

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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Give and it will be Given back to you

*“ . . . good measure, pressed down,
shaken together, running over . . . ”*

Jesus said:

Give and it will be given back to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you. (Luke 6:38)

This is so plain and direct that we often are tempted to doubt that our Lord meant it. A recent article in the *Oprah Magazine* (December 2000) illustrates an example of someone who lived her life by this and other biblical principles. The article is an interview with Maya Angelou, a 72 year old woman who had overcome poverty, a broken home, childhood rape, single parenting, and the difficulties of being black in America to become a successful performer, author, and teacher. Oprah, who knows Ms Angelou well, made the observation that “people flock to your home because of your generosity. Generosity must be a life principle for you.”

In response Ms Angelou said: “Absolutely. I learned it by experience. When I was in my twenties I was so poor . . . If I had seven dollars, I would give a little more of it to the church than I could afford . . . I’d go to the store and buy two minute steaks with a lot of gristle. I wouldn’t eat my steak and Guy (her son) would say, ‘Ma, you’d better have some of your steak.’ I’d say, ‘No, you have that. I had something earlier.’ And he would inhale it. By nightfall, someone would phone and say, ‘Listen, I just stopped by the supermarket and I’m on my way past your house, and there was a sale on hamburger meat, so I

picked up some for you and I will drop it off.’ All my life it has been that way.”

Then she went on to say, “If you have a napkin, you need another napkin to receive back all the blessings you’ll get. And you keep giving. Then you need a towel to receive all the gifts. And you continue to give, you finally have to move out to get a second house, and a third and so forth . . . It’s amazing. It’s a no-fail, incontrovertible reality: If you get, give. If you learn, teach. You can’t do anything with that except do it.”

This lady, in spite of her difficult situation, or maybe because of it, took Jesus at His word and He delivered. What about those of us who maybe have not had such a difficult life? Should we hoard the gifts that He has already given us through our seemingly more positive circumstances? It does not seem likely that this is God’s intention. It is more likely that we, in our abundance, should share all the more. We have already received much in this life.

Mother Gavriilia, an Orthodox nun (1897-1992) said that the reason there are poor people in the world, is so the wealthy will have an opportunity to give for their own salvation. Mother Gavriilia relates the following personal story that illustrates Luke 6:38 in action. It occurred in the 1950s when she worked in India prior to becoming a nun:

I had just finished working at a hospital where I had taught physiotherapy for a while. The people at this hospital were godless and very unkind. The day of my departure was very near, but I had no invitation yet from anywhere else. Nothing. They told me: ‘Your train leaves tomorrow morning at ten o’clock.’ So that was it! I took my small suitcase and one rupee (far less than one dollar) in my pocket, I went to the railway station, which was also the terminus. From this point on I didn’t know where to go. Only God knew. So, I sat quietly in the waiting room. People moved about, walking in and out, and I waited to see

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Give . . ., continued from p. 1:

whom God would send. In the meantime, two beggar boys came and I gave them the rupee to share between them. They took it and went away. Apparently, they told it to some other boys and, shortly, two more approached me. I had no money left, so I gave them a few candies I had in my pocket. Soon after, more children came. I had nothing to give them, but they would not believe me. So, to convince them, I turned my pockets inside out. And what do you think they did? They went away and climbed a mango tree and came back to offer me a beautiful mango! I took it and thanked them smiling, without saying a word. Now, what happened next? Everyone waiting at the station came to greet me, bowing to me in the Indian manner. Every single person. 'What goes on here?' I asked someone, and he answered: 'In our religion, when a beggar gives you something, it means that God makes you a present and grants His blessing to you.' You can understand how I felt. Well, after that, I just sat there again and waited . . . And indeed, much later, a young Indian woman carrying a professional briefcase entered the waiting room. She came near and asked in English: 'May I sit next to you?' Now, as I have always had what is called 'the dignity of the Christians'—no one ever knew whether I was rich or poor. So, this lady sat next to me and asked again: 'Where are you going?' I said: 'I have just finished my job at the Leprosy Hospital where I taught physiotherapy.'

'And what are you going to do now?' she went on. 'And perhaps you are free? We would so much like . . . you know, we have a small hospital nearby and we would like to have someone teach' . . . And I, who had nowhere to spend the night, was taken within one hour to my new destination and everything was fine! This is what God does! (from Nun Gavrilia, *The Ascetic of Love*, Trans. Helen Anthony, Eptalofos SA, 1991)

Are you, like Maya Angelou was, an abused and poverty stricken young person? Or, have you been born into better circumstances such as a child of a wealthy businessman, like Mother Gavrilia? Perhaps your life has parallels with one of them, but more than likely you have your own unique set of circumstances. These stories illustrate that it does not matter who you are, or what your circumstances. What matters is who the Lord is, and what you do with what the Lord has given you. God responds to those who remember that He is the source of everything that we have, and who share what He has given them with others—as these examples show! —David Grier, *Holy Resurrection Church, Saskatoon*

Sacrament of the Fellow sojourner

—by Lyn Breck

Our lenten pilgrimage calls us to repentance. We forgive those who have hurt or offended us. We accept the forgiveness of those for whom we have been a source of alienation. The theme is reconciliation, and Christ, Himself, is the means of this return to harmony, unity, and love. We allow our Lord to carve out His dwelling place in our hearts.

St John Chrysostom reminds us in one of his homilies (XV) that we become imitators of Christ by "acting in everything for the common good." Our intimacy and connection one with another, he says, is greater and different from that of friendship alone. He exhorts us to avoid divisions caused by insignificant earthly things and embrace "the bond of charity from above."¹

We are fellow sojourners in this time between the two gardens: the garden of paradise, the fruit of God's creation, and the return of our Lord Jesus Christ in glory. We are burdened and weighed down by our garment of skin; yet we, by God's grace, can reach out to each others:

- to offer material assistance: food, clothing, shelter.
- to offer inspired spiritual wisdom and faithful prayer.
- to offer consolation to each other in our times of loss.

St John Chrysostom brings his homily to a close in this way:

Let us then preserve this (bond of charity) unbroken, and none of those evil spirits will be able to enter in, who cause division in so perfect a union with Him (Christ); to which may we all attain by the grace and loving kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom and with whom to the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory now and ever, world without end. Amen.²

¹ *The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers* Vol XIV, St Chrysostom, Eerdmans Press, 1975, p 53.

² *Ibid.*, p 54.

Lyn Breck is a retreat/workshop leader, licensed professional counselor, and co-director with her husband of St Silouan Retreat, a pastoral ministry of the Orthodox Church in America to clergy and clergy wives.

Our mother among the saints

Blessed Maria (Skobtsova)

Glorified at Ravensbruck on 31 March 1945

Mother Maria is a nun of our day whom we meet in unusual places, whose life rises from the written page to challenge us. Her monastery was “the desert of human hearts,” wherever the needy and persecuted of war-torn, twentieth-century Europe could be found. Her place of glorification was the gas chamber of the notorious Ravensbruck women’s concentration camp on Passion Friday, 1945, just days before World War II ended. She is “...a saint of our day and for our day, a woman of flesh and blood possessed by the love of God, who stood fearlessly face to face with the problems of our century.”

Of Ukrainian parentage, Elisabeth Pilenko was born in Riga in 1891. Her father was in the judiciary, enabling Lisa to receive a university education. She studied theology at the University of St Petersburg, rare for a woman then, and frequented the literary circle of the symbolist poet of Russia’s Silver Age of literature, Alexander Blok.

She was a rising poet and intellectual, keenly interested in life and destined, it seemed, for its higher social echelons, until personal and cataclysmic current events “changed everything.” Rather the providential hand of the Lord led her to another life—of repentance and joy on the path of suffering.

Her life’s problems were many: an early, unsuccessful marriage, the turmoil of revolution, personal trial and near execution, remarriage and then exile to the West, which brought her into a life of poverty and the company of the suffering from all walks of life in the French capital, which swelled with Russian émigrés and war victims.

This milieu of want, cold, uncertainty, and human unhappiness led Lisa Skobtsova away from her earlier aristocratic and intellectual ways to a growing search for God’s answer for people’s lives and for society as a whole. Paris was the centre of a vibrant Orthodox consciousness rising from the work of the Russian Student Christian Movement and the St Sergius Theological Institute founded in 1925. A strong theological community had gathered, guided by the energetic Metropolitan Evlogii, including Georges Florovsky, Sergei Bulgakov, V. Zenkovsky and Fr Alexander Elchaninov.

God’s love touched and transformed Lisa. Lively, direct, practical, she was struck by the need to find a way of service in which she could share this divine love as limitlessly as God would allow. In 1932 she was tonsured

the Nun Maria. With the blessing of Metropolitan Evlogii her work was within, not separate from, the community. She gave tirelessly and cheerfully. She established hostels for the homeless and destitute around Paris, raised charitable funds, fed the poor at soup kitchens, and extended the spiritual mercies of encouragement, counsel and education. Her monastery was the world about her: not just her own Russian émigré community but the wounded society around her facing a growing totalitarianism, with its dehumanizing hatreds.

She also found time to write, often late at night. “Le sacrement du frère” (“The Sacrament of My Brother”) published posthumously, explores her unique concept of monastic poverty as “the outer limit of love.” The self-emptying love of Christ must find its counterpart in our lives: “we must likewise empty ourselves completely, becoming, so to speak, incarnate in another human soul, offering to it the full measure of God’s image which is contained in ourselves According to the law of the spirit, every spiritual treasure given away not only returns to the giver like an unspent ruble but it grows and becomes stronger.” Spiritual treasures, she felt, were also to be shared in the proclamation of the Good News, not hoarded; God would fill the emptied coffers.

Mother Maria did not work for the building of a particular monastic community, but her efforts were coordinated with others, volunteers and philanthropists who caught the vision of her vivacious soul. Among these was her chaplain, Fr Dimitri Klepinin, who would also die in a concentration camp together with her own son.

It was Maria Skobtsova’s deliberate choice to suffer with the persecuted of World War II that brought her own imprisonment and eventual death. In July, 1942, under the Vichy regime, thousands of French Jews were rounded up and put in Paris’ Velodrome d’Hiver. She was successful in penetrating the stadium, rescuing several children by bribing garbage collectors so that they could be hidden in the tall, narrow garbage bins. Ever-increasing surveillance of her activities followed, but brought no stop to her work. On 8 February 1943, however, both she and Fr Dimitri were arrested and tried.

Mother Maria was put in the infamous women’s concentration camp, Ravensbruck, eighty kilometers east of Berlin, through which an estimated 132,000 internees would pass before the war was over. It housed mainly Jewish, Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Gypsy and French women—forced labourers—living on a bowl of soup and one slice of bread per day. Ravensbruck was notorious also as a training centre for SS supervisors and for its “medical” experiments.

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Mother Maria . . ., continued from p. 3:

Mother Maria would live at "her new monastery" for two years, sharing in the life of the imprisoned, tortured and dying, bringing rays of God's light beyond the prison wall. It is a tribute to love in the face of horror that Allied troops arriving at Ravensbruck at the end of the War found 3,500 infirm persons, unabandoned, being cared for by other prisoners. (In recent times, an exhibit entitled "Faces of Courage: Women of Ravensbruck" included a display of little gifts made by prisoners for each other, the fragile threads of woven friendship and hope.)

In February 1945, as the Allies were moving in bold advance, Ravensbruck added a gas chamber to its crematorium. A plan was in place to eliminate the most infirm and then to evacuate 25,000 prisoners from Ravensbruck by the end of March.

Mother Maria, whose strength was failing her, met martyrdom on Passion Friday, 31 March. A week earlier the Allies had crossed the Rhine in strength; in less than one month Ravensbruck concentration camp would cease to exist. Mother Maria was fifty-four years of age at the time.

Again and again, her biographers* employ the word "passionate" in their description of this selfless, bold woman of God. Passionate in the divine sense of fervent, agape love. "There is a one moment when you start burning with love and you have the inner desire to throw yourself at the feet of some other human being. Immediately you know that instead of losing your life, it is being given back to you twofold . . ." Evangelical, yet fully ecclesial, her life "became prayer," poured out as an offering to God, a life lived within the absolute freedom and absolute responsibility of the faith she professed.

Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. Apocalypse 2:10

* See, for example, Sergei Hackel, *Pearl of Great Price: the Life of Mother Maria Skobtsova, 1891-1945* (Crestwood NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1981).

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*A Christian should always remember that
the value of his good works is not based
on their number and excellence,
but on the love of God
which prompts him to do these things.*

—St John of the Cross

* * *

Nos pères parmi les saints

**Saint Romain (28 Février/13 mars)
et les Pères du Jura:
un monachisme évangélique**

L'histoire commence en 435. C'est alors qu'un homme de 35 ans, guidé dans les solitudes du désert par l'amour de Dieu, quitte le domaine familial pour s'enfoncer dans les bois et les montagnes du Jura français, près de Genève. La région est la plus froide du pays; isolée, elle n'est alors habitée que par des animaux sauvages. Après avoir beaucoup erré, St Romain est conduit en un lieu désert entouré de trois montagnes, au consent de deux rivières. Pour se protéger de la pluie, de la neige et du soleil: un grand sapin: pour se nourrir: des baies sauvages. « En ermite il priait sans cesse; en vrai moine il travaillait afin de pourvoir à sa subsistance » (10)¹ Pour tout bagage, ce « disciple de Paul » (7) et « imitateur d'Antoine-le-Grand » (12) n'avait que des semences, une pioche, une Vie des Pères du désert, les *Institutions* de St Jean Cassien et, dans le coeur, l'idéal évangélique de St Martin de Tours. C'est ainsi que commence le monachisme de ceux qu'on appellerait les « Pères du Jura ».

Il ne s'agit pas d'une nouvelle école monastique mais seulement d'un maillon dans la tradition monastique indivise. Lorsque St Romain embrasse la vie anachorétique, vie d'ascète à la recherche de l'unification de la personne et de la pureté de coeur dans la lumière divine, il marche dans les pas de tous ces amoureux de Dieu qui, dès le 4^e siècle, en Occident comme en Orient, avaient quitté le monde pour une vie de solitude et de silence. S'il existait des foyers monastiques urbains, comme à Milan autour de St Ambroise (374) ou à Poitiers autour de St Hilaire (355), les anachorètes étaient dispersés un peu partout dans les solitudes du sud de la Gaule, comme dans les îles d'Hyères.² Le modèle qui s'imposait était celui des Pères du désert rapporté par les pèlerins de retour d'Egypte. Déterminante aussi fut la présence en Occident (en 336 et de 339 à 346) de l'ami de St Pachome, St Athanase, qui écrivait pour les ascètes des Gaules sa *Vie de St Antoine* (vers 360). Le pèlerin qui aurait le plus d'influence sur le monachisme Occidental est St Jean Cassien (365-435), Après avoir été moine à Bethléem et avoir passé vingt ans dans les déserts d'Egypte, formé aux leçons des Pères, à l'enseignement d'Evagre le Pontique et aux règles de St Pachome, il rentre en Gaule pour y fonder à Marseille deux monastères. Ses

Institutions cénobitiques et ses *Conférences*, écrites pour les moines de Provence, constitueraient la base de l'organisation monastique en Occident. C'est à sa suite qu'en 410 St Honorat fonde le monastère de Lérins, de type oriental, dont le modèle se répand et va directement inspirer les Pères du Jura. On notera que monachisme oriental et monachisme occidental suivent alors des règles quasiment identiques, avec seulement des différences locales comme par exemple en Gaule l'usage des doitoirs à la place des cellules individuelles.³

Ce qui caractérise les Pères du Jura, c'est qu'à la tradition monastique d'Orient allait s'ajouter l'idéal évangélique d'un St Martin de Tours (316-397). La *Vie de St Martin* de Sulpice Sévère (360-420) connaît un grand rayonnement en Gaule et suscite de nombreuses vocations monastiques. Lorsque le jeune Romain s'enfonce dans les bois du Jura, le discernement des esprits et l'exigence de la garde du cœur puisés chez les moines d'Orient cohabitent avec l'idéal évangélique des Béatitudes et l'exigence d'humilité reçus directement des disciples de St Martin.

La *Vie des Pères du Jura* date du début du 6^e siècle. L'auteur en est un moine anonyme qui retrace l'histoire du fondateur, St Romain (400-460), de son frère St Lupicin et de St Oyend (abbé de 490 à 510). A la mort de St Romain le monastère de Condat, plus connu sous le nom moderne de St Claude, est devenu un centre important du monachisme avec ses fondations pour moines et moniales. Si la vie de St Oyend révèle une vie monastique organisée, celle de St Romain montre comment la vie cénobitique émerge de l'érémisme des premières années. La vie de St Romain est à elle seule un long poème sur la vie intérieure d'un contemplatif voué à la prière continue, se gardant de la corruption du monde; on y voit comment St Romain restera toujours fidèle à la vie solitaire tout en déployant une humilité et un amour sans égal dans la vie commune, simple « moine parmi les moines » (20), miséricordieux envers tous, usant de modération, de discrétion et d'indulgence.

A l'arrivée de son frère St Lupicin et des deux premiers disciples, « ils se construisirent des huttes et en préparèrent d'autres pour ceux qui arriveraient » (13). Le dénuement des frères est total: aucun bien privé n'est conservé: « selon l'usage des temps apostoliques, personne ne disait: "Ceci est à moi" » (112). Condat devint ainsi un centre de direction spirituelle et de guérison. « La renommée des saints s'était répandue si loin que la suave odeur de leurs mérites faisait maudire les horreurs du siècle à des foules de croyants et les déterminait à fuir le monde afin de suivre, pour le Seigneur, la vocation du renoncement et

de la perfection (. . .) D'autres amenaient là des hommes tourmentés par les démons afin que la prière des saints les guérit. On amenait des fous et des paralytiques » (14-15). On voit St Romain embrasser des lépreux, manger à leur table et passer la nuit auprès d'eux: le lendemain ils sont guéris (45-47). Toutefois le bienheureux mettait beaucoup d'application à se cacher dans l'accomplissement de ses miracles (43). Priant pour ses moines (34), premier devoir de l'abbé selon la tradition des Pères, St Romain se montre un père indulgent et doux. Son frère St Lupicin, pourtant beaucoup plus rigoriste, est ainsi décrit face à deux frères qui veulent quitter le monastère: « le saint les nomme par leur nom, et, lentement, il étend la main vers chacun d'eux, lui prend le menton, le caresse avec douceur, l'embrasse (...) puis il se remet à genoux et saisit les armes de la prière » (81).

On pourrait multiplier les exemples: tous montrent que la charité fraternelle est la caractéristique principale du monachisme jurassien. Prière liturgique, lecture et travail ne prennent leur sens que par rapport à cette charité fraternelle. C'est en cela que St Romain est un modèle « de perfection et de charité » (51): il offre un monachisme évangélique approprié aux besoins de notre temps. A nos sociétés fragmentées fondées sur l'individualisme, l'isolement et l'égoïsme, il propose un modèle de perfection et de ferveur fondé sur l'amour.

Par les prières de nos saints pères Romain et Lupicin, Seigneur Jésus, Fils de Dieu, aie pitié de nous et sauve-nous. —par un moine de St Séraphim de Sarov

¹ Les citations sont tirées de la *Vie des Pères du Jura*, édition critique de François Martine (Paris, Le Cerf, « Sources chrétiennes » 142, 1968).

² Renouant avec cette antique tradition, l'archimandrite Séraphim du monastère St Antoine-le-Grand dans le Vercors fonde en 1996-1997 un ermitage dans l'île de Porquerolles, au large de Toulon.

³ On trouvera de bons développements historiques sur cette problématique dans P. Placide Deseille, *L'Évangile au désert* (Paris, YMCA-Press, 1985) et dans *The Lives of the Jura Fathers*, edited by Tim and Kim Vivian et al. (Kalamazoo, Cistercian Publications, 1999).

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

* * *

From the Bishop's desk . . .

Not just a business meeting

This July, from the 24th through the 27th, at St Herman of Alaska's Church in Edmonton, we will assemble formally as the representatives of the Archdiocese of Canada for our regular General Assembly ("Sobor"). This Assembly will be preceded by a gathering of the clergy of the Archdiocese (a "synaxis") for a conference of one and a half days.

It is true that we have to do a little formal business at each Assembly. Nevertheless, as those who have attended the last two Assemblies may attest, the majority of our time is spent learning and praying. There are social activities as well, and there has been prepared a special programme for the young people. It is also planned that the Assembly will conclude with a bus tour of our various beautiful and significant rural temples not far from Edmonton, with food of course, and with the serving of vespers in one of these temples.

Indeed, it is not only the formally elected parish delegates who have been attending these sobors in recent years. It is also any interested parishioners. Thanks to a number of persons in the Archdiocese who have these particular gifts and insight, we have been able every three years now to gather as an Archdiocesan family, and to have some sense of what that means.

You parish assemblies: don't forget to choose your delegates and to help them attend. You parishioners in general: please come as observers and participate and learn and be fed. You families and young people: the Assembly is for all of us, young and old. The young will also have the opportunity to participate. Please come, all of you!

A word of thanks

To all those who have done so much over the last years to help materially and with personal labour to renew the foundation of the Archdiocese by renewing and strengthening the Diocesan Centre and Bishop's Residence, Fair Haven; to the members of The Sign of the Theotokos in particular who have taken the leadership responsibility in so much of this; to those faithful of the Archdiocese, and those friends of the Archdiocese who have contributed so much extra both in financial contributions, in material gifts, and in personal labour; to all those who, by the Grace of God and in Love of Christ have been in many ways doing so very much: May the Lord reward you richly for your generosity and love; may the Lord grant you His Heavenly Kingdom.

Seraphim

Announcing:

Archdiocese of Canada Assembly 2001

"The Missionary Millennium"

July 24 – 27 in Edmonton, Alberta

*Hosted at St Herman's Church
and the Continental Inn Hotel*

Highlights:

- > **Keynote speaker Fr Thomas Hopko, Dean of St Vladimir's Seminary : "Vice and Virtue: an Orthodox Perspective on Healing and Wholeness"**
- > **Workshops and seminars for practical applications to parish life**
- > **Divine Liturgy and Vespers every day**
- > **A parallel youth assembly, giving youth 16 – 25 an opportunity for cross-country fellowship and learning**
- > **Clergy synaxis July 23 – 24, prior to Assembly**
- > **Only two business sessions at the Assembly**
- > **Registration and BBQ beer garden, July 24**
- > **Banquet**
- > **Tour of rural Alberta parishes**

Information packets will be sent soon to all parishes

For further information and updates, check on the website:

<http://sthermans.homepage.com>

Bishop Seraphim's Visitation Schedule

March – June 2001

4 Mar	Gary IN (USA): Sunday of Orthodoxy
15–23 Mar	Holy Synod and SVS, New York
25 Mar	Annunciation/St Nicholas, Ottawa ON
21 Apr	Montréal: Sherbrooke Univ. conference
1 – 3 May	Washington DC: SCOBA conference
5 – 7 Jun	St Tikhon's: OCA Pastoral Ministries
15 – 17 Jun	Rawdon QC: St Seraphim of Sarov, parish and monastic community

The Sign of the Theotokos Celebrates week of altar feast In new 'visible' temple

"Visibly present" now in Montreal since moving into its spacious new temple, The Sign of the Theotokos Church celebrated, during the week of its altar feast, a "Church Warming" on Tuesday, 28 November, with Vespers at 6:15 pm followed by a reception in the downstairs hall afterwards.

Approximately 140-150 people were present, who enjoyed the evening which had been precipitated by the expressed desire of the Orthodox Clergy Association of Quebec (OCAQ) to come and celebrate another "visible presence" of the Orthodox Church in Montreal.

At the request of the pastor of The Sign, Archpriest John Tkachuk, Archpriest Anthony Gabriel of St George's Antiochian Church addressed the congregation on behalf of the OCAQ. A total of twenty-two Orthodox clergy were in attendance (nineteen priests and three deacons, most of whom joined in the "artoklasia" towards the end of the Vespers). Among them were:

Romanian: Fr George Chisca of St John the Baptist's, and Fr Cesar Vasiliu of St Nicholas';

Greek: Fr Nikolaos Andreou of the church of Sts Irini and Markella, Fr Andreas Desypris of St John the Baptist's, and Fr Stephen Smith of the church of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel;

Antiochian: Fr Antony Gabriel of St George's, Fr Michel Fawaz of St Mary's, Fr Boulos Khayat of St George's, Fr Peter Shportun of St Nicholas'; and Deacon Elie Touma of St Mary's;

Ukrainian: Fr. Ihor Kutash (on leave-of-absence);

OCA and affiliates: Fr Vadym Rogoza, Fr Alexander Janowski, Fr Marc (Pierre), Fr Daniel (Baeyens), Fr Cyrille (Bradette), Fr Irénée (Rochon), Fr Gregory Nimijean, Fr John Tkachuk—all from Montreal or Rawdon; Fr Andrew Morbey of Ottawa; and Deacons Cyprian Hutcheon and Lambros Kamperidis from Montreal.

The Sign's Choir, as usual, was ably directed by Ms Lesley-Ann Judge, and sang beautifully and energetically.

The Sign's members were no more than a third of those in the congregation; the others were former parishioners and friends of the parish, among them: Helen Fotopoulos, member of the Montreal City Council; John Marinelli, principal of The Priory School; Teresa McConnon, former principal of The Priory; Soeur Coté and Mrs Hadley of Nazareth House (one of The Sign's early "landlords"); Frs John Baxter and Gabriel Villemure (Roman Catholic priests), the latter one of the "landlords" of The Sign during its 18.5 years in the basement of St-Leon-de-Westmount; and Dr John Foreman, Anglican Ancient and good friend.

Although the actual date of the altar feast of The Sign is November 27, it was celebrated this year on the weekend of December 2-3 because of Bishop Seraphim's schedule. Highlights of the weekend were the ordination of the parish's Deacon Lambros Kamperidis to the Holy Priesthood and the tonsuring of Anastassy Gallaher as reader, followed by his ordination to the subdiaconate. On this occasion Fr John Tkachuk remarked that "there are probably more Constantinopolitans here at The Sign this morning than there are in church today in Constantinople!"— because many of the people filling the crowded temple upon this occasion were, like Priest Lambros, born and/or raised or still living in "The City." ✦



Newly ordained Priest Lambros Kamperidis with his wife Presbytera Christina (l) and Bishop Seraphim (r).

Diocese to publish Ecclesiastical text Of Septuagint Psalter

The Psalter, the Book of the Psalms of David, has formed the very heart of the Church's worship, both public and private, since the earliest days of her life. Whether one considers the practice in the deserts of Egypt and Palestine of requiring a monastic postulant to know the Psalter by heart, or the fact that the bulk of the Church's liturgical prayer is woven throughout with passages from the Psalms, there can be no doubt that the Psalter stands as the Church's principle book of prayer. The Archdiocese of Canada is now in process of publishing a fresh translation of these hymns which are so important to Orthodox faith and worship.

Tradition teaches that in the 3rd Century BC, in response to the fact that a growing percentage of the Jewish population of the world was no longer able to read the Hebrew Scriptures, seventy Jewish scholars produced a translation into Greek of the entire canon of scripture, thus providing a text which was accessible to the increasingly Greek-speaking Jewish population of the ancient world. This translation is known as the *Septuagint* or *Psalter of the Seventy*, in reference to the scholars who gathered in ancient Alexandria to produce it. It is this text which is quoted in the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament, as well as by countless fathers of the Church since Apostolic times. To this day, it is the Septuagint Psalter which is the normative text of the Book of Psalms for the Orthodox Church.

There are currently several English translations of the Septuagint Psalter in print, but the English used can be somewhat inaccessible for those unfamiliar with more archaic English usage. In an effort to provide a text which is accessible and to encourage a deepening of familiarity with the Book of Psalms, the Archdiocese of Canada is providing its translation of the Ecclesiastical text of the Septuagint Psalter. This translation is contemporary in its English usage and in one of its editions will provide extensive notes and Patristic commentary to make difficult readings clearer in light of the reading of the Church. Further, it uses the Ecclesiastical text which is that which is received by the Tradition of the Church and which includes the Kathisma prayers and format for solitary praying of the Psalter.

The Psalter of the Seventy as translated and printed by the Archdiocese of Canada does not duplicate existing work already in circulation but, rather, provides a work which is unique in format, text, commentary and English usage. Its introduction can not help but make it easier for the parish or the individual to make fuller use of the Psalter. It is the hope and prayer of the translators that their work will allow English speaking Orthodox people to drink more deeply from the book which stands at the heart of the Church's life of prayer—*Priest James Griggs, Kingston ON*

Fourth annual SVS Institute To be held in Saskatoon

The fourth annual SVS Institute in Saskatoon will be held May 22 - 26, 2001, with registration on the afternoon of May 21. Fr Paul Tarazi and Prof John Barnet will be the Institute lecturers. They will explore the notion of kingship as the ultimate context for the Old Testament authors. Inasmuch as a correct understanding of kingship is absolutely essential for understanding who Jesus is (see especially Matthew, who presents Jesus as born king of Jews, son of David, crucified as king, etc).

The notion of kingship will be explored as the background for understanding the New Testament, and the perspective of the Jews of that period. A solid foundation in and understanding of the Old Testament is critical for an understanding of the New Testament. In a day when the Old Testament is largely ignored, and poorly understood, this topic is of critical importance for Orthodox Christians, and especially for the Orthodox pastors and lay leaders.

We encourage anyone interested to begin making the necessary plans to attend this Institute, and to encourage others in your parish who could profit by this Institute to attend also. We are happy to report that a goodly number of non-Orthodox Christian educators and pastors were present for the previous Institute, and enjoyed the presentations by Dr Paul Meyendorff and Professor Richard Schneider. This has proven to be an excellent opportunity for us to open our doors to those outside our Orthodox community, since they are always welcome to attend.

Brochures with full details and application forms will be sent to the parishes soon. Please address any questions to: dwguenther@home.com

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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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'Miloserdnye' group Makes appeal

Raissa Kolesnikov, Chairwoman of the Mercy and Compassion Group ("Miloserdnye") at the Holy Resurrection Russian Orthodox Church in Vancouver has forwarded the following appeal:

Our priest, Fr Michael Fourik, showed us a videotape and told us parishioners about the absolutely wonderful Russian priest Fr Nicholas Stremsky and his matushka, Galina. In 1990 Fr Nicholas was appointed to the town of Saraktash in the Orenburg region of the Urals. First he restored the half-ruined church with the help of his parishioners, then he set about organizing the House of Mercy.

The couple adopted 46 children; they are not an orphanage but a family. Then they set up a shelter for some 25 old people who had no place to go. With the help of God and the parishioners, the children raise pigs and tend a vegetable garden. They also organized a little bakery and a sewing shop. They do everything possible and impossible to support their big family.

But they desperately need help from us Christians. They need everything: food, clothes—especially for children, toys, and, of course, money. Our Mercy and Compassion Group has already sent them US\$1,200 and 70 big boxes with clothes, shoes, toys and chocolates.

This is an appeal to everyone: please help this wonderful institution, the House of Mercy, God's miracle in our day. Their address is:

462120 Russia,
Orenburg oblast, pos. Saraktash,
ulitsa Pushkina, 77.
Orenburg Diocese, Moscow Patriarchate,
Holy Trinity House of Mercy.
[Tel. (8-3533) 2-12-32 or 2-17-25]

Pastoral Notes

On 3 December 2000 Bishop Seraphim ordained **Deacon Lambros Kamperidis** to the Holy Priesthood. He is attached to The Sign of the Theotokos Church, Montréal QC, while being given on loan to the Greek Archdiocese of Toronto to serve for Metropolitan Sotirios.

On 24 December 2000 **Deacon Michael Schaplowsky**, with the blessing of Metropolitan Theodosius, was received into the Orthodox Church from the Ukrainian Catholic Church, and assigned as second deacon at St Herman of Alaska's Church, Edmonton AB.

On 21 January 2001 **Subdeacon Alexander Sulakov** was ordained to the Holy Diaconate. He is assigned as deacon at Christ the Saviour Sobor in Toronto ON.

On 25 January 2001 **Subdeacon John Kaleeg Hainsworth** was, with the blessing of Metropolitan Theodosius, ordained to the Holy Diaconate. He is attached, as a student, to the Chapel of the Three Hierarchs at St Vladimir's Seminary.

Moose Jaw couple Celebrates 50th at church

On the evening of August 18, 2000, over one hundred relatives and friends joined Mike and Vera Daniels in Moose Jaw's Holy Trinity Orthodox Church Hall to celebrate the couple's 50th wedding anniversary. Lavishly and lovingly prepared by their daughter Glennys, assisted by son-in-law Ross, and grandchildren Amanda and Samantha, the hall was adorned in fresh flowers, ribbons, balloons, and photographs, including a three-tiered cloth wall-hanging containing phototransfers of the honoured couple taken on their wedding day, August 6, 1950, and of both sets of parents.



The Daniels cutting their 50th anniversary cake.

Mike and Vera were married fifty years ago in Holy Trinity Orthodox Church where Mike is now President and Vera is in charge of food preparation and service at the hall. Vera also quietly assists Mike when it is his turn in rotation with the other two elders who volunteer to clean the church.

For the first three years of their fifty together, this soft-spoken couple ran a meat and grocery business in Calgary. They soon placed concerns about others above their own, however, and returned to Moose Jaw, leaving behind an excellent career opportunity because of the failing health of a member of the bride's family. They remained in Moose Jaw ever since. Mike retired in 1986 as head of the meat department of a local co-op after 35 years of employment there, and he immediately prepared for and obtained a

continued, next page . . .

Moose Jaw couple . . . *continued from p. 9:*

second career in real estate, again motivated by his support for a member of his extended family. An extremely talented seamstress, Vera worked for 45 years, until her retirement in 1995, at a prestigious department store in town. Both Mike and Vera enjoyed their work, earned the respect of their colleagues, and contributed to the integrity of the community because of their work's excellence.

After this wonderful evening of greetings, memories, dancing and food, the celebration overflowed into the following day, a Sunday. After the Liturgy, which included prayers for Mike and Vera, the entire congregation joined them in the church hall for lunch and fellowship. The beautiful atmosphere of peace and love pervaded everything.

Mike and Vera show us marriage as God intended it to be. The perfection of their fluid movements as they danced together at the anniversary party—to whatever music was played—provided a microcosm of the harmony in the relationship they have developed over half a century. With never any visible dissension, their loving support for each other is an obvious, solid certainty. They have seen trials (accidents, health crises, etc.) that inevitably come in every couple's life; but their forgiving, caring, nurturing, loving way quietly annihilates any negative effects and serves only to strengthn their love for each other and for those around them. "Love is eternal" wrote Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 13. We see it here.

Matushka Eva Balevich adds that,

because I am a woman, I have been observing Vera, attempting to discern what makes her as she is. Love, forgiveness, selflessness and service are a way of life for her. Her inner strength is amazing. Excruciating circumstances have no effect on the way she performs her services to others; even her intimate friends learn that these conditions existed *after* she has triumphed over them. When some eternally insignificant issue is stewing in the weekday parish background . . . and I turn to her during Liturgy and ask her forgiveness, she looks up from her prayer book in surprise and says, 'For what?' In I Corinthians 13, the Apostle Paul wrote, 'Love does not keep grudges and will hardly even notice when others do it wrong.' Vera grew up in a God-honouring Scandinavian-Canadian family and joined Holy Trinity . . . when and because she married Mike. One could wonder, 'How could she so faithfully have supported a church in which, for the first 17 years, services and meetings were conducted in languages she did not understand?' I asked her that question [while preparing these notes]. She told me her father had exhorted her to belong to *one* church as a married couple. She submitted, and we see the peaceful fruits of her submission.

May God grant Mike and Vera Daniels many years!

—*edited from the notes of Matushka Eva Balevich, Moose Jaw*

From the Bishop's desk . . .

Our Canadian Chrysostom, Archbishop Arseny (1866–1945)

The life of Archbishop Arseny is now being researched and prepared by several persons in the Archdiocese. This is particularly important now, because there are still some people alive who remember him, and because of the importance of this man in our Archdiocese.

Although we do know clearly a few persons who remember, and we are trying to collect their memories, I believe there are others we don't know. And so, this is *our appeal to anyone who does remember our beloved Archbishop Arseny: please tell us*. Write to the Bishop, or call the office, or contact one of the main researchers, and share your memories.

The persons who are assembling this material are: our Chancellor, Priest Dennis Pihach in Edmonton; Archpriest Andrew Morbey in Ottawa; and Deacon John Hainsworth, one of our seminarians at St Vladimir's Seminary.

Archbishop Arseny came from Kharkov, and was brought to North America by (St) Archbishop Tikhon. He was a co-worker with him, (St) Bishop Raphael, and (St) Father Alexis Toth. He was an important contributor to the return to Orthodoxy of many from the Unia. He founded St Tikhon's Monastery and Orphanage in Pennsylvania, and he later on established St Tikhon's Seminary in the same place. Later too he established the same in Sifton MB.

He served in Canada twice. At first, he came to us as an archimandrite and missionary in 1908, and he served in and from Winnipeg. It will be he who was responsible for the construction of the "school building" which stands next to Holy Trinity Sobor, which will have been completed at about the time of his return to his homeland. His first stay was brief, but characteristically a lot was accomplished in such a short time, and he even published a journal, *The Canadian Field*, which was read by Tsar Nicholas II. His unexpected recall was both shocking and painful to the faithful of the time, and from various comments, this recall probably allowed for the development of an instability and divisions here which would be problematic after the 1918 revolution. One most difficult element of this was the so-called Renovated Church of the Bolsheviks.

Archbishop Arseny, by God's providence, returned to us in 1926 as a bishop, and his statement as he prepared to do so is important and characteristic: "I am coming. My heart is ready. O my God! Ready!" This time, he would be with us only for ten years, but in that time he made many a memorable pastoral journey, including one to Vancouver to help bless the newly-built Holy Resurrection Church. Most of the journeys were, it must be remembered, by rail or horse,

continued, last page . . .

Politics in Babylon

The children of Israel did not like living in Babylon. They had been carried away captive from their Palestinian homeland in 597 BC by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, and they hoped that soon God would reverse their fortunes and they could return home. They had no intention of settling down there. They hated the whole place and in no way considered it their home.

Imagine their surprise, therefore, when Jeremiah wrote them and told them to settle in for the long haul! God would *not* be bringing them home soon—they would have to make their home there and would not be brought back to Palestine for another life-time (or seventy years). “Build houses and dwell in them, plant gardens and eat their fruit,” Jeremiah wrote. “Take wives and beget sons. Seek the welfare of the city where I have caused you to be carried away and pray to the Lord for it, for in its peace you will have peace.” (Jer. 29:5-7)

As Christians, we live in this age as exiles from our true heavenly homeland, even as the Israelites lived in Babylonian exile from Palestine. This present age is not our true home. Rather, “our citizenship is in heaven” (Phil. 3:20). Nevertheless, we are called by God to dwell here for now and “to seek the welfare of the city” of this world in which we find ourselves. And part of seeking the welfare of the city is taking part in its political process.

How then should a Christian do politics in this age? I would suggest three principles which ought to direct our actions.

First, one should pray for the government—whether he or she voted for them or not! This is an apostolic command. St Paul directed that “supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority” (2 Tim. 2:1-2). Stability of government is a gift from God (for “there is no authority except from God”—Rom. 13:1) and this stability is the defence of the poor against the chaos of civil war. In Canada we take this stability for granted and do not think to give thanks for it, but this is a mistake. It is a great blessing that there is political stability—even if the stability looks to many like inertia! By this stability, we can live and work, raise our children in safety, and worship God in freedom. Praying for the government means that we are willing to be part of the answer to our prayers. That means we be actively involved in the political process, by keeping ourselves as informed as we can about the issues and by casting our vote. It is easy to become disillusioned and cynical, to unfairly conclude

that all politicians are crooks and that voting is useless. But this is to fail to appreciate the gift of freedom that God has given us. It is also to abandon the political field to the secular and godless! If we would be salt to the earth and keep it from further corruption, if we would be lights to the world to show the way to virtue and truth, we must use such opportunities as we have—even political ones.

The second principle is that we should keep an eschatological outlook, recognizing that our true home and heart are elsewhere. “Here we have no continuing city” (Heb. 13:14). Though we must take an interest in the politics and state of the secular city, they should not be allowed to consume our attention. Whatever triumphs we may win in the political arena, and whatever defeats we may suffer, we should remember that all is ultimately ephemeral and transitory. “The form of this world is passing away” (Rom. 7:31). Only our kindness and good works—the cup of cold water given in the Name of Christ—will abide forever. The ship on which we live will eventually go down. That does not mean (as C.S. Lewis reminded us) “that she should be a floating hell while she lasts.” We must work hard to make this old world of ours a better place. But we work knowing that it is our works, not the world, that will remain. We sit lightly on the concerns of the world, for our heart is elsewhere. Our main focus is on the coming General Resurrection, not the General Election.

Finally, the third principle is that we should always remember that our true comrades are our brothers and sisters in Christ. Our unity in the Lord comes before any other unity or loyalty. In the heat of political debate, it is easy to forget who our real family is, and to think that our real comrades are those who think (and vote) like us. But that is to forget that our real citizenship is in heaven, and that we belong ultimately only to the Kingdom of God. Christians who agree about the big things, such as the Lord Jesus and the Kingdom, may legitimately differ on lesser things, such as politics. We may disagree and debate, even with volume and conviction, but at the end of the day, we are still all brothers and sisters, dwelling in unity (*cf* Ps. 133), and at the end of the week, we will all receive life, peace and forgiveness together from the Eucharistic Chalice. We must remember that on the Last Day, when all political concerns will be completely forgotten like the ephemeral mists they are, we will be judged on how well we have kept the Lord’s word. For the Lord said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you.” (Jn. 13:34) Nothing must be allowed to divide us from one another or to conquer our mutual love. *continued, last page . . .*

Politics in Babylon . . . *continued from p. 11:*

The Israelites did not like living in Babylon. Sometimes, neither do we. But exile is not forever. It ended for the Israelites and it will end for us. Now is the time for politics, for debate, for action. Soon will come the time for going home. Then (as St. Augustine reminded us at the end of the *City of God*) "we shall rest and we shall see, we shall see and we shall love, we shall love and we shall praise. Behold, what will be in the end without end! For what is our end, but to reach that Kingdom, which has no end?" Now is the time for politics. Then will come the time for endless praise.—*Archpriest Lawrence Farley, St Herman of Alaska Church, Surrey BC*

Archbishop Arseny . . . *continued from p. 10:*

and only occasionally by automobile. The archbishop also established our *Canadian Orthodox Messenger*. He wrote many articles, but he is still best remembered as a powerful and instructive preacher, hence his nickname of "Chrysostom" (*Zlato-oust*). Our beloved ancestor was keen to put the life of the diocese and parishes in order, and he worked hard to do so.

All of the work was done out of love and loving obedience, and in the context of much suffering. So exemplary is he as a Christian, so humble, that it is a challenge to find out the details of his life. Our people who knew and loved him have made no great fuss (we *are* Canadians, after all!), but he is part of the fabric of our daily existence, somehow always there even now. *Seraphin*

Orthodox Supplies

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Contact regarding the new Psalter - see article on page 8.

Electronic Tools for Today's Orthodoxy: Orthodox Information Data Associates, 2 Lakeshore Boulevard, P.O. Box 35, Grand Isle VT 05458-0035; Phone: 802-372-4361; Fax: 802-372-5986.

Books/Icons/Tapes: Father Alexander Schmemmann Bookstore, 4829 rue Resther, Montréal QC, H2J 2V6; Phone/Fax: 514-989-8994.

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