

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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'St Tikhon's Stewards' grows, Begins fulfilling goals

— by Matthew Francis, St Herman's Sobor, Edmonton AB

Last July, our Church family across Canada began a noble experiment, a “new way to support the vision” – the St Tikhon's Archdiocesan Stewards (STAS) programme. A year later, how are we doing? Are we any closer to providing sustainable, ongoing funding to support the work of the Church at the Archdiocesan level? What can each of us do?

Let's start with “just the facts, please.” STAS was created to provide ongoing funding to the Archdiocese. The programme supplements the regular “tithes” contributed by our parishes, which have perennially fallen short. In the meantime, while parishes address this important matter, STAS stands “in the gap,” like the holy Prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 22.30-31) to meet the needs.

Why does the Church need this money? In short, the first priority for these funds is to provide much-needed staff assistance to His Eminence, Archbishop Seraphim. Fifty-eight people from across Canada have already become St Tikhon's Archdiocesan Stewards, either through one-time gifts, or through ongoing contributions. The ongoing, annual contribution's generated by STAS giving stands at \$15,450.00. The good news is that we have made significant progress since last summer. Other ministry priorities can be addressed as STAS giving grows. But, to use Robert Frost's words, we have “miles to go before we sleep.”

On 10 May 2008, at their Spring meeting, the Archdiocesan Council set an ambitious, but achievable goal. The St Tikhon Archdiocesan Stewards are to raise \$40,000.00 in sustainable, annual giving by the end of 2008, in order to fund a staff position for the Assistant to the Archbishop

From now until December 31, each of us is faced with a personal challenge, to consider prayerfully. Each Deanery of our Archdiocese has been given a goal of

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From the Archbishop's desk:

St Tikhon's Stewards Make new assistance possible For Archbishop Seraphim

For very many years, the Archdiocesan Council, together with several Archdiocesan Assemblies, determined that full-time assistance was necessary at the Archdiocesan Centre, Fair Haven, south of Ottawa. The problems were basic : who, and with what money. That second problem is always difficult. Even with our developing sense of responsible stewardship, money for something still does not seem to appear reliably until the need is visible.

The newly-dedicated group, Saint Tikhon's Archdiocesan Stewards (STAS), took up the challenge to try to find the funding for such a personal assistant. Thanks to their efforts, although still preliminary, the Archdiocesan Council saw the opportunity to put this money to work when, recently, Protodeacon Nazari Polataiko became unexpectedly available. We have known him for a long time, and it did not take long conversations before he was offered, and accepted the



*Protodeacon Nazari (Polataiko) with his Matushka Tatiana,
and their two sons, Mykola and Alexander.*

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Protodeacon Nazari . . . continued from page 1:

challenge, of this post. He will move, with his family to Ottawa, and he will begin his work in the Archdiocesan Centre on 1 September.

Protodeacon Nazari Polataiko, and Matushka Tatiana (Renata) are also both iconographers, whose icons are in Alaska, many places in Canada and the USA, and also in Ukraine. Their studio is called "Sts Alipij and Andrew Rublew Icon Studio." Protodeacon Nazari and Matushka Tatiana were born in Chernivtsi, Ukraine. They both graduated with B.F.A degrees — Fr Deacon Nazari from Kosiv, and Matuska Tatiana from Vyznytcia Art College in Ukraine. Protodeacon Nazari then came to Canada, and graduated from St Andrew's College of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, in Winnipeg. Later, he received a doctoral-equivalent degree in Theology from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church's Academy in Kyiv, Ukraine.

During all this time, he faithfully, and lovingly served the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada for fifteen years : first, as sub-deacon to Metropolitan Wasyl for two years, and later as his deacon and protodeacon for almost eleven years. After Metropolitan Wasyl's repose in Christ, Protodeacon Nazari remained to serve Metropolitan John, whom we know well, and love. His work in the Consistory Church Goods Store provided all Canadians with excellent, and better access to, Church goods, and books.

In due course, Fr Protodeacon Nazari's spiritual father, Metropolitan Onouphri of Chernivtsi, was pressing him to spend more time in iconography, which his previous work did not easily allow, and which was the main reason for the change at this time, and the opportunity arising for us.

As of 1 August, Protodeacon Nazari was assigned to the Annunciation Cathedral in Ottawa. He undertook the move later in the month to that city, along with Matushka Tatiana, and their two sons Mykola and Alexander (now taller than depicted in the photo).

Protodeacon Nazari will travel to the Archdiocesan Office three times per week for full days of work there, and he will do other work for the Archbishop from home. Let us all welcome the Polataiko family. Thanks be to God for all He provides for us. And let us also pray for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada, that they will be finding a good successor to Protodeacon Nazari in the Consistory Church Goods Store!

+Seraphim

STAS challenge . . . continued from page 1:

raising **thirty** St Tikhon's Archdiocesan Stewards. If each Steward gives *only a dollar a day*, that amounts to **\$9000** in annual giving from each Deanery, or **\$45,000** from across Canada. If thirty Stewards are found in each Deanery, we will meet and surpass our goal of \$40,000 in annual STAS giving!

Currently the statistics are as follows:

Quebec and Atlantic Canada – 14 stewards

Ontario – 9 stewards

Saskatchewan, Manitoba & Nunavut – 9 stewards

Alberta & the Northwest Territories – 21 stewards

British Columbia & the Yukon – 5 stewards

To meet the needs and help achieve this Vision, Archbishop Seraphim and the Archdiocesan Council have added members to the STAS Vision Committee. The Vision Committee assists with communication and fulfilling the goals of STAS, and meets regularly through conference calls. Members are :

Deacon Gregory Scratch (Chair), Annunciation Cathedral, Ottawa ON

Sava Duran (Secretary), St Herman's Church, Langley BC

Mark Petasky, (Treasurer) St Herman's Sobor, Edmonton AB

Archpriest Dennis Pihach, St Herman's Sobor, Edmonton AB

Archpriest Cyprian Hutcheon, Holy Resurrection Sobor, Saskatoon SK

Justin Grimmond, All Saints Parish, Hamilton ON

Matthew Francis, St Herman's Sobor, Edmonton AB

We thank God for the support received so far through STAS. There is still much work to be accomplished. Please consider becoming a St Tikhon Archdiocesan Steward.



Through the prayers of St Tikhon, may all our efforts to build up the Church in Canada be blessed!

St Walburg receives long-awaited visit from its Archbishop

The last hierarch to visit the small Church community of Sts Peter and Paul in St Walburg, Saskatchewan was Archbishop Sylvester in 1964. Before that, the Blessed Archbishop Arseny had come to them, he who gave the blessing to start the church in 1929 or 1930. It was, therefore, a very exciting and joyful occasion on the first weekend of July 2008, when Archbishop Seraphim made his hierarchical visit.

It was a sweltering hot Friday, July 4th, when Fr Cyprian Hutcheon, James Worthington (a third-year seminary student from St Tikhon's Seminary in Pennsylvania), and I travelled from Saskatoon towards St Walburg. We were to meet our Archbishop Seraphim and our diocesan Chancellor, Fr Dennis Pihach, in St Walburg in order to prepare for the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy that would be celebrated the following day, July 5th.

The little country church is located in the town of St. Walburg and is dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul, whose June 29th feast day occurs in July for parishes such as this one, which is on the Old Calendar. We were all concerned about the heat, wondering how we would survive in the little temple, which has no windows to open in order to allow for air flow. (Actually, I remember some years ago that it was so hot in the little church that even the beeswax candles did prostrations!)

Valentina Hritzuk, the long time Parish Council President, had invited us to her home for supper. In the house there was a flurry of activity, with Valentina and her son John cooking up a storm in the kitchen, with fans blowing as they energetically dealt with the heat of the day, and of the cooking.



Valentina and John

The food was wonderful, as always. Valentina is well known for her culinary expertise, especially for her fish cakes that this day she had made from fresh fish that her ninety-eight year old husband John had caught that day! Archbishop Seraphim gave the blessing and we sat down to a most wonderful meal.

After the meal, Valentina and the Archbishop went through all the meticulous notes and metrical books which had been created by herself and her father many years ago. Vladyka Seraphim was particularly interested in hand-written letters to the community from the Blessed Archbishop Arseny.

The evening ended in a thunderstorm, which continued into the night with showers. The next morning, by the grace of God, it had cooled down considerably, and there was a moderate breeze that lasted throughout the day.

We greeted Archbishop Seraphim at the Hritzuk home in the morning and brought him to church, which is within walking distance of her residence, about one block. The temple had cooled off considerably, and a number of faithful were already waiting inside to greet His Emience. Valentina was waiting there, along with her sons and their wives, grandchildren, and relatives of past church members — even some who had travelled from British Columbia. In attendance also were members of the nearby Meadow Lake Ukrainian Orthodox Church. In fact, the Church of Sts Peter and Paul was packed with people — inside, on the front porch, and even out on the lawn.

Valentina greeted the Archbishop with the traditional bread and salt, while the cross was offered to him by Archpriest Cyprian Hutcheon, who is in charge of the parish. Then Vladyka was vested in the centre of the temple. Every eye was upon him as each part of his vestments was put on, for many of those attending would not have ever experienced this ceremony before.



Vladyka communes the faithful.

Celebrating clergy in attendance with Archbishop Seraphim were Archpriest Dennis Pihach of St Herman's Sobor in Edmonton, Archpriest Cyprian Hutcheon of Holy Resurrection Sobor in Saskatoon and Priest Oleg Razumov of Holy Trinity Sobor in Winnipeg. James Worthington, the seminary student from St Tikhon's, assisted Vladyka and the clergy in the altar and was kept quite busy as he was the only server.

The Archbishop began his sermon with a greeting, along with an apology for taking such a long time to come for a visit to the St Walburg church

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St Walburg visit, *continued from p. 3:*

community. As always, his sermon was encouraging and uplifting, as he exhorted the flock to live a life worthy of being called a Christian, worked out in the community in which they live. At the end of the Liturgy, Vladyka intoned “God grant you many years” for the faithful, and everyone joined in the singing.

All of us then walked to the parish’s cemetery where the Archbishop, the clergy, and the faithful prayed before the newly erected memorial cross, and a Panikhida was served for all the faithful departed of Sts Peter and



Youngsters help Vladyka as he blesses graves.

Paul. Vladyka Seraphim then blessed each grave with holy water, assisted by two young boys who carried the holy water and vessel. The clergy and faithful sang Memory Eternal, the sun came out, and a gentle breeze kept everyone comfortable as we continued to the end of the cemetery. At the conclusion of the grave blessings, Vladyka Seraphim, with a cherubic grin, turned with brush and liberally showered the faithful with holy water!

After the memorial prayers, all were invited to Valentina’s son John’s home for an exquisite lunch of traditional Ukrainian/Russian dishes, along with home-baked goodies.

The warmth that was felt from the faithful in and around this community was evident from their hospitality — their kind words and gestures, which can only reflect that Christ is truly in their midst. Valentina was so grateful for the Archbishop’s coming this day to visit her community. Her closing comment to me was, “This was the best day of my life!”



Archbishop Seraphim with Valentina Hritzuk.

Glory be to God in all things! — *by Subdeacon James Nicholas Davis, Holy Resurrection Sobor, Saskatoon SK*

Pastoral Notes

On 27 April 08, Paschal Archdiocesan Awards were announced : Deacon Maurice Beecroft, Double Orar ; Priest Richard René, Nabedrennik ; Priest Christopher Rigden-Briscall, Nebedrennik ; Priest Walter Smith, Nabedrennik ; Priest Nicholas Young, Nabedrennik ; Priest Walter Smith, Scoufia.

On 14 May 08, Holy Synod Awards were announced: Priest Phillip Eriksson, Gold Cross ; Priest Gregory Nimijean, Gold Cross ; Priestmonk Vladimir (Tobin), Igumen ; Igumen David (Edwards), Jewelled Cross.

On 15 May 08, **Priest Nectaire Femenias** was received through Metropolitan Herman into the Archdiocese of Canada. He is attached to Holy Trinity Mission, Québec QC.

On 15 May 08, **Priest Alexei Kaliouzhnyi** was suspended.

On 15 June 08, **Priest Christopher Rigden-Briscall** was released from his responsibilities at Holy Resurrection Sobor, at St Nina’s Mission, and at Holy Cross Chaplaincy at UBC, in Vancouver BC. He was attached to the Bishop’s Chapel of St Silouan in Johnstown ON, and he was given on loan to Bishop Alexander of the Antiochian Diocese of Ottawa, Eastern Canada and Upstate New York, for assignment.

On 15 June 08, **Priest Justin Hewlett** was assigned the responsibility of Holy Cross University Chaplaincy at UBC, Vancouver BC.

On 15 June 08, **Priest Justin Hewlett**, in addition to his other responsibilities, was blessed to serve *ad interim* the Mission of St Nina in Vancouver, on behalf of the Deanery.

On 21 June 08, **Igumen Sevastjan (Derkach)** was received *pro tem* into the Archdiocese of Canada, from the Omophor of Archbishop Avgustin of Lviv, Ukraine, and was attached to the Bishop’s Chapel of St Silouan in Johnstown ON.

On 1 July 08, **Hieromonk Daniel (Baeyens)** was released from the Bishop’s Chapel of St Silouan, and the Archdiocese of Canada, to Metropolitan Herman, for transfer to the Romanian Archdiocese of America.

On 14 July 08, **Higoumène Irénée (Rochon)**, retaining all his other responsibilities, was released from his responsibility as Rector of the Church of St-Séraphim de Sarov in Rawdon QC.

On 14 July 08, **Priest Juan Pablo Ruiz-Gomar** was assigned Priest-in-charge of the Church of St-Séraphim de Sarov in Rawdon, Québec.

Physicians practice medicine, God heals

— by Nikita J. Eike, M.D.

“You have said with Your most holy lips: ‘Without Me ye can do nothing’.”¹ Those prayerful words fully capture the spirit with which we should approach patient care. And the prayer continues: “O Lord, in faith I embrace Thy words . . .” This short sentence encapsulates the response physicians should display in answer to their callings. I have found that in years of medical practice, these two verses have been the safeguards that have helped me keep the focus on the patient in a Christian perspective.

The practice of medicine shares a certain number of similarities with the priesthood. Both professions are a calling from God giving the opportunity to get close to people and hear their intimate concerns in an interactive participation in their healing. Priests and physicians will often minister to the person for the same issues. Both are usually present during the critical stages of a person’s life: birth, illness, and death. The Church is, after all, a hospital for sinners with, at Her head, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Heavenly Physician. With this perspective in mind, I would like to present some reflections based on St John Chrysostom’s commentaries on some of the qualities required of the priesthood, and how they parallel the qualities that are the hallmark of a true physician.

Medicine is both a science and an art. Unfortunately, our modern Western society—with its utilitarian, efficiency-driven philosophy—has truncated the fullness of this ancient profession. We now train doctors who are more technicians than healers (not in the new age shamanistic sense, but with the perspective of addressing the whole person). We no longer educate physicians who will cultivate their art by broadening their approach to include the whole person : body, mind, and spirit.

In addressing young medical graduates a few years ago, I remarked that they can now be called doctors because they have earned a piece of paper that says that they are not too dangerous to be allowed to care for those who are sick and in need. I explained to them that it will take them a lifetime to become a true physician and only if they are willing to learn medicine from their patients and acquire the qualities of the mind and heart necessary for them to grow in that direction and reach the higher level of discernment required for proper and complete diagnosis and care.

¹“Prayer before work,” *The Orthodox Prayer Book*, (South Canaan: St Tikhon’s Press, 1959), p.58

It was interesting years later to read the sermon that Archbishop Tikhon gave on the occasion of the tonsuring of the first monk at St Tikhon’s Monastery in 1906. He used a similar analogy : “you are now called a monk but it will take you a lifetime to become one,” pointing out the fact that the process is a gradual one.²

As St Isaac the Syrian asserted in his treatise “On the Three Degrees of Knowledge,” the wisdom and knowledge necessary for crafts and learning belong to the first level of knowledge, and being “. . . dependent upon human knowledge, this works in darkness.”³ Discipline and work, not only in one’s field, but also spiritually, is needed to achieve higher degrees of knowledge and understanding. Hippocrates already recognized the importance of the spiritual dimension. The original oath starts by taking God (pagan gods at the time) as a witness. Later in the oath he asserts that : “In purity and according to the divine law will I carry my life and my art.”⁴

Although each profession should be approached in a Christian manner, not all professions put the practitioner in a position to be the direct instrument of the healing process, as the priesthood and medicine do. Therefore, the path, *praxis* and spiritual *askesis* involved in reaching the fulness of our calling to become a priest or a physician, share some similarities. Also comparable are the great joy and rewards as well as the difficulties and frustrations of serving and working with others in taking care of their illnesses.

There was a time in history when the two professions were closely linked⁵ and there are many modern examples of members of the clergy who are also physicians. Some of the clergy and monastics of the Early Church were also physicians and continued to practice after their ordination or tonsure.⁶ St Basil the Great

²“The Founding of St Tikhon’s Monastery in South Canaan, Pennsylvania, 1905-1906, Part VII,” in *Alive in Christ*, Vol. XXII, No.2 (2006) pp. 19-20.

³ Z. Xintaras, “Man—The Image of God according to the Greek Fathers,” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, Vol.1, No. 1 (1954) pp. 48-62.

⁴ M. North, Translation of the Hippocratic Oath, National Library of Medicine, 2002.

⁵ M. Dols, “Insanity in Byzantine and Islamic Medicine,” in *Symposium on Byzantine Medicine, Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, J. Scarborough (ed.), 1984, pp.145-146.

⁶ J-C. Larchet, *Théologie de la Maladie* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 2001), pp. 100-101.

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. . . Physicians, continued from p. 5:

and St Gregory of Nazianzus both received a university medical education.⁷ I am praying for the day when we will have again the same kind of collaboration, and maybe we will see the priest attend patient-case conferences.

In his classic work titled “On the Priesthood,”⁸ St John Chrysostom distinguishes three important qualities guiding those that are called to the priesthood, namely: despising fame, superiority to anger, and tact.

Today, as in 4th-century Antioch, some choose their profession in response to a calling from God, but many do so out of a desire for fame or, worse, out of greed, often disguised under the idea of “pursuing one’s own dreams and ideals.” This aspect of greed is particularly damaging in medicine, where the doctor’s financial interests may conflict with the best interest of the patient. Not to mention that in the case of Managed Care, the insurance companies have only one goal, which is to make money ; providing care is incidental to their business. In the case of a Universal Healthcare System, the government will often put the physician in a situation where he/she has to make therapeutic decisions geared towards minimizing the costs, regardless of what the best course of action is for the patient.

Certain types of medical practices are in flagrant contradiction with the medical ethos of *primum non nocere* (“first do not harm”), and are likely fuelled by a desire for riches—cosmetic surgery practices being a prime example. Others raise very serious ethical questions, for instance in the fields of reproductive medicine and palliative care. A desire for fame and power can easily derail an originally noble goal. Ambition is a serious issue that can cloud the fact that medicine, like the priesthood, requires—in the imitation of Christ—a kenotic [*ed. note: i.e., “self-emptying” ; thus not ambitious*] movement. The absence of such [*kenosis*] reduces the ministration to a series of empty techniques devoid of a higher, spiritual purpose, and robbed of its eschatological dimension. Techniques only touch the patient in a very superficial and external way unless the physician is aware of and embraces the whole person, something that is required for true healing.

⁷ M. E. Keenan, “St Gregory of Nazianzus and Early Byzantine Medicine,” in *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, Vol. 9, No.1 (1941), pp 8-30.

⁸ St John Chrysostom, “On the Priesthood,” in *Six Books on the Priesthood*, translated by G. Neville (Crestwood NY: SVS Press, 2002).

“An ambitious nature is slavery.”⁹ If physicians are truly focussed on serving God and others who are icons of Christ, the Suffering Servant, the slavery of ambition will have to be broken. “No one can serve two masters” (Matthew 6:24b). With somewhat loosely similar systems of belonging to organizations that oversee them, both priests and physicians have to guard against the danger of falling prey to the trap of toadyism causing them to fall away from those they are supposed to serve. *Philautia*, ambition, and pride make it impossible to love the other *as He has loved us* (John 13:34; 15:12). Without love for our neighbours, serving and ministering to others is impossible to do in an Orthodox Christian manner.

St John Chrysostom also cites “being superior to anger” as a necessary characteristic for those in the priesthood and, needless to say, [this applies] for physicians as well. I am ashamed to say that on more than one occasion I have witnessed patients suffer their physician’s temper, sometimes accompanied by physical violence. I cannot help but remember this unfortunate and sweet older lady who had her four-inch thick chart thrown at her head for “disobeying” her doctor by consulting a physiotherapist for her backache without first asking “permission.” The feelings of hurt and betrayal were long to heal.

Patients are rendered vulnerable by their medical condition. They are also vulnerable because of the relationship of dependence to the physician. This is partly due to the nature of the patient-doctor relationship, and partly due to the restrictions the medical system imposes on the patients in terms of ability and freedom to choose their doctor. Patients are to some extent at the mercy of their physicians even if in theory they are free to leave. In reality, should their priest or physician prove to be prone to anger and abuse, some practicalities may not allow them to exercise that freedom without potentially more serious consequences. In some areas, physicians are as hard to find as an Orthodox parish! I believe that for physicians, as for priests, God will ask the same question: “What did you do to My little ones?” (Matt 18:5-6)

Controlling anger and acquiring patience require work and cannot be achieved without a serious commitment first to “Physician, heal thyself” [Luke 4:23]. Although many anger management programmes are excellent, true healing can only happen at a spiritual level by God’s grace. This is why a full participation in

⁹ D. Hester, Very Rev., “Three Vital Characteristics of a Good Priest, according to St John Chrysostom,” in *The Tikhonnaire*, 104th Pilgrimage Edition (2008), pp.26-29.

sacramental life, the Life of the Church, is vital. This means a life of prayer, participation in the Liturgical Services (physically and spiritually), pilgrimages, and so on, in order to be healed by the Divine Grace that abounds in the Church.

It is sad to say that the subject of the physician's anger was never directly addressed in all my years of medical school. It was touched on much later during my residency in psychiatry, and only in dealing with the topic of counter-transference. Never was it considered for what it truly is : a passion that needs to be addressed at a spiritual level and not solely at a behavioural level. As is the case for the priest in his ministry, the practice of medicine will show the physician's shortcomings on a medical and spiritual level. There are no doubts that the practice of medicine will mercilessly expose the cracks in the armour. Attention and vigilance are therefore paramount and easily can be washed away by irascibility.

Lastly, St John Chrysostom demands that the candidate for the priesthood "Be full of tact." Anyone who has been the victim of a physician with bad bedside manners will not argue the fact that tact is a quality that is not only nice for the physician to display, but is healing in itself. For a victim of abuse, the simple fact of being treated with respect and kindness is like the application of an emotional salve to the wounds. Considering that physicians have to deliver much bad news, the ability to choose words that are fitting and expressed with care and compassion, will sweeten the most bitter medicine. Even if someone only wants to approach the subject from a self-serving angle, faulty communication with the patient is often what triggers a lawsuit. Many of these are caused by the physician's attitude and behaviour towards the patient.

Without tact, the physician will not be able to enter into the patient's world and consequently will not get to know the person under his/her care. Christ entered our world with tact and humility. He did not demand that we change it to suit Him, but He met us where we were. He never forced anything on us but asked if we wanted to be healed. He only acted unilaterally in cases where the person would not be capable of answering Him, as was the case for the Gadarene's demoniac. He acted only in the person's best interest.

In practice, it is not always feasible to take the time to know the person beyond what is necessary to address

the presenting symptoms. Knowing the whole person is a state of mind, it is behind the true meaning of hospitality (which has its roots in the word "hospital"): the receiving of others with an open heart in a spirit of healing. The spirit of hospitality will transpire in the patient-physician relationship at every level : not solely in the way that the physician addresses the patient, but in the understanding that the symptoms are more than just the expression of a disease; that the disease does not happen in a vacuum but to a person who is more than the disease itself. If the time is limited for words, body language can convey many things, and speak for us. Body language is the often unconscious reflection of our state of mind and heart. Not only can patients read our body language, they can do so very well, perhaps even better because of their position of vulnerability.

"A human being made in the image of God should never be reduced to an inessential aspect of his external reality, especially since no illness, however debilitating, obliterates that image."

How many times have we heard patients being referred to by the name of their disease? A human being made in the image of God should never be

reduced to an inessential aspect of his external reality, especially since no illness, however debilitating, obliterates that image.

I remember being a junior resident in a very large state mental hospital and supervising a young medical clerk (fourth-year medical student) who was learning to take the patients' histories. We had a patient who had been there over thirty years and suffered from a residual form of schizophrenia. He had once had the delusion of being John the Baptist and with the years, everyone had started to refer to him as "John the Baptist." Some of the staff did not even know his real name. When answering to the name of "John the Baptist," the patient would adopt the persona and act in a manner as if the delusions and hallucinations were still acutely active. The medical clerk, not knowing of the patient's nickname, properly addressed him by his real name. The patient's demeanor changed instantly and he said with a sheepish smile, "Oh, I did not think anyone remembered me." He was able to converse in a coherent manner and the delusions, although still present, had become well-encapsulated and not as disabling as we had thought. The patient had learned to respond tactfully to our tactless approach by not fighting to reclaim his identity that we had dismissed. I never forgot the lesson.

Without tact and love of the person, the physician or the priest will not be able to provide comfort, or apply bitter medicine or painful treatments, if need be. Tact

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... **Physicians**, continued from p. 7:

(from the Latin *tactus* meaning touch, feeling, handling) allows us to touch the other, where he is, in the condition and state he is in, how he wants, and when he wants. Tact allows us to receive with amazement the “wonder” that is the other person, even amidst the trials and tribulations we will undoubtedly be put through. Tact will allow a physician to establish limits without offending the patient and hurting the outcome of the treatment.

The pursuit and practice of the virtues as described by St John Chrysostom help the physician walk the narrow path between the pitfalls of presumption and despair. Presumption will undoubtedly lead to complacency with catastrophic results, either from the therapeutic standpoint, or because of a sense of omnipotence and pride due to appropriation of therapeutic success that belongs to God alone. “Woe to those who are complacent in Zion” (Amos 6:1) is a scriptural verse I have found useful in remaining vigilant.

Despair is an abyss ever deeper than presumption. The practice of medicine offers many opportunities to keep us humble and keep presumption at bay. We will become humble if we learn to listen to our patients and realize that God can heal our patients a lot faster if we are not constantly interfering with His plans. God heals patients with us, through us, for us, despite us, and without us, and He does so according to His will and on His own time, which we may chronologically never see. Despair is a more deceiving trap. Professional burnout is common and often goes unrecognized, and the suicide rate is higher for physicians than amongst the general population. With the loss of faith and hope that accompanies it, despair is an even more destructive form of pride than presumption. This is where the treasure that is the liturgical language is particularly helpful when it tells us: “Again and again let us pray to the Lord.” In a sea of despair, those words can be our ship to shore.

Above all, the love of God will allow us to “walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For Thou art with me . . .” Through their ministry, priests and physicians are certain to visit every corner of that valley.

—Dr Nikita J Eike is a psychiatrist in Hampstead, Maryland, and a member of the OCA Ethics Committee. Along with her husband, she is a member of the St Andrew’s Orthodox Parish in Baltimore. If you would like to send comments please e-mail her at njeike@hotmail.com.



Images of the Good Shepherd : Icons or not?

In recent years in the Orthodox Church, what has been termed by some as a “new” icon has emerged, and become very popular with many people. It is an icon of Christ the Good Shepherd. All one has to do to find proof of this is do a Google image search on the internet for “Good Shepherd icon,” and so many variations and copies of these icons will appear on the screen. I have painted this subject many times, with a considerable amount of questioning the subject matter, and my choice is to paint this image, and consider it an icon. The question that has been asked many times is: Is this a canonical icon? Is it blessable? Is this only an image or an allegorical representation of an aspect of Christ, or truly is it an Orthodox icon? To answer these questions, one must look first at the icons in question, and at the canons that describe what is a canonical icon.

There are several versions of this subject. This first icon (figure 1) is found in the Holy Transfiguration Monastery Store. This icon is a very literal interpreta-



figure 1

tion of the idea of the “Good Shepherd,” showing our Saviour in the midst of a flock of sheep, a crook in his hand, with a lamb on his shoulders. It also shows Him only in His chiton, His red inner garment, which represents His divine nature. Interestingly, the iconographer did not include the clavi, the shoulder bands, which are typically on the chiton. Christ is shown with all the necessary attributes for the icon to be blessed: the cross in his halo, the “I am” written in Greek, and IC XC.

A second version of this subject, less literal and more philosophical, if you will, is a relatively recent icon painted by Ioannis-Xarilaous Vranos,¹ an iconographer from Greece (figure 2). It came to me through a friend who attended a lecture given by Fr Thomas Hopko, and he distributed the icon to all those in attendance. Figure 3 is my version of the icon. In the

¹ Ioannis-Harilaos Vranos, *Ta Akrivi Protipa ton Eikon. Eikonografimeni Theologia. Tomos A.* (Thessaloniki: 2005), p.143.

. . . Iconology . . .

original, Jesus is represented in white. This colour is typically only used to show Jesus' divinity in particular icons : in the Transfiguration, the Resurrection, and the Ascension, as well as occasional icons of Christ enthroned



figure 2



figure 3

in Glory. After much prayer for discernment, I decided to represent Our Saviour in his more typical red chiton and blue chimation (the blue outer garment).

What is most unusual about this icon is that Vranos decided to represent the “lamb” in the most figurative sense : he chose to paint a man on Jesus' shoulders. Whether or not the Gospel was speaking literally or figuratively, the iconographer chose to make this “sheep” one of the Church's flock. As well, the model shows the man in modern clothing, which is an interesting anachronism in this case, making the metaphor of the Good Shepherd relevant for today's society. Both this example and the

previous example show an iconographic landscape with mountains in the background; rather than a pastoral scene, in my version in particular, Jesus is shown (perhaps) traversing a stream or crossing over the sea. In the Middle Eastern mind-set, the sea represented the most dangerous elements of life. When we pray our Divine Liturgy, we originally prayed for those who travelled by sea and land; now we pray for those who travel by land, sea, air, and in some places, space. That aside, the sea is iconographically represented here. In the upper right-hand corner, there is an iconographic/allegorical representation of the sun. While I did paint this icon as a commission, I did it with some hesitation, as I did not consider the model “canonical.” My opinion of its canonicity has changed, but looking at all the elements of the icon, I believe my hesitation was justified.²

This third version of the subject I believe is the most popular version by far³ (figure 4). It is a half bust of Christ the Good Shepherd, here dressed in both His red chiton and blue chimation, with a lamb on His shoulders and a shepherd's crook in the crook of His arm. He is represented with a cross and Greek “I am” in His halo, the abbreviation of “Jesus Christ” in Greek—the IC XC— and the designation of The Good Shepherd. Most importantly, and uniquely, the icon symbolically



figure 4

² In this case, now having found the actual source for the icon, and the iconographer's explanation or justification for the image, perhaps I will eventually have a better understanding of his decision making. Unfortunately for me, the publication is in Greek.

³ I do not know the iconographer who painted this image; however, it was featured on the cover of Metropolitan Philip Saliba's book, *And He Leads Them* (Conciliar Press, 2001).

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... **Good Shepherd**, continued from p. 9:

shows the cross on which Jesus was crucified, painted naturalistically. For many, this icon touches their hearts, because Jesus' sacrifice for his "lambs" is shown so clearly in this icon.

Is this a new icon? The image of the Good Shepherd is hardly new : it was a pagan image. Known as *criophoros*, a man carrying a sheep on his shoulders, was the pagan symbol for the virtue of philanthropy. It was connected with Hermes, the Messenger God of the ancient Greek pantheon. Through the process of adoption, adaptation, and taking "whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is anything of excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (Philippians 4:8), the image was baptized by the church and "became an obvious symbol for Christ the Good Shepherd. This figure may even have been used for direct representation of Christ, as in the mid-fifth century Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, where a *criophoros* is shown with halo and cross, surrounded by sheep"⁴ (figure 5). Even earlier examples are seen in the catacomb paintings from the third century. Today, especially in Greece, Christ is frequently represented as the Good Shepherd.



figure 5

The modern difficulty we have is with the idea of symbolism. Fr Steven Bigham deals with a particular form of symbolism: a meaning, *signifie*, represented by a human form, and a *signifiant*, that is not a real

⁴ Fr Steven Bigham, *The Image of God the Father in Orthodox Theology and Iconography, and Other Studies* (Torrance CA: Oakwood Publications, 1995), p. 191.

person. We have no objection to real historical persons being portrayed as embodiments of virtues, qualities, sins, or ideas that have been associated with them during their lives Allegorical personification, however, is not this sort of symbolization of a historical person. It is not the adding of a meaning onto a real person but rather the visualization of an abstract meaning in a non-historical human form. Personification is the opposite of symbolic embodiment. Instead of starting with an historical person and moving to an additional meaning, personification starts with an abstraction and moves to its visualization in an empty human form.⁵

According to this explanation, the image of the Good Shepherd is not an allegorical personification. If we have no objection to the representation of a real historical person being represented as an embodiment of a virtue, then Christ being shown as a Good Shepherd, a representation of the embodiment of the virtue of philanthropy, is perfectly acceptable.

Is this image, however, acceptable according to the Church's canons? The canon that deals most specifically with this iconographic question is Canon 82 from the Council of Trullo.

In some pictures of the venerable icons, a lamb is painted to which the Precursor points his finger, which is received as a type of grace, indicating beforehand through the Law, our true Lamb, Christ our God.

Embracing therefore the ancient types and shadows as symbols of the truth, and patterns given to the Church, we prefer 'grace and truth,' receiving it as the fulfillment of the Law. In order therefore that 'that which is perfect' may be delineated to the eyes of all, at least in coloured expression, we decree that the figure in human form of the Lamb who taketh away the sin of the world, Christ our God, be henceforth exhibited in images, instead of the ancient lamb, so that all may understand by means of it the depths of the humiliation of the Word of God, and that we may recall to our memory his conversation in the flesh, his passion and salutary death, and his redemption which was wrought for the whole world.⁶

If we look at the image in light of what Canon 82 declares, we see clearly that present in the image of the Good Shepherd, especially the third example, grace and truth. Christ is not shown as a lamb, but as Himself, in the embodiment of the His divine philanthropy. He is present before the cross, the vehicle through which the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, took away the sin of the world.

⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 191- 2.

⁶ Henry Percival, ed., *The Seven Ecumenical Councils* (Eerdmans, 1979), p. 401.

This icon fully shows us the depths of His humiliation. Each example of this image recalls to our memories His conversation in the flesh, and most of all the third example reminds us of His passion, His salutary death, and the redemption that He wrought for the whole world.

A question remains : is this an Orthodox icon? After much discussion with Bishop Arseni of Joensuu, Finland, one of my instructors in iconography, through my own research on the subject, and through much prayer, in my humble opinion, I would have to say yes, this is truly an

Orthodox icon. It fulfils every criterion put forward by Canon 82 of the Council of Trullo. It fulfills every criterion as to being a blessable icon of Christ : the abbreviation of the name, the cross and writing in the halo, the clothing being appropriate. It also proclaims the truth put forward by Christ Himself : “I am the Good Shepherd” (John 10:11). This ancient image resonates to us today, drawing us to Christ Himself in prayer. Let us not quench the Spirit, but embrace the truth this icon proclaims. – by Priestmonk Vladimir (Lysack), iconographer

Some holy pilgrimages to consider

It recently came to my attention that people were once again “pestering” Archbishop Seraphim to guide them on another “pilgrimage” to some ancient land. I realize that pilgrimages are a part of our Christian heritage, but I am somewhat unsure that guiding a few folk on a “pilgrimage” is really the best use of our over-worked shepherd’s stewardship. So, I thought I would come up with pilgrimages that are much more reasonable in cost and will not take up any of our Vladyka’s time.

Pilgrimage Number One

This one is the least expensive of all pilgrimages and is probably one of the most difficult to achieve! It is the daily pilgrimage from our beds to our icon corner for our daily Rule of Prayer. This is the most powerful, spirit-filling, salvation-bringing pilgrimage that we can make, yet it is too often neglected. It doesn’t cost any money, but it does cost the loss of a few extra minutes of sleep. It doesn’t require any passport or travel arrangements, but it does require the character and determination to do His will rather than our own will. It won’t take you to some exotic land on this planet, but it will transport you to His heavenly kingdom. You won’t come home with pictures and stories of your adventures, but you will be increasingly changed into a picture (icon) of Him whom you love, and your story will be told in the ages to come.

Pilgrimage Number Two

Another inexpensive but very difficult pilgrimage—the pilgrimage to your local church! This is not often a daily pilgrimage (except during some weeks in Lent!), but it should be taken at least once a week and more often if you are able. Not only is this pilgrimage spiritually helpful to you as an individual, but it is a great help to others who make the same pilgrimage. St Paul writes about how this pilgrimage is “. . . for the equipping of

the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

Wow! What a pilgrimage indeed! A pilgrimage that leads to *theosis*!

(Oh, yeah, an added bonus—it will make your priest smile.)

Pilgrimage Number Three

This pilgrimage need only be taken annually as it is more expensive, dollar-wise, than One and Two above,, but still a lot cheaper than trips to Greece, Egypt or Russia. Take a trip to one of our Canadian monasteries or hermitages and spend one or two days with the monks. This pilgrimage takes a little more planning and preparation. Here are a few tips for you:

- ◆ Contact the monastery well ahead of time and *ask* permission to visit. Find out from them when it would be convenient for *them* for you to visit. Pilgrimages to monasteries begin with a lesson in humility and obedience on our part.
- ◆ Ask what you should bring—bedclothes, food, money, etc.
- ◆ While you are at the monastery, fit into *their* schedule. Do not expect the monks to pamper and centre on YOU. Be as unobtrusive as you can. Remember, the monks are there to pray and draw near to God. Imitate them.
- ◆ Do not overstay your welcome. Monks need to spend time alone. Let them.

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. . . Pilgrimages, continued from p. 11:

Pilgrimage Number Four

Ah, finally we come to the one that the Relic Hunters love—pilgrimages to the relics of saints, which is certainly a part of our rich heritage as Christians. However, why must we go far afield to visit saints of ancient times and ancient kingdoms when we have the relics of saints right here on our own continent? Saints who have made an impact on the very land we stand on, and in the very recent past. Saints like St Herman of Alaska (patron saint of North America?), St Alexis of Wilkes-Barre, St John of Shanghai and San Francisco, St Arseny and St Raphael. The relics of all these saints are right on our doorstep, available for veneration, and these saints are familiar with our North American culture and ethos (and pathos?). Yes, by all means, let us make pilgrimages to the saints, but let us venerate those with whom we are intimate and who are part of our North American heritage. (They are also a lot less expensive to visit than our ancient ancestors!)

Finally, if you are faithfully doing the above pilgrimages and still want to go on an exotic pilgrimage, may I make the following suggestion? Calculate how much the pilgrimage would cost you, withdraw that amount of money from the bank, and donate it to the Archdiocese of Canada, perhaps to STAS, towards an assistant for our Archbishop. Not only would this be a help towards the growth of the Church in Canada, but it will probably be more beneficial to you in your struggle for salvation.

Postscript: Pilgrimages to foreign lands and exotic places are not necessary for our salvation. However, pilgrimages one and two are most certainly necessary for it! — *Fr Alexis Nikkel, Holy Apostle Barnabas Mission, Comox BC*

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

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Contacts, cooperation and dialogue Between Anglicans And Russian Orthodox, 1716 - 2008

Editor's note: St Seraphim of Sarov Mission opened its doors in March 2000 in Toronto. For eight years this Russian Orthodox parish of the Archdiocese of Canada has been sharing the church building with the Anglican parish of St Theodore of Canterbury. Both Christian communities have gained valuable and interesting experiences of contacts, cooperation and dialogue between the two confessions. On Sunday, May 11, in the church building, the Anglican and Russian Orthodox parishes met for greeting each other and Christian conversation. The following text was delivered at this gathering by Vadim Ivlev, Reader of St Seraphim parish. He is a student at the Archdiocese of Canada's St Arseny Institute in Winnipeg. Mr Ivlev sent us this lecture with the blessing of his Rector, Igumen Nestor (Mikhailetchko).

Orthodoxy is not strange and foreign reading for classical Anglicans. The [classical] Anglican way and the Orthodox way are one and the same with the appeal to Sacred Scripture and Holy Tradition. Orthodoxy is the best of classical Anglicanism preserved in our day, with an unquestioned link to the Apostolic Church. Modern Orthodox theologians had become an anchor for so many [traditional] orthodox Anglicans. Lossky, Schmemmann, Meyendorff, and Hopko are only a few of the Orthodox theologians quoted often in traditionalist Episcopalian circles.

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh [now reposed], the former senior bishop in the Russian Orthodox Patriarchal Church and the head of the Russian Church in Great Britain and Ireland, used to be the single most influential voice of the Orthodox tradition in the [British] lands. The Aberdeen University awarded him a D.D. *honoris causa* "for preaching the word of God and renewal of spiritual life in that country." Later on, he received degrees from the Moscow Theological Academy (1983), Cambridge University (1996) and Kiev Theological Academy (1999). He also received many awards from different Churches

We know that ancient Anglo-Saxon England was keeping the Orthodox Faith until year 1066. From the time of the first preaching of the Gospel of Christ in Britain and Ireland, hundreds of saints shone forth there. The memory of many of these has been preserved and honoured throughout the generations, and now, in days of our own Orthodox witness, the saints of the early, Undivided Church are again known, loved, and venerated by the faithful members of our Church. Among these are the following :

. . . Relations with other Christians . . .

Holy Martyr Alban (+304)

Holy Hierarch David of Wales,
Bishop of Menevia (+601)

Holy Hierarch Patrick, Apostle of Ireland (+493)

Venerable Columba, Abbot of Iona (+597)

Holy Hierarchs Aidan (+651) and Cuthbert (+687),
Bishops of Lindisfarne

Venerable Hilda, Abbess of Whitby (+680)

Holy Hierarchs Augustine (+604) and Theodore
(+690), Archbishops of Canterbury.

In the year 1066 the Norman Conquest of Britain occurred. The Orthodox hierarchs were replaced with those loyal to Rome. All communications with Orthodox Church had been stopped.

In 1529, the Church of England began pulling away from Rome. During that transition period [many centuries], Anglicans sought the stamp of approval and validity from the Orthodox Church.

The first encounter between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Church of England appears in the beginning of the 18th century, as a result of the movement of Anglican bishops who belonged to the party of the Non-Jurors. This party was formed in 1690 when the Archbishop of Canterbury, seven bishops and approximately 400 other clergymen refused to swear allegiance to the usurper William of Orange. They separated from the official Church and established a special congregation that continued to exist until the beginning of the 19th century. The Non-Jurors approached both the four Eastern Patriarchs and the Church of Russia, in the hope of establishing communion with the Orthodox.

In 1716, this group of Anglican bishops sent to Russia the draft agreement with the Russian Orthodox Church. In case of the agreement, it was suggested to restore the ancient British liturgy, to read the works of Orthodox Fathers after the Divine service, to establish prayful dialogue, to build the Orthodox Cathedral of Consent in London, and to allow Orthodox bishops and priests to serve in the Cathedral of St Paul in London. Amongst everything planned, it was possible only to build the Orthodox cathedral for the Greek community of London with the help of Russian Tsar Peter the Great. The community was asked to support and finance the construction. (In 1731 the Russian embassy was opened in London and the constructed cathedral became the embassy's church).

In 1722 the English clergy sent to Russia the second message. The Synod had learned about the desire of the Anglicans to "unify and leave in peace"

with the Orthodox, and in 1723 [the official in charge of communication between the Churches] promised to do whatever it took to realize it. He informed [Anglican officials] that he had notified the Emperor about the Anglicans' desire to unify, and that the Emperor had accepted the news cheerfully.

But in January of 1725, Peter the Great suddenly died, and the Anglicans lost their patron. Chancellor Golovin notified the Anglicans that their discussions were postponed due to the circumstances.

In the 19th century the Russian Orthodox Church renewed its contacts with the Anglicans. In many respects this can be explained by the internal processes happening in the Anglican Church. The Oxford movement had a significant influence on the desire to contact the Russian Orthodox Church. The movement expressed the aspirations of the Anglican Church to return to the completeness of Holy Tradition and piety.

The new era of the Russian Orthodox-Anglican encounter begins in 1759, when Russian laymen administered the first Holy Baptisms in Alaska. From that time the Orthodox faith has made a deep impression on the Native Alaskan community, and it remains strong throughout the former Russian America today.

After the Alaska purchase, occurring in 1867, the communication of the Russian Orthodox Church with the Anglican (Episcopal) Church became more frequent and practical due to the direct contacts. The enduring popularity of a Russian institution among Alaska Natives may seem puzzling. Indeed, for many decades after Russia sold Alaska to the United States, it was assumed, that the Russian Orthodox Church would not take root in North America.

As a matter of fact, the Alaskan Orthodox believers came under enormous pressure from local American authorities to convert from Orthodoxy to Anglicanism. History, indeed, has proven that the Orthodox faith has not only failed to fade away, but it has grown, being even more widespread today than back in 1867. In 1972, there were eighteen Orthodox clergy serving in Alaska. By the end of the 20th century, that number had grown to thirty-three, ministering in some eighty towns and villages. Today, there are more than a hundred active Russian Orthodox churches, chapels and institutions in Alaska. We believe that this is an eloquent call to be aware of the full reality of the Church as mystery and gift.

The same situation occurred when Episcopal Church missions arrived in California and discovered

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that the Russian Orthodox already had arrived via Alaska with a bishop. This led to questions about the Orthodox in General Convention, and thus began the longest-standing Anglican dialogue with the Russian Orthodox Church.

Discussions about the reunion of the two churches were conducted up until 1914. Great progress was made, especially in the early part of 20th century, when there were many Orthodox, and also many Anglicans, who sincerely hoped that the Anglican Communion would be reconciled to Orthodoxy in a corporate way. That corporate reunion was supported by the moderate “High Church” party within Anglicanism—which bases itself upon an appeal to the Ecumenical Councils and the Holy Fathers.

World War I, and the Russian Revolution which followed it, ruined all these hopes; the Russian Orthodox Church appeared to be destroyed by the communist regime.

The modern Anglican-Orthodox dialogue began in 1973, when the Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Discussions (A/OJDD) held its first meeting in Oxford. The first phase of the dialogue was concluded by the publication of the *The Moscow Agreed Statement* in 1976. The publication of *The Dublin Agreed Statement* in 1984 brought its second phase to a conclusion. Both statements recorded a measure of agreement on a range of specific topics, while acknowledging continuing divergence on others.

The fall of the communist regime in the former Soviet Union in 1991 has opened the way for increased relations between the Anglicans and the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Episcopal-Russian Orthodox Church Joint Coordinating Committee during the 1997-2000 triennium met twice and continued to develop partnerships in ministry projects as well as to create opportunities for theological reflection and discussion. Projects have been in such areas as seminary exchanges, alcoholism, military chaplaincy, communications, parish and diocesan exchanges, medicine, publications, and so forth.

But following the consecration of Bishop Gene Robinson in 2003, the Russian Orthodox Church ended all ecumenical contacts with the Episcopal Church USA.

In 2006, Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, who chairs the Russian Orthodox Church’s Department for External Church Relations, in his letter to Bishop Robert Duncan made it clear that while the Russian Orthodox Church firmly believes that Scripture

and Tradition support an exclusively male priesthood, the Church “has not discontinued dialogue with Protestant and Anglican Churches” that have come to another conclusion.

Drawing the line, dear brothers and sisters, we can say that our conversations are concerned with the search for a unity in faith. They are not negotiations for immediate full communion. When this is understood, the discovery of differences on various matters, though distressing, will be seen as a necessary step on the long road towards that unity which God wills for his Church.—
by Reader Vadim Ivlev, St Seraphim of Sarov Mission, Toronto

Another important reminder:

Caring for our elderly faithful

On the heels of the joyous Paschal night, I visited some of our elderly parishioners to greet them with the words “Christ is risen.” What a treat it was to see the expression on their faces, and to hear how they responded, with joy and confidence, “Indeed He is risen.” Some of them have physical ailments, while others see their memory gradually fading, but each one of them remembered and knew the words with which we greet each other during the festal period of Pascha. I cannot begin to express the joy which was written all over their faces as I greeted them and handed them the traditional Easter egg. One has to see it for himself.

That is why I remind you once again: if you have the desire to visit our elderly parishioners who have worked so much and given so much for our parishes, but who now need our help, do not hesitate, and do not feel embarrassed. Ask your rector and he will give you names and instructions. Do not be afraid. This is for the good of the parish. It is our obligation. It is confessing our faith, not in words, but in deeds. — *Michael Woinowsky-Krieger, Sts Peter and Paul Sobor, Montreal*

Such joy a visit can bring! Fiokla Tatarchuk with her Paschal egg.



The Challenge of modernity And the Orthodox Church

It would be difficult to catalogue all the problems in the Orthodox Church in North America, let alone in the rest of the world. We are not expected to reconcile the Church with the world or with the moral standards worldly societies. We do, however, have to adapt ourselves to the realities of the cultures in which we live and hope to evangelise.

The “Imperial Church” was itself an adaptation (some would say a corruption) to an era and culture that prevailed in a long past time. That time has long since vanished. We can no longer tell the laity to simply pay and obey, and not pay attention to the public life and financial matters of the Church. We must, as Orthodox Christians, however, observe that the hierarchical nature of the Church is ordained and must be respected; the Church cannot be treated like a corporation. Attacking the hierarchs is not acceptable.

This does not mean “autocracy,” nor does it mean that the laity are there only to finance the operations of the Church in silence. Indeed, many of the best developments in the Orthodox Church in North America in recent years have been the work of the laity.

It occurs to me more and more that the greatest need for the Orthodox Church today is to be finally liberated from the Byzantine Empire and from the antique Byzantine way of conducting the affairs of the Church. I cannot see how we can possibly have any sort of unity, or witness the Orthodox faith in 21st century North America, while we are still breathing the musty air of Byzantium. It is time to put away the mythologies and admit that the Empire destroyed itself from within, and the destruction came about from a long accumulation of pettiness. So long as we are infected with that self-defeating virus, we can hardly expect to have a different fate. Our task is certainly not to Hellenize or Russify America, Mexico and Canada, nor can we expect to be taken seriously so long as we continue to base our polity and methodology on 13th century Byzantium.

Our first duty as hierarchs is to teach the faithful and give them spiritual leadership (even those of us who are retired). None of us can claim anything like perfection; we are all human beings with our human frailties and failings. We need the compassion and prayers of the faithful like everyone else. The burdens of administrative duties are realities that hierarchs must face. The faithful must accept that these are heavy burdens for the hierarchs to bear. Nevertheless, without the careful

concern of the bishops about what is being taught in the parishes and how the Divine Services are being fulfilled, without the teaching role of the hierarchy and the spiritual leadership that we are supposed to be giving (even those of us who are retired), we do not have the fulness of Orthodox Church life.

The 21st century presents us with unparalleled challenges to the faith. New questions are raised that must be responded to. Mere statements of concern are not sufficient. Hierarchs and priests must work much more closely with the laity in this present era. We have to be cognizant of the fact that the laity are less and less able to give the financial support than they once were, and this situation will become more difficult with each passing year. The price of oil, and the price of everything else that it affects, is not going to become more manageable, but less so. There are enormous economic problems arising very quickly, and all these are having huge humanitarian consequences. Fiscal prudence is not the only issue, but it is significant.

Responding to the spiritual pressures and giving answers to the issues of the 21st century are of vital importance. Nineteenth century answers and superstitions will not sustain the faith and spiritual lives of the faithful in our century. We need to find the strength and presence of mind to make the great issues facing humanity, and facing the faith itself, outweigh the petty issues of Church politics and even the more significant matters of inter-jurisdictional relationships.

These are just a few thoughts for discussion, outraged remonstrances and, hopefully, some honest contemplation. — *Archbishop Lazar (Puhalo), Retired Archbishop of Ottawa, Abbot of All Saints of North America Monastery, Dewdney BC*



“One day, a man who was visiting Mount Athos asked several wise elders the following question: ‘What is the most important thing in your life?’

“Each time he was answered like this: ‘It is divine love; to love God and to love one's neighbour.’

“He said: ‘I don't have love, either for prayer, or for God, or for other people. What must I do?’

“And then he decided by himself: ‘I will act as if I had this love.’

“Thirty years later, the Holy Spirit gave him the grace of love.” — *Archimandrite Sophrony, Words of Life, p. 30.*



Concerning the ‘evil eye’

Most of you will have some familiarity with the fable of the “evil eye.” According to this ancient pagan belief, you can blame practically any thing negative that happens to you by saying that it was caused by someone giving you “the evil eye.” The story accords magic powers to the eye (usually the left eye) of an evil person. In all likelihood, you have seen some one from the Mediterranean or Balkan countries wearing a blue stone, perhaps even one shaped like a blue eye. This stone is supposed to protect you in ways that the Cross of Christ cannot.

Why is it blue? Because in the Mediterranean area most people have black, hazel or dark brown eyes, so blue eyes are “outsiders.” In pre-Christian times, and even after, many ships sailing on the Mediterranean sea had an eye painted or carved on the forecastle or figurehead. This was supposed to drive away sea monsters or ocean spirits, or even the ghosts of drowned sailors.

In Scripture, looking with an evil eye meant to look with envy. Of course, many truly wicked deeds are done out of envy, but no one has a magic eye which can cause harm. Wearing the blue stone as something that is pretending to be more powerful than the Cross of Christ is a sign of weak faith or no faith at all.

For some years now, I have refused to give Holy Communion to people who wear the blue stone in place of the Cross. If one has no faith in the Cross of Christ, then one cannot have faith in the fruit of that Tree, Holy Communion.

If you are using the pre-Christian fables about the evil eye, curses and magic, then you are likely using them primarily as a means of not having to accept responsibility for your own mistakes and folly, or the natural events that take place in life. If you pray sincerely to Christ and plan your actions carefully, taking good advice and preparation, then you will find that the things you consider to be curses, or attacks from the “evil eye,” no longer occur in your life. Remember that “luck” is what happens when preparation meets opportunity. — *Archbishop Lazar (Puhalo)*

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