

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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From the Archbishop's desk :

Diocesan Assembly 2007



Archbishop Seraphim

The theme of this summer's Archdiocesan Assembly 2007 will be "Christian Mission in a Pluralistic World." The main theme speaker will be Father Luke Veronis, who spent many years in Albania as a missionary, during the renewal of the Orthodox Church there. Together with Archbishop Anastasios, and the faithful,

together with many living Confessors, Father Veronis participated actively in the rebuilding of a Church that was outlawed, and crushed by Communism, yet not completely extinguished even so. Some will have seen the reports given by Father Veronis in various periodicals while he was active there. I think we will all benefit greatly from hearing him, and from talking with him.

One may argue that it has always been a pluralistic world, and one might be right. But this pluralism as it is expressed in our "culture" has not always pretended that there are all sorts of equally valid, yet competing truths, subject to personal preference. This is our own special brand of incoherence. But it does present its own parallels with the experience of Albanians and many others under

Communism. Some have said that Communism and Capitalism are just different faces of the same coin. Others say that in Communism Man oppresses Man, whereas in Capitalism it is the opposite.

The beginning of the Gospel of John, recently read at Pascha, addresses the shining of Christ's light in the world, and the darkness' inability to overcome it. We participate in that light, and face the same opposition, as the Saviour said it would be. We need the words of an experienced missionary to help us do our work here in Canada, and we need the example of one who also suffered for Christ to encourage us to persevere in our own Christian walk. We need his words, and his example, and we also need each other. Let us not miss the opportunity the Lord gives, only every three years, to refresh each other, to support each other, to encourage each other in our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

I cannot miss an opportunity here, as we are thinking of this theme of "Christian Mission in a Pluralistic World," to draw attention to an important matter of words in translation. In the recent past, many peoples the world over have been converted to Christianity partially by the missionaries' emphasis on the "fear of hell." This is most unfortunate, because it distorts the Gospel, suggesting as it does a vengeful, punishing God. Such a concept, whatever its origins, was supported by scriptural mistranslations, primarily in English.

Often in scriptural translations, and often in liturgical texts in English, we see the word "hell" used to describe both the place of the departed, and the place of the fire of torment. This is not correct, even if "hell" may have such flexibility technically. In the texts, there are two different words used to express two different concepts, and it helps us to refer to the footnotes of RSV in particular. "Hades" from Greek is the approximate equivalent of the Hebrew "Sheol." This refers generally to the place of the departed, and it is to there that the Saviour descended on the Blessed Sabbath, as described in the Symbol of Faith we regularly recite. It is from there that Adam and Eve, and others, are lifted, as described in the icon of that day. On the other hand, "Gehenna" is the Hebrew word used to

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describe the place where fire is never quenched, and which is the equivalent to the more usual actual understanding of the meaning of the word "hell" in English.

The flames, however, are not flames as we understand, but how God's love is received by those absolutely determined to reject it. The threat of a burning hell of eternal punishment is so distorting because there is no time, no place, no state of being, where God's love does not penetrate. Whether we accept it or reject it, everything that exists in any way, any time, any place, has being only because of God's love. If we reject Him, His love is perceived as torment. If we respond to His love by trying to love and serve Him, it is experienced as ineffable joy and peace. This in itself challenges us to be faithful to Christ's exhortation that we bring His love to the whole universe. Our responsibility in Christ is very great indeed. Let us pray for each other that we may live up to it.

+Seraphim



2007 Assembly Information

For application forms and detailed information about the Archdiocesan Assembly, to be held in Ottawa July 17 - 20, please see these websites:

<http://www.archdiocese.ca>

<http://www.ottawacathedral.org>



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

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Pastoral Acts

On 12 Nov 2006, the Mission Station of St Nicholas of Myra was blessed in Toronto ON, with **Priest Nicholas Young** as Priest-in-Charge.

On 1 Jan 2007, **Priestmonk Luke (Majoros)**, in addition to his other duties, was assigned Priest-in-Charge of St Gregory of Nyssa's Mission, Kingston ON.

On 7 February 2007, at the request of Metropolitan John, **Archpriest Waldemar Kuchta** was blessed provisionally to serve in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada.

On 1 Mar 2007, the name of the Mission of the Holy Apostle Barnabas, Comox BC was changed to Mission of the Holy Apostle Barnabas, Comox Valley BC.

On 31 Mar 2007, **Monk-Subdeacon Samuel (Panchuk)** was ordained to the Holy Diaconate at the Chapel of the Entry of the Theotokos in Holy Transfiguration Hermitage, Gibson's Landing BC, to which he is assigned.

On 1 April 2007, **Subdeacon Kurt Edward Jordan** was ordained to the Holy Diaconate at St Herman of Alaska's Church, Langley BC, to which he is assigned.

On 1 April 2007, **Priest Ronald Poworoznik** was assigned as Rector of St Athanasius' Mission in Sherwood Park AB.

On 8 April 2007, **Diocesan Paschal Awards** were given to the following clergy :

Nabedrenik : Priests John Bingham, Richard René, Christopher Rigden-Briscall, and Walter Smith.

Kamilavka : Priest John K Hainsworth
Double Orar : Deacons Gregory Kopchuk and Vincent Lehr

Holy Synod Spring 2007 Paschal Awards were given to the following clergy :

Igumen (non-ruling) : Hieromonks Daniel (Baeyens) and Simeon (Weare)

Archpriest : Priests Andrew Jarmus, James McLuckie, Andrey Somow

Palitza : Archpriests Michael Fourik, Anatolij Melnyk, Lawrence Reinheimer

News from St Arseny Orthodox Institute

Programmes approved, ready to begin

Beginning in the fall of 2007 it will be possible for students with the proper pre-requisites to begin a programme of studies in Orthodox theology offered by St Arseny Institute for the Master of Divinity degree from the University of Winnipeg through the Faculty of Theology at the university. This means that full academic training for the priesthood will now be possible in Canada. This programme has been approved by both His Eminence, Archbishop Seraphim and the theological faculty of the university.

Courses may be taken full-time or part-time, with opportunities for part of the programme to be taken by distance education, directed studies, or intensive course opportunities. There is a limit, however, on how long students may take to complete the degree.

We expect to offer two, one-week intensive courses in Winnipeg during the summer of 2007. In the 2007-08 fall and winter terms, five courses will be offered each term.

A Bachelor of Theology degree in Orthodox studies is also available through St Arseny Institute and the Faculty of Theology, University of Winnipeg. Students may be admitted to this program with other prerequisites than a full undergraduate degree.

Further information will be posted as soon as possible on the St Arseny Institute website (<http://www.saintarseny.ca>).

Personnel from the St Arseny Institute will be available to answer questions during the Archdiocesan Assembly in Ottawa from the 17th to the 20th of July. Registration information will also be available.

Inquiries regarding the St Arseny Institute programmes of study and registration information should be directed to Fr Miron Klysh, St. Arseny Institute Registrar: phone 1-204-269-3743 ; mailing address: 3 Prestwood Place, Winnipeg MB, R3T 4Y9.

Library collection now accessible, Significant expansion planned during 2007

The St Arseny Institute Library Collection has been catalogued, placed on the library shelves and is now being circulated by the University of Winnipeg Library. The St Arseny Institute faculty and those students enrolled in degree programmes of studies also have access to the university library's theological and other

resources, as well as access to the library holdings of the eight other member academies of the Winnipeg Theological Cooperative connected with the Faculty of Theology, University of Winnipeg. These academies include mainline Protestant, evangelical Protestant, and Roman Catholic institutions. Other library privileges, such as distance loans, are available to St Arseny Institute students registered in the degree programmes of the Faculty of Theology. There are plans for significant expansions of the St. Arseny Library holdings, with donations of books and money offered from several sources.

Other news in March of 2007

The Director of St Arseny Institute, Spencer Estabrooks, has been appointed as Adjunct Professor of Orthodox Studies by the Faculty of Theology, University of Winnipeg. Office space at the Faculty of Theology has also been provided, giving the St Arseny Institute a regular presence at the University of Winnipeg campus.

Through the Faculty of Theology connection, Fr Thomas Hopko, Dean Emeritus of St. Vladimir's Seminary in New York, spoke at the University of Winnipeg on March 8th. On March 23rd, the St Arseny Institute co-sponsored with the Faculty of Theology a public address at the University by Fr Michael Oleksa from Alaska.

Looking ahead to June 2007

An article on St Arseny Institute and its involvement with the Winnipeg Theological Cooperative, is to appear, along with other articles on the WTC, in *Ecumenism*.

Ecumenism (<http://www.ecumenism.net/revue/index.htm>) is a quarterly journal of the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism (<http://www.ecumenism.net/cco>). The journal, distributed in French and English editions to subscribers in over forty countries, has given over its whole June, 2007 edition to articles regarding the Winnipeg Theological Cooperative of which St Arseny Institute is now a member. (The Canadian Centre for Ecumenism, which publishes the journal *Ecumenism*, has a new executive director, Anthony Mansour, who was recently ordained to the Holy Diaconate, and serves at the Orthodox parish of The Sign of the Theotokos (OCA) in Montreal, Quebec). The Winnipeg Theological Cooperative is regarded as a unique and successful 20-year experiment in cooperation in Christian theological education, which respects the identity and character

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New deacon ordained for St Herman's, Langley BC



Deacon Kurt Edward is shown with his wife Victoria, Archbishop Seraphim, and the Rector of St Herman's, Fr Lawrence Farley. In front of them are Christian, Jonah, and Avery.

The long-awaited ordination of Kurt Edward Jordan to the Holy Diaconate took place Palm Sunday at St Herman's Church in Langley BC. The joyful rite, celebrated by Archbishop Seraphim during the festal Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, was "bookended" by two other rites setting apart servants of God for ministry in His Holy Church : before the hours, the tonsuring of Sydney Innocent Ketel as reader in the Church ; and at a later time in the liturgy, the elevation to the rank of archpriest of Fr Andrey Somow.

Deacon Kurt Edward has been a member of St Herman's since 1996, along with his wife, Victoria, and children Avery, Jonah and Christian ; and he has served as a member of the parish council for the last five years. He has also been active with the British Columbia Deanery's St Arseny Youth Camp. He recently completed the diaconal and reader's courses from St Arseny Institute in Winnipeg. Currently he has returned

to university after working ten years in the trucking industry, and is looking forward to growing and learning as a deacon in a life of service at the parish.

Reader Sydney Innocent will serve at St Herman's, where he was received into the church in 2005 and has sung in the choir.

Archpriest Andrey Somow's long ministry in the Church has included years of service at the parish of Holy Resurrection, Vancouver, first as deacon from 1974-



Archpriest Andrey Somow, with the newly-ordained Deacon Kurt Edward Jordan.

1992, and then as priest and rector until his and his wife Henrietta's retirement in 1999. —Matushka Donna Farley

St Arseny Institute news, continued from p. 3:

of each member body. The WTC has nine member schools which work with the Faculty of Theology at the University of Winnipeg to provide a Master of Divinity degree. The degree is conferred by the University of Winnipeg. We are most grateful for the wonderful welcome and assistance given by the Faculty of Theology and the Winnipeg Theological Cooperative in bringing to fruition so quickly our dreams for providing full Orthodox theological education in Canada.

Catechist training programme To be developed at the Institute

As directed by Archbishop Seraphim, the St Arseny Institute is formulating plans for the development of a training programme for Catechists for the Archdiocese of Canada. (The Institute continues to have about twenty students in the Diaconal Training Programme and about twenty students in the Reader's Programme, as well as beginning its Master of Divinity and Bachelor of Theology programmes in conjunction with the University).

Stay tuned, because coming soon will be more news and website changes!

News from our Annunciation Cathedral

Parishioners offer Lenten project, Help renovate Archbishop's home

Helping to renovate Archbishop Seraphim's house in "Fair Haven" (Spencerville, Ontario) was this year's Great Lenten project at Annunciation Cathedral in Ottawa. The house, across the street from the diocesan centre, was purchased in 2003 as a "handyman special," and work has been proceeding as time and money permitted, as part of the Metamorphosis Project initiated by Dr John Hadjinicolaou (parishioners from Montreal last year helped to renovate and furnish the main bedroom).

Collaborating with Phillip Bodnar, who has been living in the house and working on it for two years, Cathedral parishioners Ken and Ginette Kontio organized two teams to purchase supplies and carry out the remaining work. A men's "working retreat" took place over several weekends in order both to re-level the floors, and to completely gut and re-build the downstairs kitchen and second-floor landing and bathroom. There was great camaraderie and sharing of meals in the country atmosphere, where the bishop's chickens, goats and peacocks are close-by. As Ken said, at first there was a lot more deconstruction than construction, "like the Christian life . . . one needs to tear down a bit before one can build up appropriately."

A women's team then took over to paint, decorate and furnish the area. For more information about renovation of the archbishop's residence see the Metamorphosis Project website at www.archdiocese.ca/bishopMetamorphosis.htm.

Cathedral plans challenge To repay Archdiocesan loan

As Dean and Rector of Annunciation Cathedral, Archpriest John Jillions, notes, "it is through God's grace that we have been in the National Cathedral now for over a year, and much has been accomplished in this time. One of the reasons that so much has been accomplished is that the Archdiocese advanced the church a no-interest loan of \$125,000."

The loan permitted the parish to accomplish a great deal immediately when they moved. A partial list of these accomplishments is included below.

Much more needs to be done, however, and the priority which the parishioners indicated when they filled out the Parish Survey recently, was the need to proceed with converting the church into an Orthodox Temple.

Thus this is the challenge : to pay back the loan, and to proceed with beautifying the temple. As a start, an extension to the ambo and an Iconostasis frame need to be built.

Fr John notes that "If, by the time of the Archdiocesan Assembly, we have pledges to pay back the loan and are

able to put up the Iconostasis frame, we would then be in a position to ask those outside the parish, in Canada and beyond, to help in beautifying Canada's National Cathedral with icons for the Iconostasis and the frescoes.

"We can then proceed to apply for grants to help address issues of access, outreach, and service to the community."

To be more precise, the challenge is to raise, in time for the Archdiocesan Assembly this July, the funds needed to

- repay the remainder of the loan (\$75,000 - the good news is that the parish has already paid back \$50,000), and
- extend the ambo and put up the Iconostasis frame (\$25,000).

Upon hearing of this need, a parishioner has challenged the parish with an offer to give \$10,000 if it can raise the remaining \$90,000!

Fr John also goes on to say that "We have already had response to this Challenge. It is heartening that even before the official launch of the challenge we have pledges for \$14,500!

"Now, for the rest of us, the challenge is to look at our financial situation, our savings and assets, and step forward to meet the \$100,000 challenge.

"Let us pledge to give the remaining funds by the time of the Archdiocesan Assembly this July so that we will be in a position to say thank you for their confidence in us as the stewards of the National Cathedral, our Parish and our Church.

"We will then be able to also launch our National campaign towards beautifying the National Cathedral. We really do not have an option!"

The Archdiocesan Loan : what was done with this generous advance?

The Archdiocesan loan allowed the parish to:

- Cover the costs of the move from Clarey Avenue;
- Upgrade the interior of the church and make it more "Orthodox";
- Clean up the church hall and make it more inviting;
- Improve the rectory with paint, new doors, kitchen, and wireless Internet - resulting in rental income;

continued, next page . . .

. . . . **Annunciation Cathedral**, *continued from p. 5:*

- Revamp the heating / boiler system; install thermostats; clean boiler; insulate pipes - resulting in a reduction of natural gas consumption of 25%;
- Upgrade the electrical system - new breakers, fuses and wiring - resulting in greater efficiency;
- Address the Fire Protection Codes;
- Improve the exterior with signage, new pointing and roofing; fix the fence, handrails, leaking entranceway; and clean up the garden, trees and walkway;
- Secure locks and doors;
- Replace windows in the rectory and altar, repair stained glass, and install thermo panes along with flashing over exposed wood;
- Make administrative changes, such as reducing taxes, buying insurance, upgrading the telephone, and creating tenant lease agreements.

Ethiopian parish organized in Cathedral

Annunciation Cathedral witnessed the birth of a new Ethiopian Orthodox community on March 17th. About seventy persons gathered to meet Archbishop Mathias and several clergy from Toronto to celebrate matins and the Liturgy and formally organize a new parish, for which they chose the name St Mary's. The service was celebrated in the ancient Ge'ez language. The Ethiopian rite and chanting were accompanied by the words projected on the wall with translation into modern Amharic and some English for the congregation to follow and sing. Women (wearing long white headscarves) and men sat on separate sides of the church. More of the Scriptures are read than in the Byzantine liturgy, and these are taken from Psalms, a Pauline epistle, a general epistle, Acts and a Gospel.

Archbishop Mathias, 65, has been in Canada for twelve years. He is deeply rooted in Ethiopian Orthodox monastic culture and started living in a monastery when he was five. He became a monk at 19, bishop at 38 and archbishop at 45. He is a member of the Holy Synod in Ethiopia under Patriarch Abune Paulos.

Fr Haile Mariam, one of the priests on hand for the service, is Jamaican. The Ethiopian Orthodox church is well-established in the Caribbean, and Fr Mariam was involved in establishing the first Ethiopian Orthodox parish in Canada (1973, Toronto), made up mainly of Jamaican immigrants (there are now about 100,000 Ethiopians in Canada).

The community plans to meet regularly for prayer, meals and education, with a priest visiting from Toronto every so often.

Western women's retreat Held for 6th year

What a blessing we sisters in Christ were given in attending our western provinces' 6th annual Orthodox Womens' Retreat, once again held at the Entheos Retreat Centre, just west of Calgary, on September 8 - 10, 2006! All our services were beautifully served throughout the weekend by Fr Taras Krochak from St Vladimir's Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Fr Michael Lupu from St Mary's Romanian Orthodox Church, Fr Demetrios Rougas from St Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church, Fr Ibrahim Chahoud from the Antiochian Orthodox Church of the Annunciation, and Fr Larry Reinheimer from Holy Martyr Peter the Aleut's Orthodox Church - all of them representing the different church families in Calgary AB.

Shirley Dinn, one of our four coordinators, warmly welcomed the women who arrived from Texas, Washington, Oshawa, Victoria, Cranbrook, Vernon, Fort Steele, Abbotsford, Saskatoon, North Bank, Edmonton and Calgary. A number of the women were wives of priests, and one family attending covered three generations! The other coordinators, Ghada Ziadeh, Myra Reinheimer and Joan Popowitch, all contributed lovingly so that the schedule for the entire weekend was carried out smoothly.

Yet another true blessing was our speaker, Khoureiya Linda Funk. Linda is the wife of Fr Bernard Funk and the mother of four adult children. Her life is a full one, as she both teaches piano and is an Associate for the Antiochian Christian Education Department, conducting teacher-training workshops in Western Canada, the Northwestern States, and Alaska for the Orthodox Christian Education Commission. She, Fr Bernard, and most of her family live in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Khoureiya Linda shared her past experiences in such an honest, open manner. Our hearts were all touched. It seemed that each one of us could relate to her life's adventure in one way or another.

She spoke to us on the topic "Our Journey to Healing in Christ." As broken human beings apart from Christ, we were shown how suffering, self-knowledge, death and resurrection are all part of a cycle which we partake of during our entire lives. She quoted Mother Raphaela of the Holy Myrrhbearers Monastery in Otego NY, in saying that self-knowledge is the beginning of healing. Here we must honestly look at ourselves, to see who we truly are. Are we trying to control our world, or are we trusting our God to be in charge? Khoureiya Linda wondered if we were responsible only to love the world,

not to run it! The union of our will with God's will unites us to God. To become like God is our purpose here on earth.

Khoureiya Linda presented prerequisites to our healing, introducing two helpers that God sends us : sorrow and suffering, which are our inescapable companions. They can connect us with our hearts, for the heart, not the intellect, is the centre of our being. Our suffering helps our hearts receive God. The purpose of suffering is not to suffer but to lead us to death and resurrection, where our healing lies. We accept suffering as part of life. We live death and resurrection experiences all our lives. Christ's sufferings do no good unless we accept His sufferings. God is in our sufferings and we find God through them. Suffering and death are always followed by resurrection. Our life in Christ is always about transfiguration. Christ is transfigured and we will be also! Our emphasis is on holiness - to be holy people.

The retreat ended in a most positive manner, with heartfelt thanks to our speaker for her very informative and life-changing presentation. May our Lord be with us all as we look forward to yet another women's retreat next year! The 2007 dates are Sept 21st - 23rd.

— Marina Mantle, St Peter the Aleut, Calgary AB

Choral debut Raises camp funds

Two new choral groups performed publically for the first time at St Andrew's United Church in Ft Langley BC on February 15th in support of the St Arseny Orthodox Youth Camp.

Dan Steenburgh conducted the Kenosis male chorus and Reader Gregory Gascoigne led the mixed-voice Resonance Singers at the debut concert titled "Give Rest, O Christ." The performers, mostly friends and members of St Herman's Orthodox Church in Langley, were joined by guest soloist Ben Aultmann of Holy Nativity Antiochian parish.



The
conducting
team of
Steenburgh (l.)
and
Gascoigne.

The Resonance Singers began when Gregory Gascoigne organized a small group to sing choral music for enjoyment, informally presenting some seasonal pieces over lunch at church on the Sunday after Nativity. Kenosis men's chorus formed about the same time, with some overlap in membership ; a fundraiser for the camp, now heading into its fourth season, seemed the perfect opportunity for a shared debut. The *a cappella* concert included pieces from Purcell's "Funeral Music for Queen Mary," the Song of Symeon (in Slavonic, Rachmaninoff) and the title piece "Give Rest, O Christ" in Kievan chant. These and other selections formed a musical whole which Reader Gregory describes as "somber joy, death in the expectation of the resurrection." It seemed a highly appropriate program as we stood at the threshold of Great Lent.



'The Resonance' mixed chorus.

Dan Steenburgh says that "Kenosis" (self-emptying, a major theme of the Fathers) reflects a desire to counter the common preoccupation with self-promotion in the music field, and instead to "make each concert a prayer." The next Kenosis program, sometime in May, will present music for the Holy Virgin Mary Theotokos.



The 'Kenosis' male chorus.

A repeat performance of "Give Rest, O Christ" the next evening at St Mark's College UBC (Vancouver), with a brief bit of publicity for the St Arseny Camp, appeared on *Rompost*, a Romanian-focused program on a local multicultural cable channel.

Total funds of around \$700 were raised for the camp over the two evenings. —Matushka Donna Farley

St Herman's, Langley, Sponsors pan-Orthodox Retreat for women

More than sixty women from some fifteen parishes of various jurisdictions, as well as a few non-Orthodox inquirers, gathered at Camp Alexandra in White Rock BC February 9-11, 2007 to share worship, fellowship, and teaching sessions with author Frederica Mathewes-Green. Retreatants came from Vancouver Island, Washington State, Alberta and even Ontario to join those from Lower Mainland communities at this first-time event.

Ms Mathewes-Green spoke in three sessions about the spiritual disciplines of Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving. Delving into the scriptural and patristic sources for teaching on the Jesus prayer, theosis and the full meaning of "charity," she provided us with plenty of thought for the fast-approaching season of Lent. The book table maintained by Mother Anna (Barkham) allowed participants to purchase a variety of books to take home, including one of the speaker's most recent, *First Fruits of Prayer: A Forty Day Journey through the Canon of St. Andrew*. There was even a "hands-on" component to the learning this weekend, as Frederica led a prayer-rope-making workshop in a cozy fireside room Saturday evening.



Ms Mathewes-Green teaching women how to make the prayer rope.

If the speaker offered spiritual sustenance, food for the body was also provided, and at better-than-professional standards, by a kitchen crew from the sponsoring parish (St Herman's, Langley BC). Victoria Jordan, Juliana Duran and Stephanie Quissy, with assists from various others throughout the weekend, met the challenge of cooking for a large group whose numbers fluctuated, as some day attendees arrived late and some travellers left early.

The thread of prayer held the weekend together, with services in a small upper chapel led by Fr Lawrence Farley

(St Herman's Langley) and Fr Justin Hewlett (St John of Shanghai, Vancouver) with readings by Bev Cooke (All Saints, Victoria). Magdalen Farley and a group of able volunteers from various parishes led the singing, which with only female voices had a special quality of sweet worshipfulness.

In between teaching sessions, services and meals, glorious sunny weather drew participants outdoors for informal small group chats on the campgrounds and walks along the nearby beach.

The weekend concluded, much too soon it seemed, with an early Divine Liturgy in the chapel followed by brunch and a small presentation to our guest speaker.

Special thanks are due to organizers Victoria Jordan and Juliana Duran; sign-in desk workers Kimberley Francis and Judy Choi; everyone who pitched in on cleanup; and all who did the 'behind the scenes' work to make the event happen. The only question that seems to be floating about now is—how do we top this next year?

—*Matushka Donna Farley, Surrey BC*

Monastic community in BC Gains new deacon

On Lazarus Saturday, March 31, 2006 His Eminence, Archbishop Seraphim ordained Schemamonk Subdeacon Samuel (Panchuk) to the Holy Diaconate. The ordination took place in the Chapel of the Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple at the Hermitage of the Holy Transfiguration, Gibson's Landing BC.

The monastic community of Holy Transfiguration was founded by Igumen Gregory over thirty-five years ago, and was first located in Rawdon and Fitch Bay QC. About ten years ago the community moved to Gibson's Landing BC. There are at present three monks in the Brotherhood.



Pictured with Archbishop Seraphim are, from l to r, Igumen Gregory (Papazian), the newly ordained Hierodeacon Samuel (Panchuk), and Schemamonk Moses (Schneider).

Vaccines : An ethical challenge?

— by Nikita J. Eike, MD, FRCP(C)

Modern medicine presents us with a plethora of new treatments, as well as preventive and therapeutic techniques. Advancing science promises better healthcare, while at the same time opening a Pandora's box of moral dilemmas. The increasing medical sophistication renders more difficult the identification of new ethical challenges. Unlike some of the major ethical issues, such as abortion and euthanasia, new medical techniques are more opaque to those outside of the medical field. When it comes to healthcare, each one of us needs to be vigilant to avoid making a decision which might conflict with our Christian faith.

Most Orthodox Christians would not suspect that routine immunization poses a challenge to Orthodox Christian values. Immunization seems like an innocuous enough technique, no more ethically challenging than dental hygiene. Yet this is not always true. Some of the vaccines in use in Canada and the US derive from cell lines of aborted fetuses (1). When I researched the material for this article, I was sad to notice that neither the drug companies producing the vaccines, nor the governmental health authorities, clearly stated the provenance (source) of the vaccines. It was not considered that a vast segment of the population could have a concern about with the use of cell lines from "legally aborted" fetuses in the production of vaccines.

Adding to the challenge, is the fact that most provinces and states have laws which require that children be vaccinated against certain infections in order to attend school or daycare. For an example, I give below the legislation in Ontario regarding mandatory immunization. I believe that the requirements of the other provinces in terms of vaccinations are quite similar.

For children attending school in Ontario, a written immunization record or proof of immunization is required, by law, for diphtheria, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps and rubella unless there is a valid written exemption. Parents/guardians are required to provide this information to their local public health unit, and to update the information as necessary. There are specific vaccines required for children attending licensed daycare centres. You should contact your local public health unit or check with your daycare centre, for the specific immunization requirements.

You may decide because of medical, religious or philosophical reasons not to immunize your child. In this case, you will need to provide a valid written exemption to your

local public health unit. If the disease appears in your child's school or daycare, your child may have to stay out of school/daycare until the disease is no longer present. (2)

At the end of this article I have included a list of vaccines made from human embryo cell lines and their ethical alternatives. Each vaccine is listed individually but for practical reasons, I will address them as they are normally used in a clinical setting. Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), poliomyelitis and Haemophilus Influenza type B are administered in a single injection. The vaccine provided by the government called Pentacel is made from embryo cell lines. The ethical alternative called Pediacel is available upon request but the patient has to defray the costs (3).

The vaccine for chickenpox (varicella) produced from human embryo cell lines has no ethical option available at this time. Chickenpox is usually a fairly minor illness during childhood ; when fatal, it is usually secondary to pneumonia. The most serious complication is post-viral encephalitis, occurring in one out of 1000 cases (4). Rarely fatal, varicella encephalitis usually resolves without sequel. Zoster immunoglobulin if administered within 96 hours of exposure, can prevent or reduce the severity of the disease. Recently a medication called "Acyclovir" and related medications are showing promises for treatment of the illness and prevention of the complications (5). If contracted in adulthood, varicella carries more risk with an increase incidence of pneumonia and encephalitis.

The inoculation against mumps, measles and rubella combined in one vaccine called MMR2 is produced from embryo cell lines. An ethical solo vaccine for measles is available on demand in Canada. The single vaccine for mumps from non-human cell lines is still available in the US but has not been in Canada since 2001. Unfortunately, when it comes to rubella, no ethical alternative is available in North America, but one is in use in Europe and Japan (6).

Because of the potential risks of congenital malformations if contracted during pregnancy, rubella is a far more serious illness. The disease in children and adults is usually mild and often goes unnoticed, being mistaken for a flu-like illness. The risk of encephalitis is low but carries a higher incidence of mortality than with chickenpox. An infection during pregnancy, especially in the first 16 weeks, and more particularly during the first trimester, can have devastating consequences on the foetus. Congenital rubella carries the risk of foetal death, damage to the inner ear with deafness, cardiac defects, cataracts and mental retardation. Infected

continued, next page . . .

... continued from p. 9:

infants may appear normal at birth with the foetal malformations appearing later. Congenital infection can become chronic causing diabetes and encephalitis (7). Before conception takes place, women of childbearing age can have their level of antibodies for the disease measured. If the level of the antibody is sufficient, meaning prior exposure to the virus, the foetus is at lesser risk of infection. If this is not the case, the mother may face pressure to receive the vaccine.

With no ethical alternative to the current vaccine, and despite the serious risks to the foetus in case of maternal infection, Orthodox Christians, nevertheless, face the difficult decision of whether or not to inoculate for rubella. A decision to waive the requirement for varicella (chickenpox) and rubella vaccinations would certainly be difficult for a woman whose level of rubella antibodies is low. However, one does not have to remain silent when confronted with the lack of ethical alternatives currently available. Our own Archbishop Seraphim has written to the Health Minister of Canada to request that ethical vaccines be made available to Canadians. I am inviting you to join our bishop and write to the Health Minister with the same request. I list his address below, along with other useful addresses.

In general, it is important to question your physician or health nurse about the provenance (source) of the vaccines that you are to receive. When confronted with unethical vaccines, demand an alternative. Take the time to explain why you are making such a request ; it will serve as education to healthcare professionals and make them aware that not everyone passively accepts the current disregard for the sanctity of human life. It is through the patient efforts and prayers of each of us, joined by a common goal, that we can become one voice and make a small difference today. And perhaps, with hope and prayers, we will witness a different approach to the most vulnerable of us all, the human foetus.

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Useful Addresses

Hon. Tony Clement, Health Minister of Canada

Brooke Claxton Bldg, Tunney's Pasture
Postal Locator 0906C
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Minister_Ministre@hc-sc.gc.ca

Health Canada

Address Locator 0900C2
Ottawa ON K1A 0K9
Toll free: 1-866-225-0709

Canadian Physicians for Life

P.O. Box 1289
Ottawa ON K0A 2Z0
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<http://www.physiciansforlife.ca/>
info@physiciansforlife.ca

Physicians for Life (US)

P.O. Box 2478
Cullman AL USA 35056-2478
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Use of Human Cell Lines in Pharmaceuticals - Canada

Disease	Drug Name	Manufacturer	Cell Line (Fetal)	Alternative Drug/Manufacturer/Source
Chickenpox	Varilrix® Varivax®	GSK Merck & Co	MRC-5 WI-38, MRC-5	None Available
Hepatitis A	Epaxal® Havrix® Vaqta® Avaxim® Avaxim Pediatric®	Berna Biotech GSK Merck & Co Sanofi Pasteur Sanofi Pasteur	MRC-5 MRC-5 MRC-5 MRC-5 MRC-5	Aimmungen® Keketsuken Vero (monkey) Available in Japan and Europe
Hepatitis A and Typhoid Fever	Vivaxim®	Sanofi Pasteur	MRC-5	As above for Hep A component
Hepatitis B	Twinrix® (Hep A Component)	GSK	MRC-5	As above for Hep A component, Hep B is derived from yeast
Measles, Mumps, Rubella	Priorix® MMR II®	GSK Merck & Co	MRC-5 RA27/3, WI-38	Attenuvax® (Measles) Merck chick embryo Available in US Mumpsvax® (Mumps) Merck chick embryo Available in US Takahashi (Rubella) Kitasato Institute rabbit Available in Japan and Europe
MMR+ Chickenpox	ProQuad®	Merck & Co	RA27/3, WI-38, MRC-5	None Available
Polio	Inactive Poliomyelitis Vaccine - IPV® Pentacel® Quadracel® Td Polio Adsorbed®	Sanofi Pasteur	MRC-5	Infanrix-IPV & IPV/Hib® GSK (Europe) Vero Cells Pediaceal to be offered in Alberta, March 2007
Rabies	Imovax®	Sanofi Pasteur	MRC-5	Rabavert® Chiron chick embryo Available in Canada
Rheumatoid Arthritis	Enbrel®	Immunex (Amgen)	WI-26 VA4	None available
Sepsis	Xigris®	Eli Lilly	HEK-293	None available

Source: <http://www.cogforlife.org/canadianvaccines.htm>

NOTE: All flu vaccines use non-human cell lines

Orthodox Women of Montréal 2007 conference: Evolution, embryos, environment

It is not everyday that one can get a thumbnail sketch of the most critical issues of our times from the perspective of an accomplished scientist with a keen theological mind – but that is exactly what the participants of the annual Orthodox Women of Montréal conference experienced.

On February 17th at St George Orthodox Church, Dr Gail Woloschak, a professor of molecular biology at Northwestern University and a member of the Bioethics Committee of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America (SCOBA), delivered a whirlwind tour of the interface between science and religion. The conference has been held annually for over 20 years, attracting more than 100 people from Montréal and Ottawa churches. But this year's topic, "Orthodoxy Meets the Biological Revolution," was unusual.

Dr Woloschak attacked this vast subject by focusing on the past, the present and the future, examining three 'E's': Evolution, Embryos and the Environment.

The overriding question was the role and limitation of scientific knowledge and where questions about causality and meaning challenge religious views. Whether in a discussion about creationism as an alternative hypothesis to evolution, or grappling with ethical dilemmas presented by reproductive technologies, Dr Woloschak presented the issues clearly and dispassionately, with obvious enthusiasm for her subject.

In order to appreciate these discussions and dilemmas we needed to understand the science : with slides, she deftly brought us "up to snuff" with the very latest discoveries, patiently working through terminology and details that would illuminate the ethical dilemmas.

Embryos :

For example, embryonic stem cell research carries huge potential for the cure of diseases, but the science is evolving so quickly that the ethical questions are in constant flux. What exactly is an embryo? What distinguishes a human embryo from a mass of cells? In-vitro, a fertilized egg can become a blastocyst (first stage of development), but unless these cells are implanted in a mother's womb they cannot become a fetus. Since interaction with the mother is necessary for survival and development, some Orthodox bio-ethicists argue that a mass of cells in a test tube is not an embryo, and

therefore this is a legitimate source of "embryonic" stem cells for research. Others disagree, and say that a potential human life has been extinguished every time a fertilized egg is discarded from the test tube.

The latest research may shift the debate. It now appears that it is possible to remove single stem cells without damage to the embryo. Likewise, it is possible to extract stem cells from the amniotic fluid. Umbilical cord blood is a source for embryonic stem cells; eventually adult stem cells which exist in blood, skin, muscle and even the brain, may be used to regenerate the body's main organs and treat disease. Because of these new techniques the ethical landscape keeps shifting, and anyone who wishes to be part of the debate must stay current with the science.

Evolution :

Evolution is in the news for other reasons, namely the challenge posed by fundamentalist Christians who interpret the creation story in Genesis literally. Evolution is, in Dr Woloschak's opinion, no longer subject to debate as a hypothesis, since the scientific evidence overwhelmingly supports this unifying theory of biological diversity through natural selection. The sequencing of the human genome and the genomes of other species has routed the claims of creationists, while the hypothesis of "intelligent design" has added to the confusion and is not scientifically or theologically tenable, according to Dr Woloschak.

Environment :

Whereas the theory of evolution may explain our past, it is human stewardship of the environment that will determine our future and the future of the planet. Here the Orthodox have demonstrated leadership, both theologically and ecumenically. Making a distinction between having "dominion" over creation, rather than "domination" over it, Dr Woloschak finished her magnificent presentation with an appeal for more boldness in exercising our moral leadership to resolve ecological crises such as global warming, soil and water pollution, loss of biodiversity, troubled ecosystems, and misuse of natural resources.

This is where Dr Woloschak and her colleagues, both scientists and theologians, who advise SCOBA's Committee for Bioethics do the church a great service. Not only does this committee of experts grapple with advances in science and technology, but they consider the most troubling pastoral and ethical questions facing people today : end of life issues, abortion, suicide, homosexuality, fertility and birth control. - *Presbyteria Denise Jillions, Ottawa*

From a 2007 Paschal message :

The struggle of repentance : Receiving our healing, Little by little

— *by Archbishop Lazar (Puhalo), Abbot of the Monastery of All Saints of North America in Dewdney BC. Archbishop Lazar is also the Retired Archbishop of Ottawa.*

This is foremost in the saving economy in the flesh: to bring human nature into unity with itself and with the Saviour, having destroyed the evil cleavage, to renew the original unity, just as the best physician, by applying treatments, again binds together a body which has been broken in many places. (St Basil the Great, Ascetic Rules, Ch.18)

. . . Salvation, as the word implies, consists in the healing and restoration of the fallen human nature. This is the message of the whole earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. Everything that He taught, every word that He spoke was certified by His miracles in which He healed the whole person, body, soul and mind. Even death itself, the ultimate illness and mark of the fall, was healed by Christ.

Having assumed our human nature, He recapitulated all things in Himself (Eph.1:10), healing and restoring the nature of man in Himself, having taken upon Himself our infirmities and weaknesses (Mt 8:17) . . . Sin consists not only in those things which directly separate us from God. Those things which cause cleavages in our nature, in humanity, and turn people against one another, are also sin. We are driven to sin by the Evil One, who holds us in bondage through this powerful fear of death. Our liberation from such bondage is necessary before we can find healing for our corrupted and sinful nature.

The Healing Service [on Holy Wednesday in Great Lent] . . . calls our minds to the liberation from bondage to the Evil One which is accomplished finally by Christ's death and resurrection. As our beloved father Paul tells us, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hb 2:14-15). It is from this bondage that we are redeemed by Christ, making it possible for each of us to assimilate the new nature recapitulated in Him and become "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet 1:4).

Again, St Basil the Great instructs us that "He gave Himself as a ransom to death, in which we were held

captive, sold under sin. Descending through the Cross into hades — that He might fill all things with Himself — He loosed the pangs of death. He arose on the third day, having made for all flesh a path to the resurrection from the dead" (Great Eucharistic Prayer). Not only are we liberated from this bondage to death which causes us to constantly fall short of the mark [that is, we sin] for which we were created (Rom 5:12), but we are liberated also from the juridical law of the Old Testament, since He has blotted ". . . out the manuscript of ordinances that was against us, which was opposed to us, and removed it out of the way, nailing it to His cross" (Col 2:14). The juridical law is replaced by the law of love which reveals to us the true morality of Jesus Christ.

Having given us such an understanding of the saving economy of Christ, the Holy Wednesday Healing Service maps for us the whole struggle by our Christian life and the true nature of repentance. Every new wound of sin, every occasion of missing the mark set before us, is healed by Christ in our struggle of sincere repentance. It is our liberation from bondage to the fear of death that makes this struggle possible.

Not only the nature of man is thus healed but ". . . the earnest expectation of all creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For all creation was made subject to frailty, not by its own fault, but by the will of Him who so subjected it, yet with hope, because all creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth . . . together until now. And not only creation, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom 8:19-23).

Our salvation does not consist in [escape from] punishment or vengeance, nor in a satisfaction paid to God the Father. Rather it is an outpouring of the co-suffering love of God for mankind which heals our fallen human nature and reunites man with God in Christ Jesus. We receive our healing little by little in our struggle for a life in Christ and participation in the renewed nature that He has provided for us.

If, therefore, we have focussed on the Healing Service of Great Holy Wednesday, it is not to diminish any of the other services, but rather to provide a matrix for the contemplation of all, and of the true meaning of redemption and salvation. This is the very reason that the Healing Service is placed in the midst of Holy Week: so that we might more clearly apprehend the meaning of all that is to follow in the saving economy of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ. ❖

Memory eternal!

Nick Kozmeniuk

23 August 1920 - 1 March 2007

Nicholas Kozmeniuk, a recipient of the Archdiocese of Canada's Order of St Tikhon Medal for his services to the Church, reposed in the Lord on March 1, 2007. Over the years he attended many Archdiocesan Assemblies, as well as several All-American Councils, and was known by a goodly number of the faithful across Canada. The following is part of a tribute paid to him by Sandi Tokaruk, past president of the Sisterhood of St Mark's Church in Yorkton SK, the parish of which Nick was a member.

How do you begin to sum up the life of someone like Nick Kozmeniuk in a few words? When you think about it, it is really quite simple to sum up Nick's life in just one word, 'LOVE.' Nick loved God and his church, he loved his beautiful wife Evelyn, he loved his children and grandchildren, and he loved his friends. Nick loved life and all that it entailed.

Nick was the ultimate connector. That seemed to be his role, he always knew someone who knew someone, and he knew just the right people to call if there was a problem. Nick had the ability or, more appropriately, the gift to engage people fully. He was interested in people not in a superficial way but in a deeper, intense way. This ability to connect is very evident when you examine Nick's collection of friends; they come in all ages and from all backgrounds. Nick was a very special part of the lives of my family but what made Nick so amazing is that he was that special to many who knew him.

Nick was born on August 13th, 1920 in the district of Glen Elder SK to Michael and Katie Kozmeniuk. He was educated until grade 8 at the South Porcupine School and received his grade 9 and 10 through correspondence. At one time he had contemplated joining the RCMP, but when WWII broke out he decided to stay home on the farm.

As a young man he loved to play baseball. He usually played left field and was a good home run hitter. He was also a self-taught musician, playing the pump

organ and the banjo. Later he purchased an accordion for \$30, which he played for many years.

He met the love of his life, Evelyn Bondar, at a wedding dance. They were married on November 11th, 1943 in Nick's parents' home with the wedding dance held at the Glen Elder Hall. They lived with his parents for two years before settling in their first home in the Danbury area where they farmed. They raised four children, Mervin, born in 1947; Olivia, in 1949; Peter, in 1954; and Linda, in 1963. Besides working to support a family, Nick was also an active member of the community. He served for seventeen years as a member of the local school board, and fourteen years as a board member of the local Co-op. In addition, he helped in the building of St Vladimir's Ukrainian Orthodox Church.



Nick Kozmeniuk

In 1971 Nick and Evelyn decided to retire from farming and move to Saskatoon to start a new life. They moved into their new home on September 16th and by September 20th, Nick found employment with Federated Co-operative. In Saskatoon they became founding members of Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church. It was at this time of their lives that Nick and Evelyn began to travel, making two trips to Ukraine. Nick being Nick, he needed to keep busy and developed an interest in stained glass. His specialty was lamps. He always said he took up stained glass to teach himself patience.

In 1985 he and Evelyn retired to Yorkton to be closer to family and friends. Nick still kept very busy with his stained glass during the winter months. At this time he took up a new hobby : turning wood with a wood lathe. Once in Yorkton they continued to be actively involved in the Orthodox faith, by becoming founding members of St Mark the Evangelist's Orthodox Church. As part of Nick's service to the church, he began to make candles. Although this involved a great deal of work, it generated many stories and lots of fellowship and laughter. Nick and Evelyn continued to travel, but this time as delegates to Church councils. In 1993 they received a citation from the Bishop for their service to the Orthodox Church. This was presented to them on their 50th wedding anniversary.

On June 11th 1995, on the day of Pentecost, life for Nick changed dramatically with the falling asleep in the

Lord of his wife Evelyn. They had been married fifty-two years. Nick had to begin to walk his path without his partner in life at his side. He accepted this and knew he had to adjust. He moved to an apartment, decided to stop woodturning and scaled down his candle-making. He continued with his stained glass work, however, and loved to show his handiwork and tell to anyone who would listen how he made what he did.

He also adapted by devoting a lot of his energy to his children and grandchildren. He was interested and wanted to be part of every aspect of their lives, sometimes whether they wanted it or not!

Nick's faith resumé is very inspiring. How many people can say they built a church and were a founding member of two others? But it is more than tasks and duties that make Nick's faith inspiring. It was his faithful attendance at church, his prayer life and his thoughtful contemplation of God and life that stood out the most. In 2003, Bishop Seraphim presented Nick with the Order of St. Tikhon, the highest award of the Archdiocese of Canada.

Nick was a huge presence at St Mark's. He was like a grandfather to our youth; many times he fittingly played the role of St. Nicolas. He loved them all and took great interest in all of their activities. Even after they left St Mark's to start new lives, he never failed to ask about them. For his church family, Nick served as guardian, mentor, and dear, dear friend. The many gifts he bestowed on his church were always accompanied with great humility.

What wonderful stories we have shared with Nick and about Nick. He left us with wonderful memories, such as getting into a car and always without fail saying "okay, kick'er loose." Or when we encouraged him, - okay maybe even nagged him - to eat lunch after church he would always say, "I'm a fussy guy, my wife Evelyn spoiled me." And no one will ever forget going out for coffee with Nick. Nick seemed to know everyone; and every person he saw or bumped into would generate a host of new stories and adventures.

Nick's attitude was always this : Be thankful for all the good things and events that happen in your life, even some of the unpleasant things, as they all make you a stronger person. Nick had a good life; he had a long life; and he was grateful for all things that life had given him. His favorite words were "I have been blessed; I have had a good life."

We are very grateful that Nick had a long and full life. We are grateful that he has now entered the Church Triumphant and has reunited with Evelyn. No matter

if we call this wonderful man Dad, Grandpa, Nick, Mr Kozmeniuk, Pappa Nick, or Nicolas the Saintly, we are so very grateful that we were a part of his life and that he was a part of ours. We'll miss you Nick. Memory Eternal! — *Sandi Tokaruk, St Mark the Evangelist, Yorkton SK*

Samedi Radieux à Québec

Le samedi 14 avril dernier, Higoumène Irénée (Rochon), accompagné de Père Pau (Ruiz-Gomar), a voyagé à Québec pour y célébrer la Liturgie pour les paroissiens de la Communauté orthodoxe russe de la Sainte-Trinité.

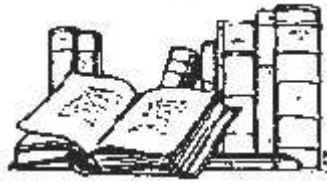
Plus de trente fidèles ont visité l'église grecque (gentiment offerte par la paroisse grecque) et pour s'échanger les vœux de « Christ est Ressuscité », « En vérité Il est Ressuscité ». Pour la première fois depuis plusieurs années une chorale (de quatre personnes) formée de paroissiens de la communauté a participé au chants sous la direction de Michel Woinowsky-Krieger. La veille, M Krieger a rassemblé les choristes pour une pratique au cours de laquelle ils ont appris quelques chants, incluant le tropaire « Christ est Ressuscité », les ekténies, « Fils Unique », « Ceux qui sont baptisé en Christ » et l'hymne des Chérubins. Un grand merci à tous les choristes qui ont déployé des efforts : Peter Frost, Elena Ftomova, Nicole Métivet et Valentine Nesterenko-Ledoux.

A la conclusion de la Liturgie, Père Irénée a remis à chacun un œuf que des paroissiens et lui-même ont apporté. Par après, les paroissiens sont demeurés encore longtemps pour déjeuner ensemble dans la salle sous l'église. Merci à tous ceux et celles qui ont contribué. - *Michel Woinowsky-Krieger, Montréal*



Père Irénée tient le Artos qu'il distribuera bientôt aux paroissiens. A gauche sur la photo Père Pau, à droite Alexandre Woinowsky-Krieger, secrétaire de la communauté orthodoxe russe de la Sainte-Trinité de Québec.

**Bishop Hilarion
(Alfeyev), *The
Mystery of Faith: An
Introduction to the
Teaching and
Spirituality of the Orthodox Church*, London:
Darton, Longman and Todd, 2002. 267 pages.
Foreword by Bishop Kallistos Ware.**



—Reviewed by Archpriest John Jillions,
Annunciation Cathedral, Ottawa

Bishop Hilarion Alfeyev is currently the Russian Orthodox Bishop of Vienna and Austria, temporary administrator of the Diocese of Budapest and Hungary, and Representative of the Russian Orthodox Church to the European Institutions in Brussels. He also has an international reputation as a patristics scholar. This book first appeared in Russian in 1996 and it has been in circulation in English for almost five years. Archbishop Seraphim asked me to write a review for the *Canadian Orthodox Messenger* in hope that more people might familiarize themselves with this superb book.

In my opinion this book is the best basic introduction to Orthodox Christian doctrine currently available, and I use it as a required text in the foundational theology course I teach at Saint Paul University in Ottawa. Central to the book is its classic Orthodox ethos of “mystical theology,” which intertwines rational understanding of the faith with spiritual and liturgical life. This reflects the conviction that there is no autonomous human life, since our vocation as human beings is ultimately bound inseparably with communion with God. Theological insight, therefore, is the fruit both of intellectual effort and divine illumination.

Although Bishop Hilarion issues a disclaimer in his preface that the book is more a personal reflection than a systematic exposition, in fact it is quite complete, certainly as an introductory text. It moves in readable short chapters through the search for faith, God, the

Trinity, creation, the human person, Christ, the Church, the sacraments, prayer, deification and the life of the age to come. Each chapter ends with a substantial set of quotations from leading ancient and contemporary teachers of the Church. Bishop Hilarion has been most influenced by the neo-patristic synthesis (Florovsky and Lossky especially) which looks to the Fathers for inspiration in dealing with the continuing theological issues of our own day. But he clearly recognizes that each age needs to understand anew the faith it has inherited in order to address the contemporary questions that challenge Christian faith. Bishop Hilarion is thoroughly rooted in the Orthodox tradition in all its variety (he is at home in the Greek, Slavic and Syriac worlds), but does not live in an Orthodox cocoon. His extensive pastoral, educational and ecumenical experience in the West has given him broad awareness of questions that are being posed to Orthodoxy today. His discussion on the Church and on the conflicting attitudes within Orthodoxy towards other Christians is a good example of the even-handed presentation he makes on most topics.

Not everyone will like the book. Its introductory nature will leave some frustrated that the picture is too neat, that few things are left unexplained or unexplainable. He largely ignores challenges to the neo-patristic synthesis that are coming both from within and outside Orthodoxy. He might be criticized for a certain idealization of the Church and emphasis on submission to bishops that leaves little room for correction and reform of Church life when it departs from the Gospel. Curiously, there is no separate chapter on the Holy Spirit. There is nothing on sexuality, the world and the Christian responses to other religions, politics, economics, poverty, and issues of social justice. He includes only limited discussion on women and no acknowledgment of questions being raised about women’s ordination.

These minor points do not detract from the book’s worth. Given its introductory scope, no book does a better job of opening wide the riches of Orthodox doctrine in the warm light of its spiritual and liturgical life.

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