

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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NASHI : New initiatives, Maple Leaf Project, Safe House

Savelia Curniski is well known in the Archdiocese as the President and co-founder of NASHI, the Saskatoon-based organization dedicated to diverting children of Ukraine from the sex trade, and to raising awareness of the global problem of human trafficking. She has led many groups of persons within the Archdiocese on pilgrimages to Ukraine; and, partnering with the Pochaiv Project under Christian Child Care International (Springhill, Nova Scotia), encouraged many to support children caught in poverty there. To date 3,500 children have Canadian sponsors, ensuring that they receive adequate food, clothing and school supplies for day to day living. In Ukraine, the response is one of intense gratitude and amazement at Canadians' ability to fundraise and provide leadership. On 10 May 2007, Savelia and co-founder, Betty Lawrence, were honoured to be at the "People of Courage Luncheon" to meet Canada's Governor-General, with an opportunity to inform her of NASHI's work. In May, the "Bells of Hope" Conference was held in Saskatoon with guest speaker, journalist and human rights activist Victor Malorek. Hundreds attended from all walks of life. To update us even more on some of the new and exciting initiatives undertaken by NASHI, which will expand its programme in many ways, Savelia was interviewed by Katya Szalasznyj on October 5.

Katya: Savelia, NASHI has been in operation for four years. This last spring you and a number of NASHI volunteers went to Ukraine. What insights did you receive in regard to NASHI's goals? What did you pick up about the situation of children at this time?

Savelia: We realized, first, that our past efforts are making a difference in children's lives. Second, that we needed to continue to expand and open new areas for a trade school. Children continue to be at risk, especially those leaving the orphanages and those from poor homes. It was also evident that sexual predators were especially interested in children who are as young as six years old.



The Governor-General of Canada, the Rt Honourable Michaëlle Jean (r), and Saskatchewan's Lieutenant Governor, Dr Lynda Haverstock (centre), chat with Savelia Curniski of NASHI (l) at the "People of Courage" Luncheon, Government House, Regina, May 2007.

Katya: The concept of a Safe House (the Maple Leaf Project) has been discussed at NASHI gatherings. Can you give us some key details about it?

Savelia: The Maple Leaf "Klenovi Lyst" project will be our most ambitious project yet. It involves the establishment of an educational/living model project. We chose the maple leaf because it is known as a symbol of Canada throughout the world and is a tree common to both Canada and Ukraine. The Maple Leaf Centre, under the direction of Fr Bohdan Bilas, will be in the Stoyaniv, a village of 7,000 persons which is 75 km from Lviv, near the regional centre of Radehiv (population, 15,000). Stoyaniv offers a number of facilities that can be purchased and renovated, including a former kindergarten and a former agricultural administration building. One will be designated as a safe house and the other will be renovated into a trade school. The first phase of work involves setting up a joint charitable fund in Ukraine with both Canadian and Ukrainian directors, for full accountability and proper dispersal of funds; major renovations to the kindergarten facility to create the safe house; and conversion of the main floor to classrooms. This phase will cost an estimated \$152,000 (Canadian).

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. . . *New initiatives of NASHI* . . .

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The second phase involves turning the administration building into a trade school and small business centre that could offer skill-building courses that include potentially a culinary school, green tourism, auto repair, hair styling, construction, and language skills. All of this will cost about \$78,000.

Katya: *What about NASHI's tradeschool? Can you give us an update?*

Savelia: This is a sponsorship programme that is very successful. We identified the need for a small trade school to assist children in learning a skill. Through fundraising, we were able to buy sewing machines and computers and to renovate space for this school. The demand was greater than the space we had, and this summer the school was moved to a larger facility where over eighty children are learning a trade.

Katya: *Fr Bohdan Bilas from Lviv, Ukraine is visiting NASHI in October, and will be guest speaker at your Fall Fundraiser Supper on October 29th. What is his role with NASHI?*

Savelia: Fr Bohdan, who is the Chancellor of the Lviv Diocese, will be the director of our joint Canada-Ukraine humanitarian project. NASHI believes that we need to partner with people and organizations, as we did with the Pochaiv Project. It is imperative that these partners continue the work that we are able to fund from Canada. Fr Bohdan has already been involved in two pilot projects in Ukraine. One project is investigating the spread of AIDS in Ukraine, and the other is the devastating effect of human trafficking.

Katya: *Sponsorship of children through Child Care International has been a great thing. What happens to the children when they reach the age limit of the programme?*

Savelia: For most of the children, the sponsors are able to supplement their food and provide assistance, especially in school materials. The programme does not include further education for the youth who have turned sixteen. Sponsors can continue to help at that age, but often the sponsorship stops, and NASHI has found that at that age they are very vulnerable to the lures of the West, which often allows them to be targets for human traffickers. It is important that assistance be extended through those critical years, for higher education. NASHI's Maple Leaf Centre will be one way this can be done.

Katya: *If some want to support the Maple Leaf Project, how can they do it?*

Savelia: We would greatly appreciate any donations for the Maple Leaf Project - either from individuals or from parishes throughout Canada. In the foyer of the safe house, we are "Growing a Maple Leaf Tree." With

each leaf our tree will grow into the "Tree of Life and Hope." A leaf can be purchased and your name, or the name of whomever you would like, will be imprinted on that leaf and displayed in the foyer. It will be a colourful tree, we hope, growing from these options:

Green Leaf \$100 - \$499.

Red Leaf \$500-\$999.

Gold Leaf \$1,000 and above.

(Of course, all donations would be gratefully accepted, even outside of these categories.)

Cheques can be sent to: NASHI, Box 362, RPO University, Saskatoon, SK, Canada, S7N 4J8. More information, and the Maple Leaf pledge form, are available on our website. Each year at a designated date we will have a service of thanksgiving and remembrance for all the donors and the persons whose names are inscribed on the leaves.



Savelia Curniski (l) with Victor Malorek (r) at a Ukrainian orphanage, summer 2007.

Victor Malarek, CTV journalist and author of "The Natashas" states the case for NASHI most eloquently:

Everyone on this fragile planet has the capacity to reach out and touch the soul of someone less fortunate. If everyone did this, what an amazing world it would be. NASHI, and its devoted coterie of volunteers, have taken on a daunting task with a deep sense of mission and driving spirit. From Saskatoon, all the way across the Atlantic Ocean to Lviv, Ukraine, NASHI makes an incredible difference in the lives of so many abandoned orphans in Ukraine. They are to be commended for their work and their selfless devotion.

For more information on the work of NASHI, visit www.nashi.ca. Want to have NASHI speak at a conference or gathering? Please call (306) 653-4646. - *Katya Szalaszyj, Holy Resurrection Sobor, Saskatoon*

“The ‘Mother of Orthodoxy’ in Canada”

Sts Peter and Paul, Montréal Celebrates 100th Anniversary

On 20 and 21 October 2007, Sts Peter and Paul Russian Orthodox Sobor, Montréal, celebrated a century of history. On Saturday afternoon, Archbishop Seraphim began the festal services with a blessing of the Church Museum. People had travelled from all over the country to attend this historic weekend, and as the cameras flashed, His Eminence listened with interest while the parish rector, Archpriest Anatoliy Melnyk, explained in Russian and English the history of the parish. This was followed by a short piano and vocal concert. Meanwhile, the faithful gathered in the temple, venerating the Theotokos of Port Arthur icon, and awaited the arrival of the First Hierarch of the Orthodox Church in America, Metropolitan Herman.



Metropolitan Herman (l) and Archbishop Seraphim venerate the Port Arthur Icon of the Mother of God during Matins of the festal Vigil.



Archbishop Seraphim blesses the Church Museum at Sts Peter and Paul Sobor. On the far left is the Rector of the parish, Fr Anatoliy Melnyk.

At around 4:45 pm, His Beatitude arrived with his retinue and received the traditional greeting of bread and salt at the church door. By this time there were nearly 300 persons gathered inside the temple. Serving with Metropolitan Herman at the Vigil were Archbishop Seraphim, Archpriest Anatoliy Melnyk, Archpriest Alexander Janowski, Archpriest John Jillions, Archpriest Nicolas Boldireff, Igumen Irénée (Rochon), Hieromonk Basile (Paradis), and Archdeacon Alexei Klimachev. During Matins, His Beatitude anointed all the faithful with oil, the little children among them bringing a smile to his face. An agape (*à la fourchette*) bustling with lively conversation and a vast array of delicacies followed.

The Primatial Divine Liturgy began at 9:00 am on Sunday, with nearly 400 people in attendance. Serving with Metropolitan Herman were Archbishop Seraphim, Bishop Job (Moscow Patriarchate), Archpriest Anatoliy Melnyk, Archpriest Alexander Janowski, Archpriest Nicolas Boldireff, Hieromonk Basile (Paradis),

Archdeacon Alexei Klimachev, Deacon Gregory Scratch, and other subdeacons, readers, and servers from all over Canada. The choir sang in Slavonic, the Epistle was read first in English and then in Slavonic by the deacon and a reader, and the Gospel was read in Slavonic by Archdeacon Alexei. His Grace, Bishop Job gave the homily in Russian.

At the end of the Liturgy, the sun came out just in time for the great festal procession. It was an exceedingly long one, with every person present participating. As clergy and faithful processed around the church, at each of the four sides the hierarchs sprinkled everyone with holy water. Then at the front door Metropolitan Herman read the Gospel in English. A beautiful

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His Beatitude anoints children of the parish

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new mosaic icon of Sts Peter and Paul above this door, as well as a new plaque commemorating the 100th anniversary of the parish, were blessed. Before everyone re-entered the temple, the photographers had them gather near the clergy on the steps for a picture.

Following the veneration of the cross, the hierarchs and many other dignitaries and special guests proceeded to the nearby Restaurant La Mer, where an elaborate banquet had been prepared. With a Powerpoint presentation on the 100th anniversary, and lovely Russian music playing in the background, all the hierarchs and many long-standing members of the community gave inspirational speeches. The Metropolitan spoke on the importance of continuing to preserve Sts Peter and Paul Sobor, and described also how touched he was by a couple who had approached him, and talked about meeting him many years ago in Montréal. Archbishop Seraphim explained how Sts Peter and Paul, the oldest Russian Orthodox Church in Québec, and the third oldest urban Orthodox parish in Canada, is also “the mother of our diocesan life in Canada.” He also stated that

“Montréal is the heart of Canada.” Bishop Job gave a speech in Russian, and many congratulatory letters were read, including ones from the Governor-General and the Prime Minister. (In November, Sts Peter and Paul Sobor will be producing a special commemorative book, which will include photographs from the 100th anniversary celebrations, and the letters of congratulations.)

Pewter medals were awarded, first to the hierarchs, and then to many prominent members of the community, and finally to a greatly surprised Fr Anatoliy and his Matushka, Irina. During the awards ceremony, some very stirring marching music was played and the guests applauded again and again..

Finally, it was time for everyone to leave, but not before several photographs were taken with the hierarchs.

Overall, it was a most joyous occasion, and a true blessing for all in attendance. Among the many wonders of this church is a bust, in the garden, of Alexander Pushkin, for whom the Church Library is named. The library, started by Archbishop Sylvester, contains



A display in the Church Museum of the vestments and other personal effects of Archbishop Sylvester of blessed memory, who was the Ruling Bishop of the Archdiocese of Canada for many years prior to Archbishop Seraphim. After having served self-sacrificially the poor Russian immigrants in France for many years, he came to serve in Canada. He did everything he possibly could to serve and preserve the Archdiocese of Canada, which was at that time so weak financially and demographically, that Vlayka had to serve as full time Rector of Sts Peter and Paul, in addition to his episcopal duties. He did all this with great love and joy, and he is remembered as a very beloved pastor.

an array of literature in Russian, and serves as the main library for the entire Russian community in the city.

Sts Peter and Paul Russian Orthodox Sobor was founded in 1907, and incorporated in 1915 by immigrants from the Russian Empire. The parishioners have been served over the years by many of Canadian Orthodoxy’s shining stars, including His Eminence, Archbishop Sylvester (whose vestments and two mitres lie on display in the new Church Museum) and His Grace, Bishop Antony, and Archpriests Oleg Boldireff, George Benigsen, John Tkachuk, Alexander Janowski, and now of course Anatoliy Melnyk. As a result of this holy church’s efforts to expand the faith, Sts Peter and Paul Sobor has produced a large number of clergy for the Church.

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Truly, our country has been given a real treasure in Montréal, something that can never be replaced. Each Orthodox community has its own gifts and qualities, and one can be certain that Sts Peter and Paul is filled with many of them. May this beautiful church continue to serve the Lord! *Mnogaia lyeta!* – Edited from the notes of Rebekah Goodyear, St Nicholas' Church, Langley BC

An Archbishop in 'retirement'

Archbishop Lazar Puhalo is, without doubt, the most prolific Orthodox theologian in Canada, and he is certainly one of the most prolific Orthodox theologians in North America. – Professor Ron Dart, University College of the Fraser Valley, Abbotsford BC, Department of Political Science/Philosophy/Religious Studies

He may be titled “Retired Archbishop of Ottawa,” but Archbishop Lazar’s recent month-long annual speaking tour of the United States somehow gives a rather unusual spin to the term “retired”! Many people half his age would probably not be able to keep up with him.

Archbishop Lazar (Puhalo), who is also abbot of the Monastery of All Saints of North America in Dewdney BC, is a renowned Canadian Orthodox theological writer, environmental activist, and author of over thirty books. Besides theology, he has also studied physics and neurobiology, and is often in high demand as a speaker at retreats, parishes, seminaries, universities, and private homes. His style of speaking deeply engages audiences and often prompts searching questions from seekers and faithful alike.

During the first week of October, His Eminence con-celebrated the divine services and spoke at St Matthew’s Orthodox Church in Columbia MD and St Nicholas Cathedral in Washington DC, on “The Sweet Mystery of the Parish” and “The Three Levels of Prayer.” On 8 and 9 October, he lectured on the same themes at the OCA’s St Tikhon’s Orthodox Theological Seminary in South Canaan PA, before a class of seminary students focusing on Israel. His Eminence also spoke publicly as part of the 37th Annual Adult Educational Series at St Tikhon’s, entitled this year “Wisdom of the Archbishops.” His talks were filmed before an audience of over 275 people who received him and his words with great interest. Many who heard him were actually quite warm in their appreciation, calling his talks “of the finest” and “prophetic.”

After departing St Tikhon’s Seminary, Archbishop Lazar went to Phoenix AZ for a Romanian Clergy Retreat. There he delivered two presentations on science

and religion. The organizers were so intent on having him there that they made a special effort to fly him in for just the one day.

By 13 October, His Eminence was back on the eastern seaboard, speaking on “The Sweet Mystery of the Parish” at Christ the Saviour Orthodox Mission in Stafford VA, where he also celebrated the Divine Liturgy and gave the homily.

On Monday, 15 October, Vladyka Lazar travelled on to Connecticut, where a lovely welcome party at a local restaurant was held in his honour. The next morning, he was warmly received for a large gathering at Three Saints Church in Ansonia CT. There he spoke on a variety of subjects, among them the relationship between theology and science, the meaning of marriage, and the Liturgy and Scripture. Later that evening, he attended Vespers at Holy Transfiguration Church in New Haven and was treated afterwards to a wonderful performance by the Stremsky family.

The Stremsky Children’s Choir is part of the family of nearly seventy adopted children, belonging to Archpriest Nikolai Stremsky and his wife, Matushka Galina. They live in Sarakhtash and form Russia’s largest family. Nearly twenty of the children came with their mother on their fifth annual visit to the United States, and they gave a delightful concert, consisting of Orthodox liturgical hymns, folk music, ballads, a series of three dances, and a closing performance of two songs in English, as well as the singing of “Eis pola eti Despota” for a very moved Archbishop Lazar.

The following afternoon, His Eminence was asked to lead a Bible study at a private home in Ansonia. There he spoke to a fascinated group about the misunderstandings caused by mistranslations of the Scriptures, and about the need to learn both the history of the Bible and its meaning as given by the only true authority on the subject, the Holy Church Herself. His Eminence stressed the importance of reading the Scripture in conjunction with the commentaries of the holy Fathers. One woman stood up in front of the group and told His Eminence that “I want to thank you for teaching us these things today, because I am 75, and I wish I could have learned this when I was 25. I have waited 50 years to hear what you just said today.”

Later that same evening, Vladika Lazar attended Vespers and lectured on “The Mystery and Meaning of Marriage” at St Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church in Bridgeport. Clergy, teachers and even a Church historian were among those who came to hear him speak.

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On Thursday, 18 October, His Eminence spoke at the Diocese of New England Deanery Clergy Retreat, held at Christ the Saviour Mission in Southbury CT. Clergy travelled from all over New England to meet him and hear his lecture on “The Sweet Mystery of the Parish.” Archbishop Lazar also emphasized the need for clergy to recall the blessing of celebrating the divine services and the importance of interacting with the laity, recalling the laity’s part in ministering to the faithful.

The next day, October 19, Archbishop Lazar visited Yale University for the first time. After being given a tour of historic Battell Chapel, he presented an open forum before an intimate group of students, clergy, and teachers, including an astronomer. Afterwards, he was escorted across the street to the Graduate Club where, while dining, he and the group enjoyed a highly intellectual conversation about the “joy of the divine services.” That same night he returned to Christ the Saviour Mission in Southbury, where he presented a talk after Vespers, to great applause.

On the weekend, the Archbishop’s whirlwind trip came to an elaborate close at Three Saints Church in Ansonia, where Archpriest Michael Roshak hosted His Eminence and His Grace, Bishop Nikon of Boston, New England and the Albanian Archdiocese, who came fresh from the Fall Session of the Holy Synod in Syosset NY to meet Vladyka Lazar for the first time. A highlight was Archbishop’s Lazar’s vivid explanation of the Liturgy and the Book of the Apocalypse. This talk was given in the temple, where the Royal Gates, the Antimension, and the sacred vessels all became part of the presentation.

This speaking tour of His Eminence was so much appreciated that he is already booked to return to New England in October of 2008. But it was Fr Michael Roshak who best summed up the major influence that Archbishop Lazar had on all whose lives he touched this

October: “The Archbishop is a delight; he is a grace-filled and spiritually joyful bishop whose words of wisdom and pastoral insight will undoubtedly have a profound impact on all of us.”

Here in his native land of Canada many of us think that it is amazing that the Lord has blessed our Vladyka Lazar with so much stamina, so much energy and love for the Church that he offers himself in blessing and teaching to so many people even in his “retirement”! He has had, and we devoutly hope that he

will continue to have, a profound impact on the spiritual lives of many of the faithful, as well as on the doubting, the questioning, and the seeking. May he continue to serve us here in Canada, as well as those abroad (over several years he has also spoken at many engagements in Romania and Greece), with his wisdom and insight.

And may the Lord grant him Many Years! –*Edited from the notes of Rebekah Goodyear, St Nicholas’ Church, Langley BC*

Note:

Vladyka Lazar is also the founder of, and the continuing publisher at Synaxis Press in Dewdney BC, one of the only two Orthodox publishing houses in Canada (the other being Alexander Press).

Among the more famous works by His Eminence published by Synaxis Press are the following:

The Evidence of Things Not Seen [Orthodoxy and modern Physics]

The Mystery of Gender and Human Sexuality

Freedom to Believe [personhood, freedom, Orthodox ontology]

The Soul, the Body, and Death

For information on these and other titles, see the website www.new-ostrog.org/synaxis/.



His Eminence, Archbishop Lazar, at Yale University.

New Archdiocesan Council gets down to work

There was a new energy in the air as the Archdiocesan Council which was elected/appointed at the 2007 Assembly of the Archdiocese in July, began its deliberations in Winnipeg on November 2 - 3. The host parish was Winnipeg's very hospitable new Mission of the Theotokos of the Life-giving Spring, meeting at St Phillip's Anglican Church.

Bringing freshness, new perspectives, and energy to the discussions were five new members who have never served on a Council before. Every person present was eager to get started on the mandate the Assembly had given them to set up a more solid financial base for the current operation and future growth of the Archdiocese. Chancellor Fr Dennis Pihach emphasized too that all Council members must understand themselves as responsible not only to the Council as a whole for the tasks assigned to them, but also, and equally, to the deaneries which they represent.

Planning began on the ways and means of working together between the twice-yearly full Council meetings. It is planned that this will be done mainly by telephone conference calls, which have recently proved so successful for the Council Executive (Archbishop, Chancellor, Archdiocesan Dean, and Treasurer). Within the Administration/Finance Unit, specific tasks and responsibilities for reporting were assigned. The Programming/Communications Unit assigned itself the specific task of researching various protocols used in the past to determine how decisions are made in these areas, with the hope of improvement. The Deans' Unit, which did not meet at this fall session, will meet by conference calls and report in the spring.

The next meeting of the Council as a whole will be held in Calgary AB on 8 - 10 May 2008, hosted by the Alberta Deanery.



The new Council with others active in diocesan work, as well as two guests. Kneeling, l to r, Matthew Francis (Youth Work Co-ordinator) and Sava Duran (British Columbia Deanery Lay Representative). Sitting, l to r, Fr Robert Kennaugh (Dean of Manitoba/Saskatchewan); Igumen Irénée (Rochon) (Dean of Québec/Maritimes); Fr Cyprian Hutcheon (Archdiocesan Dean); Archbishop Seraphim; Fr Dennis Pihach (Chancellor); Guest, Fr Bohdan Bilas (Chancellor, Diocese of Lviv, Ukraine-MP); Peter Ewanchuk (Alberta Deanery Lay Representative). Standing, l to r, Olga Jurgens (Archbishop's Office Assistant); Mira Davidson (Lay Representative at Large, elected by Assembly); Fr John Jillions (Ottawa Cathedral Dean); Deacon Gregory Scratch (Ontario Deanery Lay Representative); Spencer Estabrooks (Director, St Arseny Institute); John Hadjinicolaou (Québec/Maritimes Deanery Lay Representative); Richard Schneider (Metropolitan Council Lay Representative until November 2008); David Grier (Manitoba/Saskatchewan Deanery Lay Representative); Nikita Lopoukhine (Treasurer); Fr Vasili Kolega (Dean of Alberta); Guest, Savelia Curniski (Co-director, NASHI); and Fr Oleg Kirilov (Dean of Ontario). Not pictured in the photograph are Fr Lawrence Farley (Dean of British Columbia), Fr John Tkachuk (Metropolitan Council Clergy Representative until November 2008), and Mother Sophia (Zion) (Canadian Orthodox Messenger Editor).

On ‘Sacred Artistry’ : Mother Oksana lecture held

“One of the gifts bestowed upon great storytellers and artists is the ability not to judge others : to defer one’s opinion of another; to search out the depth of characters in stories, or to have a ‘pain of heart’ for them, by not splitting the world (fictional or real) into a black and white recipe book, but rather allowing for paradox, mystery, and the unknown to remind us of our frailty and our need for humility. Great art and, especially I would say, sacred art, not only has the ability to convey the ‘ecstatic’ or the ‘divine,’ but it also has the ability to keep us sober : to remind us of not only life, but our inevitable encounter with death. Indeed the storyteller and musician have deep roles . . . and there are many examples of modern works, artists, ideas, which can help us in our daily struggle, or at least which can remind us of the kingdom to come, and of the hidden treasures here on earth.”

With these words and more, film producer and composer Oleksa Lozowchuk inspired us to think about the value of sacred art, to appreciate the creative talents of others, and to explore our own hidden treasures of creativity. Presenting the 3rd Annual Mother Oksana Memorial Lecture at Holy Resurrection Sobor, Saskatoon on the topic, “Eastern Orthodox Influences in Contemporary Music” on October 12 to a diverse audience, Oleksa talked about the journey to faith and the importance of music in our worship. During his presentation, we listened to all kinds of music samples, from Iceland’s popular singer Bjork, to Armenian chants, and we discussed how an “eison” speaks. The lecture was attended by approximately sixty persons, most of them staying for a fellowship tea-time afterwards. The annual lecture honours the memory of Mother Oksana Olekshy (+1997), wife of Rector Emeritus, Fr Orest Olekshy of our parish.

A graduate of the Regina Film School, with extensive experience in Québec film, after having lived in Montréal for many years, and now residing in Vancouver, Oleksa does sound-recording and compositions for documentaries, and a variety of film, including *La Vie apres la Mort* and the series, *Nunavut, Our Land*. His own CD, *Bright Sadness*, was nominated for the 2004 Opus Prize. For more information, please visit his website www.tendershoot.com.

On the Saturday following Great Vespers, a large icon of St Xenia of Petersburg, commissioned by Holy



Oleksa Lozowchuk speaking in Holy Resurrection Sobor.

Resurrection parish and written by iconographer Yvonne Romano, in honour of the memory of Mother Oksana, was blessed. St Xenia was Matushka Oksana’s personal saint. The new icon was placed on the right wall close to the place where Mother Oksana was usually found during her life with our parish.

The whole weekend had the flavour of a blessed, creative retreat, and was most refreshing. - *Katya Szalasznjy, Holy Resurrection Sobor, Saskatoon*



The newly written icon of St Xenia of Petersburg, made in honour of Matushka Oksana Olekshy.

‘All creatures great and small’ : A facet of our stewardship

*We are stewards of creation, also in part, because we must exercise this responsibility in order to keep from collapsing in on ourselves in our egotism.*¹

A recent visit to Day’s End Farm, a horse shelter in Lisbon, Maryland, transformed my intellectual acknowledgement of the existence of animal abuse into the horror of its reality. The pictures of the horses taken at the time of their rescue are silent witnesses to the defilement of God’s Creation. Haunting is the question that reads in the eyes of those once magnificent animals : Why did you abandon me? And yet many of them still show a desire to trust and love ; they still have hope in us. I could not help but think of the words of Elder Zossima to his pupils - in Fyodor Dostoevsky’s novel *The Brothers Karamazov* - that there is a point in spiritual life where they will find it sensible to ask forgiveness from the birds, adding that : “Everything is like an ocean, all is flowing and blending ; a touch in one place sets up movement at the other end of the earth.”² And much forgiveness and sense of connectedness is indeed needed when dealing with situations of abuse.

What goes awry in those cases, and how can we Orthodox Christians contribute in the area of animal stewardship and, by so doing, accept the role that was given to us at the beginning? In reviewing cases of animal abuse and neglect, one sees that the sense of disconnection of the abuser to the whole created world is often at the root of the problem.

Amongst the situations of animal abuse or neglect, some are obvious cases of animal hoarding.³ It is a psychiatric illness considered to be at the interface between

¹ Correspondence of His Eminence, Archbishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada to the author, 11 August 2007.

² Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, New York: Barnes and Noble, 2004.

³ The following are criteria used to define “animal hoarding” :

- More than the typical number of companion animals.
- Inability to provide even minimal standards of nutrition, sanitation, shelter, and veterinary care, with this neglect often resulting in starvation, illness, and death.
- Denial of the inability to provide this minimum care and the impact of that failure on the animals, the household, and human occupants of the dwelling. The Hoarding of Animals Research Consortium (online), available from: <http://www.tufts.edu/vet/cfa/hoarding/abthoard.htm> (17 August 2007).

Delusional Disorders, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders and Addictive Disorders. Those situations are quite dramatic and require the help of law enforcement authorities to rescue the animals. Left to his own devices the offender will usually relapse. When the problem has been discovered and the animals removed, it belongs to the whole community to keep a watchful eye on the person by monitoring his/her activities. The problem now belongs to all of us. In many cases, the nightmarish pictures of the results of animal hoarding seen in the media could have been prevented by a more active involvement of the community, of which directly or indirectly we are an integral part.

Too often encountered is the non-committal attitude, “if it does not affect me directly, it is not my problem.” But the need to share each other’s burden is present in any situation where God’s creation is suffering. In those cases, with the suffering of the animals at the forefront, the human dimension can be forgotten. It is arduous to break through the person’s denial of the sordid situation he or she has created. The person may genuinely believe that he or she is doing well by the animals, despite the evidence of starvation or even in the face of the death of one of them. Outside of this pocket of dysfunction, the person may otherwise be quite functional, making recognition of the problem more difficult.

Bona fide cases of sadism directed toward animals, or other forms of perversion involving them, are thankfully quite rare. Most cases of animal abuse are in fact the result of neglect and come from lack of information or from insufficient commitment on the part of the owner. The animal is considered an object or a tool towards which there is little or no responsibility. Some owners believe that the animal “owes them.” They consider them their property with the right to treat and dispose of them as they please.

Other situations may appear to be the epitome of care and luxury for the animal, yet it is a subtle form of abuse. By not caring for them according to their nature, or by using them as a form of self-adornment or self-gratification, an object of pride, the relationship to the animal is distorted to the point of being grotesque. This constitutes a discrete form of abuse and self-glorification. It is a far cry from what the Lord has intended for us in our relation to His creation.

God gave us the responsibility of the animal kingdom when he bestowed its stewardship on us (Genesis 1:28). So why would some refuse this wonderful gift God gave mankind? Part of the answer may be found in the results of distorted or broken relationship between

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mankind and the rest of the created world. As John Oliver aptly explains : “Ecological distress occurs when connections are broken, relationships are severed, unity is dissolved. When a man sees no connection between his actions and their consequences ; when he lives without concerns for other living things - human beings, especially ; when he believes salvation is private and individualized, involving spirit but ignoring matter ; then that man leads a life of self-absorption that inflames the passions and damages the world.”⁴

In anything that we touch, even something as simple as planting flowers, we are in a small way assuming stewardship of God’s garden. And this knowledge and love of the Lord should be first and foremost in our minds and hearts and show in every one of our actions. This should be reflected even more so when we take on the responsibility of an animal, a living and feeling being. For we should never forget that the Lord loves all His creatures and everything one possesses belongs to God.

For all the beasts of the thickets are mine, and the cattle in the mountains, and the oxen.

*I know all the birds of heaven,
and the beauty of the field is with me.*

Psalm 49 : 10 - 11 (LXX)

To glorify God by taking care of animals is something that is often quite appealing to young people. It is particularly useful with adolescents or with those who have broken relationships to others, either because of a history of abuse or mental illness. Those persons can be hard to reach and will frequently drift out of youth groups or other parish activities. This is where animals can act as mediators to help mend broken and distorted relationships. Youth Groups could consider making regular visits to an animal shelter and, perhaps even consider the “adoption” by the group of one of the residents of the shelter. It may revive the participation of those who otherwise would have disengaged themselves. Those activities offer many possibilities of stewardship to God’s creation and an avenue to help those amongst us who are struggling in their relationships. It is quite easy to find animal shelters locally, and they are all desperate for help. Those small steps can lead to a better fulfilment of our role toward God’s creation, as in Christ the whole world become a “Burning Bush.” - *Nikita J. Eike, MD, FRCP(C), Annunciation Cathedral, Ottawa.*

⁴ John Oliver III (2002), *Creation : Charged, Tendered, Kept*. (Online) OCA website available from: <http://www.oca.org/CHRIST-life-article.asp?SID=6&ID=22&MONTH=November&YEAR=2002> (August 2007).

An ironic surprise?

Lately I received a vivid reminder of just how much the Orthodox jurisdictional landscape has changed : a number of young men from St Herman’s parish in Langley BC travelled down the west coast on a pilgrimage to the relics of St John Maximovitch in San Francisco, by way of the monastery in Platina CA. They returned with two gifts : a CD from Hieromonk Damascene of Platina entitled, *Lectures of Fr. Seraphim Rose, Volume One* as a gift for me, and an enthusiastic report of a joint Eucharistic celebration in St John’s parish in San Francisco, at which hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate and ROCOR (the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia) served together, sealing the recent reconciliation of these two jurisdictions.

I listened with warm appreciation to Fr Seraphim’s insightful lecture (given shortly before his tragic and untimely death in 1982) and realized that Fr Seraphim was, in many ways, the embodiment of his jurisdiction, the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, for he expressed vividly both its virtues and its limitations. Now that our ROCOR brothers and sisters have at long and welcome last rejoined us in official Eucharistic communion, it is time for a reappraisal and appreciation of ROCOR—most easily undertaken by us on the west coast through a reappraisal and appreciation of the sometimes controversial figure of Fr Seraphim Rose.

The first thing that struck me about Fr Seraphim’s lecture (entitled “Living the Orthodox Worldview”), apart from its warmly devotional practicality, was that it felt a bit like opening a time capsule. That is, Fr Seraphim’s emphasis was on how to “survive” (his word, used repeatedly) as an Orthodox Christian in the present and increasingly apocalyptic darkness. He was offering, in fact, a spiritual survival handbook for the Last Days. I detected a sense of eschatological urgency, perhaps tinged with a bit of panic. It was thought that World Orthodoxy was failing and falling, and that only a remnant would survive the coming confrontation with Antichrist, whose appearance was surely, it was felt, close at hand. This sense of eschatological urgency was fuelled by fear of the rise and power of communism.

Fr Seraphim, like his contemporaries in all jurisdictions, could not have foreseen the imminent fall of communism as a world power, or the growing freedom and revitalization of the Moscow Patriarchate. The shadow of the Antichrist has, in some measure, receded, at least insofar as the Antichrist is identified with the

power of communism, and this change leaves some of Fr Seraphim's approach looking a bit dated. (In fairness, it must be said that many in eastern Europe still find all of Fr Seraphim's works completely relevant and they retain a warm and growing appreciation for them.) Nevertheless, this change of political context must not blind us to the lasting insights that Fr Seraphim and ROCOR continue to offer us. The fall of the Berlin Wall notwithstanding, ROCOR has some lessons which we in the Orthodox Church in America could profitably consider. I would like to mention two of them.

First, there is the lesson of standing firm for the truth, even when it is politically incorrect to do so, and when such a stance means forfeiting respectability in the forum of public debate. The Orthodox in North America have tended in the past to suffer from a kind of inferiority complex—in the public forum which before welcomed only those labelled Catholic, Protestant or Jew, we were labelled as “Other” and thus effectively excluded. We never really got over that humiliation, and we hunger to be accepted as equal participants in the public dialogue. We long to be respected, to be listened to, to be interviewed on the CBC or, down south, to be invited to Presidential Prayer Breakfasts. We lose all this if we say unpopular things and are perceived to be a radical fringe group. We must learn again, even from Fr Seraphim and ROCOR, to be willing to appear as fools for Christ, to speak boldly with the voice of the prophets, even if this means, like the prophets, that we will be ignored, rejected and cast out.

We Orthodox in North America are not strangers to this lesson (witness our unwavering pro-life stand regarding the sin of abortion); but as the days grow darker and our public message grows less and less welcome, we must learn this lesson ever more deeply. I would suggest that it is not a matter of “survival” or of adopting a siege mentality, like a cult, but of recognizing that here we have no continuing city (Hebrews 13:14), and that our true home is not in the USA or Canada, but in the Kingdom. We are not “the Orthodox Church OF America,” but rather “the Orthodox Church IN America,” for we are not of North America or of any place on earth, but of heaven. On earth we merely sojourn until our Lord returns in glory.

Second, Fr Seraphim and ROCOR offer us the lesson of holy indifference to world political opinion—even (dare I say it) the political opinion of other Orthodox. Do not misunderstand the point : obviously Orthodoxy is conciliar to its core, so that prideful schism from other Orthodox is always wrong. We in North America are part of a worldwide family, and there is no

opting out of it. But one must discern : we can listen to our brothers out of humility, but we can also listen out of fear. And, as the Scriptures remind us, the fear of man brings a snare (Proverbs 29:25). The hard truth is that we in the OCA are not yet comfortable in our autocephaly. We wear it like a pair of new shoes not yet broken in ; we are too aware of them. That is, we are not yet self-confident in our autocephaly, and have a tendency (a natural tendency, but an unhelpful one) to cast glances around the globe to see how the other autocephalous churches regard us. We are, I suggest, far too concerned about the praise of man, and therefore not sufficiently concerned about the praise of God.

It was otherwise in the early days of our autocephaly : in the heady time following the granting of the Tomos of Autocephaly in 1970, men like Protospesbyter Alexander Schmemmann articulated a vision of what it means to live faithfully in answer to God's unique call to us in North America. We were inspired with new possibilities for liturgical freshness, for outreach and for unity. We felt called by God to try “new” things (such as the use of English for liturgical celebration), and were less concerned with how other Orthodox throughout the world would regard us. Faithfulness to God and a recovery of the true meaning and power of Orthodoxy were the main concerns—not acceptance by other jurisdictions.

ROCOR's willingness, despite the disapproval of others, to follow what they believed was God's call, is a lesson we might well consider again. Especially during these past few years of controversy, during which the heart has gone out of many in the OCA. I believe we need to recapture the vision of Fr Alexander Schmemmann, and of the early days of our autocephaly. I believe we must realign our focus—no longer gazing nervously to see what Constantinople thinks or what Moscow thinks or what Kiev thinks or what Antioch thinks. Let us gaze confidently heavenward to focus upon what God thinks, and seek our sole approval from Him.

In these days of jurisdictional surprises (such as the reconciliation of the Moscow Patriarchate and ROCOR), we must be prepared for ironies. It is perhaps ironic that a renewed appreciation for the example of Fr Seraphim Rose should lead me again to the vision of Fr Alexander Schmemmann. But, I suggest, that is just the sort of ironic surprise one might expect of the Lord—He who is the Lord of all, who causes lion and lamb to lie down together, and who, I hope, brings Fr Seraphim Rose and Fr Alexander Schemann to sit down together at dinner in His Kingdom. - *Archpriest Lawrence Farley, Dean of British Columbia.*

The poet, the singer, and the song

The soul of the Christian needs to be refined and sensitive, to have sensibility and wings . . . to fly through infinity, among the stars, amidst the greatness of God, amid silence.

Whoever wants to become a Christian must first become a poet. That's what it is! You must suffer. You must love and suffer – suffer for the one you love. Love makes effort for the loved one. She runs all through the night; she stays awake . . . she makes sacrifices and disregards all impediments, threats and difficulties for the sake of the loved one.¹

Here is the description of the soul turned to God found, in the collection of archived writings and life experience of the great Greek Elder, Porphyrios, *Wounded by Love*. A unique combination of depth, height and freedom. The soul, unbound from the world's cares and enticements, is on fire with Divine love and seeks genuine worship, which "while embracing the emotions, must also be reflective, intelligent and essentially theological ; for, as the Fathers expressed it, we are the 'rational sheep' of Christ."²

The poetry that the author talks about is our Orthodox sacred hymnography, those intensely theological liturgical poetic texts for Pascha, the Great Feasts, also Akathists, Parakleses, daily commemorations and more, composed by many saints of days past gifted in sacred artistry, including Sts Anatolios, Cyprian, Theophanes, Andrew of Jerusalem, Romanos the Melodist and the female hymnographer, St Kassiane. As we are aware, Holy Scripture, especially the Psalter, is filled with poetic truth. Elder Porphyrios urges us to love and savour holy words, to place them on our lips at all hours of the day, so that our souls would be lifted up toward God, like sunflower heads turned toward the sun. This is connected with the commandments to bless the Lord with one's soul, "to sing with understanding" (*poite razumno*). "I will sing unto the Lord while I live, I will sing praises to my God while I have my being,"³ and so many other Scriptural references to holy singing, or making a joyful noise, particularly within Psalms 95 – 107.

This was the way of life of the young future Elder Porphyrios. As a boy on Mount Athos, he appropriated

¹ *Wounded by Love, The Life and Wisdom of Elder Porphyrios* (Limni, Evia: Denise Harvey, 2005), p. 107.

² *The Festal Menaion* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), p. 66. The word "logical" is also used.

³ Psalm 104, Daily Vespers.

sacred melodic truths while he was still basically illiterate, experiencing living Orthodox theology as he leaped from rock to rock, with an unwashed face and a heart full of joy before the Lord, the words of truth mingling with the Athonite sunshine and the sound of the birds. Later, he remembered those days as life in Paradise. He recommends this type of psalmody to all, for "our soul is gladdened and our hearing is sweetened as we hear the hymns and something happens within us." He calls it being touched by Divine enthusiasm. "Devotion to and occupation with the hymns and readings is a great thing in my view – a very great thing, because in that way a person is sanctified without realizing it. He acquires love and humility and everything as he hears the words of the saints in the various liturgical books. We need to dwell on this. This needs to be our daily occupation and delight in the Church."⁴

Many of us own the *Festal Menaion*, a treasure of devotional sacred songs, footnoted with Scriptures and interspersed with Gospel readings. There are at least two versions of this work published in English, maybe more. For those of us unable to tell an Apolytikion from an Aposticha if we bumped into one, the book tends to frighten us with its many directions or by its formal English and we wave our hand in exasperation and say "leave it to the experts." But if we dare to open the book, spiritual riches spill forth and the words strike us as most beautiful, even if we have to reach a little to understand them. Remembering Elder Porphyrios' struggles and imperfections gives us courage, as he relates his illiteracy, his halting reading one syllable at a time. So we don't know the tone? Can't we do a simple chant, or just read?

Be practical is one thing we learn from Elder Porphyrios. We may not be leaping from rock to rock, but we might prop up the *Festal Menaion* on the kitchen window on the eve of a Feast day and contemplate wonderful truths as we work. Or pick up the phrase of a Canon as we cross the kitchen, and take another as we go to the garden. We might let our chanting and delighting in truth mingle with the bees in the crabapple tree, with the sunshine, with the sweeping green branches we bring into our homes for Pentecost, our homes flowing with the oil of melody and the scent of incense. In this way our senses are quickened toward holy things, our surroundings transformed. "Let all the trees of the wood rejoice for their nature is made holy by

⁴ *Wounded by Love*, p. 78..

. . . Making a 'joyful noise' to the Lord . . .

Christ, who planted them in the beginning and who was outstretched upon the Tree"⁵ Similarly a broad expanse of prairie, a quiet lakeshore or a tedious bus-ride through the snow can get somehow mingled with truth in melody and verse. Elder Porphyrios adds, "Take delight in all things that surround us . . . make the most of beautiful moments."⁶ Or, as Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann of blessed memory was so fond of doing, note the kind of day today is, what the sky is like, how the air feels, *being Orthodox in the moment*. Psalmody has much to contribute here.

Two examples come to mind from our own Canadian experience : a venerable Archbishop, no longer with us, who seemed always to have a quiet hum of song about him, singing all kinds of *tropars* and *prokimena*, as he sat behind the steering wheel ; the other, a seasoned Matushka who once described to me how to use wall-washing as a time to memorize Scripture! Why not? And examples from beyond : St John of Kronstadt and the yet-un canonized Fr Jonah Atamansky of Odessa had small choirs singing new compositions on godly themes during meal-times, while the blessed Vladyka Anthony of Voronezh always asked for particular hymns during his vesting. Many saints' lives include the particular songs that were on their lips, such as "Praise the Lord from the heavens" or in hard times, "It is good for me that Thou has afflicted me that I might learn Thy statutes" (St Tikhon of Zadonsk).⁷ Sharing the saint's favourite song is one way to draw close to him or her.

The "in-the-present" nature of our hymnography serves another purpose. In it lies a guide, a barometer, measuring what should be in our hearts: "Let us make glad today and sing in honour of the feast and with joyful face and tongue openly cry aloud"⁸ Benchmarks : *Am I glad? Is my face joyful?*

Verses often document a growing sense of excitement as holidays approach, "What is the sound of feasting we hear? On this solemn day of our feast, let us strike the spiritual harp"⁹ We are called to tune up, as an orchestra gets ready to play at a wedding feast. Translating into modern terms the chorus of one of the ancient Ukrainian carols – "*Kings! Kings! Hit the strings!*" We have *what* to celebrate! It is right to joy

⁵ *The Festal Menaion*, The Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross, Matins, from Canticle 9.

⁶ *Wounded by Love*, p. 218.

⁷ George Fedotov, *A Treasury of Russian Spirituality*, Volume 2, p. 193.

⁸ *The Festal Menaion*, The Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross, Great Vespers, p. 138.

⁹ *Ibid.*, The Birth of Our Most Holy Lady, The Theotokos, Great Vespers, Hymn of St Anatolios, p. 105.

over the feast with singing. This is one way to fulfil the commandment to "magnify." Should it be happening in the simplest of places, our magnification somehow brings home that we are one with all in the Kingdom right where we are and gives to us the humbling sense of lovingkindness exhibited in the very small (*umilienie*). In summary, simple, joyful psalmody unto the Lord seems to open doors of grace, something with which Elder Porphyrios would agree. He writes of the wise words of Solomon, "they are inspired by the same Spirit which inspired the words of the poetic canons written by the hymnographers of the Church. That's why I love them so much. Read them, study them and delight in them. That's how you will acquire divine *eros*."¹⁰

The *Menaion* answers a question many ask. Why is there quite a lot of repetition in services, with repeated imagery and the same basic idea expressed in different ways? Archbishop Kallistos Ware writes, "This constant reiteration so far from indicating poverty of thought or liturgical garrulousness, is designed to serve a definite purpose. Orthodoxy makes little or no use of that form of spiritual recollection known in the West as 'meditation,' when a period of time is set aside each day for systematic thought on a chosen theme." An Orthodox Christian stands in corporate worship hearing the same saving truths continually underlined. "In this fashion the theological significance of the different mysteries of the faith is deeply and indelibly impressed upon his mind, becoming almost second nature . . . the words that are read and sung in church are themselves sufficient to provide him with abundant nourishment for his life in Christ."¹¹

It takes courage to be a poet : to dare to speak love-words ; to rejoice when the world calls for despondency ; to forsake regular, everyday conduct (thinking "our own" thoughts) for the things of God ; to be creative in blessing the Lord when it is suitable to do so. Of course this is a learning experience, and none of us does it so perfectly. But one of the shortest phrases Elder Porphyrios writes is: "Have Christ's joy."¹²

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¹⁰ *Wounded by Love*, p. 122.

¹¹ Another aspect of the riches of the heritage of our "poetry" books : in 1950, when Pope Pius XII proclaimed the dogma of the Bodily Assumption of Our Lady, members of the RC hierarchy in France approached Metropolitan Vladimir, Russian Exarch in Western Europe for the Ecumenical Patriarchate, asking what the belief of the Orthodox is in this regard. The response of the Metropolitan was to urge him to read the Orthodox office of the Dormition, 15/28 August, saying he had nothing to add to what was already written there. See *Festal Menaion*, p. 66.

¹² *Wounded by Love*, p. 96.

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Due in large part to Arius and his heresy it seems, we have lost some of our hymnography, although some Orthodox parts of the world have retained it, such as Ukraine. Its songs echo living theology, sometimes picking up on a practical aspect of an event (for example, Joseph warming the diapers of the Baby Christ). The rational mind tries to peer over the edge and asks, "oh, but did he *really*?" but the poetic heart is too busy rejoicing that there was a venerable man named Joseph, who protected, sheltered, gave up, did *whatever* was needed, and is not distracted from its gladness to ask a question already answered by the larger picture.

Out of interest, how many times are we commanded by Holy Scripture to sing? How many times in the *Festal Menaion*? Perhaps one day, too, we will be blessed to have our own songs of the Canadian Orthodox people, echoing ancient truths mingled with our own experiences, our singular geographical beauty and unique, God-given insights on this soil. The Lord told Israel that if they did not offer praise, their very rocks would cry out. Let us take seriously the "either and or" of the Lord – for either our souls bless the Lord, or the very rocks of our Canadian Shield might! - a Canadian Orthodox Christian who prefers to remain anonymous, all the better to make 'a joyful noise' to the Lord.

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

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From the Archbishop's desk :

Pilgrimage to St Petersburg and Moscow region, 16 - 29 August 2007

Flying directly from Toronto to Moscow late on August 15, and then immediately to St Petersburg, our pilgrimage group of fifteen Canadians arrived at the St Alexander Nevsky Lavra's Pilgrim Hostel on the evening of August 16. The Lavra is in the very centre of St Petersburg, and there is easy access to the historic area, and the relics of St Alexander Nevsky are available in the Catholicon for veneration. The last time I served in this Lavra was as a priest when, in December 1980, I visited the city with a group of Finnish youth. The Lavra received us well, despite the difficulties faced by the brotherhood recently, namely the flooding of their refectory (part of their normal pilgrim service), and the prolonged time required to dry it, repair it, and return it to working order.

Our first day was given mostly to St John of Kronstadt. We travelled by minibus to the island of Kotlin, now connected from the north of the Gulf of Finland by a dam. We visited the Church of the Vladimir Icon of the Theotokos, the descendant of the first church established on the island by Peter the Great in 1704. This is the only working church for the city of over 40,000 people. This temple's reconstruction began with the labour of the faithful only, who completed the lower church, and now under the leadership of Archpriest Sviatoslav Melnyk, the restoration of the upper temple is nearing completion. We visited many other historic sites in the city, including part of the flat in which St John lived for over fifty years. Nearby were the ruins of St Andrew's Church. Indeed, much that had any connection with St John was destroyed, and anyone who seemed to have a personal connection with him was executed for it. The huge Sobor of St Nicholas, completed in 1913, is the main Navy Church, modelled after Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (except with a higher dome). It was used since 1918 principally as a theatre, and it will take up to ten million dollars to restore. Local and military authorities, however, do not give speedy cooperation in the renewal of any church life locally.

After a full day on the island, we travelled to the St John of Rila Monastery, and there venerated the relics of St John of Kronstadt. Afterwards, we went to the Smolensk Cemetery, and venerated St Xenia of St Petersburg, although the chapel was by then closed. In every place, there were also wonder-working icons to be

venerated. Throughout our time in the area, we were guided by two parishioners of Fr Sviatoslav.

The second day, Saturday, many proceeded, as on the previous day, to the early Liturgy in the Monastery. We first went to the Cathedral of Our Lady of Kazan, where Fr Anatoly met a classmate from seminary, who was preparing for Liturgy. Fr Feoktist gave the opportunity to commemorate pilgrims, and members of the diocese at proskomedia. Then we passed by the sometimes-used, renewed temple of the Resurrection (Saviour of the Spilled Blood), on the way to the Winter Palace-Hermitage Museum, where we had a guided tour. After the tour, we visited the Sts Peter and Paul Fortress, in whose Sobor (the first Cathedral of the city) are entombed former Tsars. There also is a chapel in which is the tomb of the family of Tsar St Nicholas II. Then we travelled to St Isaac's Sobor, the largest temple in Russia after Moscow's Christ the Saviour Cathedral. This temple's main altar is used now only four times a year, but there is a side-chapel in weekly use. After this visit, and driving around St Nicholas' Sobor (one of the few churches never closed after the revolution), we returned to the Lavra for the Vigil of the Transfiguration. On this evening, and the following day, some pilgrims took the opportunity to go to the Sobor of the Resurrection, where Metropolitan Vladimir and Bishop Markell were serving, in association with festival services, and concerts for the centennial of the temple.

On Sunday morning, the Divine Liturgy for the Transfiguration was served at the Holy Trinity Sobor of the St Alexander Nevsky Lavra. At the dinner following, there were several historical speeches offered by Fr Victor, a priest who has served under ten Metropolitans of the city, and who endured through some of the most difficult times. He expressed his gratitude for the reconciliation with the ROCOR. He commented that it was only by accident that he knew of the ROCOR, because until about 1990 there was almost no information coming from the exterior about Church life anywhere. After dinner with the Brotherhood (now 30+), we were given a brief tour of the Monastery territory. At every turn, because it is St Petersburg, we heard about the slaughter of the faithful after the communist revolution. Because of this monastery, two Metropolitans died. In this monastery, 120 monks were killed at once, and at another time, forty. The monastery's origins coincide with those of the city, and Peter the Great, and his descendants, have had much to do with the Lavra's development. This has included the presence of a seminary, and an academy, both served by the monks. The offices of the Metropolitan have also been on this territory. It is now only eleven or so years that buildings, besides the Sobor, are being returned to the Lavra, and only just now the last two on

the territory. All restoration and renovation is the responsibility of the Lavra, and of the Diocese. Although relations have been difficult with civil authorities, these have been greatly improving in recent years.

In the evening, there was tea given to the pilgrim group by Metropolitan Vladimir, who received us very affably. We were shown photos of the immense restoration work still progressing on the Metropolis building. His Eminence also informed us of the numerous diocesan departments that have offices in this building, and of the challenges in finding sponsors to support all the needed repairs. There were also exchanges of historical information, and answers to questions about friends working in Canada. We met the secretary of the Metropolitan, Archpriest Sviatoslav Diachena, a great nephew of the departed rector of Christ the Saviour Sobor in Toronto, Archpriest John Diachena. We were also given suggestions about how better to organise ourselves on a future visit.

On Monday morning, we rose very early for the visit to Novgorod, a very historic city which provides a kind of mythic foundation to the history of Russia. A republic for many centuries, it came only late under the control of the Moscow princes. Only Ladoga could be called more historic in western Russia, it seems. Late in the morning, after driving over 200 km towards Moscow, we arrived at Khutyn Monastery, ten km outside Novgorod. We were given a tour of the monastery, among the oldest of Russia, and we venerated the relics of St Varlaam of Khutynsk. We also walked up, and prayed atop, the hill of sand which St Varlaam had erected in his lifetime, as a daily exercise of prayer. We were told that in the temple itself, there is not one icon that has not given myrrh, at one time or another. The reconstruction and repair work are moving at an amazing pace. The present life is formed and led by the Abbess, who has thirty-three years of monastic life, her own formation having come from Puhtitsa Monastery in Estonia (like many other post-Perestroika abbesses).

After lunch at this monastery of fifty nuns, we travelled into the city of Novgorod itself, to the Kremlin, and there we visited the historic Cathedral of St Sophia. This Temple, built by Yaroslav the Wise, is contemporary with the St Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv. Here, we venerated the relics of St Anna, the nun-widow of Yaroslav, of St Bishop Nikita of Novgorod, and of other Novgorod saints. We were also told various stories of how this temple has been divinely protected, particularly during and after World War II. After a further tour of the Kremlin precincts, we travelled about another ten km to the Yuriev Moanstery (St George), the

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oldest monastery in Russia itself. It was established, in part also, as a residence for Prince Yaroslav, and princes who followed after, because Novgorod did not allow the princes to live within the city itself. Here is the diocesan seminary, as well as monastic quarters, and a pilgrim hospice. It also contains the residence of Archbishop Lev of Novgorod. We were able to visit him briefly, in the midst of his supervising the entrance examinations of the seminary. He received us very warmly and kindly, and also expressed his distress at not having known exact details of our itinerary in advance. After our prolonged conversation, during which there were exchanged also memories of earlier days at the St Petersburg Academy, and summaries of the multitude of works being accomplished in this diocese, we made our way back through moderately heavy traffic to St Petersburg, to eat and to retire.

Tuesday morning was our last day in St Petersburg. First, we paid a visit to the St Petersburg Seminary and Academy, and we were welcomed by Rector Archbishop Konstantin and given a tour of the building, which is greatly under renovation and reconstruction. Before our departure, which was somewhat delayed (as usual), I was interviewed by two students for the academy's internet site. The academy is indeed doing many renovations, but they are very much in need still of some basic supplies. Education is supplied to the students *gratis* by the Church, but such things as proper black-boards, and other for-us-standard teaching aids, seem to be completely lacking.

Next, we went to the town of Pushkin, and visited the Church of the Sign of the Theotokos, followed by a visit to the palace gardens. Afterwards, we stopped by the nearby Church of the Feodorovskaya Icon of the Theotokos, in the temple where Michael Romanov was blessed by his mother to become Tsar. We venerated this icon, and others. After this, we travelled to a restaurant of the traditional form for dinner, and then drove to Peterhoff (Petrodvorets). After a walk around some of the fountains of this palace, we walked to the nearby Church of Sts Peter and Paul, constructed only a century ago, and appearing much like the Church of the Resurrection (Saviour on the Spilled Blood) in St Petersburg. It has a renewed, high, splendid, ceramic iconostasis. Then we visited the Holy Trinity Monastery nearby, which adjoins the Presidential Summer Palace, and we venerated the relics of two local monastic saints, and then the icon of St Herman of Alaska. It was in this monastery that St Herman was tonsured a monk, and in this monastery that St Ignatii (Brianchaninov) was abbot for some time.

After this, we visited for a time with the hermit-Igumen Nicholas (Paramanov), and talked about

a number of spiritual experiences and concerns regarding the renewal of this monastery. In every church, we sang some tropars together, and it seems that in almost every place, we met old friends, professors, and class-mates of Fr Anatoliy, and various clergy who have connections with North America. Several times during these days, we met Vyacheslav Rogoza, son of Fr Vadim, who served for a time in Montréal. Having completed the Odessa Seminary, he was sitting his entrance exams for the St Petersburg Academy. Around midnight that day, we departed by train for Moscow.

We arrived in Moscow around 10 o'clock on Wednesday morning and were met by Archimandrite Zacchaeus (Wood), and our Moscow organisers. We piled ourselves and our luggage into the minibus, and were driven to the OCA Podvoriye, St Catherine in the Field, on Bolshaya Ordinke Street, where Fr Zacchaeus is the rector. We venerated the icons and relics in the temple and sang tropars, and then headed to the recently-renovated hall area, where we were given brunch.

After this, we drove to the Pokrovsky Monastery, where we venerated St Matrona's relics and were given a tour of the monastery's property. As usual, we sang tropars in the midst of the main temple, were informed about the great works associated with St Matrona, and also told about the community's caring for twenty orphaned girls. It seems they have done this since the re-opening of the Monastery. During the dinner which the nuns gave us, some of these girls entertained us with singing. After visiting the book-store, the other pilgrims visited a museum, and I was met by Archimandrite Zacchaeus, and taken to the Department of External Relations of the Moscow Patriarch, at the Danilov Monastery. There we had a conversation with Metropolitan Kirill (of Smolensk) about situations in North American and world Orthodoxy.

On Thursday morning, we departed early for the historic towns of Vladimir, and Suzdal, a three-hour drive, but in this case rather longer, because of Moscow traffic. We were greeted at the beginning of the city of Vladimir with a police-car escort, which helped, and sped the rest of the day's travels. We began our visit with a short moleben, venerating the relics of Archbishop Afanasy, and of Princes Andrei and Gleb, greeting Archbishop Evlogy of Vladimir and Suzdal, and greeting the rectors of the twelve churches of the city, all in the historic Uspensky Cathedral. We were given a guide for the day, who introduced us to Prince Andrei's domestic church, St Dmitri's Sobor, with its elaborate limestone exterior carving. Vladimir, founded by St Prince Vladimir, was the first capital of Russia. Our travels this day were somewhat challenged by high heat, and smoke

. . . Archbishop's Russian pilgrimage . . .

from forest fires. We took dinner with Archbishop Evlogy at the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery, and he informed us of numerous historical facts, as well as telling us of the many opportunities for Christian education in his diocese — from Church school, through gymnasium, to seminaries. Then we toured the monastery and visited the royal monastery buildings.

Suzdal was our next stop, where we were impressed by the fact that it remains within its 17th-century limits, retaining much of the character of an old Russian town. It was a very popular pilgrimage site, which accounts for its many churches, as compared to its small population of 11,000. We first passed the earthen kremlin walls, and entered the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery, where we venerated the relics of St Bishop Arseny of Elassa. During the whole excursion, the guide's good information was further supplemented by the commentary of Archimandrite Innocent of St Alexander Nevsky's Monastery in Suzdal. In Suzdal there are presently four working monasteries, two each of men and of women, and one which is a museum.

In the whole diocese, there are thirty working monasteries, all established in the past fifteen years. Women's monasteries are slightly in the majority, and the populations vary from three to thirty. We visited the Spaso-Ephemiev Monastery, which is a museum, and viewed and venerated many very old icons. Near this monastery there is a rapidly developing museum of wooden buildings, being collected from the whole region. Then we visited the St Alexander Nevsky Monastery, opened now for only two years, and then took supper at the Pokrov Monastery. This was followed by a rapid return to Vladimir, and to the Uspensky Princess Monastery, and the veneration of the oldest of Russia's icons, the wonder-working Bogoliubsky Icon of the Theotokos.

On Friday, back in Moscow, we went by metro to the Tretiakov Gallery. This was an interesting trip, with the several transfers, but it gave a good perspective on the life of ordinary Muscovites, and particularly in the unusually hot weather. At the gallery we were first given a tour of the main parts of the regular exhibits of Russian painters, along with a well-detailed explanation of the use of light: Russian artists tend to respond to light from above, from heaven, and to try to reflect it. This tour took us from the early painters through the early twentieth century.

Then we went to the Church of the Descent of the Holy Spirit, the three-hundred-year-old temple of St Nicholas in the Tolmatch, around which the gallery grew in time. Here Archpriest Nicholas Sokolov, the rector, gave us a history of the church, and its connection with the Tretiakov family. We venerated the wonder-working Icon of the Theotokos of Vladimir which, like the Icon

of the Theotokos of Tikhvin, is believed to be written originally by the Evangelist Luke. We were shown the back part of this icon, a cross-and-table, along with instruments of the Crucifixion, painted by St Andrei Ryblev. We also venerated a very ancient Cross-and-Corpus, from which healings come. It is situated on the kliros of one of the side-chapels at the entrance. We prayed, and we sang tropars.

Then we went to the basement of the Church, and had dinner with Fr Nicholas, who told us many things about the history of the parish and about his own life. After the dinner, we were taken by our guide to the Icon Collection of the Museum. Here, we were given very good scientific explanations about the difficulties of discovering, and of using correct restoration techniques. Then it was time to leave, and we travelled to our OCA Podvoriye (representation church) of St Catherine in the Field, about a 20-minute walk, where we were given tours of the church, its sewing facilities, its work-shops, and its church-goods shops. There is also a medical clinic, which offers free service to the needy.

Following this was the arrival of Ralph Lysyshyn, the Canadian Ambassador, with whom we had supper for an hour. He gave a very good explanation of Canadian business activity in Russia, and Russian business activity in Canada, and he answered many questions of the pilgrims. It is clear that the political tensions we experience between Canada and Russia has its effects, such as our having closed the Consulate in St Petersburg. Business goes very well, however. After his departure, we walked to the metro, and travelled to the Kiev Station, where we boarded a boat for a guided cruise along the Moscow River.

On Saturday, we departed at mid-morning for a guided visit to several Moscow monasteries. This visit followed, to an extent, what is called the Boulevard, a former boundary of the city. We began with the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery, a very old foundation, from about the 14th century, now having thirty nuns, and a considerable amount of restoration work yet to be done. This was followed by the Spaso-Andronnikov Monastery, now a museum, but having a working church. This monastery was home to St Andrei Rublev, and is of similar age to the Rozhdestvensky Monastery we had just visited. This was followed by the Novospassky Monastery, beside the Moskva River, where we venerated its wonder-working icon of the Theotokos, visited the temple, saw the Romanov crypt, and walked around the monastic grounds. A lot of rapid restoration has been done in this monastery, and its bookstore was highly commended by the pilgrims.

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The next monastery, some distance away, was the Donskoy. This monastery, founded by Dmitry Donskoy, formerly housed the wonder-working Donskoy Icon of the Theotokos (now replaced by a *spisok* of this icon). Because the Church supported the army in defending Russia during World War II, the Donskoy Regiment considers this Monastery "home." Particularly important to us, in this place are the relics of the New-confessor St Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow, founder of this Archdiocese in 1903. He was imprisoned in this monastery, and he died here in 1925. The cemetery is partly intact, and contains the relics of many famous persons. We had planned to visit the Novodevichy Monastery, but we took too much time at the others.

We concluded this part of the pilgrimage at the Danilovsky Monastery, founded by St Daniel, son of St Alexander Nevsky. Here we were able to venerate the relics of them both, and the relics of other saints as well. This monastery has several wonder-working icons, as well as some myrrh-giving ones. The grounds contain the Holy Synod building and the offices of the Department of External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate. In this monastery we had dinner in the monks' refectory, and afterwards were taken to meet Archimandrite Alexei, the Abbot. He served us tea, and asked many questions about Church life in North America. One subject of interest was the impending return of the monastery's bells which are currently at Harvard University in Cambridge MA, where they were taken after the Revolution.

After this warm visit, we drove to the Sretinsky Monastery, on Liubianka Street. The site is well-known by readers of Solzhenitsyn and other histories of the USSR. The monastery is so called because it was on this site that the Vladimir Icon of the Theotokos was met as it first entered Moscow. The monastery territory was also the site of much suffering in Soviet times (the infamous "Lubianka Prison"), and there is a special crypt chapel presently built where the monks every night pray for the departed. This monastery also operates a seminary, numbering about a hundred students. After a brief tour, we venerated the relics of the New-martyr Archbishop Ilarion. He was head of this monastery, and was the main supporter of Patriarch St Tikhon, and he suffered in part for this. We then attended Vigil in the monastery, and afterwards were given supper in the refectory, along with several monks, who asked many insightful questions. Then we returned to the hotel (Ukrainian-owned, we found), driven by our Cossack Lieutenant driver. Of course, there was photographing of us with him in his uniform.

On Sunday morning, he had a general early departure. Some went with me to our Podvoriye of St Catherine-in-the-Field, and others went either to Sretinsky Monastery, or to Christ the Saviour Cathedral. Present at the Liturgy in the Podvoriye, and the Moleben that followed, was Bishop Zosima of Yakutsk and Lensk, a diocese which was part of St Innocent's first diocesan responsibility. It was interesting to observe how very much has already been done in renovating our Podvoriye, but also to note how much yet needs to be done in future. The sovietising of the buildings, and the ruining of parts of them, is still quite visible.



Archbishop Seraphim blessing the people upon the occasion of the 210th anniversary of St Innocent's birth, Moscow, 26 August 2007

After this Liturgy and some food, Fr Anatoliy and I went to St Tikhon's University, to participate in a "round-table" on the occasion of the 210th anniversary of the birth of St Innocent. This discussion reflected on many aspects of St Innocent's life, work, and influence. Because of this anniversary, at the end of the Liturgy, we were blessed to venerate a part of the right hand of St Innocent, in a special reliquary. This reliquary was accompanying Bishop Zosima along his 3,000 km pilgrimage along the Lena River. Most of the pilgrims, at that time, went to tour the Armoury of the Kremlin. Following all this was free-time, which for me meant being taken for supper to the datcha of a relative of a parishioner of Fr Anatoliy Melnyk.

On Monday morning, because of highway construction, we departed very early for the Trinity-St Sergius Lavra. Upon arriving, we were taken on a visit to the main temples of the Lavra and, as well, on a climb up the belfry of the Lavra, to the second level. This was most impressive to all of us. Included in our visit to the Dormition temple was the veneration of the relics of St Innocent of Alaska, and of St Maxim the Greek. This

was followed by a very interesting and illuminating tour, under the guidance of students, of the Moscow Academy facilities. After dinner, we went to the Holy Trinity temple, where we venerated the relics of St Sergius.

Then we took our leave and travelled several kilometres to the place of the Spring of St Sergius, the refreshing water of which is collected regularly by the monks and drunk by many people to this day. Near the source, there is a church and a chapel, both built of logs, and wood, in the old North Russian Style. From this place, we drove to Moscow, for Vigil at the Elokhovsky Theophany Cathedral. I co-served part of Vigil with Archbishop Arseny, one of the vicars of the Patriarch. Afterwards, we had tea with Archbishop Arseny, Protosyner Matthew Stadniuk, and Nikolai Symeonovich, the venerable starosta of the cathedral, who has served in this capacity for forty years.

On Tuesday morning, we departed early for the Kremlin, for the Liturgy of the Dormition in the Dormition Cathedral, co-serving with Patriarch Aleksy. This is the historic cathedral of the city, but because of its age, its situation in the Kremlin, and its artistic and architectural significance, the Patriarch is able to serve in this temple only a few times a year, and that during a limited time, and with limited numbers of servers and congregants. The Patriarchal Liturgy followed Matins, because of the limited time available for using this historic temple, which is now mostly a museum.

We next made an excursion to Christ the Saviour Cathedral, the seven-year-old replica of the original, which was built originally mostly from the donations of the faithful as a memorial, following the Napoleonic war. The new building, however, has many below-ground facilities not included in the original, including a lower church which can accommodate about 7,000 persons. Here, on a weekly basis, many people are baptised in a side-chapel. After this tour, there was a visit to the Sofrino church-supply store nearby, and a return to the hotel, to prepare for an early departure the next day.

The pilgrimage had many difficulties in its preparation, but the main organiser, Tatiana Prochina of Ottawa, managed, with her friends and contacts in Moscow, to pull the organisation together, through God's blessing and help. Her friend, Liudmila, was particularly competent. In addition, Fr Anatoliy Melnyk's brother, Fr Sviatoslav, and his parishioners Tatiana and Olga were the main support of our time in St Petersburg. And also, the Patriarchate was merciful to us. Thanks be to God for the many blessings that came from this pilgrimage. Pilgrimage is much more fruitful than simple tourism.

+Seraphim

**Dr John
Hadjinicolaou,
editor,
Synaxis, volumes 1-3.
Montreal: Alexander
Press, 2006.**



(Availability : www.alexanderpress.com)

- Reviewed by Archpriest Lawrence Farley,
Dean of British Columbia

This review is written by a convert. Not a convert to Orthodoxy (though that too), but a convert to the excellencies of the three-volume set *Synaxis*, a collection of articles from the Greek periodical magazine of that name, written from 1982-2002 and translated into English now for the first time. I admit that I had flipped through the volumes before in a casual way, reading such headings as “‘Personalism-Existentialism’ and the theological concept of the person,” and “Apophaticism and ontology,” and, conditioned as I am to reading Western books with such titles, assumed that the book was one of those sleep-inducing tomes, written by ivory-tower academics for other ivory-tower academics and read only by their students who were forced to read them to get a passing grade. Certainly such works could have little to do with real people, who lived with real problems in the real world.

How wrong I was can be seen by the titles of the first two essays in the first volume: “The Mystery of Touch: Holy relics in Serbia,” and “The lost unity of things: a discussion about city planning in Athens.” One could scarcely get more real than a pilgrim venerating relics of the saints or city-dweller talking about city planning! Even the essays I thought would be soporific (the one about “Personalism-Existentialism”) turned out to be a good read and to deal with real issues. It too was aimed at the common man (*i.e.*, me), for when it quoted a famous Latin line from St Augustine and Beothius, it translated it into English in case my Latin was not up to academic snuff.

The three-volume set, in fact, represents a kaleidoscope of Orthodox concerns. They are helpfully arranged according to topic : volume one deals with “Anthropology, Environment, Creation”; volume two with “Icon and Person”; and volume three with Ecclesiology and Pastoral Care.” There are authors whom I recognized from perusing book catalogues from St Vladimir's Seminary Press (such as John Zizioulas, Archimandrite Vasileios), as well as authors I had never heard of (such as Fr Stamatis Skliris and Matheos Moianos). They spoke of everything from the iconoclastic crisis to socialism, from the Mother of God to women in *The Brothers*

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Karamazov. It was as if interesting Orthodox speakers - bishops, priests, monks, and theologians - had somehow crowded into a single room for a wine and cheese party (perhaps *chez* Hadjinicolaou?) and I had been able to eavesdrop on their fascinating conversations. We have all had the experience of listening to people whose insights were so wonderful that we wished we had pen and paper on hand to record them. Alexander Press has done us the favour of doing just that.

Pastoral Notes

On 22 September 2007, **Archpriest James (McLuckie)** was tonsured a Rasophor Monk, and attached to the Monastic Community of St Silouan the Athonite in Johnstown ON.

On 30 September 2007, **Roman Semenov** was ordained to the Holy Diaconate at Christ the Saviour Sobor in Toronto ON, to which he is attached.

On 30 September 2007, The Mission of St Innocent in Toronto ON was closed.

On 30 September 2007, **Priest Eugeniusz Zdrojewski** was appointed Chaplain to the St Innocent Missionary Society in Toronto ON.

On 4 November 2007 **Peter Boitchouk** was ordained to the Holy Diaconate at Holy Trinity Sobor in Winnipeg MB, to which he is assigned.

The three-volume set is thus not just a sampling of articles from a Greek periodical. It is also the collection of Orthodox insights that illumine and feed the spirit. On every page there is something that tempts one to underline, and calls one to ponder. Formerly one had to be conversant in Greek to enjoy such treasures. Thanks to Alexander Press and its friends, those of us not so conversant in that beautiful language may also be enriched.

An appeal from New Zealand

“Greetings to all friends in Canada, from New Zealand. I am writing to ask for help in learning a little more of Orthodox history here in New Zealand. In 1910, a Russian hieromonk, Fr Nicholas Manavitch, who had been serving in Canada and the USA, came to New Zealand and served the Arab Orthodox community in the city of Dunedin. Several years later he moved to Australia, where there were already far more Orthodox. Can any reader of the *Canadian Orthodox Messenger* tell me anything about him and where he served before coming here, and indeed why he left North America?

To get in touch, please contact me, James J. Read, at iakov51@hotmail.com. Thank you!”

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