

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

Founded by the blessed Archbishop Arseny (Chahovtsov), 1866 – 1945
Published by the Archdiocese of Canada, Orthodox Church in America
Fondé par le bienheureux Archevêque Arseny (Chahovtsov), 1866 – 1945
Publié par l'Archidiocèse du Canada, Église orthodoxe en Amérique

New Series 18:2 Spring 2007

Nouvelle Série 18:2 Printemps 2007

Getting to know our Chancellor : an interview

On the second weekend of August 2006, the Monastery of All Saints of North America in Dewdney BC had over 200 faithful pilgrim guests attending the annual Feast of the Icon of the Holy Theotokos, Joy of Canada. Among those pilgrims was the Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Canada, Archpriest Dennis Pihach. Outspokenly happy to be present for the pilgrimage, Fr Dennis graciously granted our reporter, Rebekah Goodyear, an interview to share with readers of the Messenger. Widely travelled after so many years as our Chancellor, Fr Dennis indicated that attending the Feast of the Theotokos, Joy of Canada, was very important to him, and that he had made a special effort to be present. He also expressed how significant it is that we have this pilgrimage for our country. It is hoped that this conversation may give some insight into his personality, as well as shedding some light on important issues in the Church.- ed.

Q. Fr Dennis, what does Christ mean to you personally?

A. Jesus Christ is my Lord, my Saviour and my Redeemer. He is my life, Whom I believe in, Whom I trust and serve. I cannot imagine my life without the Lord. There was a time in my life when He seemed very far and remote from me, but never has He abandoned me. The Lord has always been there, close to me. I had to go through a process of having to admit that it was Jesus I needed, and I had to turn my life over to Him. He does a much better job of management than I do!

Q. What drew you to the priesthood?

A. First of all, I grew up in the Church, so because of that, I was there - the first one in the morning, the last one at night. My grandfather was a cantor. Every funeral, every other service that I could be there, I was in the church. So it was a natural thing for me And what drew me to it is really that at a certain point I wanted to serve God. Then I went through a phase in my life that I wasn't sure about this whole thing of being a priest. But then God had to reassure me again that He had a role for me and opened the door again for another go-round.



The Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Canada, Archpriest Dennis Pihach, in the temple of St Herman of Alaska's Sobor, Edmonton, where he is the Rector.

Q. What is the most important part of a priest's ministry?

A. The most important part of it is serving the Eucharist, because we give Life by serving the Eucharist to the world. It is the process of transforming, and with that comes all the rest of the Sacraments, all the rest of the acts of a priest, whether it's Confession or Marriage. Those are all important, but really it is Jesus Christ, and being able to offer Jesus Christ for the Redemption of the world.

Q. What precisely is involved in your service as the Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Canada?

A. As the Chancellor, the role that I have, first and most important, is that I hold the Seal of the Archdiocese. I thought it was going to come to me in a tank and I would have to feed it every day, but then I realized it was just a stamp. I'm defining my role as written in the by-laws of the OCA that I am the bearer of the Seal, so all official letters of the Archdiocese I stamp. But that's not really the greatest function, to hold the Seal – there are many

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other things. My responsibility is, number one, to be an administrator in the diocese, and to be a consultant to the Ruling Bishop on aspects of Church life, and also to be the troubleshooter for the Bishop. So often I am called into situations that are not always that pleasant, in order to check out what can be done, and to give some direction. The job itself changes every day; with different things to do, because almost daily new issues arise. And when you wake up in the morning, you wonder what's going to happen today in the Church, and something usually does. But it's not all bad things that happen; there are some really positive things that happen, too. And so, those things are all the responsibility of the Chancellor, to make sure they are properly channelled to the right department in the Church, and that all the documentation that is necessary for all the clergy be done and so forth.

Q. As Chancellor, you have travelled as far away as Russia, most recently serving with Bishop Seraphim and Patriarch Aleksy II. Can you tell me about your trip? What was the service like, and the people, and how did it feel to be there?

A. I have had the great opportunity of serving in Russia, Georgia, Poland, and Ukraine with the heads of the Churches. It is all extremely meaningful for me. My last trip was to Ukraine with Bishop Seraphim, and I also went to Romania, and this was extremely meaningful because we were there for two major feast days of the Church, Ascension and Pentecost. Ascension we spent in eastern Ukraine – this is an area that was under communism for many years. Yet now, just to see the strength of the Church! At vigil in the city of Sumy, there were probably 4,000 people at the cathedral, and there were ten other churches in the city that were having vigil. Now I know that there weren't 4,000 in each one, but the fact that that many people were at vigil for Ascension was really impressive On Ascension morning we served in Romne, and this was on Thursday morning, a working day, not a civic holiday in the country, and there were four parishes in that city which were all functioning. There had to have been around 5,000 people at Liturgy. I suppose to me, it always reminds of a time when I served at the Monastery of Pochaev for the feast day of the Ikon of the Mother of God, and there were 45,000 or 50,000 pilgrims there. I'm using these numbers, but it's extremely powerful to experience that many Orthodox all together in worship. We in North America just don't have the numbers. That's probably one of the highlights to be there, and to see the *faith!* My experiences have all been since the fall of communism, and often in those countries I see such growth of the Church. The Monastery of Pochaev when I started going there fifteen years ago had 30-40 monks. Now it's got 400, and that's only in fifteen years.

Q. I can't even imagine that many! Now there is and has been a staggering amount of controversy in our beloved Church recently, from the problems last year in the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, to the division of the Orthodox Church in England, to the issues troubling the OCA right now. What is the cause of all these difficulties and how do we resolve them?

A. In the Church, if it experiences these situations as you describe, conflicts are normal, because we are human beings. If the Church had no human beings, it would be perfect; it would make no mistakes and no errors. Human beings can make errors, and if we're not willing to ask forgiveness and repent, then chaos sets in. Also, there has always been in the Church (this is nothing new) differences of opinions. We know from Scripture that at certain times, Apostles were having certain conflicts and this was a normal thing. You can have these conflicts; what's important is that you keep your eyes on Jesus Christ more than on the mistakes that churches or the faithful may or may not make.

You mentioned situations in the Patriarchate in Jerusalem, which was an economic thing, and in the Orthodox Church in England, which is not economic but seems to be just internal politics, with regard to which Patriarchate they are going to be under. Our own jurisdiction, The Orthodox Church in America, is struggling with financial mismanagement, and financial problems of some sort. Again, I think that though the faithful have had to react to it, we can also over-react, because no one has still been accused of anything. Is there money really missing, and if it's missing, where did it go? If it went into someone's pocket, it's a problem; if it went to pay the light bills, that is the

The **CANADIAN ORTHODOX MESSENGER**
is published quarterly by the
Archdiocese of Canada,
Orthodox Church in America,
with the blessing of His Grace SERAPHIM,
Bishop of Ottawa and Canada.

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

ISSN 1183-4773 Copyright 2007

reality, because you can't have the church without the light-bulb.

You know, on a smaller level every parish faces the same dilemma – somebody can give all kinds of money for ikons, but if you don't have the money to fix the door, then how can you buy the ikons to put inside? That's really the key. So is this a problem of administration? I heard one comment that the problem in The OCA was that we haven't been willing to give enough money to pay for the needs that we have, so maybe that's why it had to be borrowed from other sources, I don't know. But I am sure that eventually, at least we'll get some report of what's happening and what we'll have to face. But it's important to remember that our faith is not based on money anyway.

Q. There is so much anti-Christian propaganda in the world today, and seemingly it is now as acceptable as anti-Semitism sometimes seems to be. We even had a convert Orthodox Christian actor playing the lead role in The Da Vinci Code, which practically paved the way in gold for the media to attack the Church. What can be done by this type of persecution?

A. Sometimes it is good for the Church to be persecuted a little, because it will teach us to be faithful. If we're being persecuted, then we have something to offer. I would be more scared if we were not persecuted at all, because that means we've become placid, and are not having any effect on the world. Again, I think that if somebody acts in *Da Vinci Code*, okay. That was his choice, and he has to answer for his decisions. The fact that the Church can react to it is good, because it shows them that we're concerned enough. Remember that *Da Vinci Code* is nothing new, I mean it's right from the 1st or 2nd century that that story has been floating around. So give it another round. The gates of hell will not prevail against the Church, so we get hit again. In the long run, sometimes it's good for us to get a little persecuted. The Church of Russia and Ukraine and all those countries really got strong by a little bit [!] of persecution. It kind of sorts out some of us, hopefully.

Q. Father, Canada has a growing number of Christians from all walks of life, which is why it is so significant to have the only Canadian Orthodox feast day, the Theotokos, Joy of Canada, which is of course taking place this weekend. Now you have travelled all the way from Edmonton to be here for the pilgrimage. Is this your first time attending, and what brought you here?

A. This is my first time (for this feast day, it is not my first time at the Monastery). Obviously I think it is important for us to have ikons that are symbolic of

intercession for our country and for our people. And so this is a great process, the fact that we have this Ikon at this Monastery, and the fact that it has travelled in at least Western Canada is important. Because as a Church, as a people, we have to see ourselves having history and roots that come from outside of Canada, but our Church is the Canadian Church. It is Orthodoxy living here in this country. And for that reason, it's important for us to have this identity. I think it's very important for our people to meet on these types of occasions. I was invited to come before, and I could not make it, but this time I was able to arrange it, and I'm really glad that I could.

Q. We are certainly glad to have you, Father! The Monastery of All Saints of North America here in Dewdney is a men's community, but here and elsewhere in Western Canada there are hopes that one day we will also have a community of women monastics. As our Chancellor, what impact would you see this as having on Canada?

A. I think that monasteries are good, whether they're male or female. The fact that we need a female monastery in Western Canada is important, and maybe it's important for Canada as a whole, because there is no real women's monastery in our diocese. I think that having one is important. We should have places for people who want a monastic vocation, or maybe want just to try out a monastic vocation, to have a place to go. Monastics need to be in monasteries, so it is good to set up places where people who have a calling (or feel they have a calling) can go. So it becomes a facility to meet a spiritual need, and I'm excited about that, and encouraged by it.

Q. Finally, Father, what do you see as the ultimate future of The Orthodox Church in America?

A. The Orthodox Church in America has its autocephaly and because of that, can try to live out the faith on this continent. I believe every country needs its own Church, and we cannot be ruled from abroad or afar. There is a time when a Church is a mission, and needs to have the Mother Church take care of it. But the future of the Church in Canada (and I'm dividing now Canada and the USA to speak for my own country) is a Church made up of Canadians for Canada and administrated by Canada. That needs to be our goal.

[Reporter's note: I wish to extend my deepest gratitude to Fr Dennis for his kindness in speaking with me, and for sharing many other stories I do not have the room here to repeat. For me, and for everyone else present, our Archdiocesan Chancellor made the 2006 Joy of Canada Feast truly an extra special weekend.—Rebekah Goodyear, St Nicholas Metochion, Langley BC]

The beginning of the end

We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

The finance-related woes that have befallen us in the Central Administration of The Orthodox Church in America in the early years of this century have certainly put us all on the world map. More so than many expensive “public relations” extravaganzas, this “scandal” has been reported in more media than we’re accustomed to seeing ourselves. The wire-services (both commercial and home-grown) have spawned discussions of our plight not only in the USA and Canada, but in places as far away as Russia, Japan, Greece and even Iraq.

Now while it is easy to bemoan this notoriety, we are also called to “make of it” something more “according to his purpose.” And, strangely enough, some good things have come out of this predicament in which we find ourselves:

- > We have been humbled and reminded that sin is not a phenomenon that afflicts only others. Painful though it may be, it is much better to see ourselves as we really are – rather than to put up false fronts and delight in delusions.
- > We are being led into a re-examining our modes of acting and of thinking. Since these troubles surfaced, various levels of the church have been chastised : the episcopate and other clergy, the laity, and various institutions we have taken for granted.
- > We are being watched by other Orthodox Churches (both in the “old countries” such as those mentioned above, and in the “newer ones” such as England, Finland and others in the so-called Diaspora) to see how we act and react when challenged by adversity and calamity of our own doing.
- > But to my mind, perhaps the greatest boon of all is this : we are inwardly not quite as quick to permit ourselves a “holier than thou”

attitude in relation to others : other people, other segments of society, and even other confessions and denominations.

Taught as we are in Scripture that all creation and everything in it is finite – what has a beginning is also blessed by God to have an end – this is the blessing that was given me and many others at the recent joint sessions of the Holy Synod and Metropolitan Council in early December of last year. Read the statements pointed out on the OCA’s official website (and indulge yourself by admitting that you’ve read the competition’s counterpoint “OCANews.org” site). Both of these OCA organisms have now openly and publicly - some would say, finally - acknowledged that we have been remiss in our stewardship of God’s Body, the Church. Now that is a hard, but not at all a bad admission to make, and one that we Orthodox, as I said, are not very adept or comfortable at expressing both to ourselves but especially to others.

The beginning of the end is now at least visible to all the gossip and recrimination to which we have subjected ourselves the past few years.

While many details and fine points of this admission have still to be worked on, in broad strokes the very fact of doing so is rejuvenating. It’s good to be so forcefully reminded, especially during Great Lent and Pascha, that all of us are capable of and in need of, repentance and confession : clergy of all ranks, laity of various professions and persuasions, all united before and in the Lord God. And to once again know how refreshing this is.

“Lord, it is good for us to be here!”

- by Archpriest John Tkachuk, OCA Metropolitan Council Clergy Representative from the Archdiocese of Canada, formerly Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Canada, and current Rector of The Sign of the Theotokos Church in Montréal.

A gift to the Archdiocese of Canada:

Miracle-working Port Arthur Icon Visits diocesan temples

During October and November 2006, a very exact copy of the famous wonder-working Port Arthur Icon of the Theotokos, the gift of a missionary society operating out of Vladivostok, visited churches and a monastery of the Archdiocese of Canada in Vancouver, Dewdney (BC), Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montréal, and Ottawa. It spent several days in each of these venues, and the blessings which flowed from the visits have been manifold. For example, the number of people was astonishing who came through Christ the Saviour Sobor in Toronto, from many Orthodox jurisdictions in that city, for the few days it was there. For another, in Winnipeg, there was a genuine experience of unity among those who had been separated by jurisdictional strife. The icon came to Montréal when the fall meeting of the Archdiocesan Council was being held, and many considered this a great blessing also. Finally, the icon arrived in Ottawa for the

November 21st feast of the Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple, where it was received by Bishop Seraphim and taken to a special place prepared for it in the temple, where it will stay indefinitely, until a chapel can be built for it in Toronto. It is planned that the icon will visit churches in the USA in 2008, having already visited the Diocese of Alaska on its way from Vladivostok to Canada.



The icon visiting Sts Peter and Paul Sobor, Montréal. From l to r, Fr Anatoly Melnyk, Fr Dennis Pihach, Bp Seraphim, Igument Roman (Medvedev), Fr Evgeniusz Zdrojewski, Boris Bakhvalov, and Mr Samoeille. The child is Mr Bakhvalov's son.

New deacon ordained for The Sign of the Theotokos



On 19 Nov 2006 Bishop Seraphim ordained Anthony Mansour to the Holy Diaconate at The Sign of the Theotokos Church in Montréal.

Fluent in French and English, Deacon Anthony holds an MBA in International Management from Southeastern University (Washington DC), and a Certificate in Orthodox Theology from the University of Sherbrooke (Longueuil QC). He is currently the Executive Director of the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism in Montréal.

Deacon Anthony is pictured, left, in the centre of the photograph, beneath Bishop Seraphim. Flanking him are his son Brent and daughter Elizabeth.

Medical scientist to lead Annual women's conference In Montréal

At the time this issue of the *Messenger* was being prepared, plans were being finalized for the 2007 annual conference of the Orthodox Christian Women of Montréal on Saturday 17 February at St George Antiochian Orthodox Church.

The leading organiser of this annual pan-Orthodox conference, always very well-attended by both women and men in the Montréal-Ottawa area, is Matushka Masha Tkachuk who, with an energetic team of women from diverse Orthodox ethnic backgrounds and jurisdictions helping her, has presented these events since 1992.

This year's featured speaker is Gayle Woloschak, a professor in the Departments of Radiation Oncology, Cell and Molecular Biology, and Radiology of the Northwestern University, Feinberg School of Medicine, Chicago. As well, Prof Woloschak is an Adjunct Professor of Science and Religion at the Chicago Lutheran School of Theology. She is also a member of the boards of directors of both the International Orthodox Christian Charities and the Orthodox Christian Mission Center, and is a member of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese's Commission for Science, and SCOBA's Commission on Contemporary Moral Issues.

The author of many books and articles both in biomedical ethics and in theology, she will speak on the theme of "Embryos, evolution and environment" during the morning session, and on "Faith and science, the interface" during the afternoon.

Monastery cooperates with Anglican parish, Suzuki Institute To reveal *An Inconvenient Truth*

In early November 2006, in a little western town called Cloverdale BC, the old-fashioned Clova Theatre was the site of a gathering of over 350 people who had come to watch the screening of former US Vice-president Al Gore's film, *An Inconvenient Truth*. Main event sponsors were the Anglican parish church in Cloverdale through its priest, Craig Vance; the Suzuki Institute through its representative Ian Bruce; and All Saints Orthodox Monastery's abbot, Archbishop Lazar, a retired bishop of the Archdiocese of Canada, and the Canadian secretary for the international Orthodox Peace Fellowship.

Gore's 96-minute film gives an impressive, thought-provoking, and somewhat alarming portrayal of the destruction of the earth's environment. He and his team of scientists inform us that catastrophes such as Hurricane Katrina and the 2005 floods and droughts in China and India are the direct results of politicians' ignoring the problem of the environment. He illustrates how ice layers in Antarctica's glaciers read like tree rings and tell us that carbon monoxide levels are at their highest in the world's 6-billion year history. This means that the earth's atmosphere thickens and traps infrared rays, heating the oceans and melting the glaciers of Antarctica and Greenland, a deadly event that risks placing most of Beijing, Shanghai, the Netherlands, San Francisco, Florida and Manhattan under twenty feet of water.

But as Mr Gore points out, there is still hope and time to act, which is what the message of this gathering was all about. The film ended to roaring applause, and was followed by religious leaders and scientists supporting Gore's theme that it is not too late. Ian Bruce of the Suzuki Institute, a climate change specialist and expert on the rapidly diminishing state of the world, spoke concisely about the issues and what we as individuals can do to change them. Using examples of what people in Europe and Japan, as well as California and Quebec have already begun to institute, he made it clear what our choices need to be. He painted a picture of a future that has the potential to rescue our children from certain despair, *if we take action now*.

The Reverend Mr Craig elaborated on what can be done by asking that the audience begin writing to their MLAs demanding and pressuring for action. He also described more cost-efficient and environmentally-friendly modes of transport, and thanked the other sponsors of the evening who had brought pamphlets and samples of new technologies which might make a difference.

Yet perhaps the man who clarified the issue the best, putting it into proper perspective, was Archbishop Lazar. His message was simple but poignant and timeless : that we must learn to love one another, and if that is not possible, then at least to *depend* upon each other, and thereby to work as a team to be responsible stewards of our world. "No matter what you believe in," he said, "this concerns us all, and we cannot be idle and do nothing."

It appeared from the responses to the speakers and the many questions, that everyone present hoped that people would not just go home "entertained" by the film, but enlightened and determined to contribute personally as much as possible to solutions to this problem.

—Rebekah Goodyear, St Nicholas' Metochion, Langley BC

'Renaissance' at St John the Divine, Windsor, continues

Since the *Messenger's* last report a year ago on the "rebirth" of St John the Divine in Windsor, this little parish community in its beautiful, historic Orthodox temple (founded in 1914 - 16), has continued to struggle and thrive. Led by its president/administrator, Subdeacon Michael Boyer, even without regular clergy service the parish would meet weekly for Reader's Services, and managed to organize volunteer repair and renovation for the church hall, carry on a Church school programme for children and adults, and plan for many other things like the blessing of graves (by visiting clergy from Detroit or Toronto), and so forth.



The historic building of St John the Divine in Windsor, Ontario.

On 29 - 30 September 2006, Bishop Seraphim and Chancellor Fr Dennis Pihach made a pastoral visit to the parish, inspecting the temple and hall and discussing plans for the future. At the Divine Liturgy on Saturday morning, there was a baptism (of Nathaniel Douglas Lee Mart), a chrismation (of John Charles Bowser), and the ordination of Reader Michael Boyar as a Subdeacon.

Then on 1 January 2007, Bishop Seraphim returned to ordain Deacon Constantine (Dean) Katsilas, who had been helping the parish with Pro-Deacon Services for some time, to the Holy Priesthood. He will serve as the Rector, and because he lives in Windsor, where he and his Matushka have a medical supply distribution business, complications for clergy of international border crossings from Detroit or long commutes from Toronto will no longer be involved.

An interesting aspect of the parish is its organization. Subdeacon Michael

Boyer explains this. "Many people have been asking just how we are organizing ourselves to help bring this church back to active life. It is simple: We consider ourselves a Mission Group of dedicated and energetic Orthodox Christians who feel that there is an excellent opportunity for Growth in the teachings of our Faith, and want to spread the Love and Compassion of God's Will through Prayer and Celebration. We created an Action Plan that we formatted as a group, and work hard to accomplish our goals. We are looking for people to join our Core Group - to help develop our little church into something absolutely exciting and strong, so if you have the desire and energy to help make great things happen, please let us know." This quotation is found on their website, and it is remarkable how much their staying in contact with each other by the Internet, across an international border, has helped in the re-organization and growth of this parish community. Regular announcements of plans and activities, parish prayers lists, requests for volunteer help in renovation, reports of successful celebrations and activities, etc.—all of these are communicated through this medium.



Some of the parish members with Bishop Seraphim on September 30.



With Vladyka Seraphim are the new priest for St John's, Fr Constantine Katsilas, his Matushka Patricia, and their sons (from l to r), Zackary, Nicholas, and Michael. Fr Constantine was ordained on 1 January 2007.

Fall BC Deanery meeting

Clergy and lay members of BC parishes gathered on Saturday, October 28th to pray, hear speakers, and share a time of fellowship. Vancouver's Holy Resurrection Church hosted the event and generously provided lunch for the participants.

After an opening moleben, a brief business session saw the choosing of a deanery candidate who will stand for election to Archdiocesan Council at the upcoming Archdiocesan Assembly in Ottawa next July. Sava Duran was the nominee selected from among several presented by the various parishes. Also in the business session, Fr John Hainsworth of Victoria spoke about the success of the 2006 deanery camp and plans for next year's camp at a new location in Nanoose Bay, Vancouver Island, in the last week of August 2007.

Guest speaker Fr Michael Gillis of Holy Nativity Antiochian Parish in Ft Langley spoke on Lazarus and the rich man, encouraging us who have the riches of Orthodoxy to see the parable as a call to feed not only those who are physically hungry, but also those who are spiritually starving.

During lunch the participants shared the hall with hard-working members of Holy Resurrection, who were preparing perogies for their upcoming bazaar. All enjoyed watching the St Arseny BC Deanery Camp Video while they worked and ate.

After lunch a session was held with two more presenters: All Saints Victoria parish member Bev Cooke, author of the new Conciliar Press book *Keeper of the Light: The Life of Macrina the Elder*; and Fr Michael Gillis's Khouria, Bonnie Gillis, the illustrator of the book. Bev read from the exciting first chapter of this young adult historical novel, and then she and Bonnie answered questions about their work.

The day closed with prayer and an informal time of browsing the book table, where Bev's book and others were available, including the prayer book recently published by All Saints parish, Victoria. Bonnie's artwork was also on display there, as was the "house cup" trophy proclaiming the teamwork achievements of children at the 2006 deanery camp. — Archpriest Lawrence Farley, Dean of British Columbia

1st deanery hockey tournament!

At last, proof that Orthodoxy is now fully Canadian: the first-ever BC Deanery Hockey Tournament! (Of course, being BC, it had to be floor, not ice, hockey!) On Monday 13 November 2006, the Mainland Goads (Acts 9:5)

met the Island Four-Year-Olds-with-Sticks (the Victoria mission parish is four years old now) at high noon, or rather, a little past noon, this being an Orthodox event. The meet began with the Dean of BC calling on all to join in singing "O Lord, Save Your People."

Despite Island captain Fr John Hainsworth's stirring rendition of the "We happy few!" speech from Shakespeare's *Henry V*, the Mainland team grabbed an early lead in the first game. Island Four-Year-Olds goalie and youngest player Mark Hargreaves defended his net heroically, letting in only a few of the constant barrage of shots; and his team-mates rallied to score on the Goads. It was not enough, however, to stop the Mainland team, whose superior numbers allowed them to refresh the lines of their players frequently. After four 10-minute halves played with skill and determination by both teams, the Goads stood as winners of two games straight out of the planned three.



The teams at play!

Instead of conceding, however, the Four-Year-Olds redeemed their honour by defeating the Mainland at a pickup game of soccer, the Island's preferred sport, which they play weekly.

A crowd of supporters of all ages travelled from Victoria, Greater Vancouver and the Fraser Valley as far east as Chilliwack to cheer on the teams. At the final whistle, all adjourned for pizza and fellowship at Holy Resurrection church hall. The tournament has become an instant tradition, and the players expect to face off again as early as spring 2007. Final scores were, Game One: Mainland 8, Island 2; Game Two: Mainland 6, Island 2; Game Three (Soccer): Island 10, Mainland 2.

— Matushka Donna Farley, St Herman's, Surrey BC



A portion of the cheering section!

Chapel opens in Comox Valley

After seven years of Orthodox Christian witness and worship in the Comox Valley, the community of St Barnabas has entered a new stage of growth and service with the opening of their own chapel.

The mission began with a reader service in September 1998, and until this November held services in the hospital chapel at Courtenay. But the longing for a more permanent home has grown on the faithful through the years, and in the summer of 2005 Fr Alexis Nikkel began work on a chapel on the rented property where his family lives. Foundation stones were laid, and a log base set upon them, so that the chapel can one day be moved to another location. With the help and donations of family, parishioners and friends of St Barnabas, and sometimes miraculous provision of materials, Fr Alexis held the first services in the still-roofless chapel at Pascha 2006.

The little building continued to evolve until at last the mission was able to move into the chapel in November 2006. With no electricity, hanging lamps and a portable heater provide the necessary heat and light. Icons of St Barnabas and St John the Forerunner written by Matushka Jenny Hainsworth of All Saints, Victoria, are among those gracing the iconostasis. While the chapel hosts the St Barnabas mission community, the dedication of the building itself is to the Holy Transfiguration, in part because one day, God willing, the mission will grow and establish a larger building dedicated to St Barnabas elsewhere in the area.

Fr Alexis also remarks, “The vision to build our own chapel came while I was praying in the chapel at Holy Transfiguration Hermitage (Gibsons Landing, BC).” The new chapel, though considerably larger, is based on the layout of the chapel at the hermitage. “There was an agreement and a genuine desire among the parishioners at St Barnabas Mission to call the chapel Holy Transfiguration,” Fr Alexis adds, “because it is our wish to be transfigured into the likeness of Christ. In other words, the name of our chapel is part of our vision.”



Fr Alexei Nikkel (l) receives icon of St Herman, written by Igumen Gregory (Papazian) and presented to St Barnabas Mission by the BC Dean, Fr Lawrence Farley, on behalf of St Herman's, Langley, where the Nikkel family entered the faith before beginning their mission in Comox.

To view the remarkable progression of this beautiful small temple from foundation to finished chapel, visit <http://stbarnabas.orthodoxmission.org/> —Matushka Donna Farley, St Herman's, Surrey BC

For peace and understanding : an introductory retreat

On 6 January 2007, the Monastery of All Saints of North America in Dewdney BC was host to a retreat held to introduce Protestant Christians to Orthodox Christianity and to the Orthodox approach to Holy Scripture. Present were approximately one hundred Evangelical Protestants and about fifty Orthodox Christians.

The retreat was conducted as a conversation between Archbishop Lazar of the monastery, as well as Professor David Goa of Edmonton, and the Rev Brad Jersak, pastor of the nearby Fresh Wind Evangelical Free Church. After a 30-minute conversation on “approaching the Scripture through Jesus Christ,” the audience was invited into the conversation with questions and comments. Four such sessions were held during the day.

The all-day retreat ended with the Vespers of Nativity Eve. Nearly all the participants in the conversations stayed for the service. Bishop Varlaam, Fr Moses

and the chanter Andrew Bingham spend a half hour practising with the Protestants so that they would be able to join in the congregational singing.

The ladies of St Nicholas Parish, Langley catered the much-appreciated lunch and “holy supper” for the retreat. Also supporting this event were parishioners from St Nina's Mission in Vancouver, Holy Trinity Romanian Orthodox Church in New Westminster, and Holy Resurrection Sobor in Vancouver. After Vespers, a group from the professional Romanian Chorale sang Romanian colinde (carols) for everyone.

The retreat was widely perceived as a tremendous success, and the plan to have such conversations continue seemed assured. Almost all those who attended this retreat also pre-registered for the next one, which will be held at the end of March. A CD and partial DVD of the sessions will be available shortly.- rg

Spiritual fathers and mothers

As I am travelling around the Archdiocese, I hear repeatedly talk about persons' needing a "spiritual father," and this expressed with some anxiety. People are reading various books, and hearing various people speak about this ideal. But there is, in my opinion, confusion about the subject, and I wish to address this in the following words.

Spiritual fathers are a rare phenomenon. And the concept should not be limited to fathers (monks, priests, sometimes laymen) alone, because there are also spiritual mothers (usually nuns, but sometimes laywomen), who have the same gift. Such persons have a gift from God to be able to lead people, in an environment of life-giving Christian love, into the Christian Way, by their examples, by their prayers, by their lives, by their words and by their embodying the unity of all. They help people to repent. By this I mean that they help people to turn their lives around from darkness to light, from death to life, from selfishness to selflessness, from self-love to selfless love. Spiritual parenthood is a charism (spiritual gift) from the Lord; it is never learned or acquired, as skills are acquired at a college. It should be obvious to all of us that such persons are extremely rare.

They were previously quite rare, but now they are even scarcer. Occasionally, a person might, on pilgrimage or other travel, encounter such a person, and the encounter can be life-changing. But that does not mean that there is perpetual access to such a person. It is important to take every blessing that comes from the Lord in such an encounter, and to live up to the repentance that results from it. But these encounters are generally like the experience of the Transfiguration on Mt Tabor—it may not be repeatable, but it has to be lived out.

Perhaps it is in part due to the lack in proper parenting at the present time that there now seems to be such a compulsion to find a spiritual parent. Perhaps it is a point of pride, also. Some see it as a bragging point, or a point of prestige to be able to say "I have a spiritual father/mother." Perhaps it is because one has read it in a book that he should have a spiritual father/mother. Perhaps that is exactly why the Lord does not bless a person to have such a thing. Not even every monastic community has the blessing of such a spiritual guide!

So why are we so special that we can pridefully announce that we have a "spiritual father" or a "spiritual mother"? Yes, we are, everyone of us, in one sense "special," because the Lord loves each one uniquely and personally. But spiritual fathers/mothers are not some kind of necessary psychologist or personal trainer (except

when the Lord specifically blesses). There is no universal spiritual methodology taught by a guru. Our life in Christ is all about love, and simply that. Sometimes the Lord does send us a spiritual parent as a special gift, for our unique need. If this should happen, then count it as a great blessing because, as I said, such people are very rare in our time.

Sometimes the concept of "spiritual father" gets mixed up or confused with sacramental Confession. Receiving Holy Communion regularly, or at all, requires going to Confession also, according to one system or another. Confession of sins is important, and the advice, direction, and/or correction that comes with it by way of the priest is also important. But hearing confessions and giving direction/advice/correction is not at all the same as spiritual fatherhood, even if there be similarities.

A priest cannot command one to be his "spiritual child," nor limit to whom anyone can go for confession. It is true that because of normal parish discipline, the priest in charge of the parish needs to know if one is confessing elsewhere. This does not mean that a parishioner need go to him. Sometimes the relationship with a priest who demands this kind of exclusivity can become controlling, and even abusive. Given certain temptations, it could even become slave-like. We also have to have confidence in the one who hears the confession, and that is not always one's Rector. So there needs simply to be professional communication between the clergy as to the currency of the blessing for a person to receive Holy Communion.

Do we have a right to receive Communion? No. It is our responsibility, yes. But our lives must, as the Scripture indicates, support this responsibility, and enable the priest to whom we confess to give the blessing for it. If one's life is an open betrayal of Christ (and there really are no secrets in the Church), then how could the priest admit him or her to the Chalice?

One way or another, each of us has to repent, to change his/her ways. Not that any human being could ever be worthy. No one is, nor can be, worthy. It is Christ who makes one worthy, just as we are asking Him in our preparatory prayers. Our lives in Christ need to resemble what the Psalmist describes: "as the eyes of a handmaid look to the hand of the mistress . . ." so the eyes of our hearts need always to look to the Lord for His blessing, and His direction. If we are regularly and frequently confessing our sins (which are similar to those of everyone else), the Lord will bring us healing for our hearts, our souls, our bodies.

Yes, Confession is about healing. Certain persons, especially those suffering from addiction, benefit from confessing very frequently. And all Orthodox Christians

should cultivate the habit of confessing regularly. The Lord gives His grace. With Confession and Holy Communion comes the ability to live a life more pleasing to Christ, and more filled with selfless love. Let us avoid binding ourselves needlessly with anything motivated by fear or pride. In Christ, let us live in the true freedom that comes with His love. Let us live in Him. *+Seraphim*

About entering the Temple

I have noticed a lot of people being unsure of themselves as they enter the Temple, and I was recently asked a question which gives me the opportunity to present what I have received, and how I understand this. It should be understood, however, that by writing this, I am not expecting everyone to do either exactly or always what is written here. This is a reflection on my general experience, with a recognition that there is a great variety of practice in the Church.

It is important that we always try to remember that the Church is both (1) the Assembly of the Faithful who, as members of the Body of Christ, are therefore called the Church; and (2) a building, also called the Temple, similar in some ways to the Old Testament Temple, which shelters the Holy Table, or Altar. Where this Holy Table rests is similar to the Holy of Holies in the Old Testament, and that is why the area surrounding it is treated with such awe, care, and reverence. The central part of the building, sometimes now called the nave, partly because it can resemble a ship, is where the Faithful stand together in worship and in prayer, and focussed on this Holy Table. This arrangement is parallel in a way to the juxtaposition of the Old Testament Holy Place and the place where the Israelites stood. The nave is also connected in our understanding to Noah's Ark, and to the Church as the Ark of Salvation.

There are many other ways in which we have perceived these parallels, and connections, but they all have to do with understanding the continuity of God's revealing Himself to us, and our response to Him. This treatment of the Church is not based on an abstract principle. It is part of the unified life of an Orthodox Christian. Within this vision of a unified life, we are taught that we should treat everything we have with the same care and respect as if it were an object used in Church. Everything we have is from God, and we must glorify Him with all and in all.

The building in itself does not constitute the Church. It is the Faithful who do that. But where the Faithful assemble, and worship the Lord, has always been considered a holy place because of what happens there, and thus by extension it is called the Church, because of the

Faithful there. One so often sees concrete examples of this understanding in Orthodox countries, where persons who, in passing a Church, always stop, make the sign of the Cross on themselves as they face the entrance, and then continue on. If they are riding in a car, they sign themselves, and bow their heads. Often one sees, too, a person venerating the doors and walls of the Church, similarly to the manner of venerating icons. Sometimes they do this before entering, and sometimes they do it when they have something on their heart to bring to the Lord.

There are various verses from the Psalms which come to mind as we enter the Church, but one which is commonly repeated is "Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord." At the beginning of the Liturgy book we find the Entrance Prayers of the Clergy. This order is there because the clergy so pray before serving, before even entering the Altar. This order is not for the clergy alone, however. Any and all of us may use these prayers, although we will not be saying them at the Solea as the clergy do.

We enter the Temple, make the Sign of the Cross three times, with bows, we make our offerings for candles, and perhaps for prosphora. And then we stand, facing the Altar, quietly, standing to one side, so as not to block the entrance or movement of others. If the Hours are being read, after the initial tropars following the Our Father, we can then go to the Icons of Christ, and of the Theotokos, and venerate them, and say at the same time the tropars provided. And we can, like the clergy, face the rest of the assembly (even if no one is visibly there, there are saints and angels present), and bow, and quietly or even silently ask forgiveness. And then we can venerate other icons, and place candles as we wish. It is often done that, besides any other prayers, a person recites the tropar of the saint or feast represented in each icon. Following this pattern, the icon usually in the centre would come after those of Christ and of the Theotokos.

If when a person arrives, a bishop should happen to be present in the Temple and on the dais in the middle, one may still follow this pattern. One can approach the central icon to venerate it first (unless there are too many priests blocking this possibility), and bow to the bishop before offering a candle. This bow is from respect, since one is turning the back to him while venerating. It is also a bow of apology for being late. Then, after venerating the icons on the side of Christ, one would pass behind the bishop to venerate icons on the side of the Theotokos. Again, out of respect, one would not pass between the bishop and the open Royal Doors, except for those in the procession of servers.

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Sometimes, if time and space allow, it is possible after venerating the central icon, to come and ask a blessing from the bishop's hand. There are no strict rules about such things. It is a matter of being sensitive to the situation at the time, and to the local customs.

During the service, once we have found our place, it is important that we feel comfortable in our spiritual home. There are many parallels between the Temple and the home. For instance, it is an old and wide-spread custom, upon entering a home, first to venerate the icons, which ought to be noticeable from the entry, and then to begin a conversation with the persons present. The table in our home is treated as a parallel with the Holy Table in the Temple. In our unified vision of the Christian life, it is in some sense the heart of the home, where we are physically sustained by the food which the Lord gives and spiritually sustained by loving communication with our family members. (In Orthodox countries, the family table is also often perceived as the centre of hospitality to the stranger and to the poor.) Our daily personal and corporate prayers at home are simply an extension of what is done in the Temple in worship. The daily reading of the Scriptures is based on what is read in the Temple. Feeling comfortable in the Temple, however, does not mean making every opportunity to chatter. We have to take the peace and prayers of others into consideration.

Our lives as Orthodox Christian are to be one, unbroken whole, all reflecting the fact that we love, and carry within us, Jesus Christ. Let us all be evident Christ-bearers to those around us. Let us reveal Christ by how we love all. Let us refer everything to Him, and glorify Him in everything. May we truly say : "Glory be to God for all things!" *+Seraphim*



**Archdiocese of Canada
National Assembly
July 16 - 20, 2007**

**In our Nation's Capital,
Ottawa, Ontario**

*Join with His Grace,
Bishop Seraphim, the clergy, and
the faithful from across Canada!*

Please note: Registration details will be sent out to parishes early in 2007. Ask your priest!



Pastoral Notes

On 5 Aug 2006, **Hierodeacon Amvrozi (Mlodzik)** was granted the blessing to wear the Double Orar.

On 1 Oct 2006, the Mission Station of All Saints in Toronto ON was renamed Mission Station of St Innocent, Metropolitan of Moscow, Enlightener of the Aleuts, Apostle to the Americas.

On 1 Oct 2006, The Church of Mar Elias in New Westminster BC was declared dormant. **Priest Johanna [John] Ayoub** was released from his duties as Rector of this Church, and attached to the Bishop's Chapel of St Silouan in Johnstown ON.

On 16 Nov 2006, the Mission Station of St Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra, was blessed in Toronto ON. **Priest Nicholas Young** is Priest-in-Charge, while remaining attached to Christ the Saviour Sobor, Toronto.

On 19 Nov 2006, **Subdeacon Karl Anthony Mansour** was ordained to the Holy Diaconate at the Sign of the Theotokos in Montréal QC, to which he is attached.

On 24 Nov 2006, the Mission Station of All Saints of North America in Winnipeg MB was re-opened.

On 27 Nov 2006, **Priest Walter Smith** was received into the Archdiocese of Canada from Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania. He is assigned to Holy Trinity Church in Moose Jaw SK as Rector, and to Holy Trinity Church in Kayville SK as Rector.

On 29 Nov 2006, **Priest Andrew Jarmus** was received through Metropolitan Herman from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada, and assigned Priest-in-Charge of the Mission Station of All Saints of North America in Winnipeg MB.

On 5 Dec 2006, **Deacon Gregory Scratch** of Annunciation Cathedral, Ottawa ON, was given the blessing to wear the Double Orar.

On 6 Dec 2006, **Deacon Constantine Katsilas** was received into the Archdiocese of Canada from Archbishop Nathaniel and the Romanian Episcopate, and was assigned to St John the Divine's Church in Windsor ON.

On 25 Dec 2006, The Mission Station of All Saints of North America in Winnipeg MB was renamed for the Theotokos of the Life-Giving Spring.

On 1 Jan 2007, **Deacon Constantine Katsilas** was ordained to the Holy Priesthood at St John the Divine's Church in Windsor ON. He is assigned there as Rector.

On 16 Jan 2007, **Priest Waldemar Kuchta** was given a provisional release to serve under the Omophor of Metropolitan John of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada.

Be healthy and grow : Pt 5

[In keeping with the policy of the Canadian Orthodox Messenger to be as inclusive as possible of various opinions on non-dogmatic topics expressed by members of our diocese, we sometimes print strong opinions with which some may disagree, or at least disagree in part. It should be remembered also that every article printed does not necessarily reflect the views of our Bishop. -ed.]

Continuing this series of how a parish can be healthy and grow, we will be looking at what should be done to make sure we don't lose people out the back door faster than we can bring them in the front. In part 1, we discussed loving relationships and a passionate daily life in Christ. In part 2, need-orientated outreach and small groups were presented. Part 3 covered empowering leadership, gift-oriented ministries and functional parish structures. Part 4 covered a strong liturgical life where the Holy Spirit is present. These are the eight key elements, which must be present in a healthy parish, and a healthy parish always has a better chance of growing than an unhealthy one does.

It is time for us to wake up and bring Orthodoxy to Canada. We have been hiding Orthodoxy in our ethnic ghettos for too long. Albert Einstein once said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result. After a hundred years in Canada and over two hundred years in North America, we Orthodox have failed in Christ's Great Commission to "Go out and baptize men of all Nations, teaching them as I have taught you." Less than 2% of the Canadian population is Orthodox, and fewer than that are active Orthodox Christians. Orthodoxy is dying in North America! Sure, there are parishes that are growing, but they cannot grow fast enough to account for the people we are losing in other parishes across the country.

Over the past year and a half my family and I have had the opportunity to travel and serve in many parishes from Toronto to Vancouver Island. We have seen some very warm and friendly parishes and some parishes that need to work on improving the first impression they make to newcomers. We should remember that we only get one chance to make a first impression with visitors and newcomers who come to experience the Divine Liturgy of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church founded by Christ at Pentecost. It is important not only to greet people and be friendly, but to ensure that the services are in the language of the people of the land. In Canada this is English for the majority and French for those in Quebec and some of the Maritimes.

The time is now and we have to decide if we want to grow the Orthodox faith by reaching out beyond the ethnic Orthodox. Currently there are sixteen or more Orthodox jurisdictions in Canada. All are geared to serve an ethnic community such as the Greeks, Serbians, Albanians,

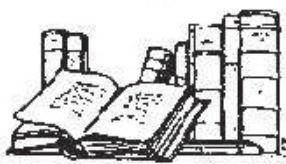
Romanians, Ukrainians, Russians, and so on. Only one jurisdiction is theoretically positioned to reach all Canadians, and this is the OCA.

This is because we are supposed to be a North American Church, an English- or French-language church and a culturally Canadian-based Church. Unfortunately, in many cases, we are not, and we can be just as ethnically hidden as all the other jurisdictions. If we continue the way we have for the past one hundred years, we will also die a slow and lingering death like many other declining Orthodox jurisdictions. What we have been doing for the last hundred years has not worked. If we want to grow we have to change. This does not mean we have to change our Liturgy, our Holy Tradition, or our theology. We have to change the way we present these things to Canadians. It is time that we let all the other Orthodox jurisdictions worry about catering to the ethnic Orthodox communities in their preferred language. Let us go out to English- and French-speaking Canadians who are searching for the One True Church, the one true faith which can only be found in the Orthodox Church. There is one place where we have had great success evangelising the faith, and that is in Alaska. There around 25,000 native Alaskans, out of about 60,000 population, are Orthodox. Why was it successful? Because the missionaries there integrated the culture, language and customs of the native Alaskans into the Orthodox faith. They did not attempt to impose their Russian culture, language or customs on the natives. This has been our fundamental error in the rest of North America. We did not do what they did in Alaska.

It is important that we not forget our past and our roots, for roots are what make a tree strong. Nonetheless, if the tree is to grow we must look to the leaves and the canopy and thereby look to where our future must be. Sadly, many missions have gone after the ethnic Orthodox in the areas in which they are planted, and consequently, they have had little success. This is because of many reasons, not the least of which is often that two separate ethnic groups have difficulty compromising and blending each others' languages and traditions. If we, the OCA, are to truly grow, we must go outside the ethnic Orthodox community and be united in Christ and not united by man-made tradition that people enjoyed in the "old country." Let us as Canadians and as the newest Orthodox jurisdiction in Canada start to establish our own identity that Canadians and North Americans can relate to. Let us establish our vision of the future for Orthodoxy in Canada and get on with the great commission of baptizing people of all nations and teaching them as Christ taught us.

If church growth is your ministry, Bishop Seraphim wants you as a member of the Church Growth Network. After talking it over with your parish priest, contact me, Deacon Gregory Kopchuk at (780) 451-2758 or email me at gkopchuk@yahoo.com. Also, listen to our Orthodox programme, "Welcome Home" at www.orthodoxradio.ca

Bev Cooke,
*Keeper of the Light :
St Macrina the Elder,
Grandmother of Saints*



(availability : www.conciliarpress.com)

—Reviewed by Fr Richard Rene, Assistant Priest, St Peter the Aleut's Church, Calgary AB

Bev Cooke's *Keeper of the Light* operates on a simple premise: what does it take to become a saint? The answer, though definitely salient for its target audience (and indeed, anyone who is a disciple of Jesus Christ) turns out to be far from simple. In exploring the life of St Macrina, whose grandchildren included such spiritual giants as St Basil the Great and St Gregory of Nyssa, Cooke demonstrates that the path to sainthood is all too familiar—paved with the daily struggles with the same old passions that threaten to overcome every follower of the crucified and risen Lord. And the means to walk this path successfully turn out to be just as recognizable—the daily acts of surrender to which all Christians are called, echoing the Theotokos' response to the Archangel: "let it be done to me according to Your will."

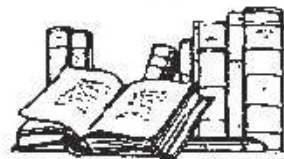
Beginning in 303 A.D., *Keeper of the Light* dramatizes the historical details of St Macrina's life. We follow her, her husband Basil and their young son (also called Basil, but referred to as 'Mus') as they escape from the latest wave of Imperial persecutions, into exile in the wilderness. We watch as the family endures near starvation and death, close encounters with soldiers and hunters, and we witness the miraculous appearances of deer, who provide a source of much-needed nourishment. In the second part of the book, Macrina and her family return to Neocaesarea and into destitution, only to find unexpected consolation as Constantine's Edict of Tolerance grants Christians the freedom to live their spiritual lives publicly. In the final part, Macrina mourns the death of her husband and then immerses herself in the spiritual upbringing of her grandchildren. These historical incidents are lent credibility by details of late Roman antiquity : city life, liturgical practice, weddings, parties, and clothing. The unfamiliar terms are printed in bold text and defined in a convenient glossary.

In the end, however, this book is neither a history nor a hagiography. It is a character-driven novel in which Cooke draws on her experiences as a mother, wife, and an Orthodox Christian to inform her characterization of Macrina. We witness the saint's struggles with frustration, fear, hunger, anger, sadness, resentment, and every other shade of human emotion. At the same time, Macrina

continually offers her struggles to God, drawing strength from the memory of her spiritual father, St Gregory the Wonderworker, who shepherded his people through the dark times of persecution. Like St Gregory's, Macrina's persistence is eventually rewarded : she finds peace with her children and grandchildren, having secured a legacy in the memory of the Church, not only as a saint, but as the grandmother of saints.

The novel is written for young adults, and would probably be most appropriate for young people of the reading age of 12 through 14 years, the vocabulary perhaps being too simple for older readers. Its focus on the inner struggles of a female character may appeal more to girls than to boys, though its presentation of the life of the period may be useful as a complement to a study of Church history. Still, in grappling with the question of sanctification in the midst of a cold and sinful world, *Keeper of the Light* represents a serious effort to fulfil a calling that we all need to heed—the call to become a family of saints, bearing one another into the Kingdom.

Archbishop Lazar (Puhalo),
*Evidence of Things Not Seen:
Orthodox Christianity and
Modern Physics*



(availability : synaxis@new-ostrog.org)

—Reviewed by Dr John Mavroides, Emeritus Professor of Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

In this very clear and well-referenced book, Archbishop Lazar Puhalo, a hesychastic theologian, uses the historical approach to contrast the theology of the Orthodox Christian Church to that of the Western Christian Churches. In addition to presenting a lucid and accurate exposition, without any phyletic distortions of traditional Orthodox theology, the theology of the Apostles, the Patristic Fathers and the later Church Fathers, as one would expect of a hesychastic monk, this gifted theologian is also comfortable with the rather difficult field of quantum physics.

He moves with ease from specific topics in Orthodox Theology to corresponding topics in physics. He shows that in contrast to scholastic and fundamentalist Christian religions, the Orthodox faith and modern physics are compatible. He indicates that because of the differences in theological understandings of Eastern and Western Christians there has rarely been, if ever, a conflict between the traditional Orthodox Church and science, and that "modern science in general is not a

devious plot which must be feared by Orthodox Christians.” As Archbishop Lazar points out, one would expect this to be the case since all phenomena and laws of nature are governed by the Creator of the Universe, our Lord God. Western theologians, Catholic and Protestant, fear science and they have a history of conflict with the disciplines of science and physics

Puhalo distinguishes between facts and meaning. In a physical experiment one can take very accurate measurements of facts, but without interpretation these facts have no meaning. Puhalo points out that an early astronomer, Brahe, took very accurate astronomical measurements but still ended up with an incorrect theory of cosmology; his facts were useless until they were correctly interpreted after his death by Kepler, his assistant.

Similarly the creation narrative, from the beginning up to the time of Abraham and Sarah, condenses enormous time and vast prehistoric oral tradition into a simple narrative. This narrative is about meaning—not historical or scientific detail. Puhalo reminds us that we derive our theology from meaning—not from supposed facts.

In comparing modern microphysics to Orthodox Theology, Puhalo points out that there is no separation between the observer and the observed, the observer in both instances is not extraneous to the observed, but is a participant at different levels of experience, being part of the process by seeking to understand and quantify it. In theology the observer has intentionally involved himself, hoping to become part of it – the living theology of Orthodoxy, whereas in quantum physics the observer unavoidably impacts directly on the observation, becoming a part of the process being observed. (The Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle).

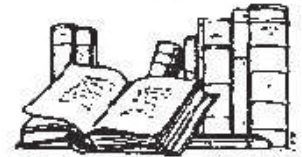
One of Archbishop Lazar’s main points of this book is that almost all apparent conflicts between science and faith are the result of “models of reality” rather than of reality itself. When we become rigid and frozen in our models by using a literal understanding of scripture and non-dogmatic statements of the holy fathers about science and history, we deprive ourselves of reality itself. As an historical example, Puhalo goes to the year 1500 when the general “model of reality” for our universe was that a stationary earth was the center of the universe, around which the sun and other heavenly bodies were rotating. The great philosophers as well as the Holy Scriptures agreed that this was reality rather than a “model of reality”—so concrete as to be a dogma of faith.

But the observations of the heavens by Galileo with his primitive telescope proved that the old model of the

universe was wrong and Galileo came up with the more accurate Copernican-Galileo “model of reality” in which the earth and the planets rotate around the stationary sun. This caused a conflict between Galileo (science) and the Catholic Church. Galileo’s doctrine was condemned by Rome and Galileo was forced by an inquisition to recant in public. Actually even Galileo’s “model of reality” is not the last word. A later “model of reality” has not a stationary sun, but one which races through space on one of the spiral arms of our Milky Way galaxy. This again is a better model, which may need to be modified as more discoveries are made.

The Archbishop’s final statement in [chapter 4] is of great importance : “Orthodox Christianity is not an arbiter of facts, but the healer of humanity, the source of meaning, the path to the authenticity of life and the doorway to eternity—to immortality”

**Sisters of the Holy Convent
of Chrysopigi,
*Wounded by Love : the Life
and the Wisdom
of Elder Porphyrios***



(availability : www.alexanderpress.com)

—Reviewed by Mother Sophia, Monastic Community of St Silouan the Athonite, Johnstown ON

Elder Porphyrios, who reposed in 1991, is one of the most beloved holy men of Greece in recent times. This truly beautiful book was translated by John Raffan, and it is based on an archive of notes and recordings made by two of the elder’s spiritual children who knew him, an Athonite-trained monk, when he served for over thirty years as chaplain in a hospital in Athens. When these women became nuns, they gave the archive to the Monastery of Chrysopigi in Crete. Under the guiding hand of the monastery’s abbess, the materials were carefully arranged thematically, but in such a way that would allow Fr Porphyrios to speak, as it were, for himself. Although the quotations in the book come from various times and contexts, the nuns strove to present his words exactly as spoken. This gives the work, divided into chapters according to themes (“On the Church,” “On Prayer,” “On the Mystery of Repentance,” “On Love for One’s Neighbour,” “On the Upbringing of Children,” etc.), authenticity and sometimes startling immediacy.

If you have ever tried to read “monastic-spiritual” literature before and simply given up because of a feeling of almost ineffable weirdness about what you

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are reading, give this book a try. It is different. For one thing, the first third of the book is an exceedingly charming and exciting account of Fr Porphyrios' very real, frustrating struggle as a teenager even to get to the Holy Mountain and try to become a monk. For another, Fr Porphyrios is always revealed through his own thoughts and words as a simple and humble man, yet also as one who is quite lively, practical, and intelligent, a person (many now think a saint) who seems in every way like us, except that, unlike so many of us, he always turns to the Lord in every adversity, and with simple, pristine faith keeps going forward with trust and hope. He can be an excellent model and inspiration for us in our own struggles to achieve the likeness of Christ.

Listen to his wise words about our missionary endeavour as Christians: ". . . we need to employ a very delicate manner so that people accept what we are offering, whether it be words, books or whatever, without reacting negatively. And something else : use few words. Words often provoke irritation. Prayer and living example find resonance. Living faith moves people, regenerates them and changes them, whereas words alone remain fruitless. The best form of mission is through our good example, our love and our meekness."

Or his words to parents: "A large part of the responsibility for a person's spiritual state lies with the family. For children to be released from their various inner problems, it is not enough for them to receive good advice, or to be compelled by force; nor do logical arguments or threats do any good. These things rather make matters worse. The solution is to be found through the sanctification of the parents. . . . Children want to have saintly people at their side, people with lots of love who will neither intimidate them nor lecture them, but who will provide a saintly example and pray for them. You parents should pray silently to Christ with upraised arms and embrace your children mystically. When they

misbehave you will take some disciplinary measures, but you will not coerce them. Above all you need to pray."

These are the words of a person of pure vision and rich ascetic experience. He is not a formal theologian, however, and everything in the book is based on oral materials, informal conversations, so one could fret, if one were so inclined, with some of the *ways* which he is reported to have said things, seemingly on the spur of the moment. For example, in a section on humility, he appears to be so concerned with emphasis on this foundational virtue that he actually says "Christ will not love us if we are not worthy for Him to love us." One should not quit reading at this point, however, for he goes on immediately to ask what would make us "worthy." It is humility, of course, for he continues by emphasizing that "Without humility, we cannot love Christ." One could quibble about such things, because the first statement is as false as the second one is true.[And ironically, perhaps he is giving us a good example of what can happen if one does not follow his admonition to use few words!] But why fret? In the end he says the right thing, fully in agreement with Holy Tradition.

Elder Porphyrios is clearly an example of what Bishop Seraphim is referring to on p.10 of this issue, that exceedingly rare entity know as a "spiritual father." He was, as the Bishop of Chania has written, "a man with the gift of clear sight, who was ever retiring, humble, simple and ardent and whose life was a true and authentic witness to Christ, to His truth and to His joy. Through his presence, love, prayer, counsel and guidance he supported an untold number of people in the difficult hours of illness, mourning, pain, loss of faith and death. He is a god-bearing Father of our days, a true priest and teacher who in his ascetic way fell in love with Christ and faithfully served his fellow men." And this book about him and "by" him is truly an inspiring one.

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