

Go therefore and make disciples of
all nations . . .
Mt 28:19



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

CANADIAN ORTHODOX MESSENGER

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From the Bishop's desk

Reflections in times of war



His Grace, Bishop Seraphim

The way of the Christian is very particular, and our responsibilities as we live in this world are very particular. We are not citizens of this world, but of the Kingdom of Heaven. We are sent by our Saviour Jesus Christ into this world to be salt and yeast. We are His witnesses. We are bearers here

of Him and His light and love. The Orthodox Way is all about balance—not extremes, but balance.

"The fear of the Lord prolongs life, but the years of the ungodly will be short."

Prov 10:27

"The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but the victory belongs to the Lord."

Prov. 21:31

These two proverbs of Solomon summarise both what is necessary for us Christians, and also where so many of us go astray. For us, communion with the Lord, being loved by Him and loving Him (*I John 4: 19*), is the foundation of our life in Christ. Indeed, this has been the real foundation of our path in life since our creation. God

said: "Let us make Man in our image, after our likeness" (*1st Book of Moses 1:26*); and at the giving of the Law (Ten Commandments), He said to us through Moses: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart . . ." (*5th Book of Moses 6:4-6*). And since, as the Apostle John reminds us, "God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (*I John 4: 16*), and "We love, because He first loved us" (*I John 4: 19*), this loving relationship with God must be the real *raison d'être* of our lives. And, as the Apostle John further says, if we love God we will, in being salt and yeast, definitely do works of love towards our fellow human beings, and indeed, towards all creation.

If we live in this love, and therefore can willingly and instinctively (like Adam and Eve before the fall—it is possible in Christ) follow His commandments, He gives us salvation and life. This is the essence of His covenant with us, from Noah and Abraham until now. He loves us far beyond our capacity to comprehend such love, yet He invites us to participate in this love, to grow up in it, and therefore, in Christ, as members of His Body, to grow up in Him, Himself (*theosis*).

But, as is so often the case, even from the time of Adam and Eve, we have this tendency to look at ourselves, to focus on ourselves instead of on God, even to substitute ourselves for God, and by doing this to abandon our part in the covenant established, and to turn our backs on His salvation. In reading the Psalms, and in reading again during this year's Lent the Prophet Isaiah, I have had this brought home to me time and again. How many times, when kings and princes took matters into their own hands were there disasters. But how many times, when these rulers trusted in God, the Lord delivered His faithful people from the hands of their enemies, even by the work of Angels. And how many times in the Christian

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era has the Lord delivered His faithful people (as we are so often begging) from earthquake, flood, fire, invasion by enemies, and civil war. All of this, for Orthodox Christians, is reinforced by our reading of the lives of the saints. For me, too, this reality has been reinforced by both reading about, and listening to the reading on tape, of "Father Arseny." In cases when prisoners were ready to kill him, or sometimes each other, God gave him both the right words and a strong supporter. When he and Alexie were placed in an outdoor punishment cell at -30C, God protected and warmed them. And this was supplemented for me by the teachings of St Silouan through Archimandrites Sophrony and Zacharias. They say, and I see, that we must try to depend on God for everything.

Our canonical history has parallel lessons for us. From the earliest times until now, the Orthodox Church has—I suppose in part starting from Abel and the suffering of Christ—taken the shedding of blood very seriously. Even if a cleric should accidentally kill someone while driving, he is automatically stopped from serving, sometimes permanently. If anyone at all even accidentally kills anyone, it means the person is to abstain from receiving Holy Communion for a substantial length of time, as a sign of sorrow for the loss of human life. In the past, if soldiers killed anyone, even if under orders, it would be the same. Recently, an old Cossack in France would not receive Communion until his death-bed, because he had shed blood in World War I.

It has always been understood that we do not live, and never have lived, in a Christian theocracy, in which the ideal and the covenant might actually be lived out. Even the so-called Christian empires of the past were really mostly so only in name. And in all governments, there are always armies, and with all governments, there is always the risk of war, and there is always the risk for warriors of killing or being killed. We must, as Christians, find the middle way in Christ.

From the earliest times, we have known that we are obliged to pray for our civil governing authorities, even and especially if they are killing us. So early Christians prayed for persecuting emperors, and martyrs forgave and blessed those who were killing them. This is strikingly the case in the martyric death, only two hundred years ago, in Alaska, of St Juvenal the Priest-monk companion of St Herman. It was accepted from earliest times that Christians would have to participate in armies of these governments. But when they did so, they participated still knowing what are the foundations of Christian consciousness. If they shed blood, they showed appropriate repentance. We have soldier martyrs who give us examples of this. Some soldiers, and even kings, became monks

afterwards, one Tsar perhaps in the 19th Century. One may do one's duty, but also bear the consequence of this duty.

Some people like to glorify certain wars, and to say that they are just. But there is no such thing as a just war. All wars kill many soldiers, and all wars kill large, sometimes unimaginably large, numbers of innocent persons of all ages. All wars feed and fuel a blood-thirsty demon, and all wars make warriors vulnerable to the blindness of, the slavery to the demon of bloodlust. All wars, no matter how "just" they are made out to be, have long-lasting consequences, often with deep hatreds, and often with subsequent wars. This is one of the most dangerous of all factors, and there is certainly no balance, no middle way in it. Without a strong faith in Christ, a person would be lost. I have met many a person, among them my own relatives, who suffered for many decades after their participation in wars. They were tortured in their hearts, and in their dreams. Some persons never were able to live a balanced life again because of the spiritual trauma. Wars are simply destructive.

Even though this is a sad fact, the Church does not condemn anyone's serving in the armed forces. Many real Christian believers have served and do serve in armed forces, and do so honourably. But they do so not just because they are so strong themselves; they do so because they have many people praying for them. Many a person has truly been saved from death, many a person has been saved from killing unnecessarily, many a person has been saved from all sorts of catastrophes, because others were praying for God's protection for him or her. And this is indeed our responsibility.

It is correct for us to do our part, to remind our leaders to do everything they can to avoid an armed conflict. It is right that we always pray for the peace of the world, and for reconciliation. This is exactly what we sing about in the Beatitudes, and it is what we ask in the Our Father. It is right that we, as Christians, pray for our governing authorities, and ask for God's wisdom for them. It is also our responsibility to live in forgiveness with all, as Christ, and through His love to bring true peace to the world. Always in the world there is the temptation to resort to violence of various sorts. It is our challenge as Christians, by our love, by our service in the footsteps of Christ, to show to the world the better Way, to show how the Weapon of Peace brings life, and how Christ is the real Victor for us all.

+Seraphim

Bishop blesses Victoria BC From four points in the city

"It's only because God is also blessing the city," declared Bishop Seraphim of the damp, drizzle and fog. The forecast for Sunday February 9 had predicted sunny, clear skies and warm spring temperatures, but the day was typical of February in Victoria, British Columbia. However, the inclement weather did not deter the Bishop. Accompanied by Fr John Hainsworth, priest of All Saints of Alaska Mission; Fr Deacon Kevin Miller of St Barnabas Mission in Comox; and server Darryl Frewing, reader Mark Sheldon, and parishioners from All Saints, the Bishop travelled to four sites around the city, to bestow God's blessing and to ask for His protection on the capital city of British Columbia.

The service began at the "Welcome to Victoria" sign on the Patricia Bay Highway. Chosen because it is the principal entry to Greater Victoria from the airport and the ferries at Sidney, it is elevated and gives a wide view of the urban area. His Grace said prayers from the Litya Service and read from Matthew 28. Then he sprinkled holy water in each of the four directions, although Deacon Kevin, who absorbed most of the holy water, thought it was more of a deluge.

The second site, Mount Tolmie, a higher elevation, was selected for its almost 360 degree view of the capital, as well as the clear view of the Sooke Hills and Western Communities. Bishop Seraphim continued with the Litya prayers and read from Mark 16 before sprinkling with holy water, again in all four directions. This time, the deacon made sure he ducked.

Highrock Park, in the township of Esquimalt, almost directly opposite Mount Tolmie has an even more panoramic view of the city, which lies north and east of the hill. The site was chosen in part because of its south-west perspective, which overlooks Esquimalt Harbour, where the Canadian Forces Naval Base is located. The base, established at the founding of Fort Victoria in 1848, has been an integral part of the area since then. Another major consideration was the fact that both the Legislative Assembly, and the original site of the Songhees First Nations village are easily visible on clear days from the summit of the park. At Highrock, His Grace read Luke 24 between the Litya prayers and the sprinkling, taking care to avoid the deacon.

The final stop, Gonzales Park, is located on the eastern side of the city. As the most central of the elevations, the park view encompasses both the Tolmie and Highrock lookouts, as well as the eastern coastline. In addition, it overlooks the downtown core of the city, which is the oldest part of Victoria, and the site of the original Hudson's Bay trading fort. The Blessing concluded at Gonzales with the Litya prayers, a reading from John 21, and the sprinkling of the faithful as well as the site. Deacon Kevin appreciated the democracy the Bishop showed in soaking the laity as well as the clergy and the site.



Bishop Seraphim blessing the city of Victoria.

"We're asking God to bless everyone in the city," explained the Bishop "not just the faithful, but everyone, and to protect the city."

Victoria has proved a difficult field for Orthodox sowing. All Saints Mission is the third attempt to establish a presence in this island city. First opened in the 1970s by Bishop Joasaph and Deacon (later Father) Andrey Somow out of Holy Resurrection Parish in Vancouver, the mission moved over to the Russian Synod in Exile in the 1980s. Fr Andrew Morbey was the next priest to attempt the mission, but was forced to leave when he could not find work. Towards the end of the decade, Fr Lawrence Farley, of St Herman of Alaska parish in Surrey/Langdon BC spent several months visiting and holding services, to "test the waters," but the time was not right.

Father John and Matushka Jenny Hainsworth arrived in Victoria in August 2002, from St Vladimir's Seminary in New York. The English language mission

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was officially reopened with the celebration of Divine Liturgy on the Feast of the Dormition. Held in St Barnabas



Fr John Hainsworth, Matushka Jenny, and daughter Elizabeth.

Anglican Church, the first service boasted more Anglican attendees than it did Orthodox faithful. However, in its last six months, the parish, due directly to the hard work and dedication of Fr John and Matushka Jenny, has grown to approximately thirty souls, including seven catechumens. They are currently using a chapel loaned by the Anglican Bishop—the Chapel of the Peace of God, located on the Anglican cathedral grounds.

Bishop Seraphim remarked that, "Victoria had a good foundation that's been a bit eroded," adding that he hoped the fallow time was past, and that with the blessing, the mission would be firmly established and fruitful.—Bev Cook, Victoria BC

Priest ordained for Comox, British Columbia

Orthodoxy in Canada took another step forward on February 8 with the Mission Parish of St Barnabas in Comox BC receiving a priest when Bishop Seraphim ordained Fr Alexis Nikkel.

The ordination was held in St. Barnabas' usual place of worship, the chapel at Comox General Hospital. The large, light-filled room, which encloses and enfolds the faithful as they worship and celebrate, was comfortably filled with regular parishioners, and delegations from St Herman's of Alaska, Surrey and All Saints of Alaska, Victoria.

Assisting His Grace in the ordination were Fr Lawrence Farley of St. Herman's, Fr Michael Fourik of Holy Resurrection, Vancouver and Fr John Hainsworth of All Saints. Also serving with the Bishop were Fr Deacon Kevin Miller, Subdeacon Matthew Nikkel and reader Andrew Nikkel, all of St Barnabas. The choir, augmented by voices from the visiting churches, was directed by Rhianna Nikkel.

Father Alexis, 56, comes to the Orthodox Church by way of the Mennonite Brethren. He became a

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The Nikkel family with Bishop Seraphim at the ordination: l to r, Tabatha Miller holding Victoria, Deacon Kevin Miller, Rhianna Nikkel holding Finnian Miller, Jeremiah Nikkel, Fr Alexis, Matushka Elizabeth, Bishop Seraphim, Andrew Nikkel, Lindsay Nikkel, and Subdeacon Mathew Nikkel holding Kayley.

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Christian at the age of 36, while working as a logging manager in the forest industry. After his call to faith, he resigned his job and went to Bible College in Alberta, then returned to Comox. Fr Alexis worked as an itinerant preacher and at Christian summer camps until he was ordained as a Mennonite pastor. He says that in 1994, he was "inadvertently given an envelope with material on the Orthodox Church," which led to a year's intense study of Orthodoxy. Soon after that, he met Fr Lawrence Farley.

"I then resigned from my pastorate at the end of October," he recalls, "and moved to Langley to begin training for the priesthood under Fr Lawrence."

At Pascha, 1996, Fr Alexis, his wife, Elizabeth, four of their five children and a son-in-law were received into

the church by baptism and chrismation. Their eldest son was received into Orthodoxy a year later.

St Barnabas was given permission to "begin reader services in Comox at the beginning of September 1998," says Fr Alexis. At that time, "Holy Apostle Barnabas was designated a Mission Station." A year later, he was ordained deacon and St Barnabas became a Mission Parish.

In the five years of its existence, St Barnabas has grown to twenty-four parishioners, with five new baptisms just before Christmas. Fr Alexis is hopeful that the "son of consolation" for whom the parish is named, will assist their church in offering hope and healing to the many injured souls in the Comox-Courtenay area.—
Bev Cooke, Victoria

Orthodox Women of Montréal hear Drs Amirali, Hutcheon On topic of healing inside and outside the Church

Healing, outside and inside the Church, was the topic of the 12th annual conference of the Orthodox Christian Women (OCW) of Montréal, held 8 March 2003. Over 120 people, men as well as women, attended the day-long conference, either from the pan-Orthodox community of Montréal, or from out-of-town.

The keynote speaker, Dr Lila Amirali, a Montréal psychiatrist and parishioner of The Sign of the Theotokos, anchored her thoughts during the second part of her talk—"Healing in the Church"—in the miracle of the healing of the paralytic (Mark 2: 1-12).

So Christ entered the house of Capernaum, the house of comfort and consolation! Like people in the crowd, we who stand near the door, overvaluing or undervaluing ourselves (the same pathology), are immobilized, we are paralytic. Four men, the Evangelists, carry the paralytic to the roof and uncover it. The roof is the mind, according to Theophylact, drawing on St John Chrysostom, the mind that overarches all that is within me. If all the earthen and clay tiles are pulled away, and the strength of the mind within us is opened up and freed of the weight of earthly things, then I will be lowered, that is I will be humbled. The bed is let down, the bed being our body, our physical, emotional, rational, intellectual being. Like the prodigal son, we come to be ourselves and are illumined by His light.

Dr Amirali quoted St John Chrysostom: "The paralytic believed [. . .] He waited, allowing the physician to adopt the method of healing which He desired. For this reason Christ did not go to him, but waited for him to come, that He might exhibit his faith to all. For could He

not have made the entrance easy? But He did none of these things, in order that He might exhibit the man's zeal and fervent faith to all." This is the way we are healed in the Church. It is our brothers and sisters in Christ who carry us to Him and the experience of His



Dr Amirali, centre, with Dr Robert (Protodeacon Cyprian) Hutcheon and Matushka Masha Tkachuk, chief organiser of the conference

presence, in loving each other. All that we need to do is to affirm our wish that His will be done, even as we are paralyzed, lying on the bed of our body, of our selves after the Fall, with a soul that is immobile. The Church brings us to Him as His children and He releases us from the bonds of our sins.

But that is not the end of the story! There are those Scribes, who could not believe, who were sitting there reasoning in their hearts, the constant doubt of our fallen nature that basically cannot trust.

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What does our fallen nature do? It reasons! And the reasoning that is so beautifully complex, a reasoning that differentiates us from the animal and the rest of creation, the reasoning that sets us apart as the crown of creation, is what the Enemy uses to keep us fragmented, to keep us from being whole, from being healed.

These are the scribes in our heart: we scrutinize everything often out of good intentions and often we listen to our rationale as if it were God. And we are looking for easy answers and explanations. This is not a matter of our need to explore and examine the nature of things. That is a gift from God! It is a matter of our need to reduce complex issues into simple and palatable recipes that we can follow in our spiritual life and which help us to be more comfortable on our beds.

Christ asks: "Why are you reasoning in your hearts?" Our heart is not open to Him. And our excuse, our way out, our rationalization is through reasoning. But He is ready to meet us where we are: in doubt, in mistrust, in our fallen nature. So he says: "That you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins, I say to you arise, take up your bed, and go your way to your house."

Protodeacon Cyprian (Dr Robert) Hutcheon, a physician, attached to the parish of The Sign of the

Theotokos, also addressed the topic of healing at the end of the afternoon. We cannot go to Pascha without going through Holy Friday, he said, in an exchange with Dr Amirali. He asked how could we resolve this paradoxical question about healing, knowing that sooner or later the person who is healed will die. The advent of antibiotics, in the thirties and forties, heralded a major change in the way people in the healing professions saw their work. They used to see their job as relieving suffering. Suddenly, with antibiotics, it became possible to cure scores and scores of people who were suffering from common and sometimes fatal illnesses. The ensuing belief was that there is a cure for everything.

But we know at the end that there is no cure for death. Healing and cure are not the same thing. Healing, as in the miracle of the paralytic, is something that is given to us by Christ, and one of its expressions is the forgiveness of sins. A person can be healed on his or her deathbed, and there are very edifying examples of that.

We will be saved, he concluded, by being "plugged into" the Divine Life, the Loving Community of Love—that is, the Holy Trinity. This can include anyone, but since much has been given to us as Orthodox Christians, much will be required.—*Evelyn Dumas, Montréal*

3rd annual Orthodox Colloquium held in Montréal

The third annual Orthodox Colloquium sponsored by the Université de Sherbrooke / Faculté de théologie, d'éthique et de philosophie / Certificat de théologie orthodoxe, was held on Saturday 12 April 2003 at Archangels Michael and Gabriel Greek Orthodox Church in Montréal, with over 100 people in attendance.

The overall topic of the papers presented and the discussions held was "Death and resurrection in the orthodox tradition." Prof Paul Meyendorff of St Vladimir's Seminary in New York gave two papers, the first in English on "Scriptural approaches to death," and the second in French on « Rites funéraires orthodoxes ». Dr Andreas Andreopoulos of the Greek Orthodox Academy in Toronto spoke in English on "How to represent the Glory of God: Patristic and iconological connections between the Transfiguration and the Resurrection."

Protodeacon Cyprian (Dr Robert) Hutcheon presented in English "The Crucified God"—a physician's reflections on divine impassibility and the mystery of human suffering." Speaking in French, and with video presentations, was Fr Stéphane

Bigham: « La mort et la résurrection dans l'iconographie » and « Pascha polyglotta ».

As was the case with the first two Colloquia, the papers given at this one will be published also.



Leading participants in the colloquium were: seated l to r, Vice-rector Jean Desclos, Bishop Seraphim, Metropolitan Sotirios, Bishop Chrysostomos, and Dean Michel Dion; standing, Dr Andreas Andreopoulos, Fr Stéphane Bigham, Protodeacon Cyprian Hutcheon, Dr Andrius Valevicius, Dr Paul Meyendorff, and Dr John Hadjinicolaou.

Orthodox Christianity and the religions of the Far East

The following is a thoughtful presentation by Anthony S. Rodger, a secondary school student and parishioner of Annunciation/St Nicholas Cathedral, Ottawa. Anthony has taken all Biblical quotations in the article from the RSV, and all Taoist quotations from The Tao Teh Ching, translated by John Wu and published by Shambhala.

One of the signs by which Orthodoxy is distinguished from the various heretical groups is the organic approach it takes to the healing of people and cultures alike. Orthodoxy, coming to a new culture, does not condemn or condescend. It recognizes the good and blesses it, and transforms the not-so-good until it too can be blessed. This is the reason why the philosophical language we use to describe God comes from Greek; the Greek philosophers had already created much of the necessary theological language in their own search for the truth. In North America, it is easy to see the rightness of such a method. The dominant culture, with its Catholic and Protestant missionaries, has broken the back of the Native culture through countless crimes, stemming from cultural arrogance.

Ironically, this imported culture is believed by Orthodoxy to be qualitatively inferior, not just in the spiritual sense but in *every* sense, to the original Native one. This is so much so that it is proving difficult to carry out missionary work in North America, simply because there is so little to bless. Even the seeming good, particularly in the area of respect for human rights, consists of laws generated by human intellect and passion rather than a spiritual perception of reality. Thus, this culture is limited to cosmetic alterations to human life, while remaining unable to heal the root cause of human pain.

Some would say that it is the worship of that mysterious force, "progress," which has spiritually bankrupted Western culture. After all, with apologies to C.S. Lewis, a fresh egg is a good thing, but try applying progress to it, and you get either a stench or food poisoning. It seems that the ultimate blame, however, lies in the Western idea of religion as involving a Cosmic Lawmaker plus Fuzzy Warm Feelings. Away from this shallow point of view, almost any progress seems welcome. Put simply, the eggs had already been cracked by the time progress became a serious cultural force—and that was during the Renaissance!

As difficult as this chaotic morass of institutionalized neurosis is for Orthodoxy to live with, some segments of this culture have found it equally intolerable. Such people come to realize that they are growing in poisoned soil. Therefore, they pluck up their roots and drift like

seaweed in the current. These people become truly desperate, willing to investigate any healthy patch of soil. There are a few patches that the consensus of such spiritual pilgrims says are preferable. The largest one is to be found in the Far Eastern traditions.

This is a movement of the greatest possible interest to the Orthodox. Though the Far Eastern traditions are the traditions of man, yet they recall much of the Way of humanity before the Fall, and have a great (though not unlimited) capacity to purify *when transmitted correctly*. If we cannot interface with Western culture, perhaps, in some strange fit of geographical derangement, the Far East can provide a bridge.

To understand how this could work, it is necessary to review some history. First, the Church has long awaited the opportunity to communicate with these traditions. Indeed, the first missionary to the East was the Apostle Thomas. In the centuries since then, however, very little has been accomplished. St Innocent of Irkutsk was turned back at the Chinese border only a few centuries ago, and realized to his sorrow that the time had not yet come for Orthodoxy in China. The Church has a natural affinity for China, the oldest traditional culture in the world, a greater centre for culture and philosophy than was Greece. Given all of this, it is remarkable how little has been accomplished. We can only accept that it was God's will for us to wait.

There are definite signs that this is changing, however. In the Boxer rebellion early in the last century, 40,000 Christians were martyred in China. Now, in complete isolation from any external missionary efforts, about the same number of Chinese are becoming Christian each day. Meanwhile, in North America and Europe, where the Western churches are discredited and Orthodoxy still relatively unknown, the younger generation especially is turning to Buddhism, Taoism and other systems. Rather than being surprised at this, we should realize that these traditions are a blessing to many of those who seek them, after the spiritual oppression of a distorted form of Christianity and the resulting confusion of atheism. These Eastern philosophies find their fulfilment in Orthodoxy. On the deepest level, there are not the grounds of antagonism between us that there were with the pagan religions of the West. The East in general shares with us a deep persistence in finding what is true and what is not, a single-minded pursuit of the transformation of the human person, a hatred of scholastic debate, and many other attributes.

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But how will this meeting of Orthodoxy and Eastern philosophy work in reality? Only patience and faith will tell. There are some signposts that can guide us. One of them is the approach that these philosophies—for they are not religions in the Western sense—take to finding truth. As an example, there is the story of the Jesuit who came to Lhasa, Tibet. The lamas, who had heard only distant reports of Christianity and were anxious to benefit from the traveller's wisdom, requested that he explain his system, that is, the process he used to obtain enlightenment. The lamas listened to him, and were confused. He called them "pagans," told them that if they did not convert they would go to a very graphically described hell, and generally disregarded their every attempt to discover if Catholicism had any substance beyond this. They thanked him for his time, gave him a meal, and asked him to leave. "We are not ready to receive this wisdom," they said. What they meant was that they had been mistaken in thinking the Jesuit an enlightened man. He showed no respect for their efforts or ideas and offered no proof that his "system" produced concrete results. He failed to outline a process of self-improvement or to show them anything but a tortured soul, in need of deep meditation or a bucket of cold water. The lamas, like most of the Eastern sages, were interested in results. They knew nothing of a personal God, but were willing to learn anything that will help them on the Tao—the Way. This is the first signpost for us. Our spiritual system purifies and realizes human nature as theirs does, but ours is both much simpler and ends in a much more comprehensive result: personal knowledge of the Absolute. They will desire to learn from it, but only if a deified person shows them *results* in his own being.

The Eastern experience of the Tao is of a humble, submissive, merciful, simple force. They relate it to water. "Water knows how to benefit all things without striving with them," writes Lao Tzu. "It stays in places loathed by men. *Therefore it comes close to the Tao.*" We know all this and much more: "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and those in authority are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves . . . *I am among you as one who serves*" (Luke 22: 24-27). There are many examples of these parallels, things both great and small that will help in our explanation of the Orthodox spiritual tradition. "Drop sharpness, abandon cleverness, and the people will be benefited a hundredfold." How many times is that point repeated in Proverbs? The whole Tao Teh Ching could be condensed into a few words from The Wisdom of Solomon:

For in her, there is a spirit that is intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle, mobile, clear,

unpolluted, distinct, invulnerable, loving the good, keen, irresistible, beneficent, humane, steadfast, sure, free from anxiety . . . because of her pureness, she pervades and penetrates all things.

That is not to say that Taoism is at all like the Hebraic perception of God. As Hieromonk Damascene notes, the Chinese knew much that did not occur to our understanding before the coming of Christ. "Only he who is willing to give his body for the sake of the world is fit to be entrusted with the world. Only he who can do it with love is worthy of being the steward of the world." Guess what happened several centuries later? Despite this, the idea of the Tao Itself as a Person is still unknown to them.

How is it that Orthodoxy fulfils this tradition? Even Lao Tzu did not know whose child the Tao is, or who sends forth the Spirit of Wisdom. As Solomon writes, "She is a breath of the power of God, a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty." Moreover, the great secret behind all that Taoism and Buddhism know is the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Christ, the selfless Tao, Who became like us and gave His Body for our sake, disclosed to us a God Who can be known, and is known to be infinite, self-forgetting Love. What is more, we are invited to participate in that Love, not as an abstract concept, but as a complete mode of being in itself. That is the key to transforming and fulfilling the philosophies of the Far East, who first remembered that the Tao is humble and caring. ✦

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

Pan Orthodox Winter camp held In Saskatchewan

On February 14, 2003 an enthusiastic group of young people travelled to Camp Kadesh on Christopher Lake, Saskatchewan for another Pan Orthodox Retreat weekend. In an effort to foster continuing relationships for those who have graduated from high school, the retreat staff had worked to create a format where they can continue to participate in teen retreats. This has resulted in holding separate teaching



There was instruction and inspiration from speakers, such as Fr Stacey Richter, Youth Director of the Archdiocese . . .



. . . and then there was fun and fellowship inside . . .

sessions for those of college and career age (high school graduates and up). Our chaplain, Fr Stacey Richter—who is the Youth Director for the Archdiocese of Canada—and our speaker, Rod Tkachuk, a lawyer from Edmonton, rose to the challenge of a rigorous schedule, each of them speaking to the two age groups at various times throughout the weekend.

Our topic this retreat was “Relationships: the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat.” Rod Tkachuk pointed out that life is about relationships and exhorted everyone to understand that there are choices before us and to “know that the real you exists in God.” Fr Stacey

encouraged the youth, pointing to St Augustine: “You have formed us for Yourself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You.” He also shared several recommendations for spiritual growth, practical steps toward relationship with God.

Thirty-two teens and eleven college and career-aged youth gathered from Alberta (Edmonton, Smoky Lake, Spruce Grove, St Albert) and Saskatchewan (Outlook, Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Yorkton). With the chaplain, speaker and nine staff members, our group totalled fifty-four this retreat. Along with daily prayers, thought provoking lectures and good food, there were games of snow football, music, plenty of social time, improv games, fun and laughter.—by Lorraine Grier, Saskatoon



. . . as well as more fun outside!

Pastoral Notes

Effective 1 September 2002, the Mission Station of St Gabriel at the University of Toronto was blessed.

On 8 February 2003, **Deacon Alexis Nikkel** was ordained to the Holy Priesthood in St Barnabas' Mission in Comox, BC. He is assigned to the Mission as Priest-in-Charge.

On 9 February 2003, **Deacon Kevin S P Miller** was released from his attachment to St Herman of Alaska's Church in Surrey BC and attached to St Barnabas' Mission in Comox BC.

On 6 April 2003, with the blessing of Metropolitan HERMAN, at St Vladimir's Seminary, **Edward J Hewlett** was ordained to the Holy Diaconate. He is attached to Three Hierarchs' Chapel.

On 30 April 2003, **Priest John Polson** was suspended from serving.

On 4 May 2003 at Christ the Saviour Sobor, Toronto, **Deacon Geoffrey Korz** was ordained to the Holy Priesthood. He is assigned to All Saints of North America Mission, Hamilton ON.

On 4 May 2003 at Christ the Saviour Sobor, Toronto, **Subdeacon Alexander Tefft** was ordained to the Holy Diaconate. He is attached to the Bishop's Chapel of St Silouan the Athonite, Johnstown ON.

Effective 1 August 2003, **Priest John Jillions** is received through Metropolitan HERMAN from the Moscow Patriarchate, into the Archdiocese of Canada, and assigned Dean of the Cathedral of the Annunciation/St Nicholas in Ottawa ON.

Archdiocesan Council Holds spring meeting

Christ the Saviour Sobor in Toronto was the site of the spring 2003 meeting of the Archdiocesan Council. Both Bishop Seraphim and the Chancellor, Fr Dennis Pihach, emphasized to those gathered that the Archdiocese has shown remarkable growth in the past half year, growth which reveals itself in both increasing numbers of clergy and increasing numbers of new missions.

This is the good news. The bad news is that mostly because two of the largest churches in the eastern part of the country failed to send in the amounts they usually remit to the Archdiocese, and without notifying the Treasurer of the shortfall ahead of time, there is currently a \$12,000 deficit in the budget of the diocese.

The Council found that at this meeting, as in the previous two, the new format of unit work, with the first evening given to meetings of the administrative, programming, and communications units, was both very productive and time-efficient for the all-day meeting which followed. Because there seemed to be an imbalance in the workloads, with the administrative unit's bearing the heaviest load, the area of pensions and insurance was moved from the administrative unit to the programming unit.

There was a proposal to restructure the number of yearly meetings of the whole Council from two to one, with the units meeting with the Bishop and Chancellor during the other half of the year, divided roughly along east/west lines. This was given very serious consideration because of possible cost-cutting potential, but it was finally rejected because of the very real possibility of re-creating the sense of division between west and east that the Council has worked so long and hard to overcome.

Under the matter of the Archdiocese's finding an auxiliary bishop to assist Bishop Seraphim with the visitations (to mark anniversaries, perform ordinations, honour special parishioners, etc), His Grace announced that at the spring 2003 meeting of the Holy Synod, the blessing was officially given for the Archdiocese of Canada to begin the search. [See back page of this issue.]

Because this meeting of the Archdiocesan Council was held in Toronto, the new executive secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches, the Rev Dr Karen Hamilton, was able to make a brief visit on Saturday morning to introduce herself as she begins the process of familiarizing herself with the member churches of the CCC. It is also significant to note that Council member Professor Richard Schneider of Toronto is a nominee for president of the CCC.—ed.

Our mother among the saints:

St Rachel of Borodino

Canonized 28 July 1996

Many of us have read *The Way of the Pilgrim*, but rarely have met someone who lived a pilgrim's life. In the life of Mother Rachel we encounter a live pilgrim, who in the course of her life wandered more than 4,000 kilometres. The enigma of her life was that later she would settle at the Monastery of Borodino where she would live for more than fifty years, leaving it hardly more than once until her repose in 1928. Her burning love for Christ and for the Holy Theotokos transformed her, and the Lord empowered her with a gift of prophecy. She came to be able to see into the hearts of those who came to her and, endowed with an ability to comfort others with her words, she became known as a "Consoler of Hearts."

Maria Mikhailovna Korotkova was born in the early years of the 19th century in the city of Dorogobuzhe in the Smolensk province of Russia. Her family members were longstanding grain and tea merchants. From an early age, Maria helped to sort, blend and package tea, becoming very knowledgeable about its quality. At age 14, she visited the Kyiv Caves and had a most interesting experience, meeting an Elder by the tomb of St Theodosius, who exuded great holiness and read her very thoughts. When she asked how to find him should she want to talk to him again, he replied, "I am always here. You will find me here at any time. I never leave this place." In time and through other holy persons, it was confirmed that it was none other than St Theodosius who had appeared to her; he would bless her again at various times of her life.

A fashionable life with all of the decorum of upper Russian society was a natural choice for Maria, but it was one made by her father. She would not disobey him, but called fervently on the Mother of God for a means to escape her stifling existence. While picking mushrooms one day, she severely poked her eye, and when no help could be found for it, she asked her father if she might visit a nearby monastery. There she promised God that if her eye was healed she would enter a monastery. A moleben before the relics of St Gerasim and a wonderworking icon of the Mother of God, and anointing of oil, brought her complete healing. At that moment, she heard a soft, inner voice say to her: "Maria, you must keep your promise."

A marriage proposal was the turning point in her life, and one night she slipped out of her parents' home with only a few clothes in a bag. After a brief stay in a monastery, she began her wanderings that would continue

for about eleven years. Poor, ragged and ashamed to be seen among people for the holes in her clothes, she travelled from one holy place to another, relying on God's provision. Her bare feet became totally disfigured.

Near the end of these years, she came to Sviatogorsk (the Holy Mountains) in the vicinity of Kharkov and there she met the Grand Duke Constantine Nicholaevich and his family. Through them, the Lord opened a door for her to enter the Vladichny Monastery in Serpukhov. Her pilgrimage period drew to an end, and her humble monastic obedience as a cook began. Thus ten years of her life would be spent not attending services but uncomplainingly praying in the kitchen and the cold cellar where she would do washing, be busy reshelving foods, or be making fish or other aspic dishes.

A transfer to the Borodino Memorial Monastery was not a departure from her kitchen duties. Borodino, founded by Margarite Mikhailovna Tuchkova (someone we meet in the book, *Holy Women of Russia*) was a well-known place for many visitors of noble birth and others, with numerous anniversaries and commemorations of those fallen in the Napoleonic War of 1812. Its marble chapel and perpetual reading of the Psalter for the departed marked a place of great mercy—the abbesses of Borodino were renowned believers. Here Mother Rachel would experience particular blessings, including saintly visitations and many temptations as well, of which she was not ashamed to speak.

As she grew older, she was transferred to the work in the Church, to serve in the holy altar, giving the priests the prosphora and the censer, and cleaning the church. All of this she did with great reverence and holy fear for a total of eighteen years, remaining in constant prayer as she worked. An interesting anecdote has been preserved regarding the need for prayerfulness of church attendants, in Mother Rachel's own words: "One time, when I turned the care of the church over to another, I told her, 'Glory be to God, all is well in the church.' 'But in our church everything is always well,' the other church attendant rudely replied. I came out of the church and had not time to depart from the porch, when I heard a crash from within. I quickly returned to the church and saw that a hanging candlestick above the church cabinet had fallen, smashing and overturning glasses with oil...the oil spilled into the cabinet, flowing down and dirtying many candles, crosses, lampadas and pamphlets. It became clear that maybe not all was well in church, if one is without prayer and fear of God in devotion to Him."

Mother Rachel was tonsured into the great schema at a very old age in 1915, just as had been foretold to her by holy people along the way, including the Recluse John

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of Sviatogorsk (+1867). She lived in a cell by the almshouse so that she could oversee it, living there with an elderly nun, Rufina. They lived in such harmony that everyone marvelled—if one went to get water the other ran to meet her to help carry the bucket. Mother Rafaela was often found washing floors, helping elderly nuns with their obediences! She was especially fond of picking mushrooms, gathering medicinal herbs and berries, but mainly she just loved to pray in the forest, where she said prayer was the most exalted and intense.

Very late in life, and with the turmoil of the Russian Revolution, many began to visit Mother Rachel's cell, pouring out their sorrows, fears and uncertainties. Her room was crowded from early morning until late night. She practiced simple hospitality, serving tea to all and feeding guests all sorts of things that were given her: rolls, jam, honey, flat cakes, herring, pickles and berries. Everyone from peasants, clergy and doctors to communist party workers and beggars were her guests. Her conversation and consolation came mainly in the form of parables, stories and allegories. She had unique habits, such as dressing every evening in a white *apostolnik* and reading her prescribed three-hour rule of prayer, then dressing again in black. She slept only in her armchair. On days that she was preparing to receive Holy Communion she did not receive visitors.

Mother Rachel was a very old person when she reposed on 10 October 1928. Some believed she was more than 120 years old, having wandered more than a decade and lived in monasteries for almost six decades. Perhaps the Lord preserved her life so that she could encourage many through those bitter and turbulent years. Before her repose, she walked all around the cemetery, and said she could not find her spot. No details of her funeral are known, and she was buried outside the monastery gates. Some believe the sisters might have buried her secretly due to the Bolshevik times.

Practical, loving, strict with herself but with a joyful twinkle in her old eyes, Mother Rachel left behind many timeless words of wisdom. Once when serving tea she used different cups for every one of her guests. Understanding in her heart the unspoken question in the mind of one of the visitors, Mother Rachel said, "You see, people are also all different. Here everyone is able to drink tea from different cups, and it is possible for all kinds of different people to be saved; they should only have warm hearts toward God and their neighbours." Her fervent prayers in her lifetime availed much and have not ceased.

Mother Rachel, pray to the Lord for us!

Parmi ceux qui sont bénit:

Archevêque Arseny (Chahovstov), le Chrysostome du Canada 1866 – 1945

L'archevêque Arseny était originaire de Kharkov, et fut amené en Amérique du Nord par le saint archevêque Tikhon. Ses confrères de travail étaient le saint évêque Raphaël et le saint père Alexis Toth. Il a contribué activement au retour de plusieurs uniates vers l'Orthodoxie. Il a fondé le Monastère et l'Orphelinat Saint-Tikhon en Pennsylvanie, et a plus tard établi le Séminaire Saint-Tikhon au même endroit. Plus tard, il a également établi les mêmes oeuvres à Sifton, Manitoba.

Il a servi au Canada à deux reprises. La première fois il est venu à titre d'archimandrite et de missionnaire en 1908, et il a servi à Winnipeg et dans les environs. C'est à lui que revient la construction de l'«école» attenante à la cathédrale Holy Trinity, qui sera presque complétée au moment de son retour dans sa patrie. Son premier séjour a été bref, mais il est caractéristique que beaucoup de choses ont été accomplies en si peu de temps. Il a même publié une revue, *The Canadian Field*, qui était lue par le Tsar Nicolas II. Son rappel imprévu fut consternant et pénible pour les fidèles de l'époque; d'après différents commentaires, ce rappel a probablement contribué au développement de l'instabilité et des divisions qui sont devenues problématiques au Canada, après la révolution de 1918. Un des éléments le plus difficile de cette situation était la soit-disant Église vivante des Bolcheviques.

Par la providence de Dieu, l'archevêque Arseny est revenu au Canada en 1926 à titre d'évêque, et ses mots à l'approche de sa venue sont importants et caractéristiques: «J'arrive. Mon cœur est prêt. Oh, mon Dieu! Prêt!» Cette fois, il est demeuré au Canada pendant dix ans seulement, mais durant cette période, il a accompli plusieurs visites pastorales mémorables, dont une à Vancouver pour aider à la bénédiction de l'église Holy Resurrection, nouvellement construite. Il faut se rappeler que la plupart de ces voyages se faisaient par train ou à cheval, et quelquefois seulement par automobile. C'est également l'archevêque Arseny qui a fondé le *Canadian Orthodox Messenger*. Il a rédigé plusieurs articles, mais il était surtout connu comme un prédicateur édifiant et puissant, qui lui a valu le surnom de «Chrysostome» (Zlato-oust).

—Traduction française: Denis Lessard

Ce texte a été publié pour la première fois en anglais dans le COM, nouvelle série Vol. 12, no.2 (printemps 2001), p. 11.

From the Bishop's desk

Disease and Holy Communion

I would like to call attention to an article originally published in this newspaper in September 1995. It responded to the great concern at that time about HIV infection and AIDS. The current concerns regarding SARS or any other diseases are addressed by this article. We recommend that all read it and remember, and trust God.

A Medical Opinion: '...to the Healing .. of Soul and Body . . .'

—by Emanuel Kolyvas, M.D., *The Sign of the Theotokos*.
Montréal

Contrary to popular opinion, wine, and the other beverages of antiquity produced through fermentation, were probably more important in providing disease-free drinking fluids, than in their tendency to intoxicate. Ancient Greeks drank their water mixed with wine, and also used wine to cleanse wounds and soak dressings. More recently, military physicians of the last century observed that during epidemics of cholera, wine-drinkers were relatively spared by the disease, and troops were advised to mix wine into the water.

Wine has been shown to be an effective antiseptic, even when the alcohol is removed. In fact, 10% alcohol is a poor antiseptic; and alcohol only becomes optimally effective at concentrations of 70%. The antiseptic substances in wine are inactive in fresh grapes because these molecules are bound to complex sugars. During fermentation, these antiseptic substances are split off from the sugars and in this way become active. These molecules are *polyphenols*, a class of substances used in hospitals to disinfect surfaces and instruments. The polyphenol of wine has been shown to be some thirty-three times more powerful than the phenol used by Lister when he pioneered antiseptic surgery.

Same-year wines can be diluted up to ten times before beginning to show a decrease in their antiseptic effect. The better wines gradually improve with age over the first ten years and can be diluted twenty times without a decrease of the antiseptic effect. This effect then remains more or less constant over the next twenty years and becomes equivalent to a new wine after another twenty-five years. (Modern antiseptics and antibiotics for disinfecting wounds have surpassed wine in effectiveness because the active ingredients in wine are rapidly bound and inactivated by proteins in body tissues.)

In preparing communion, the hot water that is added to the wine will increase greatly the antiseptic effect of the polyphenols. Disinfection occurs more rapidly and

more effectively at 45 degrees centigrade than at room temperature (22 - 25 degrees). Another contribution to the antiseptic effect comes from the silver, copper, zinc that make up the chalice itself, ensuring that microbes are unable to survive on its surface.

Throughout the centuries no disease has ever been transmitted by the taking of Holy Communion. Diseases, such as Hepatitis B, known to be transmitted by shared eating utensils, have never been acquired from the communion spoon. HIV is known not to be transmitted through shared eating utensils, and considering the antiseptic qualities of the Holy Communion received by the faithful, there is no likelihood of acquiring HIV infection through the Common Cup.

It is quite important to remember that the priest or deacon must consume what remains in the Holy Chalice, after everyone has received Holy Communion. Priests and deacons do not become sick from this. Apart from the medical facts given in the preceding article, this Chalice contains the Life-giving Body and Blood of Christ. We must not allow fears stirred up by the powers of darkness to separate us from this Chalice.

It is true that, nevertheless, during public worship, we could take the ordinary precaution of washing hands after contacting others, as we are told is prudent. It is also important, in this context, to be sure that if people are taking a wine-water mixture after having received Holy Communion, this is done from a metal cup, and that the mixture is warm enough. Otherwise, disposable paper (not plastic) cups are acceptable (best burned afterwards). If the parish custom is to give only water at this time, then disposable paper cups are prudent.

The Church has, during epidemics in the past, provided other temporary measures in order to provide for the people, when their fears were so great as to keep them from approaching the Chalice. We would only most reluctantly bless these measures. The scientific facts can give us some confidence, and undergird our trust in Christ Himself. Let us not be carried away by the panicky fears of those who have not hope in Christ. Let us be an example of the peace that comes from this loving communion with Christ—love which gives us and all around life.

+ + +

I want to recommend, especially to the clergy, the set of cassette tapes recorded in 2001 from a clergy retreat in Kansas. Bishop Basil, of the Antiochian Archdiocese, gathered clergy to hear Archimandrite Zacharias of St John the Baptist's Monastery, Essex, England. He is a disciple of Archimandrite Sophrony, and of St Silouan. These make very good listening while driving or doing

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Bishop's desk, *continued from p.13:*

other menial tasks. They are, however, at a fairly high level of teaching, and not for everyone.

Orthodox Christian Cassettes
2919 N 56th St
Springdale, Arizona 72762 USA
Tel: 501 750 3808
Fax: 501 927 2867
occassette@aol.com

+Seraphim

Nominations for Auxillary Bishop

With the blessing of the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America, nominations for Auxillary Bishop (assistant bishop) of the Archdiocese of Canada are open for the consideration of the Ruling Bishop, His Grace Seraphim, and the search committee which he has created (Fr John Tkachuk, Fr Robert Kennaugh, Helene Culhane, and David Grier). Anyone may nominate. All nominations should be submitted by 15 August 2003.

All nominations:

- must be in a written or typed letter,
- must be signed by the one who is doing the nominating,
- must include in the letter of nomination a list of three names of persons who would be willing to give a reference for the nominee, along with the addresses and telephone numbers of the referents, and
- must be mailed via Canada Post only—no telephone calls or e-mails allowed—to:

Bishop's Search Committee,
c/o His Grace, Bishop Seraphim,
Archdiocese of Canada OCA,
P.O. Box 179,
Spencerville ON K0E 1X0.

RETURN ADDRESS:

Archdiocese of Canada,
Orthodox Church in America
P.O. Box 179
Spencerville, Ontario
K0E 1X0 Canada

