

*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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Ascent to Mt Tabor : the 'Group of Twelve' expedition

—by Reader Michael Luciuk, St Mark's Church, Yorkton SK

On Wednesday night, 21 June 2006, twelve young Orthodox Christians gathered in Wells Grey Provincial Park in BC to begin a mountain trek together. They came from Alberta, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan, some driving up to 18 hours. After greeting each other, they gathered first for evening prayers, and then for discussing final plans. A temporary "parish," under the protection of St Barbara the Great Martyr, was formed.

"The Group of Twelve" is an Orthodox adventure, led by Priest John Hainsworth from Victoria and made up of him and eleven other members. This year its mission was to have twelve brave souls undergo an intensive five-day outdoor hike in the Rocky Mountains of Canada. The expedition goal was for young Orthodox Christians to bond, study the Scriptures, and enjoy the glory of God's creation together. The experience was part of what is hoped will be a series of expeditions, open to young adults between the ages of 19 and 30. In addition to the hiking, each member was required to present a two-hour seminar, and to cook a group supper with another person. Each year the Group of Twelve will have a different Great Feast theme. This year it was the Transfiguration.

Day One: the beginning

After morning prayers, we drove down a deserted road to reach the trail. Despite some changing of plans and a squirrel-ravaged backpack, everyone was ready to depart. Battle Mountain Trail to the first camp consisted of a gruelling eight km of uphill forest switchbacks and a two km tundra hike, with a total elevation of 1167 m. Though it started out easy enough, soon we were testing our bodies to the limit. Going up a hill at a 50-degree angle with 40-pound packs exhausted us. While at first we talked freely and marvelled at nature, we soon talked sporadically and kept our eyes focused on the ground in

front of us. Soon we had problems in keeping the group together, because a few in front were setting a pace unbearable to those behind. A delicate balance between pressing ahead and staying bearable had to be set. Though exhausted, we had a beautiful view of a thunderstorm in the valley below. One member of the group was having trouble with the pace that many dismissed as a lower fitness-level; but after someone switched her pack with his, it was discovered that she had a badly designed pack, and it was throwing her back out of alignment.

This is a metaphor of Christian life: at the start it may seem easy but it gets harder. We as a church are on this ascent together, and can only finish together. We must understand that though others seem to hold us back, it is not always a lack of asceticism but the different burdens we carry. It is only by sharing these burdens that we can learn to appreciate each other's journey and complete it. In between breaths, the group sang hymns and songs, and planned music for future services. Each clearing in the trees would raise our hopes that we had reached our destination, only to be dashed by another twenty minutes of walking. Finally after eight hours, 12 km, and two river crossings, we found Fight Lake, our campsite. Through a brief rain which dampened our spirits a bit, we set up our tents, made a campfire, and cooked supper. It was a blessing that at this site, someone had already built an outhouse and a bear case. After warming up by the fire, we quickly said some prayers and went to sleep, shivering in the damp -5 C weather.

Day Two: foretaste of the Kingdom

Next morning, we climbed out of our tents, stiff and sore from the day before. It truly was a blessing to feel the sun, and it further increased our confidence in God's plan. After breakfast and prayers, we discussed the the Transfiguration, and in particular,

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the Old Testament figures Elijah and Moses and their relationship to it. We then decided to take a day to rest and explore the area surrounding Fight Lake. We split into three smaller groups: one to explore a shelter that had been sighted, another to find a nearby lake and swim in it, and a third to tackle the smaller Mt Phillip (400m). Freed from our packs, my group seemed to float over tundra, snow, and fallen trees to reach the mountain, which we did quite quickly, but far off course, and with only a straight rock face to climb. At the top—a breathtaking view—we settled down for a relaxing lunch and fellowship, and erected an Orthodox cross. Perceiving the image of God in all this beauty seemed to make the trip worth it, and somehow the refusal of St Peter's suggestion that the disciples stay on Mt Tabor was in the back of our minds. We knew that God had something better planned for us.

Going back, we decided to slide down the side of a steep hill, led by the priest (of course)! It's an amazing experience, back-country sliding at the end of June. Wet and tired, but content, we trudged through a flowery mountain meadow to the camp. That evening we discussed the Transfiguration in the liturgy and music. Relaxing around a campfire, swatting away mosquitoes, I was struck by how beautiful and peaceful it was up there. Amazingly, during evening prayers, the sun set as we sang "O Glad-some Light." We retired to our tents feeling very alive.

Day Three: assembling of the Church

Next day we hiked up over Ridge 51 to the what would be our base camp, the base of Battle Mountain. After an easy climb, we reached the valley beneath the mountain. There were two cold, pure-tasting waterfalls there, cascading down the mountain. We set up camp, dug a toilet and made a bear hang. Unfortunately the latter proved extremely difficult, as there were packs-worth of food, and it was decided that some of the food would be burnt. After ravaging the food down to one pack, we proceeded up the mountain to find a site for liturgy. Half way up, there was a fine spot with a big flat rock, and others forming an enclosure facing east. A waterfall roared by it, and flowers and trees surrounded it. It was as if God Himself had already prepared the church. We found a cupped circular rock with notches for rope to make a censer and proceeded to erect the altar with twelve flat stones. A cross was then erected and altar stands made as we sang "O Lord, save Your people." This chapel would be our place of worship and discussion for the next two days.

We then escaped the plus 30-degree weather by wading down the waterfalls and swimming in the river. That night we discussed the significance of the Transfiguration icon, along with a live demonstration of it. We noted that this icon is sometimes placed where the Resurrection

icon would go. The reason? Because even though all will be resurrected, only by transfiguration will we be able to bear the light of Christ. (We also discussed some implications of the darkness surrounding Christ in the icon.) After evening prayers and a session in which we compiled the liturgy from the six parishes represented, we shared some "Battle Mountain Fondue" (chocolate saved from the food purge), and retired to sleep.

Day Four: the ascent beyond words

We rose early to participate in the Liturgy, surrounded by the icon of God's creation. Though I could fill pages about it, words would fail to fully record this amazing event. It was a life-changing experience. How does one explain an encounter with God? If we had left for home that moment, the trip would have been worth it; but God had something better planned. After a fellowship meal we began our ascent. The climb was tough over snow and rocks. At one point there was only a straight drop beside us. At last we reached the ridge line. After leaving our packs, we proceeded to conquer the final trek to the summit. Tired and dehydrated, we arrived at the cairn, filled with joy for the amazing view lying before us. We stood on the top of the world (2367 m), overlooking the Rockies, seemingly filled with the strength that God, in all His glory, had given us. It was hard not to be humbled by the mountain, and to appreciate God's love for us even more.

We felt that we knew what the disciples would have felt when they had journeyed up Tabor. The ascent is like the Christian journey, hard to the last breath: you will feel pain, but also joy. Twelve crosses were blessed and given to each member, and a cross was left in the cairn. We shared lunch, soaking in the view, and then had a huge snowball fight to cool off. We then went to the smaller summit and shared our experience of the mountain. Very slowly we forced ourselves to depart. The climb down was victorious and filled with running and sliding on snow slopes. Supper led to evening prayers and a seminar on monasticism and what role the Transfiguration plays in it. Lying beside the campfire, we listened to the recounting of each other's journey to Christ and took in the star-filled sky.

Day Five: back to the world

On Monday morning we did the Akathist "Glory to God in All Things." The service seemed to be made for that moment, surrounded as we were by the mountains, the trees, the snow, and the waters. It was an amazing service, again beyond explanation. We left behind in the altar a document signed by each one of us, describing why this was sacred ground. After packing

up, we hiked the 14 km back to our cars. Renewed, we flew down the mountain, physically running the last two kilometres. Curiously, in some ways it was harder on our way down than on the way up, since much of one's mind is occupied with trying to keep from falling. How much easier is the ascent to Christ than the descent to the world! After reaching our cars, we took some refreshment, gazed at Hemlechken Falls, and discussed how different philosophical ideas affect our view of the Transfiguration event. Exhausted from the heat, we enjoyed a meal which beat all the other nightly feasts. Then we stayed up long into the night, talking and realizing that the end of this adventure was fast approaching.

Day Six: the end of the expedition

The next morning we packed our tents one last time and had our last prayer service. The Gospel was, fittingly, about Jesus' telling His disciples to go into the world to preach the Good News. Fr John disbanded the "parish" community under St Barbara until next year. We drove into town, had one last meal, and departed. The first "Group of Twelve" expedition had been completed, and a first for Canadian Orthodoxy had been achieved. As we parted from the group, we felt as if we were missing a part of ourselves. I will always remember this event as I continue on my ascent to Christ. The Lord did not let his disciples stay on Mt Tabor, but had something better prepared for them. I have no idea what this next thing

is for me, but it will be quite amazing if it tops my experience with the Group of Twelve.



This year's Group of Twelve.

How to be part of the Group of Twelve

An experience like this will challenge you mentally, physically, and spiritually. But what you gain from taking the plunge will be greater than you can even imagine. If you want a challenge, to enjoy nature, and to grow in Christ, then you may want to consider applying for next year's trek, which will explore Theopany and will consist of back-country canoeing and backpacking. More information will be out on <http://www.groupoftwelve.org/> or email all-saints@shaw.ca

Ottawa, Montréal young people have another get-together

On Saturday, 14 April 2006, young people from parishes in Montréal and the Annunciation Cathedral in Ottawa

gathered for another retreat, following upon one held earlier, in August 2005, at the Iversens' farm in the Montréal area.



Among the leaders and helpers for the day were Archpriest John Jillions, Rector of the cathedral, and his wife, Presbytera Denise; Archpriest Cyprian Hutcheon; Prof John Hadjinicolaou; Sasha Lopoukhine; Kosta Stavrianeas; and Vicky Grillas.

The group is standing in the courtyard at the side of the new Annunciation Cathedral temple. Note the very large new icon of the Theotokos in the background. It replaces the statue of the Holy Virgin Mary, a shrine site of long devotion to the Mother of God in the neighbourhood.

Be healthy and grow : part 3

Continuing this series of 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. Earlier, we discussed loving relationships and a passionate daily life in Christ. Then we discussed need-orientated outreach and small groups. These are four of the eight key elements which should be present in a healthy parish, because a healthy parish has a better chance of growing than does an unhealthy one. The eight key elements to 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; and small groups to support each other.

Now I would like to discuss empowered leadership, gift-orientated ministries and functional parish structures. All three of these elements are interrelated. Empowered leadership is about how the faithful are being prepared and trained to serve and enact the Great Commission ("Go...and make disciples of all the nations..." Mt 28:19). Gift-orientated ministries is about how the tasks of the parish are delegated to those who have a God-given talent for that ministry and not left to be done by the bishop, priest or deacon. With functional parish structures, the organization of the parish and its ministries serve the purpose of what is useful for the parish. These all lead to development and growth. If we stick to the way things are now, however, things will always stay the same! This means if we are losing members or staying constant, without change, we will always lose members or remain constant, and this does not fulfil the Great Commission.

So where does this all start? It starts with the leadership of the Church. What are the clergy doing to establish healthy parishes? Are they training everyone with talents to do work in each parish so the parish will grow? Often the faithful are used for attaining the personal goals and visions of the clergy rather than for what is good for the parish and God's will. It is important that the clergy invert the pyramid of authority so that they assist the faithful to attain the potential God has given to them and the parish. The clergy must equip, support, motivate, train and mentor individuals, enabling them to become all that God wants them to be. Often, all the work in the parish is left to the clergy, yet they may not have all the skills necessary for the many varied tasks. The clergy cannot be all things to all people at all times, and they should be willing to admit this. The clergy must be able to harness the skills of the faithful and not feel threatened by them.

A parish must be organized into a functional parish structure. Does the parish allow new ideas to be implemented, or do they stop them dead in their tracks without truly asking "Is this what God wants?" or "Are we imposing our will?" Do we encourage all to participate in the life of the parish and add to it, or do we say, "No, you have only just joined the parish, faith, etc; serve your time and then perhaps we will see in a few years." We must harness the enthusiasm of a new convert, or of a returning lapsed member, to assist in growing the church. If there is no ministry for the new person who has a talent, then we must find a way for the new person to be properly guided by someone senior, in order to fulfil his or her talent for God's good works. The parish priest cannot do this all or by himself. He will be working 100 hours a week or more if he tries. This is where the parish priest has to learn to let go. Yes, ultimately the parish priest represents the Bishop and is running things for the Bishop, but one person cannot do it all. Even Christ sent out his apostles two by two to reach out to the people. He didn't do it all on his own. Many times, people are discouraged or kept from participating by over-controlling clergy or rigid and inert parish councils

Many clergy, parish councils, and parishioners are afraid of change. If we embrace change that is in keeping with our Orthodox Faith, it will give us growth; if we don't, strife results. If we are not growing as a parish we are dying. Change will happen whether we want it or not, so let it be positive, not negative. Let us equip the faithful, let us train them and send them out to proclaim the Good News and baptise people of *all* nations!

If church growth is your ministry, Bishop Seraphim wants you as a member of the Church Growth Network. After talking it over with your parish priest, contact me, Deacon Gregory Kopchuk at (780) 451-2758 or e-mail me at gkopchuk@yahoo.com. Also, listen to our Orthodox radio program, "Welcome Home" at www.orthodoxradio.ca

Discover more about your Orthodox Faith!

"Welcome Home" is the Archdiocese of Canada radio programme about the Orthodox Faith. Listen at our website: <http://www.orthodoxradio.ca>

Learn more about your Orthodox Faith and discover why many are converting to Orthodoxy.

Some of the broadcast's past guests have included Fr Peter Gilquist and Frank Schaffer, as well as Bishop Seraphim.

New priest ordained For service in Québec

On 29 April 2006, Bishop Seraphim ordained to the Holy Priesthood, Deacon Juan Pablo [Pau] Ruiz-Gomar in Sts Peter and Paul Sobor, Montréal.

Fr Pau has served as a deacon, mainly in Rawdon QC, since July 2002. He is a Catalan by birth and an academically accomplished linguist, who presently gives hospital care-giving to the elderly. He and his wife Catherine were members of two l'Arche communities in France over the two decades before their conversion to Orthodoxy.

While remaining attached to the Chapelle de Saint-Séraphim de Sarov in Rawdon, Fr Pau will also serve as “deanery supply clergy” because of the age of our francophone clergy in Québec, and the pressure on the Dean, Higoumène Irénée (Rochon). So, although he is attached in Rawdon, he will be serving in various places as needed, especially where French is the primary language of the liturgy.



Photographed with Bishop Seraphim immediately after the liturgy at Sts Peter and Paul Sobor, Montréal on April 29 are, from left to right, Miquel, Fr Pau, Daniel, Bishop Seraphim, and Matushka Catherine.

Bishop Burton gives Mother Oksana Memorial Lecture

On Saturday evening, 6 May 2006, the Rt Rev Anthony Burton, Anglican Bishop of Saskatchewan, delivered the annual Mother Oksana Memorial Lecture at Holy



From right to left, Fr Daniel Guenther, Ilaria Olekshy (Fr Orest's daughter), Bishop Anthony Burton, Lucien Bissonnette (Ilaria's fiance), Fr Orest Olekshy, and Fr Dn Wilhelm Friesen.

Resurrection Orthodox Sobor, Saskatoon. His topic was prayer as the expression of the desire for God, and he used the poetry of George Herbert and Dante as illustrations.

Following the service of Vespers, Bishop Burton was welcomed by the Priest-in-Charge of the parish, Fr Daniel Guenther. The Bishop then prefaced his lecture with some observations on the centuries-old and warm relationship between the Orthodox Churches and the Anglican Communion. He was thanked by Archpriest Orest Olekshy, Rector Emeritus of Holy Resurrection, who also spoke movingly of the faith of Mother Oksana and of her spiritual life. Afterwards there was a very fine Paschal tea in the church basement.

Matushka Oksana Olekshy (1944 – 1997) served faithfully and sacrificially with Fr Orest in his ministry, first in Winnipeg, then in Willingdon AB, and from 1970 until her repose, in Saskatoon. Whether it was opening

continued, next page . . .

. . . **Mother Oksana**, *continued from p. 5:*

their home for liturgies and prayer meetings, serving coffee and her fine cakes afterward, or heading off to work at the library to help support the family when the fledgling Holy Resurrection mission parish could not afford much of a priest's salary, Matushka's giving was consistent. She always seemed to have time to listen to those in need, to encourage the person, while not judging the issue. She was gentle and kind, full of discreet but practical love, and very generous. In her last days, her gracious Christian warmth and humour, shining through the suffering which she endured with much patience, were great blessings to the many who visited her bedside in palliative care.

She never talked about what she had given up to fulfil the humble, largely unsung role of the priest's wife: the unrealized potential in her artistic and musical talents, in her proficiency and excellence in the Ukrainian language and arts, or in her great love for performing opera roles. But she believed the call of the Gospel, and she deeply shared her husband's vision of a late-twentieth century mission parish composed of mostly "non-ethnic" Orthodox believers, and in the language reflecting the needs of the English-speaking Canadians among whom the Lord had placed her and Fr Orest.

May her memory be eternal!

Parish helps mothers in crisis

Babies are expensive! I should know—I gave birth to my first child, a boy named Makariy, almost eight months ago. Babies need so many things in the first few years of life, as they grow so quickly. From cribs, high chairs and car seats to clothing, blankets and toys, the list just seems to go on and on, and the dollars seem to disappear faster and faster.

That's why I am so thrilled about what our parish, St Nicholas Canadian Orthodox Church in Langley, British Columbia, did this past summer. We took up a collection of new and used items, such as those mentioned above, and donated them to the Fraser Valley Pregnancy Centre, a local, non-profit organization which provides information, education and support to women with crisis pregnancies. The Centre also offers practical assistance to single moms and moms-in-need.

Our parishioners are encouraged to collect items that are still in good condition. So many people have things at home that they have been saving or that their children no longer need. Communities are full of garage sales and moving sales throughout the summer; many items can be found at them, bought very inexpensively, then donated. We are even asking co-workers and

neighbours who have children if they have anything they would like to donate. It seems that people are more than happy to be generous when asked to help. It is truly better to give than to receive!—*Hannah Pryadko, St Nicholas Church, Langley BC*

Langley church given new tomb

The whole of Lent was especially poignant this year for the faithful of St Nicholas Orthodox Church in Langley BC, and Holy Week was amazing.

At the services of Great and Holy Friday, the clergy and faithful alike were elated at church's newest gift—a wooden tomb for the Burial of the Lord, handmade by our own



Subdeacon George Patrikeeff. Very talented in carpentry, he knew St John Maximovitch of Shanghai and San Francisco personally, and credits all his expertise in Orthodox services to the Lord and to Saint John himself. It was a joy to walk in procession that night, as the men carried the Plashchanitsa upon the top case of the tomb. At Pascha, the priests put the Icon of the Resurrection on top it, and it will remain there until Holy Friday next year. We are eternally grateful to George for this magnificent gift!

This year the services were con-celebrated by Archbishop Lazar, Bishop Varlaam, Fr John Bingham, and Fr Vasili Wilkes, of Florida, who is actually a member of the Brotherhood of the Monastery of All Saints of North America, and so it was wonderful for all of us to have him here for Holy Week and Pascha. The Brotherhood, including Fr Vasili, has a total of five brethren.

The Brotherhood of the Monastery of All Saints of North America.



For the Sunday afternoon Paschal Vespers, which was held at the Monastery of All Saints of North America, in Dewdney, over 200 people attended, making it the largest Paschal service we have ever had. A combination of Russians, Serbs, Romanians, Ukrainians, Canadians, Americans, and many others came, and each individual felt the radiant joy of the Pascha of the Lord. —*Rebeka Goodyear, St Nicholas Church, Langley BC*

All Saints' Day At BC's monastery

On Sunday, 18 June 2006, at the Monastery of All Saints of North America in Dewdney BC, 503 people attended the annual All Saints' Healing Service, well over twice the number who had come last year. The sun shone brightly as the faithful streamed up the foxglove-lined country road to the monastery, and finding a place to park quickly became a real miracle!

The 4 p.m. service was served by Archbishop Lazar, Bishop Varlaam, and Priests Mikhail Fourik, Stephen Slipko, Nicolae Lapuste, Johannes Ayoub, John Bingham, and Christopher Rigden-Briscall. Prayers invoking the Holy Spirit were said for the Holy Oil to heal soul and body, and seven epistles and seven Gospels were read in multiple languages.

Afterwards, the bells were rung, and the hierarchs led the clergy and faithful in a seemingly endless procession along the "Jordan River" down to the monument



One section of the procession.

for the Orthodox departed. Many people carried icons and relics. The monastery's beautiful icon of All Saints was written by a young girl whom Vladyka Lazar had met on one of his annual trips to Romania. I had the great blessing of carrying the holy relic of St Mary of Magdala, the only one of the monastery's relics which currently emits the lovely fragrance of myrrh.

At the monument, Archbishop Lazar gave a moving sermon, followed by the blessing of the monastery's newly-built cedar gate, complete with Romanian castle-like cupolas. Just as at the Paschal service, Vladyka Lazar knocked on the gate, and a voice from behind called out, "Who wisheth to enter?" Vladyka answered, "The Lord, the King of Glory," and Brother Ionikios, a novice of the monastery, opened it. This delightful moment clearly pleased all the children who were present.

Upon returning to the main building of the monastery, the faithful walked under the Gospel, one by

one. It took a full forty-five minutes for the nine priests to anoint the over five hundred faithful. Many could truly sense the presence of the Holy Spirit, as souls were healed by this blessed oil.



Brother Ionikios opens the gate.

After the completion of the services, a large banquet and barbeque agape meal was enjoyed, and we were reminded of how Christ miraculously fed the five thousand! There was a very powerful spirit of Christian love and devotion present. This may surprise some, but it should not, because as it is written, "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God" (Heb 11:3, NKJV). And indeed, by faith we saw the image of the Word Himself in the faces of all who came. It was a day none of us shall ever forget, and we pray this news will inspire even more people to visit this beautiful monastery. May God bless and keep all who have come and shall come in future!



The faithful being anointed.

To see more photos from this year's glorious event, please visit www.o.ca.org, and click on Photo Gallery and Events, June 2006. We extend our deepest gratitude to the OCA's web team for their kindness in posting our photos.—Rebekah Goodyear, St Nicholas Church, Langley BC

Calgary clergy synaxis Unites brother clergy

Echoing the words of Psalm 133, the brotherhood of clergy from across the Archdiocese was united at the Entheos retreat centre outside Calgary from July 10-14, 2006.

The pastoral setting provided a tranquil backdrop for the meeting of over twenty priests and deacons with His Grace, Bishop Seraphim, who repeatedly urged the clergy towards mutual love and support in their varied ministries across the world's geographically largest diocese. His Grace and many clergy repeated a shared sense of optimism and thankfulness for the positive atmosphere in the Canadian Archdiocese, and God's continued blessings in many corners of the Archdiocese.

Starting at 7 o'clock each morning, clergy served daily Divine Liturgy, and were strengthened both by the wholesome meals of the centre, and by the spiritual edification of presentations throughout the week. Each day ended with evening services, which concluded around 10 o'clock.

Fr John Jillions led the priests in a discussion of parish issues and the pastoral support of clergy in the Archdiocese, while Bishop Seraphim met with attending deacons in discussion of diaconal issues. Fr Ron Poworoznik shared a thorough reflection on the Gospel of St Luke and on the Acts of the Apostles, underscoring the historical authenticity of these Scriptures.

One of the major highlights of the synaxis proved to be the multi-session presentation by Fr Michael Oleksa of the Diocese of Alaska. Fr Michael delved deeply into the missionary experiences of the saints of Alaska, weaving a detailed and compelling account of their understanding of the cultural inheritance of Alaskan aboriginals, and their use of these insights to build an indigenous Orthodox witness in Alaska that has lasted to this day. Fr Michael's presentation was filled with historical anecdotes, local myths, and personal experiences, which all served as illustrative examples of missionary approaches applicable to our experience in Canadian mission work, in different cultural contexts.

The final days allowed those attending to spend a little time visiting some local natural wonders near the Elbow River, to share parish experiences, and to give encouragement to each other. Although clergy were visibly tired from the long and full days, it was evident that all those who attended truly appreciated their time together, and look forward, God willing, to the next synaxis in a couple of years' time.—Fr Geoffrey Korz, *All Saints' of North America Mission, Hamilton ON*

Diocesan focus group Examines administration

His Grace, Bishop Seraphim has blessed the formation of a Standing Focus Group, composed of several Orthodox Christians from across the country, to re-examine the current administration of the Archdiocese. Our mission is to develop and to offer for consideration, an *administrative vision* for the Archdiocese of Canada that ministers to its present and future needs. We hope to suggest ways the current administration could re-evaluate, re-define, or even re-orient the different offices within the Archdiocese, in order to meet these needs.

At this point, the beginning of our mandate and of our research, we plan to focus on the key elements of *clarity* and *continuity*. The goal will be to find and suggest practical ways in which the offices of the Archdiocese can continue serving the needs of the entire diocese *even* more, and *ever* more, effectively—always keeping the pastoral concerns of our ruling bishop as foundational to our thinking. Through the distribution of surveys, to both the rectors and the parish wardens/councils across the diocese, we hope to gather relevant information regarding the experience and knowledge of the current administration of the Archdiocese, and about the impact which this understanding has.

We are planning also to engage in dialogue with the committed faithful of the diocese, assessing their collective experiences. In so doing, we also hope to gain insight into possible solutions to current hurdles experienced by our clergy and laity alike. "Before we can even think about coming to a common mind, we all need to hear one another, to see the different perspectives from all quarters of the Church. We need to be patient with one another and to bear one another's burdens."

It is important to remember that we can multiply our talents to bring before the Lord. And our beloved bishop has made it clear that he needs the help of all of us: "The spiritual growth and salvation of the people of the Archdiocese has always been my highest priority. It must be so, and shall continue to be the main concern of my heart for the Faithful of the Archdiocese, and for those to whom we are called to witness for Christ by our Christian living . . . *the development of the Archdiocese in a healthy direction [still] requires a lot of work from us all.*"

For more information on the ongoing work of the Standing Focus Group, please contact us at archdiocesesfg@gmail.com and visit our blog site at standingfocusgroup.blogspot.com. —Deacon Gregory Scratch, *Annunciation Cathedral, Ottawa ON*

St Arseny Institute : latest news

Formal affiliation of St Arseny Institute with the University of Winnipeg

His Grace Seraphim, Bishop of Ottawa and Canada, is expected to be in Winnipeg in late August or early September, 2006, for ceremonies to make official the affiliation of the St Arseny Institute with the Faculty of Theology at the University of Winnipeg. An agreement between the Faculty of Theology and the Institute was finalized in July 2006.

Master of Divinity degree credits possible, beginning January 2007

Credit towards a graduate-level Master of Divinity degree from the University of Winnipeg will be possible for St Arseny Institute students with a BA or equivalent prerequisites, once St Arseny Institute courses are co-ordinated with the Faculty of Theology academic standards and begin to be offered through the Faculty of Theology. We expect the first courses to be available under this arrangement in January 2007.

Association of Theological Schools accreditation

The Faculty of Theology at the University of Winnipeg has recently successfully completed the process of review for membership in the Association of Theological Schools of the United States and Canada. This is the primary accrediting body for M.Div programs in North America. As we begin to offer our St Arseny Institute courses through the Faculty of Theology, our students who are qualified, will be able to benefit from courses accredited at the ATS level. The OCA's St Vladimir's Seminary and St Tikhon's Seminary are members of the ATS.

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and other missionary labourers
of the Orthodox Church in America.*

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Over the summer and in the fall of 2006, the St Arseny Institute Library will be pruned and prepared for cataloguing, and transferred to the University of Winnipeg. A considerable number of books donated recently by St Vladimir's Seminary will be added to the collection, along with the purchase of about 150 new volumes. Eventually those St Arseny students in our programme, registered with the university's Faculty of Theology, will have access through distance loan to both the St Arseny Library holdings and those of the University of Winnipeg.

Courses to be offered in Vancouver area, Fall 2006

Archpriest Lawrence Farley, pastor of St Herman of Alaska's Orthodox Church in Surrey BC, has agreed to teach two courses in Holy Scripture to a number of St Arseny Institute students in the Vancouver area of British Columbia, in the Fall of 2006. We are also working on means by which St Arseny Institute correspondence students from other parts of Canada might be able to take these courses taught by Fr Lawrence.

A series of volumes on the New Testament literature has been prepared by Fr Lawrence for *The Orthodox Bible Study Companion* series published by Conciliar Press. The volumes on the Gospel of Mark, the Epistle to the Romans, and the "Prison Epistles" of St Paul have already been published.

We are very pleased that such a dynamic and proven teacher is pioneering the first in-class teaching for St Arseny Institute outside of Winnipeg. It is our hope that such classes will be established across the country to anchor and complement the programme of correspondence studies which, at this point in time, serves students in seven of the provinces of Canada, as well as the Yukon Territory.

On-line CJOC to publish services for St Arseny

The third issue of the *Canadian Journal of Orthodox Christianity* (www.cjoc.ca) is due to be published by the St Arseny Institute in the Fall of 2006. Among other contributions will be full hymns and stanzas for the veneration of, and intercession to St Arseny, in the services of Vespers and Matins. This offering will be included in the section of the journal which is devoted to writings of St Arseny and studies of his life and his contributions to the Church. These services are being published with the blessing of Bishop Seraphim.

For more up-to-date information and news of the St Arseny Institute, please stay in touch by contacting the Director, Mr Spencer Estabrooks, by letter at 150 Canora St, Winnipeg MB, R3G 1T2 ; by phone at 1-204-783-5350; or by e-mail at institute@saintarseny.ca.

Saints show us the way :

Giving and giving off

From St John the Compassionate to St Tikhon of Zadonsk, to St Maria Skobtsova of our own times, the saints have consistently been givers. They gave of their money, goods, time, advice, sewing, ability to read, their beds to the sick—whatever they had. They gave love in all of its practical forms. They gave in unseen ways, too, wearing their knees out in intercession or reading the Psalter perpetually for the departed. By corollary, we who are “called to be saints” are called also to give. “Freely you have received, freely give” (Matt 10:8). In the words of St John Chrysostom, any surplus we have should be stored in the bellies of the poor.

The saints not only gave, they also gave off. Their lives exuded the sweet scent of holiness wherever they were, be it a prison camp, a crowded train headed for Siberia, or criss-crossing the breadth of Canada during the Depression as we see in the life of our own St Arseny, meeting opposition with faith. “I have not fallen in spirit, and you don’t either,” he says to those in the young St Walburg parish, in the early 1930s, when money was scarce and the Canadian diocese was hardly able to collect any funds to help the fledgling congregation. Patience, watchful love of others, consideration, hope were given off by them. Of course, the saints would not have noticed what they gave off, as they were far too God-centred to focus on themselves.

However, all of us know those whose mere presence lights up a room. The chandelier seems to shine brighter where they are; they seem to be able to sanctify the city when they are there, even the day. They are like sunshine to our souls. Such are the saints, but magnified even more. What they exuded (and exude) comes to us between the lines of their writings, for they do not talk about themselves. For example, within the writings of St John of Kronstadt, we read that we are to treat with gentleness and kindness persons who are irritable and have an *idée fixe*. “Turn with calm, serene faith to God in prayer . . .” And so we can picture that St John would have done just that, giving off gentleness, kindness, calm and serenity in the face of agitation. “A soft answer turns away wrath” (Prov 15:1). How many saints prepared for death, carefully and solemnly, knowing their end was mere minutes away, and helping others to remain strong in the faith. A sweet breath of faith right to the end.

From the mad array of deodorants, anti-perspirants, foot sprays, body sprays, colognes and perfumes vying for our bucks, it is obvious that we, in the temporal sense, are hyper-preoccupied with what we give off. But what of our spiritual scent? And oddly, we are back to the subject of giving, for St Paul says to the Phillipians, “I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things which were sent by you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God” (Phil 4:18). Our giving to one another through ungrudging good works—literally, those who labour and those who sing in the Church, those who respond to an inward nudge to give to a blessed cause, those who faithfully support their parish and the Archdiocese—these works are as incense, sweet and pleasing to God. The scent is carried to our brothers and sisters, too, a buoyant encouragement to keep going on this mutual journey of faith in our Lord. The scent of our giving and labours is pleasing to God, uplifting to the faithful, and fully in line with our calling : to be saints.

And finally, there is the promise of vast abundance to those who give : “Bring all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Mal 3:10). Each of the lives of our saints reflects riches in its own particular way. Their souls became adorned with jewels of virtue. Largesse, physical and spiritual, took all sorts of forms so that they could bless and uplift others—true life, in a circle of giving and receiving that embraced God and community.—*Katya Szalasznyj, Holy Resurrection Sobor, Saskatoon*

Sifton Seasonal Museum of Orthodoxy, 2007

Plans are underway for the Archdiocese to open a seasonal **Museum of Orthodoxy at Sifton, Manitoba** in the newly restored church in 2007. With the help of a Virginia Farah Foundation start-up grant, the museum will operate from late May until the end of August. There will be a kiosk with books, icons, candles, incense and CDs. Displays will be portable, so that they can be stored in the new basement in the off-season, or when the church is being used for services.

If you have any historical items related to Orthodox faith and would like to donate them, consignment goods, or just want to know more about the Museum please contact Katya Szalasznyj, 2506 Woodward Avenue, Saskatoon, SK, S7J 2E5 or write katya.archives@sasktel.net.

The state of our diocesan finances

As the Treasurer of the Archdiocese of Canada since Bishop Seraphim's consecration in 1987, I have witnessed significant changes within the diocese. The following, non-existent before Bishop Seraphim's tenure, have been accomplished because of your generosity :

- support of our Bishop, providing a very small stipend and a place to live;
- purchase and upgrade of the diocesan centre ("Fair Haven")—adding an office, a chapel and more recently a separate residence for the Bishop;
- holding two meetings per year of the Archdiocesan Council; and,
- covering Bishop Seraphim's travel costs (in economy class, mind you) across the largest geographic Orthodox diocese in the world.

We support these activities, through individual donations, but mostly through contributions to the Archdiocese by member parishes. Many of you adhere to the principle of tithing : you give 10% of your income to your parish and the parish, in turn, contributes 10% of its income to the Archdiocese. True, this is not yet universally practiced by all parishes in the diocese, but we still hope that the Lord would lead all parishes to support the Archdiocese in this way. A general rule of thumb to differentiate parishes is to look at whether annual contributions include cents and not an even number. A listing of parishes and their contributions for 2005 appears on the next page, as we were asked to do.

At the Saskatoon Assembly in the summer of 2004, I presented the state of the Archdiocese financial picture. I mentioned then that if we were to apply an annual inflationary rate to the Parish Contributions to the Archdiocese received some twenty years ago, and then compared it to the contributions received in current dollars, *the growth in giving is relatively non-existent. The simple fact is that our annual budget is only keeping up with inflation.*

Unfortunately, some parishes have actually reduced their annual contributions. Thanks to God and the hard work of clergy and dedicated parishioners, new parishes have sprung up in Canadian centres that did not previously have a diocesan presence. The contributions of these newly established groups have made up for other parishes which have reduced or not increased their contributions. More importantly, these new missions, some of which are now well-established, have taken up the call of a ten percent tithe from their inception and are now solid contributors to the work of the Archdiocese.

Some may ask why the Archdiocese needs more money, given our accomplishments so far. Bishop Seraphim's recent letter sent to all parishes on the importance of stewardship perhaps is reason enough. However, let me raise just one practical reality. Two Archdiocesan Assemblies ago, a resolution was passed that the Archdiocese was to hire an administrative assistant for the Bishop, to provide help to the Bishop in running his Office and the Archdiocesan Centre. To date, we have not been able to afford the ongoing cost of such help. The growth of the Archdiocese in number of clergy and parishes, has added to the complexity of administration. Yet, our Bishop has not had an increase in support in administering our Archdiocese. What a burden we are placing on our beloved Bishop!

The Archdiocese of Canada has many generous people. Through God's Grace, much has indeed been accomplished throughout the diocese. Parishes have raised funds to build new churches or to acquire larger facilities, and the number of clergy has grown exponentially from some twenty years ago. Then, recently, in response to an appeal, many of you responded to showing whether our Archdiocese could monetarily support a auxiliary bishop. A little over of \$60,000.00 was collected in less than a year. These funds have now been placed into a savings account in anticipation of the eventual consecration of a second bishop for the enlightenment of our Canada.

The response to emergencies and appeals has been exemplary. Yet, that is not the way to meet annual costs of supporting our Bishop in administrating the Archdiocese. Bishop Seraphim's recent stewardship letter to each parish speaks to an ongoing giving back of some of what God has provided every one of us. As a guide, let's start by asking ourselves whether we are tithing a full 10% of our income? Then ask whether your parish is contributing 10% of its revenues—and if not, why not? If a small mission parish can, why not your church?

Let's ask ourselves these questions and resolve to making it happen. The point simply is this: if we have it within ourselves to give in response to appeals and emergencies, then surely we have the capacity to give more to our individual Parishes, which then through tithes will increase giving to the Archdiocese. We will then be able to hire the administrative assistant (can we do it before next year's assembly?). Imagine our beloved Bishop with a full-time assistant: less stress, more energy for seeking God's will for the Archdiocese, maybe even more years in our midst. —*Nikita Lopoukhine, Treasurer, Archdiocese of Canada, OCA*

. . . Donations to the Archdiocese, 2005 . . .

Parish	Total	Syosset	Arch- diocese	Mis- sions	Educa- tion	Charity	Bishop and other purposes	Bp Off E & W; car	Inst. St Arseny	Auxil. Bishop
Amos: St Mary Mag.	0.00									
Andrew/Kyssylew: Nativity Virgin	0.00									
Andrew/Shandro: St Mary	300.00	30.00	270.00							
Andrew/Sochava: St Michael	2,000.00	200.00					1,800.00			
Andrew/Sunland: Holy Trinity	400.00	40.00	360.00							
Andrew/Wost/Buk: Holy Trinity	1,340.00					250.00	1,090.00 (Tsunami, AAC)			
Calgary: St Peter Aleut	28,014.80	1,220.35	10,811.45	370.00	75.00	1,035.00	500.00	500.00	580.00	12,923.00
Comox: Ap Barnabas	250.00	25.00	225.00							
Desjarlais: St Nicholas	706.00				428.00		78.81 (clergy insurance)			200.00
Dewdney: All Saints	358.73						358.73 (Ottawa cathedral)			
Dickie Bush: Sts Peter & Paul	200.00	20.00	180.00							
Edmonton: H. Trinity	1,041.67	54.17	487.50				500.00			
Edmonton: St Herman	22,182.92	1,470.00	9,504.01	35.92	147.00			3,725.99		7,300.00
Gibsons: H. Transfig.	0.00									
Halifax: St Vladimir	1,117.40	111.74	1,005.66							
Hamilton: All Saints	2,500.00	250.00	2,250.00							
Kayville: H. Trinity	0.00									
Kingston: St Greg.	0.00									
Labelle: St Sergius	367.00						367.00			
Langley: St Herman	11,794.16	906.86	8,162..30							2,725.00
Minitonas: St Lavren.	0.00									
Montreal: The Sign	8,643.33	650.04	5,850.00	403.00	559.00	391.29	530.00 (IOCC/Tsunami)			260.00
Montreal: Ss Peter & Paul	2,000.00	200.00	1,800.00							
Montreal: St-Benoit	900.00	70.00	270.00				360.00			200.00
Moose Jaw: H. Trinity	0.00									
Narol: St Nicholas	1,300.00	115.00	360.00	150.00			675.00			
New Westminster: Mar Elias	0.00									
North Bank: Holy Transfiguration	0.00									
Ottawa: Annunciation	14,910.83	617.05	5,553.53	586.00		654.25	1,100.00 (Nfld mission)			6,400.00
Pakan (Sm.Lake): St. Elijah	400.00	30.00	270.00							100.00
Rawdon chapel	200.00	20.00	180.00							
Rhein: H. Assumption	0.00									
Sandy Lake: St Nich.	700.00	70.00	630.00							
Saskatoon: H. Resurrec.	8,438.35	343.84	3,094.51							5,000.00
Sherwood Park: St Athanasius	8,012.50	359.75	3,327.75	165.00	250.00					4,000.00
Smoky Lake: H. Trinty	400.00						400.00 (AAC)			
Star: H. Transfiguration	0.00									
Stary Wostok: H. Trinity	0.00									
Stenen: H. Assumption	400.00						400.00 (Sifton)			
Swan River: St Lawrence	250.00						250.00 (Sifton)			
Toronto: All Saints	0.00									
Toronto: St Astius	0.00									
Toronto: Christ the Saviour	6,783.00	550.00	4,950.00							1,283.00
Toronto: St Seraphim	0.00									
Vancouver: H. Resurrec.	4,600.00	360.00	2,700.00				540.00			1,000.00
Victoria: All Saints Alas.	300.00	30.00	270.00							
Whitehorse: St Nich.	4,880.00	328.00	2,952.00	450.00	300.00	850.00				
Windsor: St John Div.	0.00									
Winnipeg: H. Trinity	0.00									
Yorkton: St Mark	4,274.00	261.80	2,356.20				825.00 (IOCC)		185.00	646.00
Totals:	139,965.50	8,333.60	67,729.91	2,159.92	1,759.00	3,180.54	9,774.54	4,225.99	765.00	42,037.00

An interview with Bishop Seraphim:

‘The whole point is to serve Christ in our life ’

—by Rebekah Goodyear, St Nicholas Church, Langly BC

My first meeting with Bishop Seraphim occurred three years ago, when I was beginning my catechumenate. I can still recall how nervous I was, but he almost immediately put me at ease, with his smile, his gentle laughter, his sense of humour. To me, his kindness and humour are indicative of the extraordinary character of this man, who appears to think of himself as very ordinary.

On 28 September 2005, I was granted a telephone interview with His Grace. I already admired him, especially after having read *From the Bishop’s Desk: Writings of Vlada SERAPHIM of Canada*, a work reminiscent to me, in parts, of the gentle honesty and love found in the recorded words of St Silouan the Athonite. But after the interview had ended, I found myself respecting him even more. His answers, indicating much thought and prayerful consideration, lend an insight into the mind and heart of our spiritual leader. So it is with joy that I now present my conversation him.

Your Grace, you were born Lutheran, later converted to Anglicanism, and finally to Orthodoxy. How many years have you been Orthodox, and what drew you to the faith?

Well, I guess I’ve been Orthodox since 1978, however long that is . . . 27 years or so. What drew me to Orthodoxy, in the end, was the truth of the Faith, essentially, and the fact that I believe strongly that the Lord drew me to the Church. He opened doors that I felt had been closed to me, and He made it very clear that I had to come into Orthodoxy. So, that’s how it happened. Some people come to the Orthodox Church as a reaction to things that they feel are somehow out of kilter where they came from. There might have been something involved in that too, in my hope for direction, but it had much more to do with the fulness of the Orthodox Faith and the ability of the Orthodox Faith, than anything like that.

What is your most treasured memory from your life in the Orthodox Church thus far?

My most treasured memory? Oh, probably, I suppose there would be two. They are not single memories; they are kind of group memories, having to do with living in Valamo Monastery in Finland in 1980. And after that, the two times I was able to be at St John the Baptist Monastery in Essex, where I met Archimandrite Sophrony.

That must have been really something, to meet him!

Well, particularly because he was a holy man, and the

sense of peace and joy a person feels around him is what is really significant. What he says is significant, too.

The Church appears to be growing within the whole of North America, including Canada, and indeed, the Archdiocese now has a new building for Annunciation Cathedral, and it seems that every day, more and more converts are being baptized and/or chrismated everywhere. Are you, as our Bishop, pleased with this? Is the Church progressing as well as you would hope?

I think that the Church is progressing according to God’s blessings, and there is development according to God’s blessings. So, I have to be grateful for how things are developing as they are. A person, especially like me, could be impatient because things seem to be growing in a somewhat slow manner, compared to how a person would like things to be. But I think that the Orthodox Church, regardless, has to grow slowly and steadily, in order to put down the correct roots. Because the Orthodox way isn’t about some kind of intellectual system or anything like that. It’s a way of life. And a way of life doesn’t develop in five minutes. So I’m happy the way things are going.

In Holy Scripture, women are given an equally important role to that of men, and treated with the highest respect in the Church; now, as you know, the diaconate for women is re-opening in Greece and, God willing, the whole Church. Can you describe the exact place of women within the Church—in monasticism, in the diaconate, and as laity, and the contribution they can make?

That’s a complicated question. To say the ‘exact place.’ I don’t think I can say what is the ‘exact’ place in the Church.

How about the approximate place?

That’s probably better, because if you want to say what is the exact role, that’s hard to define. When you say that the treatment of women in the Church and the Scriptures is one of equality, you would be right. But equality is not the basic identity. In other words, men and women are equal, but they’re not the same. They have different abilities and different gifts, for which God created us. For instance, men can’t be mothers. So, it’s important for us, in my opinion, to understand what is God’s will for us, and how we serve in the Church according to our different gifts and abilities and callings, and to do God’s will. Sometimes, people want to think that there are special limitations on women, in one way or another. But if that’s perceived, it’s usually because of a weakness. Men sometimes want

continued, next page . . .

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to lord it over women, which is not what the Scripture talks about.

It's important for us all to live in a more Scripturally-minded way and with a more repentant attitude. And as for monks and nuns and lay people, that's the same calling. Monks and nuns are people who give of themselves more completely, and are determined to focus to serve Christ. But it doesn't mean that one is better than the other—that one way is better than the other. Various people have opinions about that. According to the Apostle Paul, the married way is good, but he preferred everybody to be unmarried like him, so that they could serve Christ with single-heartedness and single-mindedness. But that does not mean that the married way is without blessings, you see? They're equally blessed ways to serve Christ. The whole point is to serve Christ in our life. Some He calls to be married, and some He calls to be unmarried. And we have to be concerned with what He's calling us to do for Him.

And what do you think of the women's diaconate re-opening?

Well, the diaconate is good, but the diaconate itself is the foundation of how the Christian life is supposed to be, for everybody, whether they're ordained or not. Because the diaconate is serving, as Christ gave us the example of serving. So we are, in the first place, mistreating the male diaconate; in general, at the present time, the diaconate is, in many places, treated simply as a liturgical function. In reality, the diaconate has a lot more to do with the exercise of social service gifts and other ways of serving, than just liturgical function. And if we don't arrive at a way for male deacons to exercise more normally the kind of personal service gifts that deacons have, then there's not much point in ordaining women to the diaconate.

When they're doing the same thing?

Yes, because if women think that they are being treated poorly in some ways without this, how are they going to feel if they're deaconesses and just tokens? And that's what I'm afraid of! I don't want that. If women are going to be deacons, then it has to be real! The Orthodox Church is not about any falsehood or window-dressing; it's about reality. Deaconesses never had a liturgical role. They were always about social service, and baptismal service as well. They had all those kinds of functions—practical functions. If they're going to be deaconesses, then they have to be doing something! In Greece, there are *deaconesses*—which is the right word, you really can't say *deacons* for women—but their deaconesses, as far as I understand, are abbesses of monasteries. And in that case, that is part of our tradition, that an abbess might also be a deaconess. And it does have a practical function. But I don't think that even in Greece they—in normal parish life—are yet ready to

embrace the restoration of deaconesses in the parish. Because the diaconate itself has to be recovered in a full, normal sense before we can properly do this. I'm not saying it can't happen; I'm just saying we have to do it in the right order, or it's going to be awful. We'll be saying the wrong thing. We don't want to suggest the wrong thing to women—as they say, “throw a ball, they come.” That's too degrading to do that to somebody.

St Silouan the Athonite wrote of Christ-like love: “No one can know of himself what is Divine love unless the Holy Spirit instructs him.” Archimandrite Sophrony wrote that “the meaning of Christ's word ‘love’ will remain a mystery for the philologist to the end of time.” And St Seraphim of Sarov said: “God is a fire that warms and kindles the heart,” and that, contrary to popular Western beliefs, “the devil is cold.” How would you describe Christ-like love to those as yet unfamiliar with these works, and how can we achieve it?

Christ-like love is fundamentally self-emptying, selfless love. It's love without self-interest. No strings attached. No conditions. And I suppose you could say it's love which expects love in return, but doesn't demand it, and doesn't force it. And it's love which is characterized by service, because it's self-emptying love. It is about service, can't help but be. And how you achieve this, is by opening yourself to the Lord and asking Him to give it. It's not something that you can by any technique acquire. It is a Gift of the Holy Spirit, and as far as I can see, the only way that you can come to it, is to put yourself in His Presence and wait for Him. At least that's what Archimandrite Sophrony tells people to do in his writings. He shows how it has been for him in his life, and the kind of struggles that you have to face, not only in opening yourself and asking for the Lord to give you this love, but once you have been given it, then to live with it.

Your Grace, ours is the oldest and True Church, and some people heavily emphasize that many are not members. But His Grace, Bishop Kallistos (Ware) has pointed out that there exist people who are part of the Church—the Kingdom—in an “invisible” manner, noting: “We know where the Church is but we cannot be sure where it is not,” and the theologian Alexis Khomiakov said that in mankind there are those who are “united to her [the Church] by ties which God has not willed to reveal to her.” If these brethren are unknown to us, what more can we, as Orthodox Christians, do to reach out and connect to our “invisible” brothers and sisters?

The way of Orthodox hospitality has always been with a view to try to see Christ in the other person, without asking for his passport. There are numerous cases in the lives of saints. The one that I remember always is St Bishoy of Egypt. He was always—in the traditional way of his day—washing the feet of anybody who came into his cell. He would receive beggars, and the other monks were

criticizing him for how many people he would let in and see. And on one of those occasions, he was washing the feet of some really dirty person, and was about to feed him, when somebody was criticizing him. While he was washing the feet of this person, the brethren who were criticizing him were immediately silenced, because it was revealed to them that it was Christ Whose feet he was washing. And as soon as they saw that it was Christ, He disappeared.

On another occasion with him, the brethren were having the same weakness, but one of the brothers had a dream in which Christ said He was going to appear to the Brotherhood in the church, and they should all go. So word went out, and the brothers started to the church. St Bishoy was the last of them. Sitting beside the road was a paralyzed beggar, who asked the monks where they were going. And they said where and why, and he asked them to carry him so that he could see Christ too, and they all said they were in too big a hurry. St Bishoy came last, and he picked up the beggar and carried him on his back into the church. And all the brethren immediately saw that it was Christ he was carrying.

So that is the attitude that we must have towards people. Christ created all human beings. People are not sub-human because they're not Orthodox. And if persons can see Christ's love in us and in how we treat them, it makes it easier for them to come to the Church. But if we treat people as if they have to have some kind of special passport, before we're going to talk to them or have anything to do with them, then the Church appears to them as an exclusive club, which is difficult to get into, if at all.

What would you say is the most important role for our youth today, and how can children and adolescents, who are faced with so many dangers and temptations, find and maintain grace and freedom in Christ?

It's difficult for them to do that all by themselves; that's the responsibility of adults, to help them. And it's important for them to understand that their call and their relationship with Christ is the same as everybody else's, and age has nothing to do with it. Notice Apostle Paul's exhortations and instructions regarding the Apostle Timothy, who was quite young, yet given big responsibility. Apostle John was quite young, and he had special responsibility. Youth is an advantage, because young people are less distracted and congested with worldly cares or other concerns. And youth, especially, is the most opportune time to offer what is found in Christ, and try to counter inexperience in love. If a person in youth can have, already, experience in love, and can understand how love motivates a person in life and every other way, it can make the rest of that person's life—later—make more sense, impacting positively in the context of all the difficulties of relationships. That's the way any human being, regardless of age,

survives the difficulties of life—always keeping focus on Christ, [one's] sense of direction on Christ, one's hope on Christ. Young people should read the Scripture to know Who *is* Jesus Christ, to keep *remembering* Christ. An important factor, too, is that young people have much more energy than us older guys! And often they're able to sustain service to people who have particular needs better. There are all kinds of people, I think, who would benefit from the loving ministration of a young person.

There is a lot of fear and despair today because of terrorism, war, and environmental disasters taking place everywhere, but the Scriptures teach us to fear nothing. Fr Lawrence Farley once said of Christ, "He was Heaven's amnesty to the children of men," and Archbishop Lazar said: "It is a wondrous mystery of God's Grace that we can become co-workers with Christ in the salvation of mankind." Now, we all know about the need for charitable works, but what can be done to comfort and strengthen the hurting in their faith?

I think that you can't separate charitable works from comforting. Charitable works aren't just something to do! Charitable works are the works that are from selfless love; by definition, charity is a conscious decision to love. That's how this English word "charity" needs to be used—as *selfless love*. If you're going to do something good for people, comfort and help them in a practical or a verbal way, that's a charitable work. The comforting of people who need consolation has to be done in practical ways, on the basis of selfless Christian love, motivated by Christ in our heart. There's no programme for consoling people who are fearful, lonely, or grieving. When it comes to how you yourself are going to console somebody, it has to be motivated by the Lord in your heart giving you the words that are actually needed by that particular person, for that particular situation. But it can't be a programme, because all the situations are unique. You have to depend on God to teach your heart what to do and what to say. Of course, that means that we have to learn to pray, which is something we're not so good at these days, because we're so busy and we think that we don't have time.

Finally, Your Grace, you have been our Bishop for nearly twenty years. With such experience, what do you feel is the ultimate future of the Orthodox Church between now and Eternity? [To this question, His Grace replied incredulously: "Between now and Eternity?!" I said, "Yeah," and we both just laughed. I'd hit him with another complicated question, but he graciously answered, nonetheless.]

Aah, well . . . The Church is the Body of Christ, and the future of the Church is to live in Christ, reveal Christ, serve Christ, and to preach Christ prophetically. That's it. Sorry I can't be more detailed. We have to be who we are. We have to live up to our calling.



Pastoral Notes

On 14 May 2006, Bishop Seraphim ordained **Subdeacon Lasha Tchantouridze** to the Holy Diaconate in St Nicholas Church, Narol MB, to which the new deacon is attached.

On 24 May 2006, the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America granted the following awards to priests and deacons of the diocese:

Jewelled Cross : **Igumen Philip (Speranza)**

Palitsa : **Igumen David (Edwards)**, and **Archpriests Cyprian Hutcheon, Andrew Piasta, and Dennis Pihach.**

Igumen : **Hieromonks Marc (Pierre) and Symeon (Weare).**

Archpriest : **Priests Daniel Guenther, Robert Kennaugh, and Andrew Piasta.**

Gold Cross : **Priests James Griggs, Vasily Kolega, and Rodion Luciuk.**

Protodeacon : **Deacon Wilhelm Friesen.**

On 29 May 2006, at the Divine Liturgy at St Tikhon's Monastery in South Canaan PA, Metropolitan Herman ordained **Subdeacon Nicholas Young** to the Holy Diaconate on behalf of Bishop Seraphim. The new deacon is attached to Christ the Saviour Sobor in Toronto.

On 30 June 2006, **Archpriest Waldemar Kuchta** was released from his responsibility as Priest-in-Charge of Holy Trinity Church, Moose Jaw SK, and attached to the Bishop's Chapel of St Silouan the Athonite in Spencerville ON.

On 1 July 2006, **Priest Michael Schaplowsky** was released from attachment at St Herman's Sobor in Edmonton, and attached to St Athanasius' Church in Sherwood Park AB.

On 3 July 2006, at the Divine Liturgy at All Saints of North America Mission in Hamilton ON, at the direction and blessing of Patriarch Ilia of Georgia, **Priest Teimoraz Suarashvili** was elevated to be an Archpriest.

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