jesus is the Door. “You will find grace wherever you are.”

Want to help a child in Ukraine?

Did you know that you can “foster” a poor Orthodox child in Ukraine—either in Pochaev or in Ternopil, thereby helping both the child and his or her family? The cost is \$29.00 per month, tax-deductible. You will receive periodic letters from your “foster child,” and you may write to him or her yourself. If persons or parishes are interested in this charitable endeavour, which is very much on Vladyka Seraphim’s heart, please write or call:

*Christian Child Care International
P.O. Box 2099
Springhill, Nova Scotia B0M 1X0
Telephone: 902-597-8838*

'May He kiss me With the kisses of His mouth': The essence of monasticism

—by Archpriest Lawrence R Farley, St Herman's, Surrey BC

Monasticism, especially in Canada, takes many forms : some monastics live in small communities, others are parish priests, yet others are forced by circumstances to find secular employment as they live alone and attend parishes. The existence of this variety of monks and nuns raises a number of questions.

The first and perhaps most obvious question is what a non-monastic like myself is doing even posing these questions! How could a non-monastic married man pretend to know anything about the essence of monasticism or explain monastic spirituality?

In reply it might be stated that *there is no such thing as monastic spirituality*. That is, there is no spirituality that is specifically and exclusively monastic, just as there is no spirituality that is specifically for clergy. Rather, there is only Christian spirituality, the life in Christ that is common to all Christians, be they monastic or non-monastic, be they clerical or lay. To be sure, the monks live out this common spirituality in a way that is peculiarly monastic, just as clergy live out their lives in Christ in a way that is different (in spots) from their lay brothers and sisters. But spirituality, the struggle to die to self and to live only for Christ, is common to all. The arena of monastic struggle is not the cloister, any more than the arena of the priest's struggle for sanctity is the parish. Rather, the arena for both monk and priest is the human heart. It is this interior arena, common to all Christians, which is the true place of struggle. And so it is that even a married priest, if he has entered this arena, might dare to speak about the essence of monasticism.

One might also next ask if it is possible really to be a monastic while living in the world. Obviously, of course, it is better for monastics to live in monasteries wherever this is possible. Monks and nuns living in parishes and employed at secular labour is far from ideal. It is best if Canadian monastics can belong to monasteries (preferably big rich ones, as long as we are dreaming in technicolour), go to all the services, have the Liturgy every day, and not be encumbered with secular employment. One might also ask for a local staretz (preferably clairvoyant), and for Fr Thomas Hopko as chaplain.

That this cloister is the ideal is indisputable. But the question is: If such an ideal is not possible in Canada (as it obviously is not), then can one be a monastic at all? And here we must be clear : one is not asking if a

monk, long attached to his cloister or cell, can thrive in the world. The ascetic literature is clear about that : a monk cannot live long outside his cell, anymore than a fish can live long outside of water. True enough, but that is not the question we are posing. We do not ask if a cloistered monk should leave his cell. We are asking if a monk can begin and live as a true monk *never having had a cell or cloistered formation*. Can a monk really be a monk while living in society and attached to a parish? In other words, what is the essence of monasticism?

The monastic essence is found, I believe, less in the *Philokalia* (wonderful as those volumes are) than in the Song of Solomon. There is an old theological commonplace, going back as far as Origen in the third century, that says that the initial stage of wisdom is purification (typified in the Book of Proverbs), which leads to contemplation (typified in the Book of Ecclesiastes), which finds its goal in union with God (typified in the Song of Solomon). The Song of Solomon, the first verse of which poem provides the title for this essay, speaks of the soul's infatuated love for God, the ravished desire of the beloved for the divine Bridegroom. This is the goal of monasticism, as it is for all Christians. And I believe that it is also the essence of monasticism. That is, what makes a monk or a nun is the relentless way in which they pursue this goal.

How do they pursue this goal? By living out their monastic vows. That is, each monk is *monachos* (the root meaning of the word)—single, solitary. Each is vowed to virginity, to the celibate life. This vowed celibacy is the essence of monasticism. One can be a monastic without a monastic habit, without a title, without a monastic community, even (if necessary) without a monastery or a cell. But not without this. The monastic finds his or her essential calling in this vowed virginity.

It is necessary to delve deeper into this vowed life. For the essence of this life is not celibacy in itself. It is not a matter of "It's Saturday Night and I Ain't Got Nobody"—so I might as well become a monk. The essence is found in its *intentionality*, in the fact that this life is *freely and irrevocably chosen*. And it is chosen because the monastic is running furiously and headlong towards the divine Lover, the heavenly Bridegroom, so that there is no room for any earthly lover.

If one were looking for an example of being monastic while being "in the world," one could not find a better example than the Theotokos, she who is extolled as "the glory of virgins" and who is the patroness of Mount Athos. Though legally married to Joseph and thus "in the world," she kept her body for God, living in consecrated celibacy. This is not because sex is evil or

continued, next page . . .

. . . continued from p. 7:

tainted. Rather, it is because her love for God so filled her heart that there was no room for any lesser love. Her physical virginity was thus the manifestation of her exclusive and all-consuming love for God.

It is this dedication to God's love that constitutes the essence of monasticism. Valentine's Day may find the married Christian rejoicing in his or her spouse, and this is good. Married love is also created by God, and is blessed with the sacramental mystery of Matrimony. But one does not disparage silver by distinguishing it from gold. And if married love is the silver, consecrated virginity is the gold. Like the Mother of God, the monastic says that, given the intensity of the search for God, it is inconceivable that his or her body, heart and life could be shared by anyone else. It is as St Paul said: "the one who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord, but the one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and his interests are divided" (1 Cor. 7:32-34). For the monastic, this interior division is unendurable.

Those who are married need not, by the way, feel dejected, as if forced to settle for second place. As St Paul also said, "Each has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that" (1 Cor. 7:7). If one has not received the gift of sexual continence, then marriage forms the blessed and preferable path. The truly "angelic life" consists of obeying God, whether married or not.

Nonetheless, for the monastics, given the gift of sexual continence, the angelic life consists of seeking God alone, and that is why they bind themselves with monastic vows to remain available, vulnerable and given over, in their deepest selves, only to God. In our day, it is fashionable to dismiss vows and promises and intentionality. Our culture and our laws can find no difference between the married couple who have bound themselves with vows, and the couple who live together "common law," without vows. But the heart knows otherwise. Vows *do* matter. As C.S. Lewis says, "love songs all over the world are full of vows of eternal constancy" (*Mere Christianity*). That is why the monastic binds himself or herself with vows of celibacy, so that he or she cannot give the heart and body to anyone other than the divine Bridegroom. The heart captivated and ravished by love demands to belong exclusively to one's Lover. This heart says, "may he kiss me with the kisses of his mouth . . . my beloved is mine and I am his . . . hurry, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices" (Songs, 1:2, 2:16, 8:14). This love is burning, all-consuming, exclusive. Valentine's Day romance and the heart's division of which St Paul speaks are not possible in the face of such relentless love.

This is the essence of monasticism. Cloisters help nourish it. The many services help nourish it. All the externals of the classic monastic pattern help nourish it, for they bring the monastic closer to the Bridegroom. But they do not define it. Monasticism is defined by this burning exclusiveness, this forsaking of all earthly loves for the sake of God. The monastic rushes into the arms of God, and finds in His embrace his or her true self and true calling.

A frozen computer . . . And the Jesus reconfiguration

—by Monk Pierre (Blais), Toronto

The other day I was experiencing the desperation that a dear friend was undergoing. His pain was so vivid to me that I contacted one of our nuns to pray together with me, in order to bring the Divine Light to his pain.

Any how, as we were praying, I remembered a story which I had once told to our dear Mother Dorofea (eternal memory), when the two of us had been meditating together about the Fall and the promise which Jesus left us, "Believe that I have conquered the world" (Jn 16:33).

Back in East Rochester, New York, May 1997, the Thursday afternoon before I had to submit six copies of my dissertation for review at Toronto School of Theology, I got the crazy idea to load some new software to my computer. You know, the kind of whisper you hear—soft and enticing—and know full well that it should not be heeded. Still you pull a St Paul, and "do the things I do not wish to do" (Gal 5:17) against your better judgment. To make the beginning long story short: my computer froze with the most recently corrected part of the dissertation buried somewhere on the hard drive; with the majority on diskettes, and in WordPerfect not Word; with none of it hard copied. I might lose the new corrections entirely. Since most friends had long ditched WordPerfect, retrieving the diskettes in someone else's Word programme would mean hours of searching for and correcting the numerous mistakes inevitably inserted into the translation from one format into another. Then there was the matter of hard copying the whole text, and getting it to the printer in time to make six copies on acid-free archival paper, and then driving all of it to Toronto by 4:30 p.m. Friday. After I had frantically tried to pray with my mom (memory eternal), she got a gentle inspiration that I should call a computer-savvy friend in Toronto. So dialing, while she continued praying in confidence, I reached my friend Chris and related the whole dismal situation.

Chris in turn begged me for absolute confidence, and reminded me of a key and code construct that everyone learns in basic programming which can send a computer down, crashing immediately, making most of the data virtually non-retrievable (except to experts who know how to fish around in the computer's deep memory).

Chris offered the following diagnosis over the telephone : "Your computer is trapped in an endless loop. Do you remember the configuration you were told in programming class never to use? NOW is the time to use it! The configuration will effectively break the loop. But it won't seem to work at first, and your screen will look as if it is about to explode, and you will hear a screech emitted. Then your screen will go blank, and if all is right, your computer's buried surface memory will jump from deep memory, and all should return to normal." I looked panic-stricken at my mother. "Is Chris right, or will this kill everything?" My mother's reply was simple, "Have faith in God." So, I held down three keys simultaneously, entered the configuration, and everything went as Chris had said it would. The computer looked like it had exploded, followed by what looked like an implosion. Then a deafening blankness and silence, which seemed forever, after which the C-prompt came to the screen, followed in turn by the computer's opening page. "Before you look for your documents, delete the new software, reboot, and then search for them." To make the end of a long story short : I dropped off the six copies of the dissertation with only five minutes to spare! If I had been five minutes later, the doors to the College would have been locked. Which would mean that I would have had to wait six more months before resubmitting the dissertation, and would have had to pay a penalty fee of \$1000.

So where is Jesus in all of this? Well, what Mother Dorofea and I had pondered a few years back, was: What if you liken the Fall of Satan as just a minor, yet an infinitely profound, glitch. One digit in a series of digits is all that would be needed to cause immense and universal harm to every living creature. So simple a mistake and yet so tragically profound. A simple misplaced (missing the mark) error (sin) that throws off everything; sweeping up everything in its tide, and crashing it along in its wake. One wrong digit in another dimension of existence, which has ramifications on all the dimensions, in all of the galaxies, and in all of the generations of earthly existence, encompassing all creatures seen and unseen. A flicker of a fallen star witnessed by the Word (*cf* Lk 17-19).

Now, as with every star, what we experience as now is illusory. The light (and if a sun, heat also) is real to us, but still very much an illusion. For while we engage the

light rays, what we experience as now and which we presently engage, has long since changed or ceased to exist. This is why it is a *real illusion* : truly experienced and mutually engaged, but nothing of which it seems to be. And this is exactly what compounds the tragedy of it all.

So, what if Satan, the fallen star, glitched as a mis-flicker, which dragged everything into its invincible loop? The devil which I wrestle with no longer exists, even as it is real to me in the pain and temptation and oppression, and mysteriously remains engageable and personal to me. Whatever it is, or is no longer, remains a mystery ; yet I and everyone else are trapped in this loop invincibly, or so it seems.

Yet, what if Jesus of Nazareth, is truly the Messiah? As Messiah, He would be the Saviour from the Loop, achieving this as the Word Incarnate, the Divine-Human Configuration, the perfect insertion offered by the Father and configured and inserted by the Spirit, as the correct digit, which will set us free from the invincibility of the satanic loop. So, while everything seems futile as if the words of Jesus were simply a hazy, deluded dream, what if Jesus accomplished the insertion into necessity, even while the loop continues to play itself out, in all of its horror for however long it takes to play out? Where the loop itself is illusory, though painfully real, now that the insertion is also playing out and re-correcting the false configuration, and preserving the authentic memory buried deep in the bowels of hades? And then it shuts down (the Second Coming) and crashes and rises again. But here, to something far beyond what pre-existed the loop : a theosis?

Stewardship of creation: A review of *On Earth as in Heaven*

—by *Matthew Francis, St Herman of Alaska, Edmonton*

In *Jesus and the Earth*, written by James Jones in 2003, the world is called a "field—hedged in by both ecology and theology." Other recent important works, such as Alistair McIntosh's *Soul and Soil*, focus on the public reorientation that is taking place towards the critical importance of the environment. At the April meeting of the Community Planning Association of Alberta, which I had the privilege to attend, speakers and participants constantly referred to "the triple bottom-line" of sustainable development : the economic, the social, and the environmental. Clearly, even in provinces not generally known for their ecological stewardship, a sea-change of sorts is taking place. Patriarch Bartholomew's annual encyclical letters on the environment, delivered at the

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continued from p. 9:

beginning of each liturgical year, have highlighted the responsibility and solidarity we as Christians have to “the whole creation.” As the Apostle Paul wrote in his Epistle to the Romans:

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God ; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now ; and not only creation, but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the Spirit groan inwardly as we wait for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. (Romans 8.19-23)

We, as the “personal creation,” crowned with God’s image and called into the likeness of Jesus Christ, are given the priestly vocation of stewardship of the rest of creation, of which we are a part.

Dr Wee Chong Tan’s recent book, *On Earth as in Heaven : Collected Papers on Environmental Issues and Organic Farming*, brings together fifteen essays, previously unpublished lectures, and occasional writings on ecology that express his holistic, Christian worldview. Dr Tan, a parishioner of All Saints of Alaska Orthodox Church in Victoria BC, is well known in both scientific and Church circles. Born in the Fujian Province of China in 1930, he received his PhD in Biochemistry from the Indiana University in 1966, later studying Theology in Britain, and was ordained as a priest of the Church of England at St Paul’s Cathedral in 1971. A fellow of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund and the Royal Microscopical Society in Oxford, Dr Tan has had a distinguished scientific career. Following his time in Britain, he became one of the founding faculty members of the Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific in Victoria BC, where he taught Biochemistry until his retirement in 1985. In retirement, he founded the first college teaching Traditional Chinese Medicine in Canada, and also the Canadian College for Chinese Studies. A longtime friend of the Orthodox Church, Dr Tan was received into Orthodoxy at All Saints this past year and has become an integral part of the parish community.

Composed of essays written between 2003 and 2005, *On Earth as in Heaven* is a sort of whirl-wind tour of hot topics in ecology and agriculture : the impact of chemical pesticides, GMOs (genetically modified organisms), organic farming, and the relationship of humanity with nature. Constantly in view is Dr Tan’s comparison of the East and the West’s respective

approaches to these matters. The first essay “Why China Chose to Build Her Civilization on the Foundation of Agriculture,” delivered at the University of Stockholm in 2003, demonstrates China’s traditional emphasis on sustainable agriculture and the interrelationship between humanity and the earth. Even the cycle of the seasons has been linked in Chinese philosophy to the patterns of history, suggesting that we must always be reminded of the importance of what modern Western planners refer to as the “triple bottom line.” If the economic, social, and environmental aspects of life become unbalanced, threats to the quality of our common life will challenge us to reorient our way of living accordingly.

Several other essays follow Dr Tan’s 2003 visit to Europe, where he visited 18 countries exploring environmental issues. His meetings with such important figures as Leen Aarnoutse, who pioneered organic farming in the Netherlands in 1978, are recounted with both scientific detail and stylistic panache. Several chapters carefully elucidate the risks associated with long-term use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers, which may be linked not only to health concerns such as infertility and birth defects, but also to global warming. This conviction was borne out in further interactions with farmers and agricultural experts throughout Alberta and Saskatchewan. In short, *On Earth as in Heaven* is a testimony of how Dr Tan, a biochemist, became an ardent supporter of organic farming.

In this “field—hedged in by both ecology and theology,” some of Dr Tan’s later essays are more

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Patriarch of Moscow (+1925),
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and other missionary labourers
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explicitly theological. For instance, in recounting his experience at a meeting of the Moscow Academy of Oceanography in 2000, Dr Tan was challenged to summarize Western Civilization using one word. He chose "logic." When later asked to define Chinese Civilization in one word, he chose "the Tao," the organizing principle of life and nature. Hieromonk Damascene's well-known book *Christ the Eternal Tao* immediately comes to mind, where the Johannine concept of Jesus Christ as the *logos*, or eternal Divine word of the Father, is related to its Chinese counterpart, "the Tao."

In some chapters, Dr Tan's work reaches towards a sort of "theology of culture," which does not isolate ecology from the arena of *politeia* or the stewardship of public life, or even *leitourgia*, in the sense of public good done at private, Christian, expense. Perhaps one can even hear thematic echoes in Dr Tan's works of some of the thinking of His Eminence, Archbishop Lazar (Puhalo). In "Freedom and Kingdom," the author explores Western society's focus on individual freedom, which he sees as now having become a sort of obsession or *passion*.

Some classical Greek philosophers have said that the foundation of happiness is in freedom and that the foundation of freedom is in courage. I hope that the ultimate value of western history is not the attainment of individual freedom. If one equated individual freedom with happiness, happiness would not last. Such happiness is not lasting and such freedom is not perfect. *The Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England*, 1662, says that "His service is perfect freedom." The Chinese refer to this as the "Heavenly mandate," doing God's will. During the Last Supper Jesus renewed the commandment that people should love one another. Seeking the Kingdom of God, through the execution of God's will, will lead to a change in human nature. This change will consist of the decrease of selfishness in human nature. God's service is perfect freedom. True freedom does not conflict with the Kingdom. It is through the Kingdom that perfect freedom is found, and not by the pursuit of individual freedom, which sometimes is a departure from the Kingdom . . . Service, especially to the weak and needy, is the essence of the freedom which will decrease the self/ego of the individual. Therefore, the essential consciousness of the idea of freedom is the moral sentiment of reason. True freedom bears fruit of peace and harmony with mutual respect for different traditions ; weaker nations must be treated with fairness and not with double standards" (*On Earth as in Heaven*, page 84-85).

All in all, *On Earth as in Heaven* is a challenging book that presents not only a compelling argument for stewardship of creation, but it also does so in Dr Wee Chong Tan's mercurial tone of voice. I had the privilege of meeting Dr Tan at All Saints of Alaska Church at the end of March. Clad in a brightly coloured Ecuadorean-

knit sweater, he offered a generous welcome to his home parish, and gave me a copy of his book *Jesus in China* to share with our parish here in Edmonton. For a man of such deep learning, Dr Tan's attitude reminded me of this quote from Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) of blessed memory:

The word 'humility' comes from the Latin word *humus* which means fertile ground. To me, humility is not what we often make of it : the sheepish way of trying to imagine that we are the worst of all and trying to convince others that our artificial ways of behaving show that we are aware of that. Humility is the situation of the earth. The earth is always there, always taken for granted, never remembered, always trodden on by everyone, somewhere we cast and pour out all the refuse, all we don't need. It's there, silent and accepting everything and in a miraculous way making out of all the refuse new richness in spite of corruption, transforming corruption itself into a power of life and a new possibility of creativeness, open to the sunshine, open to the rain, ready to receive any seed we sow and capable of bringing thirtyfold, sixtyfold, a hundredfold out of every seed.

" . . . the ecological destruction provoked by the irrational exploitation of the earth's natural resources is creating serious concerns for the future of our planet Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew points out 'whenever we narrow religious life to our own concerns, we overlook the prophetic calling of the Church to implore God and to invoke the Divine Spirit for the renewal of the whole polluted cosmos. Indeed, the entire cosmos is the space within which transformation is enacted.' All our efforts in this domain will be productive when they take place in the Holy Spirit, 'from whom grace and life come to all creation' as we sing in the Orthodox Church. For 'through the Holy Spirit spring the sources of grace, watering and reviving the entire creation.' St Gregory Palamas defines the duty and ethos of every faithful with regard to nature, when he states that the heart of a person illumined by the eternal uncreated light 'embraces the whole of creation'."

—Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana and All Albania to the World Council of Churches Assembly in Brazil, 14 Feb 2006

Be healthy and grow : Part 2

Continuing this series on how a parish can be healthy and grow, we will be looking at what should be done in a parish to make sure we don't lose people out the back door faster than we can bring them in the front!

In the first part of this series we discussed loving relationships and a passionate daily life in Christ. These are two of the eight key elements, which must be present in a healthy parish. A healthy parish has a better chance of growing than an unhealthy parish.

To review, the eight key elements in a healthy parish are :

- empowered leadership
- gift-orientated ministries
- functional parish structures
- strong liturgical life where the Holy Spirit is present
- loving relationships
- a passionate daily life in Christ
- need-orientated outreach
- small groups to support each other.

Let's talk about need-orientated outreach and small groups. As St Paul wrote, faith without works is dead. If we are living a life in Christ, the Holy Spirit will move us to want to do good works in the community. This is where needs-orientated outreach and small groups come into play.

With small groups, we are referring to people coming together either at the parish or in someone's home for fellowship and to learn more about the faith. This could be in the form of a Bible study, instruction on how to raise our children with an Orthodox influence, marriage enrichment classes, or even learning how to reach out to the non-Orthodox or lapsed Christians. As each of these types of small groups grow in the faith and learn more, they will then take what they are learning out into the community.

For example, if a parish is doing classes on improving marriages within the Orthodox

community, they may want to start inviting their non-Orthodox friends to these same marriage classes. As a natural result, the non-Orthodox people in the marriage course will then become curious about Orthodoxy and may start to explore it. Who better to do this with than the people in their small group?

This can work with any type of small group which meets together in the parish or in parish members' homes. Members with children may choose to gather together on a Sunday afternoon in a parishioner's home so that the children can play with their Orthodox brothers and sisters in Christ. The parents can then enjoy fellowship and perhaps a short lesson on their Orthodox faith.

Even a perogy supper or any kind of supper for people in the community can be a small group and provide need-orientated evangelism, if they are done right. Having a supper at the parish and inviting the neighbourhood can be a great way to introduce people to Orthodoxy. During the meal a member of the parish can sit with the newcomers and tell them who we are and what the Orthodox faith is all about. Perhaps they can take visitors on a tour of the church itself and explain what they are seeing, because Orthodoxy is very visual. At the end of the discussion the visitor can be invited for a Vespers or Sunday Liturgy.

These suggestions are just some examples of what types of small groups can exist. Keep in mind that these don't have to be led by clergy. They can be led by anyone with the desire and enthusiasm to organize a group of some kind under the guidance of the parish's priest. Look at what the strengths of various parishioners are and what kind of small groups can be formed. Eventually, if the small group is properly nurtured, it will want to reach out to the community. This is one of the best ways for a parish or mission to grow.

If church growth is your ministry, we are recruiting volunteers in each parish for this role. After talking it over with your parish priest, contact me, Deacon Gregory Kopchuk at (780) 451-2758 or email me at gkopchuk@yahoo.com. Also, listen to our Orthodox radio program, "Welcome Home" at www.orthodoxradio.ca.

Our mother among the saints

Equal to the Apostles, Mary Magdalene the Myrrh-bearer

July 22 / August 4 (o.s.)

We recall Christ's words, *who do men say that I am?* As with Christ, so with His followers. Repeatedly through two millennia the world has asked this question about Mary Magdalene

Who was she? She fascinates a world that insists on couching her in sonnets, often depicts her in provocatively-clad penitence, makes her the patron saint of shampoos, cosmetics and infamous medieval Rehab Laundry Asylums, or throws her in the forefront of the battle over perceived male-dominance. It makes her a goddess. It never lets her out of the gutter. She is ageless, beautiful and always injected with the passion of her objectifier.

In distortion, nothing has so popularized her as *The Da Vinci Code*, on the *New York Times* bestseller list for three years running, translated into forty-four languages, read by one out of five Canadians, and now released to screen at a theatre near you. Depicted with her is our Saviour, whose Divine life is joined to hers and slandered from scene to scene. By the *Code*, the world reveals its deep sickness, raising a piteous cry from its darkness for the prayers of the real St Mary of Magdala and the loving, pure arms of the real Jesus Christ.

Ecclesiology is a dangerous subject in the hands of Hollywood. The declared finding of a Mary Gospel, speculations on the Nag Hammadi manuscript found in an earthen jar in Egypt in 1945, fragments of papyrus here and there are used to interweave stories readily believed by the untaught who, without question swallow the opening lines of Dan Brown's fictitious work, "All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents and secret rituals in this novel are true."

We know what the world of tainted imagination, tickled fancies, secret codes and "new" revelations say about her. What does the Orthodox Church, drawing from the opened books of Scripture and the light of holy tradition, say about Mary Magdalene? Why has the Church given her the title, Equal to the Apostles?

Magdala was a trade-route town on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, where, according to tradition, Mary was born to her parents, Cyrus and Eucharion. How it was that Mary first met Christ is not known, but it is declared in St Mark's Gospel (16:9) and St Luke's (8:2) that she had been possessed by seven demons and was delivered from them by Him, whereby the power and glory of God was manifest. Her whole life was given to following and ministering to Christ as part of a group of women that followed him. We find Mary at the foot of the Cross together with the Holy Theotokos and the disciple John, where they stood for six hours, watching the nails being hammered into His hands and feet, and seeing the soldiers and people humiliate and jeer at Him. Later she and the other Mary kept vigil opposite the tomb.

Together with the other Mary (not the Theotokos) she came with myrrh and other spices to anoint the body of the Lord. The Gospel of St John, chapter 20, accords eighteen whole verses to the flow of events from the time of Mary Magdalene's going to the tomb to her completed exchange with the risen Lord. One reason for the detail might be that later in life, Mary was with John in Ephesus and could provide first-hand information to him.

It is said that in Biblical times, a woman's testimony was worth only half that of a man. The Lord bestowed unprecedented honour on and equality to women when He chose to appear to women, asking that they bear witness to His Resurrection. The myrrh-bearing women, filled with great joy, obeyed His command, and ran to declare that He had risen and was going before the disciples into Galilee.

He also gave great honour to Mary personally by being the first person to whom He appeared on that first day of the week. The exchange between the risen Christ and Mary is poignant, yet simple. She looks for Christ, weeping, and begins to talk with him, mistaking him for the gardener. The "Mary—Rabboni" conversation underlines personhood : the Christ, second Person of the Holy Trinity, in loving exchange with the human being, Mary. When He speaks her name, she knows. She speaks for us all, representing that moment of revelation, that moment of knowing, after which nothing is the same! "God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us!" Lord over death, darkness and the world.

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Was Mary Magdalene the sinful woman who brought the alabaster box of ointment for Christ's feet (St Luke 7) or the one who poured the fragrant oil from the alabaster flask on His head (St Matthew 26)? The Church believes she was not (see the *Orthodox Study Bible*, page 71). More than five hundred years after Christ, speculation developed whether Mary Magdalene was the prostitute of Scripture, but the Church has not supported it over time. Some have confused Mary Magdalene with Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. It must be noted that when Mary Magdalene appears in Holy Scripture, she is called with the descriptor name, Magdalene, to separate her from the other Marys. Whatever spiritual problems Mary Magdalene may have had before meeting Christ, we cannot conclude with any certainty that her sins were of a sexual nature.

This side of heaven, we will never know all of the facts about Mary, but it is her soul that speaks to us—her spiritual astuteness ; her tenderness of love for the Lord ; her concern for practical needs, her heart—a fire of love ; her witness—one of courage and valor. There is much that is symbolic, much that can be extrapolated from her life. There is a freedom of purified senses (symbolized by the scent of myrrh) represented by St Mary whose soul remains beautiful through the ages.

After the Resurrection, it is believed that Mary Magdalene went with St John the Theologian to Ephesus, and from there she zealously spread the Gospel throughout the region. She was not martyred, but reposed at Ephesus and was buried in a cave (not in Provence or any of the other four places of western Europe that have claimed her body in repose). Her remains were moved to a new Church built by Emperor Leo VI in Constantinople in 890. She was then given the title Equal to the Apostles, a title reserved for certain saints for the strength and zeal of their witness.

What an honour Mary Magdalene had! She was the first on earth to declare, "Christ is Risen!" : words central to the advance of the divine love story, but not as Hollywood depicts it. We feel especially close to St Mary Magdalene because we see her every year. Every Pascha, we go to the tomb with her and find it empty, and we share her joy and her wonder at it all!



Orthodox Kenya

The following is a translation of an account by a Polish journalist writing in 'Przeгляд Prawoslawny' ('Orthodox Review'). The translator is Dr Michael Zurowsky from The Sign of the Theotokos Church, Montréal. We thought it would be of interest since, like Canada, Kenya is missionary territory for the Orthodox.

A visit to Kenya can certainly change a person . As an amateur traveller, I heard this many a time. After spending a few days on the Dark Continent, I tried to relate this saying to my own experience. One thing is certain : it certainly changed the way I view the Orthodox world. The Kenyan experience allowed me to see our faith in a broader perspective.

I first came into contact with dark-skinned Orthodox a year and two years ago on Mt Athos. They told me quite a lot about the Church in Kenya and the Congo, they sang hymns for me in their own languages, and they aroused much interest among traditionally Orthodox Greeks, Serbs, Russians and Romanians. However, there was something lacking because it is one thing to hear about something, and another to experience it with one's own eyes. I did not ponder about the matter for very long, as the Secretary-General of Syndesmos suggested that I participate in a conference organised in Kenya.

For almost a week, young Orthodox from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia as well as from Albania, Belarus, Russia, Germany and Poland acquainted themselves with the specifics of the Kenyan Church.

Their hierarch is the Metropolitan of Kenya, Archbishop Makarios. Already on the first day of the proceedings he observed, "it's a wonderful feeling to observe delegates from various countries, coming from different traditions and different cultures united by a common Orthodox faith. This only goes to prove the belief about the great universality of Orthodoxy. At this moment, nationality, language, colour of skin has no importance ; due to your presence here today, we are all united with Christ, because all of us were created in His image and likeness."

Those words have particular importance on the African continent, where many cultures, ethnic groups and nationalities mingle together. Kenya is a perfect example of this. Forty-two ethnic groups dwell in this state of 32 million people, each with its own dialect. It is true that English and Swahili are generally used; however one can still find places, particularly in the

villages, where it is difficult to make oneself understood in either of them.

This particularly becomes a problem in the spreading of knowledge and traditions of Orthodoxy. However, the Kenyan daily reality demonstrates that it is possible to overcome this. This is shown by how quickly the Church is spreading, which numbers now about a million faithful, who are concentrated in three hundred parishes, and each year brings five more new Orthodox places of worship.

The Orthodox Church in Kenya is part of the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa. The most important Orthodox centre is Riruta, which lies on the outskirts of Nairobi, the capital of Kenya. A whole complex of buildings and institutions belonging to the Kenyan Church is found on a large and enclosed property.

First of all, the seat of Metropolitan Makarios is found there, as well the Orthodox Patriarchal Ecclesiastical School named after Makarios III, Archbishop of Cyprus. Aside from typical seminary buildings such as lecture halls, student dormitories and kitchens with student refectory, I discovered a large conference centre with guest rooms and lecture hall. An Orthodox primary school and a catechetical school are functioning beside it. To house these, a three-floor educational and administrative building with a library has been erected. A classroom is found there with a few hundred sewing machines which mothers can use who bring their children to school there. They can sell their newly made clothes there, which is very important in a country where unemployment is almost 60%.

Beside the elementary school is a large sports field and childrens' colourful playground, and all of this is in the shadow of a large chapel. This complex in Riruta has its own clinic and technical school. Not far from the clinic, Metropolitan Makarios is planning to build a medical school. Already around a thousand people a day use the premises.

At present, about forty students from various parts of Kenya and from other countries of eastern Africa are studying in the seminary. The course of studies lasts three years. Afterwards, the graduates return home to carry out their pastoral duties. What is more, when the academic year commences in the seminary, a representative of a new language group, hitherto absent from the halls of the school, is required to translate the liturgy into his own language. The professors of the seminary, together with the Metropolitan, are available to give him a hand. To date, the liturgy has been translated into

eighteen Kenyan languages, and translations have been printed in book form.

The problem of liturgical language in Kenya in and of itself is an interesting issue. The greatest emphasis is placed on understanding. Nobody is puzzled by the fact that Sunday liturgy is conducted in various localities of the country in twenty different languages. Metropolitan Makarios constantly stresses that language cannot be an impediment to the understanding of the basic teaching of the faith.

The liturgy at the seminary is celebrated in English and Swahili. Some of it is chanted as well in the local languages. In addition, during international gatherings, Greek and Old Church Slavonic can be heard. I participated in a liturgy during which I was able to hear seven languages. The same can be said about African traditions in the Church. The first encounter with Kenyan Orthodoxy for believers brought up in the Byzantine-Slavonic tradition can be a shock. Accustomed to a subdued, dignified and unusually serious atmosphere which I experience in Polish, Ukrainian, Romanian or Athonite churches, I needed a few moments in order to adjust to the indescribable joy which reigns in Kenyan temples. As an example, let me provide you with two illustrations.

The first is a concert of church music in the seminary chapel. A choir consists of over twenty persons singing to the accompaniment of African drums ; all of them are swaying rythmically and simultaneously swinging their hands. The choir directress stands in front of the semi-circle of choir members, directing the dance and the movement of the hands. The rest of the congregation are rythmically clapping their hands. When the choir begins singing a song which in translation means, "we are travelling with the bishop on a train to heaven," everyone lines up in a queue whose "locomotive" is Metropolitan Makarios himself, and, singing, they "ride" around the church. What a simple, vivid and clear picture of the bishop this is, leading his flock to salvation.

The second illustration comes from a small and poor country chapel in the mountains close to Lake Victoria inhabited by the Nandi people. From the exterior, the temple reminds ones of a typical African mud hut in the middle of which there is a dirt floor and a clay-walled iconostasis on which, aside from the royal and side doors, two old and well-used icons of Our Lord and the Theotokos are hanging. During Sunday liturgy, the church is filled to the brim, the faithful are even

continued, next page . . .

. . . . continued from page 15:

standing outside. Mothers modestly dressed, with bare feet, are standing with groups of children. The majority are participating intensely in the service and are singing, and whole-hearted joy can be seen on their faces. When the Metropolitan comes out with the chalice with the Gifts, almost everyone lines up in a queue, singing even louder, clapping their hands. Metropolitan Makarios says that every time he celebrates liturgy in this church, he feels the authentic presence of Christ.

Bishop Kallistos Ware in his book *The Inner Kingdom* wrote "Of primary importance for the Orthodox Christian is that the act of participating in a church service ought to express the joy and beauty of the Kingdom of Heaven. Without this dimension of beauty, our services can never become prayerful in the full sense of the word : prayer equally of the heart as well as of the mind." The traditions of the Kenyan Church have been developing for almost a century in the conditions of the Dark Continent, in a specific place of an unusually multi-ethnic culture, full of original customs and rhythms.

One of the elements of the African specificity is tribal solidarity. One can see this as well in the Orthodox parish communities. All kinds of activity are

concentrated in the parishes, not only in the villages but also in the cities. Community centres are being built in which both youth and adults get together. Sunday schools for children, day care centres, primary and secondary schools and outpatients' clinics are located there. In the majority of cases, all of this is the result of the initiative of the faithful themselves, buttressed by the power of prayer, organisational talent and the enthusiasm of Metropolitan Makarios. From time to time, one of the well-disposed local churches abroad (Cyprus, Greece, the USA, Finland) gives financial or material assistance.

I shall always remember the church built in that village which is 2,400 metres above sea level. Not too far from the temple, clay is extracted to make bricks ; it is shaped and burnt in specially built ovens.

One can talk long about Kenyan Orthodoxy, about its differences and problems. Despite everything, one can feel completely at home in the Kenyan Church, many thousand of kilometres from one's own country. Often I heard from the lips of my host, "Dwelling amongst us, living, eating and praying with us, you become one of us." And the following words in Swahili, as it were, force themselves out of one's lips: "Asante Sana Kenya! Hakuna Matata!"

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