

*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 Bishop Seraphim's desk :

Bishop welcomes All-American Council to Canada



The Fourteenth All-American Council will convene in Toronto, on 17-22 July 2005. The last time an All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America convened in Canada, it was 1977, it was in Montréal, and its focus was the election of a new Metropolitan. That choice was His

Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius. It seems providential for Canada that this was so, because it was he that took such trouble to enable the rebuilding of this Archdiocese of Canada in the 1980s. Now, convened by his successor, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, who also over the years has shown an active interest in this diocese, we meet again in Canada, this time in Toronto.

It is a great joy to be able to welcome our bishops, and our brothers and sisters from the USA and Mexico to Canada—to the largest of Canada's cities. This city, Toronto, is the most multicultural of our cities, although both Montréal and Vancouver would compete well. Toronto is to Canada as New York is to the USA, and many in Canada say Toronto is a "wanna be" New York. It is a particularly good opportunity for all of us, though, including Canadians, that the Council convenes in Toronto this time. It is the easiest city in Canada to fly into, and it is giving more Canadians than ever the opportunity to participate in this Council, either as

delegates, or as observers. A large number of young people have early indicated their intention to participate in the Youth Programme of the Council, and that participation will certainly be strengthening for them. There will be a free afternoon and evening on Wednesday for visiting the city, for those not participating in their diocesan assemblies that day. For the local Orthodox of Toronto, however, the best part seems to be the working together of the clergy and laity in the Local Committee of the Preconciliar Commission. There has been a lot of interest shown, and energy promised for enabling the work of the Council in Toronto. Members of the three dioceses of the OCA present in Toronto—the Archdiocese of Canada, the Bulgarian Episcopate, the Romanian Episcopate—are all working together, and getting to know each other better as they prepare to welcome the continent. The Canadian faithful should do all they can to be present and to participate. It is not every day, or everywhere on the continent, that a person can worship together with around a thousand others!

The Council will be considering the topic "Our Church and the Future" during the course of the week, a topic which we hope will be a catalyst for the Holy Spirit's guiding of our life in the next years. We will do some necessary business, but primarily, as we discuss together, we are trying to be sensitive to the Lord's direction of our common Church life and service in North America. The common reflection on this subject will help all of us to refine our vision of our mutual call, responsibility and service on the continent, in our various contexts, as faithful bishops, clergy, and lay-persons. It is a most important exercise, in part because the Council to follow this one will consider a revision of the Statute of the OCA, and this revision should reflect the understanding of our Church's state, life, and service as the current Council may guide.

... continued from p. 1 :

In preparation for this consideration, it is necessary to take a look at our overall context. Even Canadians tend not to know much about, or be conscious of our history. But a person cannot contemplate possible characteristics of the future without considering the past. The two, with the present, are intimately connected one with another.

Canada's Orthodox history is much shorter than that of the USA, and has a much different character. This is partly the result of the history of immigration to this country, and partly the formation that the country brings to those who arrive in it. Immigration of Orthodox peoples to Canada did not begin until almost a century later than it did in the USA, and it was this immigration, not a missionary foundation, that introduced the Orthodox Faith to Canada. This is the case, even if one were to accept a theory that the first Orthodox believers could have arrived among the Vikings in Newfoundland a thousand years ago! Even at that time, people came to Canada either to find a better economic life, or to escape some painful local situation, such as persecution.

So it was, in the second half of the 19th century, that immigrants from the Middle East, from Syria and the now Lebanon, arrived in eastern Canada, in the Eastern Townships of Québec, in Prince Edward Island, and in Nova Scotia. As witness to this, there is, at Bishop's University near Sherbrooke, Québec, a Gospel Book, dated about 1875, given by Tsar Nicholas I to that University, in thanksgiving for their giving the use of the University Chapel to the Orthodox believers, who received the services of a priest sent to them from New York by the Russian Mission. By 1890, there began the arrival of the first Slavs from the then Austro-Hungarian Empire, soon to be followed by Romanians, and then others. These came principally from the areas of Ukraine and Romania called Galicia, Bukovina, Kyiv, and Volyn, which includes Pochaev. Their settlement was primarily in the western prairies, although many settled also in Québec and Nova Scotia, and then in Ontario. A wave came later from China's Shanhai and Manchuria to far western Canada.

The Mission began from 1898 to send priests to western Canada to serve these large numbers of migrants, also later to eastern Canada. Always there was the struggle to meet the needs of so many immigrants with very few resources. Missionary motives as such were not in the forefront of the minds of many, except a few exceptional lay-persons and priests, who were responsible for the conversion of many to the Orthodox Faith. Foremost for most was simply living their Orthodox Christian lives as they had in their homelands. So much was this a primary concern, that in many cases these pioneer homesteaders

lived in sod houses, and before building a "better" home for their families, they first banded together to build the parish church. The prairie provinces are dotted with such beautiful temples to the Lord, built of logs and/or sawn timber, dating to as early as 1894. In a sense, it is this sense of priority and importance of the worship of the Lord that has remained a constant until today. But the seventy years after the communist revolution in Russia wrought havoc in Canada, in our diocese, almost destroying our life in its various effects. As a result, there was all-round neglect, sometimes oppression, both of clergy and parishioners, often because of complete lack of resources, sometimes from falling into temptation. But the Lord, in His mercy, kept all alive, enabling a renaissance and blossoming of active Church life, beginning with the last years of the active service of Archbishop Sylvester, of blessed memory.

The problems that arise from Canada's being a different and independent country from the USA, and yet an integral part of the Orthodox Church in America, are much the same as they were a hundred years ago, and even more difficult. A century ago, Archbishop (St Patriarch) Tikhon was unable to make a Canadian federal incorporation of the Bishop, because he was a foreigner, and was able to manage it only on a local, western, level—and that after considerable difficulty. People rightly constantly marvel at the energy, wisdom, insight, and future vision of this godly and God-given man. Today, the Canadian government strictly regulates the activities of, and limits the foreign outflow of monies from registered Crown Charities, as are almost all our parishes, and the Archdiocese of Canada itself. At this moment, only one of our American institutions is registered in such a way as to receive Canadian contributions and qualify for tax credit.

Many who participate in the 14th Council will notice differences between Canada, Canadians, USA and Americans only in a small way. But the differences are nevertheless real: a republican country founded in revolution, and a modified monarchy founded in peaceful, gradual, and free independence; two countries whose principal language is English, but with quite different ways of speaking and spelling it; two countries consisting of many different cultures, but also two very different ways of including them; one country founded only in the English language, the other founded first in French, then adding English, and in time incorporating them both equally; one highly-developed country in many aspects, and the other that is popularly said always to be thirty years behind. In both countries, the Orthodox Church is broken up into nationalistic administrations,

and in both countries, the bishops are trying to work together, despite the administrative division.

Regardless of the differences, we are all part of the North American Church, and we have a similar foundation in faith and perspective; and we are, taking into consideration our differences, moving in the same direction, even though in different contexts, with different resources, and with different mentalities. Even if our cultures are somewhat different, and if our founding and present constituent parts are somewhat different, the Canadian and American parts of the Orthodox Church in America (and this surely applies also to Mexico), both understand themselves to be the local Church in and for North America.

We have a double missionary work to do. On the one hand, we have the responsibility to reach out to, be visible to, and accessible to the people of the culture in which we live—American or Canadian. And in each, there are many subdivisions. On the other hand, there are periodically large immigrations of peoples from traditional Orthodox homelands, to whom we must also be accessible. Often, although certainly not always, the education in the Orthodox Faith of the newly-arrived persons begins at a more fundamental level than that of a North American potential convert. And in order for it to be effective, it must be offered first in the native language of the immigrant. If this be the case in the USA, it is much more the case in Canada, since in Canada, it is the official policy of the federal government to enable the retention of the ancestral languages and cultures for as long as possible.

It has been the experience of our communities, time and again, that various programmes will be formulated by the faithful, with a view to being more visible, more inviting, more accessible to those in the environment of our communities. All of this is undertaken with a sense of responsibility and seriousness. Sometimes there is a little fruit from these programmes of outreach, and a few people may arrive. But it is far more often the case that real growth in a community results either from the patient, prayerful, loving, serving, witness of the believing faithful themselves, which produces a positive response in the hearts and lives of those touched personally; or, it results from the Lord's having touched the heart of a seeker, who then finds the community through one's own research, and simply arrives.

And when the sheep arrive, from whatever motivation, they need to be fed. The foundation of this food is love, in the context of the love of Christ. In addition, following the example of the Apostle Paul, the food has to be presented in a form that is perceived

as consumable by the sheep. Those who are doing the receiving have to be prayerfully sensitive to the needs of these arriving sheep, all with their different needs, and try to feed them accordingly. In Canada in particular, this has already meant the need for a multicultural and multilingual approach. If we were ever to be approachable by the aboriginals of Canada, it would require our understanding them and their cultures much more than we do, and following the example of St Innocent, for instance. But it is the likes of St Innocent, and also of St Nicholas of Japan, who serve us best in our desire to be approachable for the sake of Christ.

Regardless of the content of our outreach in whatever direction, it is necessary for us all, in all our countries, to accept the responsibility we have been given by God. This is to live our lives in loving service of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and in imitation of Him, and His way of life. Always, it seems to be this personal witness that is most attractive to others, and produces the most fruit for building up the Church in the long run. It is not we who bring or make converts to Christ, it is the Holy Spirit who does this, who moves the hearts of people. Our work has to be that of being sensitive ourselves to the Holy Spirit in our own lives, and to learn, in the spirit of Sts Innocent, Herman, Nicholas and the others, how to live our lives here and now, remembering how the Orthodox Way has been lived in other cultures elsewhere, and taking this guidance for the development of this Way in the various North American cultures.

The manner in which we live the Way need not imitate exactly any other specific Orthodox culture, but develop by the Grace of the Holy Spirit in the same way they developed historically, becoming the Orthodox Church living here in North America, with various flavours, according to the various situations. Our becoming truly the Orthodox Church in North America will be achieved in time when we will know ourselves to be faithful to the Tradition of Christ in the Orthodox Church, living in the context of the various local cultures, and no longer trying simply to transplant and impose a different culture on these ones. After all, the cultures of traditional Orthodox lands are all now as they are, because of how the Orthodox Faith and Way transformed these cultures under the influence of the Gospel by the Grace of the Holy Spirit. This can, again, only be accomplished in North America by our living our lives faithfully, and in a natural dialogue with these local cultures. It is the Lord Himself who will accomplish all the rest, according to His will.

+Seraphim

A statistical brief view Of the Archdiocese of Canada

—Archpriest Dennis Pihach, Chancellor, Archdiocese of Canada

As of April 2005, the Archdiocese of Canada has parishes, monastic communities, missions, and/or mission stations in eight of the ten Canadian provinces and in one of the three Canadian territories. These all make up seventy-three communities spread roughly along a line 8,000 kilometres long (about 5,000 miles).

The Archdiocese of Canada has, by God's grace and blessing, experienced astonishing growth during the seventeen years of Bishop Seraphim's tenure. At the time of his consecration in 1987, the diocese was so poor, and the number of communities so small, that he had to drive in an old car to visit all of them. If he were to travel in that manner now, visiting all of his communities, just one such trip would take a year or more.

The Archdiocese of Canada is the largest territorial Orthodox diocese in the world. Its vast distances create many challenges, not the least among them the necessary pastoral travelling expenses for the Ruling Bishop (and not to mention the "human expense" of the wear and tear such constant travel entails), who is responsible for communities from the western tip of Canada (Victoria, British Columbia) to its eastern end (St John's, Newfoundland).

The current statistics of the Archdiocese are as follows:

Clergy and monastics:

- ruling bishop : 1
- retired bishops : 2
- priests : 57
- deacons : 14
- non-clergy monastics : 12

Communities

- with regular weekly services : 31
- with less than weekly services : 14
- in rural areas, attached to other parishes : 20
- monastic : 8

Ages of clergy

- under 35 : 8
- 35 to 49 : 22
- 50 to 64 : 35
- 65 and over : 9

The Archdiocese of Canada's pastoral school :

News of the St Arseny Institute

❖ The St Arseny Institute awarded its first scholarship in March, 2005, and graduated its first diaconal student in June, 2005.

Subdeacon LashaTchantouridze, from Holy Trinity Sobor in Winnipeg, where the St Arseny Institute is located, has been studying full-time for two years at the Institute. In June, 2005 he became the first student to complete the full diaconal program with a view to being ordained as a deacon.

Subdeacon Lasha also received the first scholarship awarded by the Institute. The \$1000.00 award was part of a donation made by the Cropo Funeral Chapel in honour of Sir Thomas Cropo, a generous benefactor of a number of churches in Winnipeg during his lifetime.

Subdeacon Lasha was born in the country of Georgia. He teaches at the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg in Political Studies. He and his wife Nina, and their children Elizabeth and Matthias, are involved in the life of the Holy Trinity Sobor, of which the Mitred Archpriest Anatoly Melnyk is Rector.

❖ The Archdiocesan-wide appeal in October of 2004 resulted in over \$3000.00 in support of the St Arseny Institute, and there is more in process of being tallied. (Charitable donations to St Arseny Institute should be made out to the Archdiocese of Canada and designated for the St Arseny Institute).

We are most grateful for the financial and prayer support for this project of the Archdiocese. A total of \$3000.00 has been received toward the newly-created scholarship fund which is part of an effort to encourage full-time student enrolment for diaconal studies at the Institute, along with its thriving correspondence program and lay studies program. The Institute finished its second year of operation with over 35 students enrolled.

. . . Around the Archdiocese . . .

❖ Saint Arseny Institute was chosen by The Fellowship of Orthodox Christians of America (FOCA) for its annual "Gifts of Love Campaign."

The gift is to be presented to His Grace, Bishop Seraphim, at the 14th All-American Council of the OCA in Toronto in July. "According to Fr Eugene Vansuch, FOCA National Spiritual Advisor, this project presents an opportunity for the FOCA to get involved 'on the ground floor' with the anticipation that this institute will develop into a full-fledged seminary for the Church in Canada, much like St Herman's Seminary in Alaska" (from the FOCA website www.orthodoxnews.netfirms.com <<http://www.orthodoxnews.netfirms.com>>)

❖ All twenty core theological courses, along with the Reader's Programme, have now been prepared and taught at least once, and are all available by correspondence.

❖ On February 5, 2005 the members of the St Arseny Institute Administration met with and spoke to nearly fifty students and staff from Concordia (Lutheran) College in Moorhead, Minnesota regarding St Arseny and the St Arseny Institute, when they visited the Holy Trinity Sobor, as part of an annual tour of Orthodox churches and participation in Orthodox services in Winnipeg, in conjunction with studies at Concordia College.

❖ St Arseny Institute has reprinted an English-language catechism issued by Bishop Arseny in 1928. The catechism was made available by St Arseny when he returned to Canada as Bishop of Winnipeg, out of his missionary concern in foreseeing the growing need for the use of the English language in the Orthodox Church in America.

The Institute is grateful to Vasily Hetmanenko for loaning us the copy of the *Catechism* presented personally to him as altar-assistant by Bishop Arseny, with Bishop Arseny's seal and signature.

The catechism has been published in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the falling asleep in the Lord of St Arseny in 1945, and also to commemorate the second anniversary of the St Arseny Institute. Memento copies of the catechism will be available for sale at the All-American Council in Toronto in July, as a fund-raiser for the Institute.

❖ Plans for the next academic year include major changes to the website to make it much more active. In the works are: an on-line journal, course materials accessible on the website via password to registered students, plus more news and pictures.

❖ For next fall we also hope to initiate a programme designed for laity, which will include such things as special lectures, workshops, retreats, panels and short-courses on various aspects of Orthodox Christianity and specific current issues from an Orthodox perspective.

❖ Look for us at the Archdiocese of Canada display table at the All-American Council. We'll have a video display, brochures and application information, and people to talk to and to answer questions. *Inquiries about the St Arseny Orthodox Christian Theological Institute may be sent to the Director, Spencer Estabrooks, either by mail at 150 Canora Street, Winnipeg, MB, Canada, R3G 1T2 ; by phone at 1-204-783-5350, or by e-mail at institute@saintarseny.ca . Alternatively, one may contact the Registrar, Fr Mirone Klysh, at 3 Prestwood Place, Winnipeg, MB, Canada, R3T 4Y9, or at 1-204-269-3743, or by e-mail at lklysh@shaw.ca*



St Arseny Institute Administration and Faculty, l to r, Protodeacon Raphael Cole (Treasurer); Fr Mirone Klysh (Secretary/Registrar/Instructor); Fr Robert Kemnaugh (Manitoba Dean/Instructor); Fr Anatoly Melnyk (Chaplain/Instructor); and Reader Spencer Estabrooks (Director/Instructor).

Archbishop St Arseny : 'Canada's Chrysostom'

Archbishop Arseny was a man whose life was writ large, filled with historic places and historic people. He worked tirelessly for the Church, side by side with at least three of the major saints of North America—Tikhon, Raphael, Alexis—as well as with the many martyrs and confessors of Russia during the beginning of the Revolution. In addition to being a key figure in a formative time of North American history, his life of 79 years took in the birth of modernity, the Russian Revolution, the reformation of the Metropolia, World Wars I and II, and so much more. The Archbishop also left an indelible mark on Orthodox life in Canada, where he is fondly, even passionately remembered to this day. In short, his life was such that we can learn as much or more about our history generally as we can about him specifically. He was capable of being all things to all people. He was a married priest, a widower, a father, a parish priest, a monk, an igumen, a dean and rector, a travelling preacher, a prisoner, a bishop, and a founder of monasteries and pastoral schools and orphanages. He walked in the company of great men and women of the faith in every part of his life, and in every country he lived. He was a learned man, an eloquent man, and a humble man. Indeed, he was most of all humble. His was a life of service, of sacrifice, of love for the Church.

It is no surprise, then, that Canadians have long venerated the holy Archbishop Arseny, even during his lifetime, and that there has been a broad and enthusiastic call for his glorification for some time now. In fact, what is so interesting about this call is that it has not been the call of a few from a specific region, for instance Winnipeg, where Archbishop Arseny's cathedral was located, but that of many from across the country, and even as far away as New Zealand. Young and old, archpriests and seminarians, converts and prairie-born Orthodox, have united to express their desire for his glorification. For Canadians and many others, there is no question that he is a saint, a confessor for the faith even, and that his contribution to the OCA in general is a tremendous one. The Archdiocesan Archives is dedicated to him, and the Theological Institute formed in Winnipeg bears his name.

With the blessing of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America, the Archdiocese of Canada has begun formal work towards the glorification of Archbishop Arseny. Since Canadians already consider him holy, we call him a saint. As well, an Archdiocesan Canonisation Committee has been assembled consisting of, among others, His Grace, Bishop Seraphim of Ottawa

and Canada; the diocesan Chancellor, Archpriest Dennis Pihach; Archpriest Anatoly Melnyk; Archpriest Andrew Morbey; Priest John Hainsworth; Professor Kyrill Holden; and the diocesan archivist, Ms Katherine Szalaszyj. This committee has been charged with producing a researched Vita of Archbishop Arseny and collecting, translating, and collating as many of his writings as possible for submission to His Beatitude, our Metropolitan Herman, and the Holy Synod, as directed, in October 2004.

The present document is part of the fruit of that committee's labour. The research involved in this life is broad, and includes not only the Archdiocesan and OCA archives, but also those of the countries and regions wherein St Arseny worked and lived, particularly those of Kharkov, which were graciously supplied by His Beatitude Nikodim, Metropolitan of Kharkov and Chairman of its Canonisation Commission. The latter provided valuable information on Archbishop Arseny's family, particularly his son, the Hieromartyr Dionysus (+1937). As well, some of the letters and reports of the miraculous effects of St Arseny's prayers have been collected. Materials for a Vespers, including a Troparion and Kontakion, for St Arseny have also been written.

While the widespread veneration of the Holy Archbishop Arseny is most keenly witnessed in Canada (where he worked tirelessly and effectively, founded a monastery and pastoral school, and even suffered as a confessor of the faith when he was shot by radicals and wounded), the Archbishop really stands with the whole college of Saints of North America. We know with certainty that he worked and worshipped side by side with Sts Tikhon, Raphael, and Alexis Toth, and that his work in founding not only St Tikhon's Monastery but also its Seminary (which he undertook in the retirement forced upon him by his gunshot wound), have had a profound effect upon the history of the Orthodox Church in America and will continue to do so long into the future. What is more, St Arseny manifestly had the same missionary zeal as Sts Herman, Innocent, and Jacob, and the Alaskan Martyrs, Juvenaly and Peter the Aleut. It is also significant that in 1907 Igumen Arseny was entrusted with the bringing of the holy relics of more than fifty saints from the Old World to America, so that he is clearly linked with the building of a strong spiritual foundation in America.

The work we have undertaken in the Archdiocese of Canada really consists in raising up another example of the extraordinary out-pouring of God's grace in this new land. We seek to echo, in fact, Archbishop Arseny's own words, as he watched the procession of hierarchs and priests approach the newly built St Tikhon's Monastery, "O Mother! O Holy Orthodox Church!

. . . Canada's beloved St Arseny . . .

Come and see! Behold your children who have come to glorify the Lord Whom you glorified! "

Archbishop Arseny was born Andrew [Andrij] Lvovich Chahovtsov [Chahovets] on March 10, 1866 in the historic Cossack region, known as "The Sloboda," in the village of Ohultsev, Valkovskii U'esd, and was the eldest son of Church reader Lev and Anna Chahovtsov, parents of a family of five children. As a young boy he worked

as a shepherd tending "the flocks of mute sheep owned by my father and did not dare to dream of becoming the pastor of a rational flock." His natural intellectual abilities were noticed early, and his family had decided, "in view of my alertness and love for school," to send him to "the city, in the commercial branch, in order that I could stand on my own feet more quickly to help them with their large family." However, at an unknown age, his father died, leaving him one of five little orphans, and as he was the eldest, he was sent immediately to a school for clergy children where eleven years of happy school life flew by. He was then admitted to the Kharkov Theological Seminary, graduating with

some distinction in 1887, and being ordained Deacon and then Priest in the same year. From the second class of seminary onward, he was a tutor to three children attending the gymnasium, who belonged to the noble family of Pavel Silanskii. For this he received three rubles a month which he sent to his mother to assist in raising his smaller siblings at home.

One of the least known aspects of his early life is his family relations. We know that he married a young Orthodox woman whose first name was Paraskevia (Pasha) in 1885, and then had one child, a boy named Dionysius. This son would become a married priest and would suffer martyrdom on 28 November 1937 (we also know that this son's wife was Antonina Ivanovna and his son, Nikolai). In time and

according to the family's circumstances, on 29 March 1887, St Arseny was ordained to the diaconate by His Eminence Archbishop Amvrosy and sent to serve at the St Nicholas Church in the village of Derhachi in the Cossack Sloboda in the Kharkov Gubernaya. On 7 May 1890 the same Archbishop Amvrosy consecrated him to the priesthood, and he was sent to serve at the Church of the Nativity of the Holy Theotokos in the same village (Derhachi). From 18 April 1891 onward, he

taught Canon Law in the Church school in Derhachi. However happy his life was, it was not to last.

At the end of the 19th century grief befell the family of the priest Andrij: his wife Paraskevia, reposed. As he describes: "Ominous clouds gathered over my happiness, a storm broke out, the thunder roared, and of my happiness remained only broken pieces . . . From the hands of God's design I accepted the heavy lot of a widower priest in the prime of life." What happened to him afterwards is still a mystery. We do know that the inconsolable grief of his wife's

death acted tremendously upon his spiritual strivings, such that he placed upon himself iron chains to mortify his flesh and constructed an oak casket in which he slept. (This casket later was the one used by his mother, Anna, who passed away on a Soviet collective farm in poverty.) As he said in his own words, "I was very close at that time either to spiritual delusion of a sort or perhaps nearly completely delirious with grief." We know that he received the permission for monastic tonsure in November 1900, and according to his own account he did not enter that refuge without great struggle.

Sometime between his wife's death and his tonsuring, however, St Arseny spent time searching for direction and consolation. The story is fascinating, both for what it tells us about what he did after his wife's

continued, next page . . .



A recent Canadian icon of St Arseny

. . . continued from p. 7:

death, and for how it reveals the personality of St Arseny himself, and it is only to be found in his Elevation Speech:

From happy and cheerful I became a rebellious man . . . And, O God! what kind of storms did not wrack my frail ship . . . But in this frightful desert of my life, the Lord did not abandon me. I see oases. Here I am—in the coffin nailed before its time; here I am—bound in iron chains; here I am—with a bag on my back going from monastery to monastery bringing my pain and looking for consolation. I see myself concelebrating at God's Altar with that godly man of the Russian lands, Father John of Kronstadt; I see myself in midst of the elders of Valaam monastery, surrounded by tales of the lives of the hermits.

Of course, this raises more questions than answers. What did he mean by “in the coffin nailed before its time” or “entangled in iron chains”? And what was his meeting with Fr John of Kronstadt like, and what did the great saint say to him? The remarkable quality of this speech shines through in the drama and feeling of its presentation, but it is made more remarkable by the fact that it was spoken to a group of bishops, clergy and laity at his elevation to the episcopate in Winnipeg. Certainly it is a remarkable bishop who would relate such a story of his past in such a public arena and at such an occasion.

Parting with the baptismal name of Andrij, he took the monastic name of Arseny, in honour of the holy Arseny of Konev (June 12) and was numbered among the brethren of the Kuriazhskii-Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Kharkov Gubernaya. But having been led to his monastic refuge, Arseny was soon made Igumen (Abbot) of the Kuriazhskii Monastery. On 5 December 1900, His Grace Bishop Innokenti (Sumskii), the Vicar of the Kharkov Eparchy, petitioned the Archbishop for a blessing to take the Hieromonk Arseny, “as a man pure and hardworking, as a monk by inclination and as well by calling, to serve at the Kuriazhskii Monastery and there to be in charge of all services.” This request received the blessing of His Eminence, Archbishop Amvrosy that very day.

He did not stay long, however. Within two years he left for America. At this time Bishop Tikhon was recruiting priests and lay workers for service in the Orthodox New World, and Fr Arseny, being a natural preacher and fluent in many “Little Russian” dialects, was ideal for the call. In keeping with the request of His Eminence, Archbishop Tikhon of North America (later, His Holiness, Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus) in November 1902, the Holy Synod commissioned Fr Arseny to serve in the American Orthodox Mission. On 8 December 1902 he bid farewell to his brethren at the monastery. It was, as is related, a fully joyous day with a Divine Liturgy and a Molieben of Thanksgiving served. The fitting words of Fr Arseny

expressed the heartfelt moment:

Exactly two years ago, to the very day, I was led by God's Providence into this holy habitation and this brotherhood, and took the name of its holy superior, under His Grace, the Rector. Now I go to the New World, with a cross and a Gospel and begin the work of my calling; where reason will prove useless, where a word will become ineffective, there I will open my heart and fulfil all with love. But I know that this road is not going to be easy—it is ornamented, strewn with flowers of sorrow and renunciation. Ready to embrace this, I depart from you, and this one thing do I ask of you: do not forget me in your prayers, cover my weaknesses with your brotherly love, and with your prayers lighten the burden of my apostolic service.

And again, many years later, reflecting upon that day, he would say, “I accepted from the hand of God the fate of a preacher. The right hand of God transported me to the side of the New World—America.” It is interesting is that he saw himself as accepting the “fate of a preacher,” a description which gives us an insight into how he saw his role as a missionary in America, which was as a sower of the Gospel. Hieromonk Arseny reached America in January 1903.

By the resolution of Archbishop Tikhon, Fr Arseny was assigned as rector of the Orthodox parish at West Troy, New York. In 1904 he was assigned as rector at Mayfield, Pennsylvania. He was the second rector of that parish, which had been reunited to the Orthodox faith from the Unia. Under his leadership, the parish so flourished that the congregation even began to assist other Orthodox churches. Curiously, his work with the returning Ukrainian Catholics is not mentioned in any of the memorial articles and accounts of his life. Only he mentions this vital aspect of his early ministry, and in very passionate terms: “The Stamp of my apostolate is the believers in Troy, Mayfield, Simpson, and the brethren scattered in many places—which I brought back into the folds of the Orthodox Church.”

The Ukrainian Catholic return to Orthodoxy, as lead by St Alexis Toth at the turn of the century, was a very contemporary issue when Fr Arseny arrived, and the hieromonk would have certainly worked closely with St Alexis. In fact, in 1902, St Alexis himself had received “the parish of St John the Baptist in Mayfield, Pennsylvania” and thus must have passed its care directly to Fr Arseny. It is clear therefore that St Arseny's role in the return of this church was significant, although history has so far remained silent about the extent of this role. However, working side by side with St Alexis Toth, Fr Arseny nevertheless had another dream for the Church in North America, and it was one which he was to realize just three years after his arrival on the continent and

one which was to win him a lasting name in the New World.

Seeing that there was a burning desire for the faith and the desire to strengthen Orthodoxy in the New World, Hieromonk Arseny put forth the idea of building the first monastery on the North American continent. His proposal was crowned with success, and among those in the parish he found ready volunteers to donate land for the monastery and a bell-tower. However, soon it became evident that this place was not fully suitable for a monastery and the parishioners made the first down-payment on the land. The project was put before the Mission administration of Archbishop Tikhon, who then realized that Hieromonk Arseny's inner direction was always towards the establishment of a monastery, which he considered essential to a true understanding of Orthodoxy, as a fostering ground, a centre and an image of Orthodox spirituality in America. With the blessing of then Metropolitan Tikhon, in May 1906, Fr Arseny founded St Tikhon's Monastery and Orphan's Home in rural northeastern Pennsylvania.

The story of his labours and feats of fund-raising are well documented in the literature of the day. Indeed, on the day of the monastery's consecration, Bishop Raphael claimed that it was impossible "to pass by in silence those exemplary labours, struggles, works and endeavours, which were applied in an untiring way, always hoping in the blessing of God, of the respected Mayfield Rector, Fr Igumen Arseny, for the realization of this glorious act—the founding of this Holy Monastery." Fr Arseny was named Superior of the new monastery with the rank of Igumen, an honour for which Fr Alexander Hotovitsky, an eyewitness, claimed was met with cries of "Meetly Worthy!"

It is indeed a remarkable moment in history to contemplate: Metropolitan Tikhon, Bishop Raphael, and Fr Alexis Toth processing together to the new monastery built by Fr Arseny and concelebrating there. One eyewitness claimed, "Even though I had seen in Russia festive multitudes headed by Hierarchs, with thousands of vestments, the procession here was more impressive. This moment cannot be repeated! This feeling cannot be expressed! I could not expect anything more from this procession!" Even Fr Arseny's voice, claims the same witness, "was stopping, because of choking with tears." Fr Arseny in fact was elated "that all this took place here, in a foreign land, where yet we are so little known," exclaiming, "O Mother! O Holy Orthodox Church! Come and see! Behold your children who have come to glorify the Lord Whom you glorified!" Such it seems was St Arseny's vision, the firm establishment of the Orthodox Church in North America, and it is one which he states

many times in his description of the founding of the monastery to be the source of his great joy at the event.

However, in February 1907, Igumen Arseny petitioned Archbishop Tikhon for his blessing to return to Russia for a three-month period, until 25 April. It was not a request intended for a rest; rather it was submitted for three reasons: "to fulfil the debt of a son to visit my aging mother; to select from the monastic ranks two or three worthy monks and to bring them back with me for our community;" and in Russia, to appeal to noble and generous donors. Igumen Arseny asked His Eminence to give him in his name a Contributions Book for the collection of money in Russia. Vladyka blessed his request, and thus we see Igumen Arseny in St Petersburg at the Holy Synod, where he requested a donation for the monastery and received the sum of 500 rubles, and also "permission is granted for Igumen Arseny to carry out the fruitful activity by raising funds through donation throughout Russia, by the blessing of the Eparchial hierarchs." Most significantly, however, he returned to St Tikhon's monastery with "fifty holy relics received from the Moscow Synodal Office for the North American Eparchy."

Yet, in his speech of 1926 at his elevation to the rank of bishop, Igumen Arseny says nothing of the founding of the monastery, but passes on, for reasons unknown, from his duties as pastor of Mayfield to his reassignment as rector of Holy Trinity Cathedral in Winnipeg and rural dean and administrator of the Canadian parishes. He was assigned to Canada in 1908 by Metropolitan Platon, who had just replaced St Tikhon. Soon after arriving, Fr Arseny applied his enormous energies to the building up of the Church there. From almost the moment he arrived in Canada, the Canadians loved him. One commentator notes, "By God's Providence, to us was sent a tireless protector for this country. He was an excellent organizer and a wonderful preacher and all of this led to the progress of parishes in all of Canada. His incomparable, majestic sermons acted upon their listeners and very soon churches were full of faithful, sincere parishioners, particularly immigrants from Bukovina." He was fluent in Ukrainian and also in many of the Russian dialects, and so was able to preach in the native dialect of many parishes across the country. "It was in Canada," says the *Tikhonaire*, "that his rare missionary talents increased and bore fruit."

Again his efforts were concentrated on receiving Ukrainian Catholics back into the Church, as well as welcoming the many Bukovinians and Galicians immigrating *en masse* at that time. His efforts in Canada were tireless, as he himself describes: "Through the

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depths of virgin forests, through the limitless prairies of wide Canada, I started searching for those who had gone astray, strengthening the faith of the weak, and instructing the growing generation with the light of the true teaching." His greatest tool was his preaching. It was in Canada that he gained the affectionate title "The Canadian Chrysostom" for his extraordinary preaching talents. We hear, for instance, in July 1909, Andrij Herbut, who was starosta (board chairman) of St Barbara's Church in Edmonton, Alberta, about one of Arseny's visits where many came from all over. "But when they heard the famous preacher the hearts of lost sinners were softened and many of them shed tears. "

He became famous for his sermons which, being published in an Orthodox journal, *The Canadian Field*, eventually were read in Russia by Czar Nicolas II. The Russian Emperor was so taken with his sermons that, in order to thank him for this food for the soul (as he referred to the articles written by Archimandrite Arseny), he bestowed on him a gold pectoral cross, sent directly to him by His Majesty's offices.

However, almost as suddenly as he came, Arseny left Canada for Russia in 1910, only two years after taking up his new post. The Canadians were beside themselves, as one contemporary recalls: "In 1910, with the departure from Canada of this Chrysostom-Missionary, many, many people were dispersed, in grief and with regret, in various directions." In his petition to Bishop Platon to release him from the Mission due to the weakness of his health, Archimandrite Arseny writes very touchingly:

In January of this year I completed seven years of service in the American Orthodox Mission. I worked, by the mercy of God, as I could, attempting not to be lazy, to carry on the high calling of a missionary, to make a steady effort, not operating solely from rationality/intellect. In the last two years of my service, heavy afflictions and laborious work in the Canadian wilds had taken their toll on my health, and material lack have repeatedly brought my spirit to full despondency. In the last while, I have been fully invalided with a terrible hernia, which from the constant journeying creates horrible pain; doctors are trying to force me towards a surgery, but I am afraid to lie beneath a knife, lest I die in this foreign land. The Mission is full of abject misery and debt. But the All-Seeing God is my witness, Merciful Vladyka, that I came to this place, not because of luxury or because of immoderation in my life but totally because of desire to further the cause of our Mission in Canada. Feeling myself unfit physically and weak in spirit to continue this work in the Mission . . . I ask you to release me from the responsibilities of the Canadian Diocese and the work of the Mission. If a decree to this effect from Your Eminence is forthcoming, I will, according to

the measure of my strength, carry on my duties until I receive the funds from the Holy Synod to make the trip, as I have no personal monies for this, whatever.

No one could guess, however, that Arseny would return some sixteen years later, after serving as a preacher and pastor in the very trenches of the Bolshevik Revolution, and returning, he would accomplish much more, though it would be nearly at the cost of his life. When St Arseny left Canada for Russia in 1910, he could not have imagined what his life would be like. From his own account, he returned "with the title of missionary-preacher, then, as the director of a school for missionary-priests."

At the beginning of 1911, he was assigned to be the assistant of the Eparchial Missionary, Protopresbyter Timofei Butkevich. Then, in 1913, an Act of the Holy Synod established Archimandrite Arseny to be the head of the Gregory-Biziukov Monastery (a first-class monastery), Kherson-Odessa Eparchy, and, on 25 August 1913, the head of the Pastoral Missionary Seminary at the monastery, where he remained until 1917. The *Tikhonaire* writes that "while he was there, the revolution broke out and seeing the terrible sufferings and terrors being inflicted on the Church of Christ and His Faithful, Archimandrite Arseny joined the White Armies." An account of his service in the White Army is given by St Arseny himself in his usual descriptive style: "as a missionary preacher, under the whistling of the bombs, the explosion of shrapnel, I comforted the soldiers, and wished to give my life for my brothers." When the First World War broke out, Archimandrite Arseny, like millions of other faithful citizens of the Fatherland, stood firm in support of the Armed Forces against the enemy. Each worked at his own post for the Front. In response to a request for an explanation concerning just what the Eparchial clergy and monastic community were doing for their country in these dark days of tribulation, a report of Bishop Prokopii of Elizavetopol (19 February 1915, No. 26) indicated:

the Infirmary of the Gregory-Biziukov Monastery—twenty sisters from the women's monastery are caring for the sick and the wounded. The infirmary has acquired both hospital clothing and linens (for 100 beds, 4 changes), 115 warm dressing-gowns, etc. When the head of the Gregory-Biziukov Monastery, Archimandrite Arseny, was sent to serve the Army in chaplaincy, the sisters of the Holy Annunciation community brought linens and other items necessary for the soldiers bought with their personal funds which included 120 bags filled with presents, which were distributed by Father Arseny personally at the front. The Commanders warmly thanked the monastics for their gifts.

By 1918, Archimandrite Arseny held the position of the Protopresbyter-Chaplain of the Army of All Ukraine and was put forth as a candidate for consecration to the Episcopate. He was Chairman of the Commission for the Acquisition of Material Means for the White Army. At one point, he was captured by the Bolsheviks "and sentenced to be shot, along with several others, on the following morning." According to accounts, he spent the night praying and preparing for sure death, but in the morning, "shortly before he was to be shot, a detachment of German soldiers appeared and rescued the condemned men."

After this miraculous escape, he fled to Serbia, where he served as the parish priest of a Serbian Church in Milianovtsi and head of Sreza Porechok. From 1924 to May 1926 he became the head of the Monastery of the Holy Archangel in Markovii Hrad and was at the same time teacher of canon law at the Serbian gymnasium in the city of Prilep, South Serbia, where he thought "that the book of my life was written up and ready to be closed."

The Canadians, however, would add more pages. Having received news that Fr Arseny was still alive, they petitioned Metropolitan Platon with some insistence that he be returned to them as Bishop. Platon complied, and in 1926 letters were sent to Belgrade to arrange his consecration. The Holy Synod directed: "For Archimandrite Arseny, Bishop of Winnipeg, Vicar of the North American Eparchy. In order to consecrate Archimandrite Arseny, it was necessary to call a Hierarchical Sobor and it was imperative to send him, Fr Arseny, as soon as possible to America, which was completed in Belgrade, with preliminary agreement and the blessing of His Holiness, the Patriarch of Serbia."

On 24 May 1926 by the direction of His Beatitude Metropolitan Platon and with the blessing of His Holiness, Patriarch of Serbia, Dimitri, he was consecrated to the Episcopate (Winnipeg) in Belgrade (Serbia) in the Russian Orthodox Church by His Beatitude Antonii, Metropolitan of Kiev and the Galician Chairman of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, His Grace, Hermogen, Bishop of Ekaterinoslav and Novo-Moscow, and His Grace, Gavril, of Cheliabinsk and Troitske. Bishop Arseny's response to this was typical of him: "I am coming. My heart is ready. O my God! Ready!" (Psalm 107)

Bishop Arseny travelled to New York for a meeting with the Metropolitan, then spent a short time visiting his beloved St Tikhon's Monastery, and then arrived in Winnipeg to take up residence at his new cathedral. The arriving bishop told his flock, "The love of the Archpastor of the Orthodox Church in America and

Canada, His Eminence, Metropolitan Platon by the Higher Authorities of our Church Abroad, the Holy Synod, called me to Hierarchical service in the Canadian fields of harvest." He then presented to the gathering a relic of the Holy Life-Giving Cross of Our Lord, which he had brought from Europe. "In this Cross is a portion of the Life-Giving Cross, on which was crucified Our Lord, Jesus Christ. This Holy Relic is a gift of Bishop ARSENY to Holy Trinity Sobor, City of Winnipeg."

However, by all accounts, Bishop Arseny had come back to a very different Orthodox Canada than what he had left sixteen years earlier. The so-called "Living Church" had risen since the Revolution and was causing great trouble, as were various Ukrainian nationalist groups. According to Archimandrite Antony (Tereshchenko) "a whole book could be written, outlining in it all that Vladyka Arseny suffered in Canada after his return, but it would be a catalogue of horrors. His Eminence had to wage war against the 'ill weeds' on several fronts, and it was difficult at times to distinguish who was one of ours, and who was on the other side." Still St Arseny pressed on, traversing the vast country, preaching, founding monasteries in Sifton Manitoba, and Bluffton, Alberta, and throughout Alberta. He even travelled as far as Vancouver, British Columbia, where he concelebrated with Metropolitan Platon in the consecration of a new Holy Resurrection Church there on August 9th, 1929.

He was very active in directing the Church, frequently convening clergy assemblies and sobors; and although he was a strong leader and a passionate defender of Orthodoxy, he was known to be unusually ecumenical, not only in his relationship with other sometimes non-canonical Orthodox churches, but also with other Christian confessions.

In 1928 Vladyka Arseny wrote a general missive for the strengthening of discipline and reverential ways in the parishes. Many questions were considered and recommendations made, and in his words here, we glimpse the true Orthodox Canadian mentality of this Shepherd. He writes to his flock:

Never, by any means allow into the life of the Church any politics and with all our strength root out all nationalist chauvinism. The shepherd must be dear to every member of the flock, whether he is from big, small, dark, white, Carpatho-Rus, Bukovina, Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and so on. First of all: ORTHODOXY. And this does not mean that we do not need to keep our national languages. It is essential that every church should build a parish school in order to teach the children their mother tongue and its grammar, and it is very important that Catechism

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be taught, at least on Sundays. In conclusion, I beg of you and pray: in church and before services, we need more reverence; beyond the church and in home life we need more decorum and in everything—more inclination toward the things of God.

Bishop Arseny took upon himself an unusual task: he asked Metropolitan Platon's blessing to conduct a collection of funds throughout America for the northwestern parishes of Canada. He explained that, for 200 - 300 miles "there is not a single church or a chapel, no cemetery; children are left without baptism, are buried without a funeral service. Missionaries from other faiths, particularly French, build churches where there are none of their faithful and then they call ours to come. Do not say that asking spiritual bread for our own, according to faith and blood, we can judge, close our eyes and ears and say in a monotone: 'We are poor' . . . I as Bishop of the Church, seeing the dire straits, fear the Lord and His Great Judgement, with His hand; I pity the souls of the Orthodox given over to other faiths . . . And never did I know that in all my sixty-four years to take upon myself this task, it is better to burn one's soul in the fire of service, than to have it smoulder in a slow flame."

As well, a Theological School for the Church was always a priority for His Grace; it occupied his thoughts. In the spring of 1929 Vladyka Arseny, having plenty of experience in teaching in spiritual disciplines, offered theological courses—22 lectures—for candidates for the priesthood at Holy Ascension Monastery in Sifton, Manitoba. The themes of the lectures were: Leadership for Rural Priests; Liturgics; Homiletics; Priestly Writings. There were five students who lived at the monastery and completed his curriculum. However, Vladyka did not stop there. Here are his personal words:

Right now I am interested in hearing/collecting/gathering the thoughts of my priests on the establishment of a school/bursa for the "birth" of priests, candidates to the priesthood from Canadian youth. This question is totally important and sharp. The diaks' theological knowledge, upon being tested, is found inadequate. Brothers from Russia—there aren't any and it is expensive. We must think of those here, instead. We cannot look to the general American theological schools, as Canada is considered "Siberia" from which people try to run away as fast as possible. We are left with our native Canadians, candidates from which we must locate and raise up, one by one as theological cadres. It is hard, both materially and for the morale, especially in the matter of teachers. But all this I dare, and prepare the way with an iron and desired purpose.

It should be noted as well, that the sheer size of the Canadian diocese always forced Vladyka Arseny to have an immeasurable physical hardiness and spiritual strength. Constant travel is hard enough for the young, let alone for a 65-year old man. He writes:

I threw myself into my endless flying around from place to place in wide Canada not able to fulfil my schedule and often lamenting that there were only 24 hours in a day. I just sat down on the train and am travelling from Saskatoon to Winnipeg, so that in two days I can go from there—to Moose Jaw. The train goes through snowbanks. The train cars shake terribly and one cannot write . . . at Sifton—I managed to stay in that spiritual bliss for only a single week. How good it was there and pleasant! But my work does not allow me to stay there long. Everywhere is agitation and trouble. If I am delayed, then much will befall. Above my grave, write that the cause of his death was not the office but he was 'zealed to death' with flying from place to place for the good and peace of the Church. If in the New Year they cut my wings for flying, I don't know what will happen to me . . . now I am in Montreal, beginning my flappings over all the visa trouble.

The words of the Litany—"Again let us pray for the unity of the Holy Churches of God"—were, for Vladyka Arseny, not simply words but actual reality. He served in the singular unity of the Orthodox Church in America under Archbishop Tikhon and he carried this standard of a unified North-American Orthodoxy all of his life. On 24 October 1931 he wrote to Bishop Leontii, the future Metropolitan:

Everywhere in America and Canada they are organizing some kind of new Orthodox churches with Zhuk (the name of a schismatic) and we, the Orthodox, pray and observe that our sheep are turning to foreign folds. Why do we not come to agreement with other Orthodox bishops, that is, with Greeks, Serbians, Bulgarians, Syro-Arabs and discuss at our Sobors about the ways and means to preserve true, historic Orthodoxy. I am afraid to die, to leave the Church in such chaos. It is obvious we are a *bliustiteli* [protected] Church. We are a guardians of the Church.

Sifton's Holy Ascension Monastery was the "child" of Bishop Arseny, it was his home, and here he applied his spiritual and physical strength. Vladyka renewed his previous work here—the Orphanage which he built in 1908-1910, as Administrator of the Canadian Orthodoxy in the capacity of Archimandrite. The Orphanage was destroyed in a fire in 1924. Vladyka's loving heart was so wide, it longed to enclose the whole world. In his service of people, especially in the downtrodden, he saw the purpose of his existence on earth. On 18 June 1932,

Bishop Arseny informed Bishop Leontii in a letter: "And now . . . a little concerning joyful things: in my Sifton Monastery, the Apodosis of the Feast passed despite the work of my enemies. I am accepting three orphans to raise."

Tireless as a pastor, Arseny would soon face the cross of a confessor as well. While he was convening a clergy assembly at the home of a priest in Canora, Saskatchewan, "a band of hooligans, still calling themselves Christians, armed with stones and wooden stakes, broke the windows and doors and shooting through them into the house where Vladyka Arseny and a gathering of clergy had assembled to celebrate the Divine Liturgy the next morning." St Arseny was badly wounded in the leg, getting lead poisoning from the bullet, and it was this, and not any lack of desire to continue, that forced him to retire from active service in Canada. The loving flock with commensurate honour bade farewell to their meritorious Bishop. The Edmonton parish of The Holy Great-Martyr Barbara prepared for him, on behalf of Canada, a special Gramota of Gratitude. This gramota fully speaks of Bishop Arseny's dedicated service: "Today You pray with us for the last time. You are entering into Your rest. At this moment, the parish of the Church of The Great Martyr Barbara, which thirty years ago you consecrated, and in which You served as First Rector, wishes to express to You its deepest gratitude for your work in the formation, development and strengthening of the Orthodox Church in Edmonton, Alberta and in all Canada." According to a Church Directory of 1936, he was re-assigned briefly to Detroit and Cleveland, retiring to St Tikhon's Monastery after only ten years of service in Canada, leaving a legacy which remains in the Canadian diocese to this day. The Archbishop remained a Canadian citizen until he died.

Bishop Arseny was elevated to the rank of Archbishop for his tireless work, and he was expected to retire quietly from Church life. However, he soon after astonished just about everybody by applying to the Holy Synod for the blessing to establish St Tikhon's Pastoral School (later Seminary), which he did in record time in the fall of 1938. The opening of the school was another feat of tireless labour and ingenuity on Archbishop Arseny's part, and the speed and apparent surety with which he accomplished it were nearly miraculous. Typically, he was loved by the students who, according to *The Tikhonaire*, "each year on his birthday and name's day, would honor him with bouquets of flowers."

It is interesting also to note the importance Archbishop Arseny gave to the use of English in Divine Services. He laboured to establish good Russian schools

for the young, and even held supplementary classes, three and four times a week, for perfection of the language. But he felt strongly that the English language was for future use.

In the years following his retirement, St Arseny was never idle. We hear of his visiting local parishes, blessing altars, such as that of St Nicholas Church in Olyphant, Pennsylvania, on December 19, 1940, or travelling to assemblies and special occasions. However, even as he returned to the life of a simple monk, he never stopped in his service to the Church, so that we find him bookkeeping, gardening, returning to the simple joys, and often instructing the young seminarians on how to preach. Finally, on October 4, 1945, at the age of 79, Archbishop Arseny died in Moses Taylor Hospital in Scranton, Pennsylvania. The funeral and interment took place on October 9 at St Tikhon's Monastery, attended by Archbishop Vitaly, Bishop Alexy, Bishop Makaray, and Bishop Leonty, and more than fifty priests, hieromonks and deacons, as well as students and friends.

So much remains to be said about this remarkable man. It is obvious that his contribution to the Orthodox Church in America and Canada was memorable and foundational. He shared as passionately the same missionary vision as the great saints and fathers of Orthodoxy with whom he worked. He was capable of being all things to all people. He was a married priest, a widower, a father, a parish priest, a monk, an igumen, a dean and rector, a traveling preacher, a prisoner, a bishop, a founder of monasteries and pastoral schools and orphanages. He walked in the company of great men and women of the faith in every part of his life, and in every country he lived. He was a learned man, an eloquent man, and a humble man. Indeed, he was most of all humble. If he has remained in the background, if his extraordinary life and contribution to the Church have gone unsung, it is because his accomplishments were never for their own sake, but for the Church, in which he knew he was only a servant. His was not a zeal for self-advancement, it was a genuine zeal for the Kingdom of God, for the Gospel, and it is significant that he is best remembered as a master homilist, as a Canadian Chrysostom. His was a life of service, of sacrifice, of love for the Church. In a word, his was a life lived in response: response to the call of priesthood, response to the call of the North American mission, response to the call of God wherever it would lead. And we hear his response, even on the eve of his return as Bishop to Canada:

"I am coming. My heart is ready. O my God! Ready!"



5th Orthodox colloquium meets

On 9 April 2005, the fifth annual Orthodox studies colloquium was held at the Université de Sherbrooke, Montréal campus. The theme was "The Passage from Judaism to Christianity," exploring certain aspects of the contemporary discourse which deals with the question of the passage from Judaism to Christianity and attempting to offer a vision of the Church in modern society from an Orthodox point of view.

Keynote speaker was Prof Charles Kannengiesser, who gave talks in both the morning and afternoon sessions ("Christianity Born out of Judaism" and "The Gospel Event and the Birth of the Church"). Other speakers included Fr Lambros Kamperidis ("Jewish and Christian Eschatology"); Fr John Jillions ("Communion in the Messiah: Fr Lev Gillet and Relations between Judaism and Christianity"); and Douglas Demetrios Lyttle ("The Miracle on the Monastery Mountain [Mt Athos]").

The yearly colloquium grew out of the programme of the Certificate in Orthodox Theology, begun in 1998 as an undergraduate programme with the Faculté de théologie d'éthique et de philosophie of the Université de Sherbrooke, and has now been extended to offer a Master's of Theology with a concentration in Orthodox Theology. It was born of a close cooperation between the Faculty and a group of Orthodox Christians in Québec.

Bishop Seraphim represents OCA At Roman pontiff's funeral

As the OCA's vice-chairman of external affairs, Bishop Seraphim attended Pope John Paul II's funeral in Rome on April 8. The OCA delegation also included Fr Alexander Rentel, a professor at St Vladimirs Seminary in New York. Below, Vladyka is seen greeting Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, who was soon to become the new pope, Benedict XVI. Between them is Walter Cardinal Kasper.



Pan-Orthodox women's conference Led by Fr Thomas Hopko, Sponsored by Orthodox women

On the Saturday before Great Lent began, over one hundred women and men from the Montréal and Ottawa regions gathered at St Nicholas' Antiochian Church in Montreal for the annual one-day conference sponsored by the Orthodox Christian Women of Montréal, a pan-Orthodox organization of members from OCA, Antiochian, Greek, Serbian, Ukrainian and Romanian jurisdictions. The OCW has been sponsoring these highly successful pre-Lenten or early-Lenten conferences for fourteen years.

Speaker for the day was Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko, who challenged his hearers with richly theological meditations on the theme of "Christ's Mother Mary : Model for Christian Life." In a speaking style which was gripping, enlightening, and inspiring, Fr Hopko emphasized that the Holy Theotokos is the only perfect human model for all Christians—both men and women. This is so because of her openness to hearing the word of God, her complete acceptance of it in faith, and her life of total humility and obedience to Him. Not only is she the personification of the Church; she is also the "Mother of the Christian People," of those striving to live in faith by God's grace. She is the one human being who has been most perfectly filled with the Holy Spirit, and because she is simply human like us, she gives the hope of salvation and of deification to all Christians who struggle to follow her prototype of humility, faith, and love.

After Fr Hopko's concluding presentation, four of the women present were asked to reflect on his theme. A physician, two priests' wives, and a nun each spoke very briefly about their lives as both mothers and Christians, with a very interesting variety in their own reflections.



With Fr Hopko are, l to r, Dr Evangelia Amarali, Matushka Denise Jillions, Matushka Lynn Gabriel, and Mother Sophia.

Notice to young people:

Summer 2006 in Georgia?

In the winter issue of the *Canadian Orthodox Messenger*, Bishop Seraphim mentioned the possibility of a visit to the Georgian Republic by interested Canadian young people.

Now is the time to start preparing for this visit with the leader, Fr Larry Reinheimer of Calgary. It is proposed to make the visit in July 2006, for approximately three weeks.

There will be room for about twelve young people on this working pilgrimage, along with a couple of extra adults. The Georgian leader will be Archbishop Nicholas, head of the Georgian Church's Department of Missions.

This will be a learning and working experience, with fun too. There is even the possibility that there will be a short visit to the ancient Georgian churches in nearby eastern Turkey.

Please indicate your interest either to Fr Larry (larrein@yahoo.com) or to Bishop Seraphim (zoe@ripnet.com) by August 1, 2005.

Saskatoon's St Vladimir's Institute Continues, but changes format

On the May 2005 long weekend (Friday through Sunday, with an optional Monday extra day), the popular St Vladimir's Institute, Saskatoon, presented a lecture series led by Fr Dr John Behr, professor of Patristics at St Vladimir's Seminary in New York.

For the past few years this series has been held for a week at a time, and had included lectures by two St Vladimir's professors. The change in format is seen as allowing more people to attend, as well as cutting costs for the participants, and putting less time stress on the faculty members.

It is planned that a second series will be held, again on a long weekend, in the Autumn of 2005. For more information about future St Vladimir's Institute lecture series, please contact Ms Lorraine Grier in Saskatoon at

dnlgrier@shaw.ca

Symposium to be held

Forgotten voices : Women in the Church

A symposium of interest to both men and women alike will be held on Saturday, 4 June 2005 at the Monastery of All Saints near Mission BC.

Archbishop Lazar (Puhalo), retired Bishop of Ottawa (OCA) will explore the contributions great women in the early Church made, not only to the development of Christianity, but also to society as a whole. Their voices are so often forgotten, but three women in the first century founded the modern medical system.

Another great woman, who is called an Apostle in the Eastern Church, influenced the First Ecumenical Council to mandate the establishment of a free health care system, which existed throughout the history of the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) Empire. A slave girl, also called an Apostle by the Eastern Church converted the Kingdom of Georgia to Christianity and then helped to shape a rudimentary social services programme for the Kingdom.

Archbishop Lazar will tell us the story of some of these inspiring and noble women and help us restore our regard for them and their immeasurable contributions to humanity.

Another speaker, to be announced later, will speak of women in mediaeval Christianity. Who were the great women who attained a high spiritual and scholarly status in the medieval era? Which female "elder" was the mother confessor to many of the monastics in early Orthodox Britain?

Finally, Dr Anna Altmann of the University of Alberta will speak on "Christian women of action in the 20th Century." She will share with us the lives of women who made a profound contribution in society during the last century. These women, who were motivated by the Christian tradition, had an impact on the lives of the communities around them, and that impact has often helped to reshape social institutions and concepts.

The symposium will last from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Registration includes a continental breakfast, full lunch, and refreshments during coffee breaks. Registration costs: Members of OCA parishes \$25; others, \$50. For more information and directions to the monastery, e-mail or telephone Archbishop Lazar: (604) 826-9336. e-mail: synaxis@orthodoxcanada.org.

Three new priests ordained for Canada

Father Christopher Rigden Briscall

February 2, 2005 saw the ordination to the Holy Priesthood of former Deacon Christopher Rigden-Briscall, at St Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary in New York. Fr Christopher had been studying at the seminary since the previous September, and was ordained there by his Bishop, Vladyka Seraphim at the Feast of the Meeting. Prior to going to St Vladimir's, he had successfully completed both the St Stephen's course of studies and the OCA's Late Vocations Programme.

Fr Christopher is a convert to Orthodoxy, being the son of an Anglican minister in British Columbia. With his wife Kim and their children, he was received into the Church by chrismation in 1996 at St Herman of Alaska's Church in Langley BC, by Fr. Lawrence Farley, its pastor. His enthusiastic zeal for the faith was soon recognized, and he began exercising a leadership role at St Herman's, serving on its Parish Council. He had, even before his conversion to Orthodoxy, a desire to serve Christ in holy orders, and a significant step was taken in his journey when he was subsequently ordained to the holy diaconate at St Herman's. He served there for two and a half years until his move to St Vladimir's in September 2004.

Fr Christopher has always had a heart for missions as well as for pastoral work, and looks forward



Immediately following the ordination in the St Vladimir's Three Hierarchs Chapel, Bishop Seraphim is photographed with Fr Christopher, his wife Kim, and their four children.

to serving in these capacities in the days to come. The place of his future fruitful mission has not yet been revealed to him by the Lord. It seems that he will be returning to the British Columbia lower mainland for a time, while his wife Kim completes her job, from which she had taken maternity leave. For now, let us continue to uphold them all in our prayers—Fr Christopher, Matushka Kim, their children Elijah, Esme, Nikolai and Margaret—and ask that God may direct their steps. *Axios*, Fr Christopher! May God grant to him and to all his family, Many, Many Years!—*Archpriest Lawrence Farley, Surrey BC*

Father Richard René

On March 6th 2005, at St Peter the Aleut's Church in Calgary, Alberta, His Grace Bishop Seraphim ordained Deacon Richard René to the Holy Priesthood. His Grace also called forward Presbytera Jaime and the children Lily and Gabriel to join Fr Richard for a prayer of blessing at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy.

The faithful of St Peter's parish were joined by several visiting clergy, family and friends. Serving with



Shown at the left are Vernon and Cheryl Meng, Presbytera Jaime's parents; behind Jaime is Errol René, Fr Richard's brother; beside Bishop Seraphim is Fr Richard, and in front of him is Presytera Jaime with Gabriel and Lily.

His Grace at the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy were Archpriest Dennis Pihach from the Sobor of St Herman in Edmonton, Hieromonk Vladimir (Lysak) of Valaam Monastery in Finland, Fr Justin Hewlett from St Herman of Alaska's Church in Langley BC, and Deacon Gregory Kopchuk, also of Edmonton's Sobor of St Herman. Fr Richard has been assigned as second Priest at St Peter's and Presbytera Jaime is the head of liturgical music.

Another special guest and friend of the Renés, Dr Al Rossi of St Vladimir's Seminary in New York, added a unique dimension to the weekend. Not only was his presence a blessing for the newly ordained priest,



Dr Rossi in St Peter's Church

who is a former student of Dr Rossi's, but for the whole parish family. On Saturday, the day before the ordination, Dr Rossi led a one day retreat on "Orthodox Christian Parenting" and "The Power of Personal Prayer." We thank God for His abundant blessings!—*Presbytera Myra Reinheimer, Calgary AB*

Father John Bingham

On April 17, 2005, Bishop Seraphim ordained Deacon John Bingham to the Holy Priesthood in Holy Resurrection Sobor, Vancouver BC. Serving with Vladyka Seraphim were Archbishop Lazar and Bishop Varlaam, along with Fathers Dennis Pihach, Michael Fourik, Irénée (Rochon), Robert Kennaugh, Andrey Somow, Steven Slipko, Larry Reinheimer, Peter (Kondratyev), Justin Hewlett, and Stephen Pettai. Also present was Fr James McLuckie.

The newly-ordained Priest John has served as a deacon for the past three years. He was a school teacher for many years and is presently employed as a pharmacy technician. He and his matushka, Anna, have three children: Andrew, Hannah, and Thomas. Fr John is attached to the chapel of All Saints of America Monastery in Dewdney BC.—*ed.*



Fr John Bingham and Matushka Anna, receiving a blessing from Vladyka Seraphim.

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Editor: Nun Sophia (Zion),
Monastic Community of St Silouan the Athonite,
P.O. Box 179, Spencerville, Ontario K0E 1X0
Phone 613-925-0645; Fax 613-925-1521.
e-mail: sophia@ripnet.com

Circulation Manager: Helene Culhane,
377 Kintyre Priv, Ottawa, Ontario K2C 3M6.

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

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Pastoral Notes

On 6 March 2005, at Holy Martyr Peter the Aleut's Church in Calgary, Alberta, Bishop Seraphim ordained **Deacon Richard René** to the Holy Priesthood. He is assigned as Second Priest in this parish.

On 17 April 2005, at Holy Resurrection Sobor in Vancouver, British Columbia, Bishop Seraphim ordained **Deacon John Bingham** to the Holy Priesthood. He is attached to the Chapel of All Saints of America Monastery in Dewdney, British Columbia.

An Orthodox view Of Pope John Paul II

—by Monk Pierre (Blais), ThD, Religion Lecturer, University of Toronto; member, Commission of Justice & Peace, Canadian Council of Churches.

On April 4th, my eye caught bold headlines usually reserved in newsprint for world crises. Across the *Toronto Sun* it read, "World Weeps For 'Saint'." ¹

Mind you, having been a former Roman Catholic theologian, I understand the passionate devotion that many Roman Catholics feel towards their patriarch. But the media circus surrounding the pontifical funeral elevated it to a cultic experience. What becomes dangerous is when the media, in order to *manage* the news, markets a perceived cult of person, and then casts *amnesia* around their reporting in order to *focus* their audience. In all the reporting, little has been said about the complex papacy of John Paul II. If anything, this was a pope of contradictions, who seemingly took down as many barriers as he seems equally to have erected. We Orthodox should look at this carefully, with discernment.

Following in the footsteps of his namesake, John Paul I, John Paul II began his pontificate, also abandoning the papal coronation, as well as the royal "we" in conversation. Like the first John Paul, John Paul II also emphasized his papal title "Servant of the Servants of God" over and above his titles "Vicar of Christ" and "Supreme Pontiff." ² And in his first *Urbi et Orbi Address*, he insisted upon episcopal "collegiality." The bishops with the "Successor of the blessed Peter...all collaborate" as part of the "mystery of salvation." ³ Things looked even more hopeful to Orthodoxy when he wrote (1979) to Patriarch Dimitrios I of "the Sister Church of Constantinople" that the "Church," as John Paul understood it, consisted of the "great and distinct traditions [of] the East and the West." ⁴

John Paul then approved the Balamand Statement (1993), based on Arricia (1991), in which it was declared that the Orthodox Church has everything sufficient in itself for salvation ⁵; which, from an Orthodox theological perspective, was an admission that claims of papal primacy and infallibility did not factor into *theosis*. Yet having taken these giant steps forward, this pope then back-pedalled so significantly that *Newsweek* (John Paul II Commemorative Issue) could not let slip by the fact "that centralization increased under John Paul II's rule." ⁶ As much as there was *rapprochement*, there was retrenchment.

Where to begin in demonstrating this? For a start, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994/1997), while admittedly a marked departure from the fire-and-brimstone harshness and dogmatic polemic of the *Tridentine Catechism* (16th c), leaves the principal doctrines of that earlier work formulaically untouched; changes are only in emphases. Papal supremacy is reconfirmed. The argument is made that the primal authority of the Roman ("Petrine") See is situated in St Peter's profession of faith, which itself becomes "the Church's foundation." Ignoring Eusebius' *History* and employing scriptural proof-texts, the erroneous historical assertion is restated that "Simon Peter holds the first place in the college of the Twelve." Forcefully comes the open proclamation: "All Christian churches everywhere have held and hold the great Church that is here (at Rome) to be their only basis and foundation." And moreover, "The sole Church of Christ...[was] entrusted to Peter's pastoral care...[and] which is governed by the successor of Peter." And, more frightful to Orthodox-Catholic conversations, comes the clincher, "The Church, constituted and organized as a society in the present world, subsists in (*subsistit in*) the Catholic Church." ⁷ What, therefore, has become of "Sister Churches"?

This became crystal clear in John Paul's encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint* (1995). Having re-cited Vatican II and the *Catechism*, that "the Church of Christ" "subsists" under "the Successor of Peter," Balamand was then theologically paralyzed. The pope argued that the "separated [Orthodox] Churches" are employed by the Holy Spirit as "a means of salvation." Yet their efficacious gracefulness derives from the Roman Catholic Church in which is deposited and "entrusted," wholly and completely, "the very fullness of grace and truth." The Roman Church, alone, possesses "all the means [of salvation] with which God wishes to endow his Church." In effect, John Paul insisted that, regardless of any amelioration of the civil-political characteristics of the papacy, the Orthodox and any others must, in the end, submit to the Roman pontiff in order to assure salvation. ⁸ A feudal undertone remains.

On the heels of *Ut Unum Sint* came *Ad Tuendam Fidem* (1998), which sent shudders among both Catholic and Orthodox scholars alike. Not since Pius XII's *ex cathedra* dogma of the Assumption of Mary (1950) did any pope wish to assert the prerogatives of papal infallibility. Not John XXIII, not Paul VI, not John Paul I. Yet, John Paul II not only re-asserted, but rather extended the reach of papal infallibility by insisting that the consistent teaching of the papal Magisterium [teaching] be deemed "definitive"—that is, no longer

open to discussion or dissent—and given the same assent of faith as one would to any formal *ex cathedra* declaration⁹ [an “infallible” teaching, “from the throne”].

Consider this, too: since canonizations are understood as having the timbre of infallibility,¹⁰ it is no wonder that John Paul’s list of canonizations and beatifications, it is claimed, exceeds all of those of his combined predecessors.¹¹ Impressive was his 2002 beatification of Mother Teresa of Calcutta (+1997), a true servant of the poor, much like our St Mother Maria (Skobtsova). Pleasing to Catholic and Orthodox Aboriginals alike was his 2002 canonization of Juan Diego, to whom the Theotokos is reputed to have appeared as Our Lady of Guadeloupe (1531) and left her image upon his poncho. But most offensive to Aboriginals was his beatification of Junipero Serra (+1784), known for his New Spain “concentration camps,” euphemistically dubbed “missions,” in which thousands of Aboriginals were starved, raped, mutilated or executed. This beatification was carried out despite overwhelming protests by Catholic Aboriginals.¹² It would be such New Spain missionaries in 1815 that martyred our St Peter the Aleut. Some Aboriginals resent Serra’s 1988 beatification coming as it did on the heels of St Peter’s 1980 Orthodox canonization. Extremely disturbing to Serbian Orthodox and others was John Paul’s beatification of Cardinal Stepinac, a reputed Croatian Nazi-sympathizer.¹³

Similarly, the world was left confused by the 2002 canonization of Josemaria Escriva (+1975), a known pro-Franco fascist, and founder of the secret quasi-monastic society, Opus Dei. Escriva established a *Secular Institute* of vowed priests and laity (single and married), who are essentially secret monastics. Opus Dei is classified as a personal prelature of the now-deceased pope, unanswerable to any local bishop. Members are encouraged to seek influential positions as “spiritual leaven.” Joaquin Navarro-Valls, Vatican spokesperson, and Robert Novak, neo-conservative columnist, are the most visible members. The most notorious is the US-Soviet double-agent Robert Hanssen, sentenced in the US for treason. Membership is estimated at 85,000.¹⁴

So—while the *Toronto Sun* has dubbed John Paul a “saint,” George Weigel has called him a “mystic,”¹⁵ and Cardinal Sodano has referred to him as “John Paul the Great,”¹⁶ I must follow the lead of Hans Kung and call him “Pope of Contradictions.”¹⁷ And as an Orthodox, I believe we must maintain a sense of balance and not be swept up by this current of the present passionate exaltation of the personal virtues the man admittedly did

have, and by the emotional outburst of fervour by multitudes of his admirers. Nevertheless, may he rest in peace. Eternal memory.

¹ *Toronto Sun* (Monday, April 4, 2005), 1.

² “Servus Servorum Dei.” Archived at <http://en.wikipedia.org>.

³ *Urbi et Orbi Address*, Oct. 17, 1978. Archived at www.ewtn.com.

⁴ *Angelus Address*, Dec. 2, 1979. *Ecumenical Documents III: Towards The Healing of Schism*, ed./trans. EJ Stormon, SJ (NYC: Paulist Press, 1987), 373.

⁵ “The Balamand Statement: Uniatism and the Present Search for Full Communion,” JRC-OCTD. Archived at www.cin.org. (Catholic Information Network). See Fr. Ronald Roberson, CSP, *The Eastern Christian Churches: A Brief Survey*, 5th ed. (Rome: Edizioni <<Orientalia Christiana>>, 1995), 180-181.

⁶ Andrew Nagorski, “Freedom Matters,” *Newsweek* (April 11, 2005), 47.

⁷ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, rev. ed. (Toronto: Doubleday, 1997): # 442, 552, 834, 816.

⁸ *Ut Unum Sint* (May 25, 1995): 10b, 10c, 11a. Archived at www.ewtn.com.

⁹ *Ad Tuendam Fidem* (May 18, 1998). Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Archived at www.vatican.va.

¹⁰ “Beatification and Canonization,” *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (1917). Archived at www.newadvent.org.

¹¹ “Pope John Paul II.” Archived at <http://en.wikipedia.org>.

¹² Daniel Fogel, *Junipero Serra, the Vatican, and Enslavement Theology* (SF: ISM Press, 1988). Throughout.

¹³ “Pope beatifies controversial Croatian Cardinal,” (October 3, 1998). Archived at www.cnn.com.

¹⁴ “Opus Dei.” Archived at <http://en.wikipedia.org>. See also Maria del Carmen Tapia, *Beyond the Threshold: A Life in Opus Dei* (NYC: Continuum, 1999).

¹⁵ George Weigel, “The Pope in Private,” *Newsweek* (April 11, 2005), 54.

¹⁶ “Pope John Paul II.” Archived at <http://en.wikipedia.org>.

¹⁷ Hans Kung, “The Pope’s Contradictions,” *Der Spiegel On Line—English Site* (March 26, 2005). www.spiegel.de.

A book review:

Orthodox writer continues C S Lewis' insights about demons

Jim Forest, the author of several books, from an Orthodox perspective—on icons, confession, the Beatitudes, and St Maria (Skobtsova)—has recently published a small book which reveals his discovery that the enemies of our souls, the demons, are truly alive and well, and very busy too. As a matter of fact, they are even using the Internet to communicate with each other!

Forest's exposé, *The Wormwood File : E-Mail from Hell* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 2004; ISBN 1-57075-554-X; ppb 116 pp) contains an extended correspondence on the Internet from the senior demon Wormwood to a novice demon, Greasebeek, who has just graduated from the diabolical academy and is struggling with his first client, a young married man who is interested in finding a church to attend, and perhaps even a faith to live by. This, of course, is a very nauseating prospect for the demons, so they must do their best to prevent it. Wormwood finds the 21st-century culture we live in to be very helpful to their goal.

Fans of the great Christian writer C S Lewis, whose *Screwtape Letters* (1941) published the "snail-mail" letters between the demon Screwtape and his protégé Wormwood, will remember that at the end of that collection, Wormwood was in big trouble and his future career very uncertain. Well, somehow he managed to survive, and now is a senior tempter who can see every

diabolical angle that present life offers the demons in their attempt to separate mankind from God : the breakdown of families, the cult of "victimhood," the ease of abortion, the proliferation of pornography, New Age spirituality, widespread cynicism regarding religion, and so on.

Despite Greasebeek's hard work and Wormwood's diligent coaching, the young man seems to be getting closer and closer to becoming a faithful Christian. Trying to counter Greasebeek's near-despair about this situation, Wormwood writes,

How much less reason do you have to regard your client as a hopeless case. . . . Far from loving his enemy, he barely loves his wife. He is currently reading a Bible that requires him to honor his parents, but his actual attention to them is minimal. The same book calls on him to love his neighbor, but in fact, according to your reports, nearly all his neighbors are strangers. It rarely crosses his mind to give anything away, and still less often does a charitable thought become a charitable action. You moan and groan about how difficult he is, while in fact he is nearly yours.

The Wormwood File : E-Mail from Hell is a Satanic satire, and it is really funny in places. But it is also full of insight about the struggles and stresses mankind faces in our time in the largely God-less culture which surrounds us. As another critic has noted, "When I first heard of *The Wormwood File*, I confess I wasn't sure Jim Forest could pull it off. After all, C S Lewis is a tough act to follow. It turns out to be a splendid piece of writing, glowing with wisdom." It is certainly a book well worth reading.—ed.

RETURN ADDRESS:

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

