

THE WORD

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THE WORD

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COVER: ICON RECENTLY FOUND IN A FLEA MARKET IN CROATIA. IT IS OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN. THIS TYPE OF ICON IS CALLED A RIZA. THE PRECIOUS METAL COVERING IS USED BOTH FOR VENERATING AN ICON, AND PROTECTING THE ICON FROM DAMAGE CAUSED BY VENERATION.

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Letters to the editor are welcome and should include the author's full name and parish. Submissions for "Communities in Action" must be approved by the local pastor. Both may be edited for purposes of clarity and space. All submissions e-mailed and provided as a Microsoft Word text or editable PDF. Please do not embed artwork into the word documents. All art work must be high resolution: at least 300dpi.

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CAN PARENTS REGAIN THEIR TRADITIONAL ROLE IN THE FAMILY?

Bishop JOHN

Our Father in Christ, Patriarch JOHN X, dedicated most of the October Holy Synod to studying the family in order to understand better how we can minister in our Church. Families are like the cells of the body that make up the Church. Each family is indeed a "little church," where God is encountered and where our minds, bodies, and spirits are fed by God. The relationship of the family and the Church is symbiotic: the church feeds, protects and cares for the family, just as the family feeds, protects, and cares for the church.

It is no secret that parents are often struggling to maintain productive relationships with their children, relationships in which they can transmit to their children their traditions, their knowledge of God's revelation, their values, and their wisdom. Both parents often work long hours just to provide for the family, leaving little time and energy to parent. When there is time, or rather, when they make time, parents often encounter children who themselves are too busy with their electronics, sports, movies, peers, and academics, to listen and learn.

For a variety of reasons, most people today derive their identity much more from their peer group, jobs, hobbies, and social circles, rather than their church, family or nationality. Modern research indicates that young people are more interested in what their peer groups say about faith, politics, values, and relationships than their church, political party, or family. This makes parenting and ministry particularly challenging.

The good news is that young people are

sensitive, curious, and honest, and that they seek authentic religious experiences. They seek God, even if they are suspicious of adults and religion. The Church has an opportunity today to equip



parents to do their God-given task of educating their children in Christ, into whom they brought their children at baptism. Parents need themselves to encounter God, to experience Him in prayer and liturgy, and to share in His life, before they can offer these gifts to their children. Parents and church leaders need to be deliberate about working together.

Metropolitan JOSEPH has made holiness and spiritual vocations the focus of his teaching and leadership. He calls upon parents and clergy to work together for the future of our youth, which is the future of our Church.

METROPOLITAN JOSEPH ATTENDS MEETING OF CHRISTIAN ARAB AND MIDDLE EASTERN CHURCHES TOGETHER

On September 17, 2019, His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH attended the fall meeting of CAMECT (Christian Arab and Middle Eastern Churches Together) at the Coptic Orthodox Diocesan Center in Staten Island, New York. He was accompanied by Archdiocese Vicar General Fr. Thomas Zain. Leaders and representatives from the various Christian Churches with roots in the Middle East, including Bishop GREGORY Mansour of the Maronite Catholic Church, Archbishop ANOUSHAVAN of the Armenian Orthodox Eastern Prelacy, and a representative from IDC (In Defense of Christians), gathered for their fall meeting, hosted by Archbishop ANBA David of the Diocese of New York and New England of the Coptic Orthodox Church.

The group discussed the situation of the Christians in the Middle East, with each representative giving an update of his particular community's situation. The biggest concern continues to be the displacement and emigration of the Christians from the Middle East for a variety of reasons, including persecution and economic factors, as well as the instability caused by the various wars in the region.

In the discussions, the Church leaders came up with three goals towards which they will work in the coming year: sponsorship of a United Nations event on religious freedom; a continued partnership with IDC for the Washington events (which has included the very successful prayer service in the United States Capitol Rotunda last July); and our own Metropolitan's suggestion of having CAMECT leaders and others visit various Middle Eastern countries as a show of support and hope for our people there. They also pledged to be seen together more often, in order to bring the common witness they represent to the American people.

The next meeting will be held in March and will be hosted by the Antiochian Archdiocese.



ST. JOSEPH, PATRON SAINT FOR CHASTITY

Fr. John Fenton

PATRON SAINTS

I don't really know how patron saints are made. I'm sure that, at some point, somebody, somewhere had to make an argument, stating that this or that saint was best for this or that parish, region, country, family, person, or cause. No doubt, that argument was based on all sorts of factors: the connection of the saint to that place, an answer to prayer to that saint, personal struggles in the saint's life, miracles performed while living, the inspiring story of a saint's life or martyrdom, or simply general devotion. The practice of adopting patron saints can be traced first to the churches built over the graves of martyrs.¹ By the Middle Ages, it had expanded to include patron saints for diseases or various struggles. The thought is this: the intercessions of the patron of a various disease or vice is most helpful since that saint, by personal experience, understands. It's like asking a single man (rather than a married woman) to speak with and counsel young single men who are struggling with loneliness, guilt, rejection, and all other issues that might be attached to being a single man.

At some point, someone (or a group of someones) had to make an argument for why a particular saint was more suited to a particular issue. Again, some points of the argument were, no doubt, easy to connect, and personal experience weighed heavily. After hearing the arguments, someone decided the merits of the argument.

So, I'm making an argument. My argument is that those who struggle with the vice of lust should seek the prayers of Saint Joseph in order to achieve the virtue of chastity. The goal in battling any vice is to overcome it by replacing it with the corresponding virtue. It is not enough – in fact, I will be so bold as to say that it is more harmful – merely to ask for the will and to develop the behavior of avoiding the sin. If that is all, then it is both a negative goal (“I don't want to do this anymore”) and, worse yet, it opens the door for a greater attack or another vice. Jesus warns us about this one-sided method when he says that the unclean spirit, driven out, seeks rest by returning to a swept, put-in-order, yet empty house. Empty is the problem. For empty means there is more room for the seven

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CHRISTIAN
CHURCH,
WHITTIER,
CALIFORNIA.

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Metropolitan JOSEPH

The Right Reverend
Bishop BASIL

The Right Reverend
Bishop THOMAS

The Right Reverend
Bishop ALEXANDER

The Right Reverend
Bishop JOHN

The Right Reverend
Bishop ANTHONY

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deadly spirits (sins) to enter and set up house (Matthew 12:43–45). So it is not enough to ask prayers to amend. The goal is not simply to stop bad behavior. The goal is transformation, and transformation means a positive change. So to stop is not enough: to replace is also necessary. Both to repel the destructive passionate movement with its self-destruction, *and* to replace it with its opposing good – that should be our unending prayer to our patron.²

Toward this end, permit me to argue that we should look for help to the prayers of St. Joseph, the Spouse of the Blessed Virgin and the foster-father of Our Lord. Yet let us not only seek his help in battling this insidious vice, which both attacks with its temptations while also worming its way underneath the skin. Let us also plead with this man, whose essence is righteousness (*esset justus*, Matthew 1:19), to lead us, by his prayers, his merits, and his example, to true and godly chastity.

CONSIDERING JOSEPH'S NAME

The first thing we need to know about our patron is his name. St. Bernard of Clairvaux, a wonderful homilist and holy abbot, urges us to learn what kind of man St. Joseph was by considering his name, “which undoubtedly means, Increase.”³ St. Bernard then immediately connects our St. Joseph

with the Old Testament Patriarch. Both were sons of Jacob. Both were directly connected to a miraculous birth: the one born of a barren woman, the other the guardian of a virgin mother. Both married and protected despised women: the one an Egyptian, the other a woman suspected of adultery. And both were royalty: the one appointed by Pharaoh, the other a direct descendant of King David.

These details are not coincidences. In fact, as is common with the Holy Spirit, what we might call coincidences are actually planned types and anti-types. For the Joseph of old, both in the details and in the conduct of his life, pre-figured the guardian of the Mother of God. Let us hear how St. Bernard marvelously describes their connection:

Call to mind that great Patriarch who was sold into Egypt in olden times: and be assured that this Joseph not only had the same name, but also attained unto his chastity and equaled him in innocence and grace. That Joseph, sold through the envy of his brothers and led into Egypt, prefigured the selling of Christ: this Joseph, fleeing from the envy of Herod, carried Christ into Egypt. The former, faithfully serving his master, would have no intercourse with his lord's wife; the latter, knowing that his wife, the Mother of his Lord, was a virgin and being chaste himself, faithfully guarded her. To the former was given understanding of the mysteries of dreams: to the latter it was given to know and to share in the heavenly mysteries. The former preserved wheat, not for himself, but for all the people: the latter received the Living Bread from heaven to preserve both for himself and for the whole world.⁴

In the latter you see the former. The same is true in their shared name, which means, “May the LORD give increase.” The Patriarch Joseph undeniably leads to the increase of the descendants of Abraham. Certainly, by God's providence, the young man sold as a slave by his brothers is raised up so that he might relocate his father's family to Egypt, and so that they do not diminish through famine but increase through the food he prudently stored away. In his own words, Joseph says: “God Almighty appeared to me at Luza, which is in the land of Canaan: and he blessed me, And he said: ‘I will cause thee to increase and multiply, and I will make of thee a multitude of people: and I will give this land to thee,

and to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession” (Genesis 48:3–4) “And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them” (Exodus 1:7)

How did this all come about? First of all, by chastity. You know the story (Genesis 39:1–20): Joseph is put in charge of Potiphar's entire estate. Daily he is tempted by Potiphar's wife, but Joseph does not give in to this vice of lust. In word and in deed, with his eyes and in his mind, he practices chastity. In fact, if you listen carefully, you can almost hear Joseph repeating the Psalm: “I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes” (Psalm 101:3). Patriarch Joseph's initial reward for refusing to indulge his eyes and his disordered desires is to be humiliated, then falsely accused, and then imprisoned. These are the sufferings, the grief, that he manfully strives against. The loneliness and deprivation in prison – that is the reward for struggling against his own flesh, for not giving in, even in the secret of the bedroom. Yet he endures these evils. And like all the righteous, he does not give in or give up. Rather, Joseph perseveres. And the Lord rewards his virtue by strengthening him and enabling him to live up to his name – for the good of the children of Israel. Chastity, therefore, has its reward, even though for a long while, perhaps even for an entire life-time, we must constantly and diligently refuse the evil and seek the good.

You can see that the Patriarch Joseph zealously, relentlessly, unwaveringly guards his chastity. Why? Not for his own reputation's sake. Not because of fear of being found out. Not because of self-shame. The estate he manages for Potiphar, even Potiphar's seductive wife – he sees these as gifts, given by God, entrusted to him, placed under his protection, care, and guardianship.

This Joseph, as I've said, is simply the type; the one who prefigures and points to the husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The latter one, who is our champion for chastity, exemplifies his name. What does St. Luke say? By God's providence, entrusted as a gift, the very Son of God was placed under St. Joseph's protection, care, and guardianship. In his care, “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52). This increase means not only that Jesus grew up in St. Joseph's

home. It means that Our Lord Jesus bore Joseph's name; that He learned from Joseph the art of constructing and fashioning things with His hands; and that Jesus was schooled by Joseph in the family heritage – the Davidic royal line with all that this entailed.⁵

“Jesus increased” also means that the Son of God “found in Joseph an ideal son of Abraham; that is to say, a man who lived, as Abraham did, by faith.”⁶ And what does that faith look like? It looks like a man who submits without question to the will of God. From Joseph, Jesus saw, “Not my will, but thine be done.” Which, among other things means, “I will not satisfy my own desires; I will not give into my own appetites; I will not do what pleases me. Instead, I will trust in the prayer I say: that God gives me, day by day, all I need to assuage my loneliness and my needs. And I will let the love of God burn so brightly that it will burn away all my ungodly passions.” That's what submission to God looks like: desire for God to snuff out self-serving

“I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes” (Psalm 101:3)

desires. That's what “Thy will be done” looks like: not feeding my whims or convincing myself of what I deserve or seeking my pleasure above all else, but trusting that God knows what I truly need and that He is merciful enough to supply, in whatever way He chooses, that need. We see that faith, that submission, that confidence, that prayer lived in the Patriarch. And for nearly thirty years, Jesus sees it alive in His divinely ordained foster-father. And so He “increase[s] in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”

The more one denies his flesh, the more one subdues his appetites, the more one practices true chastity – the more one achieves true serenity, and escapes anxiety, and acquires a spirit free from frenetic distraction. For frenetic distraction, apprehension, and disquietude are embedded within the demon of lust. Yet from his guardian and foster-father, as He grow us, Our Blessed Lord sees and learns the opposite. For St. “Joseph was not a person given to anxiety. He appeared, rather, as a man of

extraordinary serenity. We find Joseph in five scenes in the gospel [according to] Matthew, and every single time he is sound asleep. Whatever troubles Joseph endured, they did not include insomnia.”⁷

St. Joseph reared and trained our blessed Lord from infancy until the beginning of His public ministry. And through the hand of St. Joseph, Our Father granted increase in wisdom and stature, in virtue and insight, for His well-beloved Son. And I suggest that the strength of St. Joseph’s character, the underlying charism that enabled Joseph to be the guardian Jesus needed, was his faith which led him to sacrifice his carnal passions.

St. Joseph demonstrates that it is possible to live an intimate, even romantic life, with another, without sexual relations or without the life being “sexualized.”

GUARDIAN

We have little biblical information about St. Joseph. However, we are plainly told that he was a just man. This justice, or righteousness, is displayed first when he wrestles with the dilemma of finding his young wife six months pregnant. The non-biblical records agree that St. Joseph was specially chosen by God through a miracle from among other widowers. And unhesitatingly, as is his nature, he submits himself to God’s will. On discovering the Holy Mother with child, however, St. Joseph is shaken. Here is one apocryphal record of the account:

And, behold, ... entering into his house, [Joseph] discovered that [Mary] was big with child. And he smote his face, and threw himself on the ground upon the sackcloth, and wept bitterly, saying: With what face shall I look upon the Lord my God? And what prayer shall I make about this maiden? Because I received her a virgin out of the temple of the Lord, and I have not watched over her. Who is it that has hunted me down? Who has done this evil thing in my house, and defiled the virgin? Has not the history of Adam been repeated in me? For just as Adam was in the hour of his singing praise, and the serpent came, and found Eve alone, and completely deceived her, so it has happened to me also.⁸

What is most remarkable about this account is that St. Joseph doesn’t accuse the Holy Mother Mary of indiscretion, but rather blames himself for letting down his guard: “for I have not watched over her.” In this regard, he compares himself to Adam, who was blithely singing, rather than guarding Eve, as was his task from God. Adam failed in guarding Eve by not being mindful of Satan’s approach. St. Joseph understands that he has failed in the same way. He knows both his duty to St. Mary, and what that requires from himself. He must be on guard. Since he has apparently failed, something must be done, yet without putting his betrothed in harm’s way. While Joseph is tossing and turning, mulling over what to do, his guardianship of the Holy Mother is confirmed by the angel of the Lord: “Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife” (Matthew 1:20). Take her, not to possess but to guard; not to make her your own, but for her well-being.

“There is no doubt but that this Joseph was a good and faithful man, he to whom the Mother of the Savior was espoused. He was, I say, the faithful and wise servant whom his Lord hath made protector of his Mother, guardian of his own Manhood, and, in short, the sole, and most faithful assistant on earth of his mighty counsel.”⁹ With those words, St. Bernard ties St. Joseph’s justice, his righteousness and goodness, directly to being a guardian both of the Mother of God, and also of the Holy Child. So “Joseph, who held the position of husband but was in actuality servant and steward . . . is called father, but is more a guardian.”¹⁰

A guardian guards. He guards others, but in doing so, he must guard himself as well. For how can one guard if one is not on guard? And how can one keep watch if he is busy indulging himself? And how can one protect others from assault if he does not know how, or does not practice, protecting himself? And so, to guard this Holy Family, St. Joseph needed, unlike Adam, to guard himself: continually, conscientiously, uncompromisingly. This means, above all else, that St. Joseph will need to sacrifice his desires. For, above all else, St. Joseph must protect the virginity of the Holy Theotokos. Why? Because if she is shown not to be perpetually virgin, then the rumors that he feared, and the stories that would be told later, could not be disproved. That, in turn, would call into question the divinity of Jesus. And to protect the Blessed Mother’s virginity meant,

first and foremost, guarding himself from giving into his disordered desires. By guarding himself, St. Joseph was not merely guarding the reputation of Holy Mary and Blessed Jesus: he was also safeguarding the foundation of our faith.

STRENGTH

Notice what St. Joseph’s constancy shows us. In his marriage to the Holy Mother of God, in his justice and uprightness with her at all times, in his willingness to dispense with his desires for the sake of another, St. Joseph demonstrates that it is possible to live an intimate, even romantic life, with another, without sexual relations or without the life being “sexualized.” This patron of chastity shows us that it is possible to control our passions – most especially, the passion of lust.

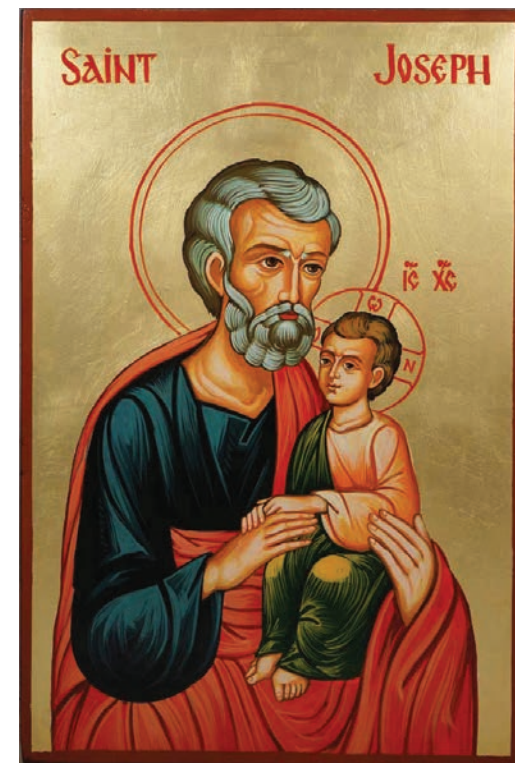
Lust is not the worst sin. It is not the unforgivable sin. Pride is the first of the deadly sins because the proud person asserts that God is not necessary and, worse yet, that the love that God is does not require either the sacrifice of His Son or the sacrifice of our will. From pride flows gluttony, which says that self-denial is not necessary for I can choose from any tree that I desire. Gluttony, in turn, awakens the other ungodly passions by fueling a sensual life where all senses are satiated in a never-ending, downward spiraling demand for satisfaction. But this need to be satisfied is never satisfied, since it becomes increasingly self-serving, thereby cutting us off from true satisfaction; namely, life lived for an (O)ther.

“Like its sister sin, gluttony, lust allows a soul unable to confront the reality of life with a brief escape. Indulge in lust, and all of life’s troubles and worries disappear for a moment – only to reappear again unchanged, and with one’s soul in a state of peril. Like many sins, lust is often not fallen into because it is somehow awful and hurts; no, it offers us

something, and we think we benefit from it.”¹¹ The benefit, however, is truly illusory. For lust’s empty promise is that loneliness can be overcome, love can be embraced, and self-worth can be discovered. What actually happens, however, is that lust feeds on unreality, on fantasies that make us increasingly isolated, miserable, and ashamed. So, “instead of facing reality, hardship, suffering, fear, woe, or anything else, man can temporarily ‘forget his emptiness in the intensity of a momentary experience.’”¹²

The strength of St. Joseph is that he did not shy away or hide from reality. He did not compare his reality with another’s. He did not complain that he labored as a carpenter when, in truth, he should have been reigning as king. He did not seek a phantom escape when death threatened his family. He did not think he deserved to indulge himself because he was relegated to “third wheel” in the Holy Family. Instead, St. Joseph placed himself entirely at God’s disposal, embraced as a gift the life he had, and worked tirelessly to guard and cherish, protect and defend his small, yet holy habitation.

Above all else, St. Joseph’s strength is his continual continence, which is not merely self-restraint against passion, but more so the practice of virtue. And that is what our patron demonstrates: virtue. Virtue comes, first of all, by mastering self-control against vice. Controlling our passions, fasting from our appetites, restraining our desires, practicing continence with eyes and hands – this self-denial actually strengthens us both to battle pride and to live holy and pure lives. I’m very confident that St. Joseph didn’t simply stumble upon continence, and that his passions did not fade with age. Rather, he knew that the fight against various demons was both unavoidable and life-long. For “to fight [our passions] is unavoidable if we want to live; for once we stop fighting, we shall straightway



1. Scott P. Richert, “What are Patron Saints: A Brief History and How They Are Chosen.” ThoughtCo, September 10, 2018. Accessed 10 April 2019 (<https://www.thoughtco.com/what-are-patron-saints-542859>).

2. See Theophan the Recluse, *Unseen Warfare* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2000, p. 117).

3. St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153), Homily II “The New Song,” in *Homilies in Praise of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (translation from the *Monastic Breviary for Matins* on the Feast of St. Joseph, March 19; Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1993, pp. 28–29).

4. Ibid.

5. Patrick Henry Reardon, *The Jesus We Missed* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012), p. 4.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., p. 5.

8. Trans. Alexander Walker, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe: *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 8, (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1886); revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight (<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0847.htm>).

9. *Monastic Breviary for Matins*, p. 754.

10. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermons for Advent and the Christmas Season* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 2007), p.142.

11. Sam Guzman, “The Seven Deadly Sins: Lust” in *The Catholic Gentleman* (April 10, 2019; <https://www.catholicgentleman.net/2013/09/the-seven-deadly-sins-lust/>).

12. Ibid.

13. *Unseen Warfare*, p. 114.

14. The pattern I’ve described is laid out in greater detail in *Unseen Warfare*, pp. 113–115.

15. St. Bernadine of Siena in *Monastic Breviary for Matins*, p. 22.

16. Based on a prayer by St. Bernadine of Siena uses to conclude his homily in *Monastic Breviary for Matins*, p. 22.

17. Source: <https://franciscanmissionaries.com/patron-purity-chastity/>

be stricken to death.”¹³

We can only guess how St. Joseph entered into this warfare in order to maintain his continence. So here is my guess, based on the lives and recommendations of other saints: St. Joseph prepared daily, every single day, for battle. First, he did the hard work of examining his own weaknesses and discovering in himself the occasions for sin – those patterns or circumstances that “triggered” his desires and sought to draw him into the vicious cycle of sin. Second, he would begin each day in prayer, asking the Lord’s grace and strength to avoid any near occasions of sin. Third, before beginning the day’s duties, he would review his schedule to determine what opportunities for temptation might occur on that particular day. Then he would resolve to be aware of those particular occasions so that he was on his guard. Finally, he would, in prayer again, arm himself with distrust in his resolve and daring hope in God’s protection. And this pattern he would repeat daily, without fail.¹⁴

OUR PATRON

To see St. Joseph as our patron for chastity means, first of all, that we seek to imitate this pattern that I’ve imagined based on the holiness of others. For relying on the merits, and pleading the prayers of a patron, is of little benefit if we do not also learn from his life, however scant the information may be. Our task, then, is begin each day asking for St. Joseph’s intercessions to strength us in our resolve to avoid all those near occasions of sin that we’ve identified, that we know are possible from past patterns, and also that may comes unawares throughout the day; and to repeat this routine every morning. For our desire – mine and yours – should be to become not merely better persons by self-restraint and self-control, but also to be better guardians of those entrusted to our care, and whomever we meet or see. For if we can guard ourselves, we will also begin to protect others, even those in digital images.

By guarding himself, and especially by keeping his passions in check, St. Joseph most certainly, by God’s grace, has shown that he is “the faithful guardian and keeper of [the Father’s] choicest Treasure.”¹⁵ Yet more so, for us, the Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary indicates both how we can live without giving into our passions, and also how he is a most ready and powerful intercessor for those

who are caught in the unrelenting loop of feeding their carnal desires.

Be mindful of us, therefore, blessed Joseph, and intercede for us, helping us by thy prayers to thy reputed Son; who with the Father and Holy Spirit liveth and reigneth throughout infinite ages of ages. Amen.¹⁶

APPENDIX

Although the following saint has the misfortune of not being Eastern or Orthodox, but Jesuit, I found the following details of his story very compelling.

St. Aloysius Gonzaga (1568–1591): The Patron of Purity and Chastity

St. Robert Bellarmine (another Jesuit) who knew Aloysius well observed that he was sure Aloysius had never committed a mortal sin. And what he did to control his sexual passion and desire was by penance and mortification frequently. In other words, he practiced self-denial frequently to control his passions.

The late-Fr. Hardon said he “began to practice self-discipline to preserve his chastity, he tried to imitate the lives of the fathers of the desert.... In order to protect his chastity ... he fasted three days a week.... Every midnight he’d get up to pray on a stone floor, no matter what the weather was, in winter without heat. He tried to make hours of meditation.” These he’d do regularly.

Fr. Hardon said that Aloysius wrote about these himself and also wrote about his sexual passions; he had very strong sexual passions. We know this also from people who knew him.

So, he was doing penance not so much to repair what sins had been committed already, but more for preventive purposes. Fr. Hardon said, “He simply believed that unless he mortified his body ... he just would not get that passion under control. The lesson for us, in a sex-mad world, is obvious. You do not control that passion without mortification, you just don’t.”¹⁷

Fr. John Fenton, Pastor, St. Michael’s, Whittier, California

“FROM THESE STONES”

DEPARTMENT OF MISSIONS AND EVANGELISM

LIFE ILLUMINED

Fr. Joseph Huneycutt

THOSE OUTSIDE THE CHURCH OFTEN MISUNDERSTAND THE ORTHODOX WAY OF ASCETICISM AND SELF-DENIAL. *IT IS A WAY TO LIFE*. CONTRARY TO MISPERCEPTIONS, SELF-DENIAL IS NOT IMPOSED ON OTHERS. RATHER, JUST AS THE SAVIOR VOLUNTARILY SUFFERED THE CROSS FOR OUR SALVATION, WE VOLUNTARILY IMPOSE THE RIGORS OF SPIRITUAL LABORS ON OURSELVES. THE FOLLOWING IS FROM A TALK GIVEN TO NON-ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS, WHERE THE CONFERENCE THEME WAS *LIFE*.

“*The light of Christ illumineth all!*” In the Orthodox tradition, these words are intoned by the priest during the service of the Presanctified Gifts during the Great Fast of Lent. The parishioners, should they be of the pious sort, have been fasting – not only forgoing meat, dairy, wine, and oil – perhaps having had no food all day. *The Royal Gates open*. The celebrant appears holding aloft a candle in one hand, the censer in the other. He faces the people of God and chants: “*The light of Christ illumines all.*” This is intoned whilst the congregation is in full prostration; that is, on their knees, with their faces to the ground.

I would venture to say, brethren, that in the life of the Church, *light* and *life* cannot be separated. Just as it is not possible to separate the *life* of Christ from the *light* of Christ, the same is true of death and resurrection, His and ours. We are not called out of the world, transfigured in Christ, and sent back into the world to be Darwinian, just supporting life for the sake of multiplying our species. Rather, in the waters of baptism, we put off the old man, dying to Christ, and are raised a new man in Christ, who

is the God-Man. We are called, commissioned, to be *light*. “You are the light of the world!” (Matthew 5:14). Orthodox Christians are reminded of this every time we light a candle in prayer. We are called to remember that it is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who is the true light, and that He will grant us true life.

In lighting our candles, the first thing we *should do* is make an offering for the candle. Everything that we have is from God and the first step is to give back to Him for all His many blessings. We light candles and remember those we love, those who are sick, those with whom we struggle, and those who have passed beyond the veil. We beseech God to have mercy on us all.

Our progression toward the light is by way of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. This is the way Orthodox Christians work out their salvation. It is how we voluntarily deny ourselves – *die to ourselves* – and take up our cross to follow Christ. St. Seraphim of Sarov is quoted as saying:

Prayer, fasting, vigils, and all other Christian practices, however



The light of Christ illumines all

good they may be in themselves, certainly do not constitute the aim of our Christian life: they are the indispensable means of attaining that aim. For the true aim of the Christian life is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God.¹

Christ calls us out of the world. He consumes us and sends us back with fear of God and full of the Holy Spirit to bring in the harvest. We must die for Him to live in us. We must allow our pride to die, our greed to die, our wants to die, our wills to die, our dreams to die, our feelings to die. We must die. There is a sign above the entrance of a monastery on Mount Athos that reads “*If you die before you die, then when you die, you will not die.*”

Like St. John the Forerunner, we must say of Christ: “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30). In taking up our cross daily, we crucify our sinful selves only to be raised up to glory, and thereby become co-workers with God for the salvation of the world. This is the promise. This is the mission. This is the fruit of our labors: prayer, fasting, and alms-giving.

“But God forbid that I should boast, except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world” (Galatians 6:14). St. Paul embraces the death of the world and his own death. He understands that the crucifixion of Jesus *is life*. He knows that he must be crucified with Christ so that his death can be joined with Christ’s death.

By a gradual spiritual transformation through prayer, fasting, and alms-giving, we are made aware of it: this death, this life, *this light ... of Christ*. It shines in our minds and souls. Christ said, “I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have *the light of life*” (John 8:12). Jesus Christ *is* that light. He is the light that shines for us in the midst of this world of darkness. Anyone who follows Him needs not fear that darkness, because we know that Christ will always shine for us, leading us in the Way to the Father. Matthew the Poor writes,

The union of man with God, or deification, is a legitimate aim to seek. This is due to the preexisting union between divinity and humanity in the incarnation. It is Christ, then, who has set it before us as an aim. Union here includes all the gratuitous means of grace – baptism, Holy Communion, and perpetual

repentance. Union also includes struggles such as fasting, chastity, bridling of tongue and mind. It involves constant prayer as well as acts of love and humility. It certainly includes as well God’s invisible succor to those who strive to reach him.²

As Orthodox Lent and Holy Week comes to an end, on the night of Great and Holy Pascha, the darkened church sees the Royal Gates of the altar opened and the priest emerging with a lighted candle, chanting:

Come ye take light from the Light that is never over taken by night.

Come glorify Christ, Risen from the dead!

Later in the service, the priest reads the great Paschal Sermon of St. John Chrysostom. During a Lenten retreat in Houston years ago, Fr. Paul Tarazi told how each year, during the reading of the great sermon by St. John Chrysostom at the Easter Liturgy, he would often see his most faithful parishioners wearing a frown, particularly at the lines:

If any have arrived only at the eleventh [hour], let him not be afraid because he comes so late.

For the Master is generous and accepts the last even as the first.

Inevitably, during the festive meal following the Liturgy, someone would approach him and ask: “If one can be accepted, even at the eleventh hour, why did we have to do all those services and all that fasting?” To which he replied: “So that *you could understand* what St. John was saying!”

Almighty God, sometimes to our chagrin, allows the light to shine on the wicked as well as the righteous. And we are called to be like God.

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Endnotes

1. Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (London: Penguin, 1993), p. 230.
2. Matthew the Poor, *Orthodox Prayer Life – The Interior Way* (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2003), p. 107.



The Ministry of the Clergy in the Orthodox Church

Fr. Joseph Allen

“I CAME NOT TO BE SERVED, BUT TO SERVE (MATTHEW 20:28, MARK 10:45). THE MEANING OF THESE WORDS, SPOKEN BY OUR LORD, REFLECTS THE MINISTRY OF ALL THREE MAJOR OFFICES OF THE CHURCH: BISHOP, PRIEST AND DEACON (EPISCOPOS, PRESBYTEROS AND DIAKONOS). EACH OFFICE IS CREATED BY GOD FOR SERVICE TO THE CHURCH, AND, THROUGH THE CHURCH, TO THE WORLD. ALTHOUGH WE SHALL AT TIMES REFER TO ALL THREE OFFICES AS THE “CLERGY,” EACH HAS A DISTINCTIVE FUNCTION WITHIN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH.

To minister is to serve; this is the meaning of the ancient Christian term *diakonia* (“ministry,” “service”). It is precisely this term that makes us who are “clergy,” at once disciples and apostles of Christ. If the word *discipled* means “the called,” then our service is to be a disciple *called* by God. If the word *apostle* means “sent,” then our service is to be as an apostle sent by God.

Although this also applies to the layperson, it does hold a special meaning for those ordained into one of these three offices of the clergy; they are “called apart” (*hierotonia*, “ordained”) to a very focused life of service within the Church.

Among various interpretations, it is these three offices which most clearly point to the variety of “gifts of the Spirit” (*charismata*, “grace,” “gifts”), but only inasmuch as each remains fused within the same body and is “for the common good.” Thus the

great Apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians: “Now there are a variety of gifts, but the same Spirit; a variety of services, but the same Lord; a variety of workings, but it is the same God who inspires them all” (1 Corinthians 12:4–5). To this, he immediately adds, “To each is given the manifestation for the common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7). This variety of “gifts,” of “services,” and of “works,” then, shows the global and comprehensive scope of the ministry of the clergy: bishop, priest and deacon.

THE ART AND PRAXIS OF THE PASTORAL MINISTRY

St. Gregory Nazianzen (also called St. Gregory the Theologian) understood this global and comprehensive scope when, in his famous *Oration on the Flight to Pontos*, he called the pastoral ministry an “art.” Certainly, however, he did not mean that skill and attitude were unimportant. The remainder of his writings, like the writings of the other two of the Three Hierarchs (Basil the Great and John Chrysostom), indicate that he well knew skill and attitude to be part of the ministry. To describe the ministry as art, however, is probably the most comprehensive and proper description. What is “art,” except that which includes elements of creation, truth, spontaneity, vision, and so forth. These elements must be channeled and directed by the skill and attitude of the artist. This is also virtually a description of what takes place in *diakonia*, or ministry. Thus the Nazianzen writes of the service of the clergy as “the art

same body and “for the common good.” “Of this healing we are ministers and fellow laborers; for whom it is a great thing to recognize and heal, first of all, our own passions and weaknesses . . . but a much greater thing is the power to heal and the skill to cleanse others” (ibid., p. 210).

In a like manner, *The Pastoral Rule* of St. Gregory of Rome calls this direction of the souls “the art of arts” (*ars est atrium regimen animarum*). He writes: “No one ventures to reach any art unless he has learned it through pondering it deeply. With what rashness, then, would the pastoral ministry be undertaken by those who are unfit to do this, seeing that such direction of souls is the ‘art of arts’” (in the Paulist Press’s *Ancient Christian Writers, The Pastoral Rule*, I, p. 21). Both Gregories know, then, that this “art” is one which includes the skill and attitude proper to its *praxis* within the Church.

This “art of arts and science of science,” however, cannot be reduced to any one element within the *praxis*. Indeed, it implies the most global care of the people of God; it is not merely counseling, administration, liturgy, teaching, preaching, and so on. It is indeed inclusive of *all* these particulars, but for the Orthodox clergy, to reduce such care to any one of them would wrongly diminish the scope of his activity.

For this reason St. Basil the Great has best described this as an *epimelia*, (which means “total care”), and such a term has the meaning of what the Lord Himself is: “The shepherd (*poimenos*) and overseer (*episcopos*) of your souls” (1 Peter 2:25). Such “total care,” however, does not wash away the exacting functions of the Orthodox clergy. Indeed, it has traditionally brought him into a most intimate and fatherly relationship with those to whom he is sent to minister: “And he calls them by name . . . and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice” (John 10:2–4). If this is true, however, we must then ask, “What can be said of those more exacting functions within such total care?” Although some may have other groupings, most would agree that there are three, inter-connected such areas of pastoral care in the Orthodox Church, and that all three are very visible and understood by the people as a need of the church.

THE THREE MAJOR FUNCTIONS

1. The Liturgist

The first area is that of the *liturgist*. Given the

vast traditions, blessings, and liturgies with which the Orthodox people have lived and celebrated over the centuries, the preeminent role of the pastor as *leitourgos*, the minister of the sanctuary, is obvious. He is not himself, however, this *leitourgos*, but presents the One True *Leitourgos*, who is only Christ Himself. Christ is “the minister of the sanctuary, of the true tabernacle, which the Lord has pitched, and not man” (Hebrews 8:12). In his ministry, the clergy are re-presenting, that is, “presentifying,” the One who is always present through the Spirit (Hebrews 10:15–16). Jesus is the sole priest, the sole celebrant, at every liturgy, the liturgical function of the clergy being only to realize in that function the presence of the One *Leitourgos*. This ministry is delivered *to* him by the Lord, and received *from* him by the Lord (cf. The Anaphora of Saint John Chrysostom).

His function is clearly *in persona Christi*, and thus for the people it is Christ Himself who is “the Offered and the Offerer.” The liturgist, therefore, is the foremost of the three exacting functions of care in Orthodox pastoral life.

2. The Preacher and Teacher

The second area is the clergy as teacher and proclaimer. It is always the Gospel, the Good News, that is taught and proclaimed, and usually (but not solely) in the liturgy. The substance of what is preached, the reason for it, the meaning of it, is always the same; “Jesus Christ is the Lord!” The pastor who is preaching is delivering only that which he has first received: “For I delivered to you, first of all, that which I also received” (1 Corinthians 15:11).

Although this always-the-same message is kept, it is also to be appropriated, applied and delivered in its context; it moves out of the one basic message toward the particular. Following the pattern of the great preachers like the Apostle Paul or Saint John Chrysostom, up until the modern age, it is always the task of the clergy to give the distinctive human form to the proclamation, so that it speaks to the circumstance and predicament of the people. This proclamation (*kerygma*) is never an essay nor a speech – that is, it is never reduced to mere human technique. It is always up to the clergy to co-operate with the Holy Spirit in its formulation and deliverance. This co-operation (*synergeia*) is realized by prayer and study (cf. 2 Timothy 2:2 and 1 Timothy 4:13). It is always God Himself who lifts up this all-too-human effort. Such care offered to the people

through teaching and proclaiming is seen by those same people, then, as God’s very Word.

3. The Father-Confessor and Spiritual Director

The third exacting function in the *praxis* of this care is in the area of counsel, and most particularly as father-confessor and spiritual director. The pattern for this function is found in the “elder” (*abba, geron, staretz*), so highly esteemed in the Orthodox Christian Tradition. This function of spiritual direction may be connected to the sacrament of repentance, but they are not to be totally identified. Repentance (confession) is a re-entrance, a baptism by tears, through which the penitent is received again into the Body of Christ. As an exact function, however, spiritual direction is otherwise, although it may begin at confession when the person raises this or that sin or difficulty, that is, one that justifies an extended counsel of the clergy. It may also be – and this is happening more and more in Orthodox pastoral life – that one comes to his pastor for counsel without coming first to confession. The telephone call, the social gathering, the conversation about a son or daughter, a crisis in marriage or family, and even today certain bio-ethical issues: these call for a particular meeting and dialogical relationship.

In whatever way it comes, however, the clergyman is always to be seen in a distinct pastoral setting, rather than as a secular counselor. The clergy represent the Christian response; they are always concerned about helping persons grow toward the *ought*, the *should*, as given by the Faith. If he does not first “meet” them where they are, he cannot stretch them; if he has no intent of stretching them, his touch has no spiritual goal.

These three functions, then, lie at the center of the art and praxis of the pastoral ministry, showing precisely that that ministry reflects the “total care” of the people of God: liturgist, preacher and teacher, and father-confessor. These are the major functions within the ministry of the clergy: bishop, priest and deacon.

THE FATHERS ON THE PASTOR AS SHEPHERD

St. Basil the Great, remembered for being an organizer of the monastic life and an insistence on true Christian philanthropy, turned his attention to the position of the pastor as *shepherd*. In doing so he emphasizes the word *proestos* (leader): “Such

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of arts, and the science of science . . .”(*Nicene Post-Nicene Fathers [NPNF]*, Series 2.7, p. 203). “But the aim of the pastoral art is to provide the soul with wings, to rescue it from the world . . . to strengthen the image of God in man when it is in danger . . . and to restore that which has been lost” (ibid., p. 209).

Furthermore, he knows immediately the deep linkage between the clergy’s own internal spiritual struggle and the lives of those who are served; again we are reminded that this linkage occurs within the

are the leaders of the Disciples of Christ. They lead them forth to . . . nourishment of true doctrine, they water them with living water . . . they raise them up and nurture them until they produce fruit: then they guide them to rest and safety . . . (*On Psalm 28:2*).

The leader, however, must use all the qualities which God has given him, since there is such a variety of persons he has to lead. This brings to Basil's mind the notion that the Church is like a *house*: "In the great house, which is the Church, there are not only vessels of every kind – gold and silver, wood and earthenware – there are also manifold lives and talents. Indeed [the house] houses hunters, travelers, architects, builders, shepherds, athletes, soldiers" (*Homily 3:4*). Each of these must be met, seen and dealt with as they are. The "renewal of the mind," he reminds us again in *Homily 29*, takes place in the individual, in his own walk of life, again "in order that no one may be left without [the Church's] aid." Finally, St. Basil says the clergy have got to create the proper *disposition* and *atmosphere* within the community. This can only be done by true faith and love: "What is this ethos of a Christian? Faith working through love . . . not to seek one's own good but the good of the loved one for the benefit of his body and soul" (*Moral Rule 80:22*).

St. Gregory the Theologian, who turns his attention to the "identity" question of the pastoral life, focuses on the shepherd of the flock as a *doctor*, that is, one acting with maturity and propriety. In his *Oration on the Flight to Pontos*, his prayer is that he, now as a member of the clergy, would be able to realize that goal through the grace of Christ: "Such is my defense: its reasonableness I have set forth: and may the God of peace himself hold me by my right hand, and guide me with his counsel, and receive me with glory, who is a Shepherd to shepherds and a Guide to guides: that we may feed his flock with knowledge, and not with the instruments of a foolish shepherd (*NPNF*, p. 228).

The shepherd, according to St. Gregory, must learn to apply the "medicine" to the flock according to what they can bear. The clergyman needs maturity in order to "cure as does a doctor." "Sometimes, and in certain cases, the doctor will make use of the cautery or the knife or even the severer remedies; but none of these, laborious and hard as they may seem, is so difficult as the diagnosis and the cure of our habits, passions, lives, wills and whatever else is within us . . . and establishing in their stead what is

gentle and dear to God . . . not allowing the superior to be overpowered by the inferior, which would be the greatest injustice . . ." (*NPNF*, p. 208).

Finally, the Nazianzen writes: "And before a man has, as far as possible, gained this superiority, and sufficiently purified his mind, I do not think it safe for him to be entrusted with the rule over souls or the office of mediator (for such, I take it, a priest is between God and man)" (*NPNF*, p. 222).

St. John Chrysostom, in the many works in which he refers to the life of the clergy, always reminds us of the elevated honor of his ministry. It is established through the Holy Spirit and is most evident in the liturgical rites. "The work of the priesthood is done on earth, but it is ranked among heavenly ordinances. And this is only right, for no man, no angel, no archangel, no other created power, but the Paraclete himself ordained this succession, and persuaded men, while still remaining in the flesh, to represent the ministry of angels" (*On the Priesthood*, III, 4).

The clergy, by this same power of the Holy Spirit, are given "authority" in the Church: "Priests have received an authority which God has not given to angels or archangels. Not to them was it said, 'What things so ever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven; and what things so ever ye shall loose, shall be loosed.' Those who are lords on earth have indeed the power to bind, but only men's bodies. But this binding touches the very soul and reaches through heaven. What priests do on earth, God ratifies above" (*On the Priesthood*, III, 5).

In fact, it is because of this honor that St. John clearly addresses the flock, saying that they should not forget that he is an instrument of God, and that God can work through him, even though he is hardly "worthy." He writes in his *Second Homily on Timothy 2–3*:

Do you know what the priest is? He is an angel of the Lord. Are they his own words that he speaks? If you despise him, you do not despise him, but God who ordained him . . . If God does not work through him, then there is no baptism, nor communion in the mysteries, nor blessing; you are no longer Christians. What then, you say does God ordain all, even the unworthy? God does not ordain all, but he works through all, though they themselves be unworthy, that the people may be saved [in *NPNF*, p. 481].

Besides the Three Hierarchs, so highly commemorated in the Orthodox Church, we offer for the clergy the following patristic comments for reflection; they speak for themselves.

St. Ambrose, who was elected to the episcopacy in 374 and preached often on the subject of the pastoral ministry of the shepherd (until his death in 397), addressed his flock at Milan with these words: "The duty of the priest or minister is to help all, if it is possible, and to harm no one. Therefore, if another cannot be helped without being hurt, it is better not to help him so as not to hurt him. It belongs to the priestly office to do no harm to anyone and to be desirous of helping everyone; but the accomplishment of this can come only from God" (from Migne's *Patrologiae Latinae* [The Latin Fathers], henceforth *PL*; *Duties of Ministers*, 3, 9, pp. 58–59).

St. Gregory the Great, who lived the monastic life before he became Pope in 500, writes in his *Pastoral Rule* (written after his election to this rank) that the shepherd must be "chief in action," since the "flock, which follows the voice and manners of the shepherd" needs the example even more than the words; "to speak" must never be separated from "to exist."

"The ruler (of souls) should always be chief in action, that by his living he may point out the way of life to those that are put under him, and that the flock, which follows the voice and manners of the shepherd, may learn how to walk better through example than through words. For he who is required by the necessity of his position to speak the highest things, is compelled by the same necessity to exhibit the highest things. For that voice more readily penetrates the hearer's heart" [*PL* 6, p. 103 ff.].

St. Ephraim the Syrian appeals directly to the "pastors" and how they are lead: "O ye pastors, be made like unto the diligent pastor, chief of the whole flock, who cared so greatly for his flock. He brought nigh those that were afar off. He brought back the wanderers. He visited the sick. He strengthened the weak. He bound up the broken. He guarded the fatlings. He gave himself up for the sake of the sheep" (in *NPNF*, "Of Pastors," pp. 384–385).

St. Gregory of Nyssa, noting how the Holy Spirit causes external and physical substances (such as the bread in the Holy Eucharist) to produce internal and spiritual effects, uses the same reasoning with regard to priestly consecration.

The selfsame power of the word makes the priest holy and venerable, for he is "set apart" from the rest of the community by the new blessing which he has received. Though but yesterday he was one of many, one of the people, now he is suddenly proclaimed a leader, a ruler, a teacher of piety, a priest of hidden mysteries. And this comes about without any change at all in his bodily appearance. As far as externals go, he is who he was; but his invisible soul is changed for the better by a certain invisible power and grace [from Migne's *Patrologiae Graecae* (The Greek Fathers), *Sermon on the Baptism of Christ*, pp. 581–584].

Finally, *St. Cyril of Alexandria* summarizes for us these patristic thoughts on the pastor as shepherd. Each of the clergy, regardless of the rank of office, bishop, priest or deacon, serves in the ministry of Jesus Christ Himself; it is the Great Shepherd who truly ordains all the offices by the Holy Spirit:

Our Lord Jesus Christ ordained [the disciples] pastors and teachers of the whole world and ministers of his divine mysteries . . . And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit . . ." After elevating them to a position of eminence by the great dignity of the ministry, and appointing them priests and ministers at the altars of God, he at once sanctifies them, breathing upon them openly and giving them his Spirit. He shows that it is necessary for the Spirit to be given to those whom he chooses for the divine ministry . . . because they can do nothing pleasing to God, nor can they free themselves from the chains of sin, changed into something other than they were. Our Lord Jesus Christ . . . brings to perfection priests for the altar of God, and he does this by sanctifying them in very truth, making them share in his own nature by communication of the Spirit, and in a manner fusing the nature of man with a power and glory which is more than human [*Patrologiae Graecae, Commentary on St. John*, 7–8, p. 712].

Fr. Joseph Allen
Fr. Joseph Allen is now Pastor Emeritus of St. Anthony's Church after 50 years of distinguished service. Metropolitan JOSEPH, the Archdiocese, and Community of St. Anthony's will offer thanksgiving for Fr. Joe's lifelong service on December 21 and 22, 2019. More information will be available at www.stanthonysothodox.org.

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST DOES NOT GO WITHOUT SAYING

Archpriest Andrew Stephen Damick

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. (Matthew 28:18–20)

You have probably heard the expression “preach the Gospel at all times; if necessary, use words,” attributed almost certainly falsely to Francis of Assisi, or heard, “Acquire the Spirit of peace and thousands around you will be saved,” a genuine saying of St. Seraphim of Sarov. You may have then heard these things used to mean that it is not necessary, and perhaps not even desirable, for Orthodox Christians to speak actual words to non-Christians or non-Orthodox concerning Jesus Christ, Who He is, what He did and what He is coming again to do. These sayings are often used to assure ourselves or others that we do not have to take initiative and speak words about Jesus Christ and life in His Body the Church. We may especially like to use them as a response to *obnoxious* forms of evangelism. *We’re not like those Protestants*, we might think to ourselves, thinking usually of people knocking on our doors (who may not be Protestants at all), or like loud, flashy, television evangelists.

So, in response, we like sayings that we can interpret to mean that we should mostly just mind our own business, live basically moral lives, and then assume that God will send us people if He wants to. Or maybe we’ll go a little further, and say that our job is just to set up churches and do the services

well, and visitors will come knocking if God wants them to.

Here’s the problem: you will not find a single place in the Scripture where, once the Gospel had been revealed and preached by Jesus and His Apostles, it was considered acceptable to just live a good life and hope that someone would eventually, maybe, ask you about why you do. Nor do you see it said anywhere that it was normal for Christians just quietly to pray and worship and hope eventually someone would show up at their doors and ask what’s going on.

Some will counter by saying that Christianity is a “lifestyle,” by which they mean that it’s mostly just about how you live. It’s true that Christianity is a lifestyle, but what lifestyle is passed on in silence about the most critical core message around which it is all arranged?

Sometimes necessity or persecution make it hard to preach the Gospel, and in those cases we have to use strategy to figure out the most effective ways to do so. In no case, however, is it acceptable to interpret “preach the Gospel” to mean not actually *preaching* it, which means speaking words. It is good *news*. That means that we will have to use words. That means we have to talk about it.

“Preach the Gospel at all times; if necessary, use words” makes about as much sense as, “Feed the hungry at all times; if necessary, use food.” It doesn’t make sense. Yes, one can use *preach* and *feed* in metaphorical senses, but if the metaphorical mean-

ing replaces the direct, literal one, then we have a problem. Yes, we should use our lives to “preach” and our kindness to “feed,” but that doesn’t mean we get to leave out the *words*, or the *food*.

It is true that the Church both now and in history has hermits, monks, nuns, and so forth, who are not obviously engaged in preaching the Gospel – though many of them actually do and did. Not all monastics in every period of Church history were separated from the world in every way. And it is true that God calls these rare, few people to that kind of life, in which their intense prayer lifts up the world and protects it from the evil one.

But that is not the call that most of us have, and if it really is your call, then that means you have to live that life in its true fullness, with all the prayer, asceticism, and self-denial that are entailed. If you really have a calling to serve the whole world through your prayer, rather than your words, you have to do it the right way and not just give lip service to it. Don’t hold up monastics who apart from the world as an example in the way that’s convenient and then not follow that example in other ways.

As Christians we have a hope within us, the hope of Jesus Christ, and just as we so freely speak words about many other things we love – food, drink, entertainment, books, ideas, and so forth – we cannot fall silent about the coming of the King of Kings into this world to conquer death itself, and about His return, when He will judge the living and the dead. It makes no sense for a Christian to be evangelistic about everything except Jesus.

If you are a Christian and do not know how to preach the Gospel in your own way and in your own context, then you need to learn. Not everyone’s way will be the same – for some of us, it is very public, but for others it will be much more intimate. For all of us, however, it will mean *communicating*.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ does not go without *saying*.



ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN PRISON MINISTRY ANNOUNCES 2019 STRATEGIC PLAN

The Board of Trustees of Orthodox Christian Prison Ministries (OCPM) is pleased to announce that its 2019 Strategic Plan is completed and ready for implementation. OCPM is the official prison ministry of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America (formerly the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America, or SCOBA). OCPM was founded in 1991 by the late Metropolitan PHILIP (Saliba), Primate of the Antiochian Archdiocese of North America, and Father Duane Pederson, a highly experienced prison minister. Metropolitan PHILIP offered this ministry to SCOBA in 2005, and it became an official agency shortly thereafter. It was later transferred to the Assembly of Canonical Bishops of the United States of America (ACOB) in 2010.

Working with Bill Marianes of www.stewardship-calling.com, OCPM has developed its Strategic Plan in order to work with all canonical jurisdictions in reaching out to the men and women in prison across this country with the love and light of Christ. As a specific calling of our Lord Christ – “I was in prison and you came to me” (Matthew 25:36) – OCPM’s Strategic Plan outlines an expansion and enhancement of this gospel ministry throughout the United States.

As Eugenia Ordynsky, Chairman of the OCPM Board, commented, “Not everyone can go into a prison and do the ministry, but everyone can help empower those who do.” The OCPM Strategic Plan is a concrete, practical approach to expanding the loving embrace of this vital ministry on behalf of all Orthodox Christians in America. The Strategic Plan may be found, together with other significant materials, at <https://theocpm.org/strategic-planning/>

LIVING THE LITURGY – A PRACTICAL REFLECTION

PART 3 OF 10

As we've seen, we belong to a variety of communities. These communities influence us, form us, guide us, shape our opinions on various issues, and provide us with a support system. Within the Divine Liturgy, we are invited to worship God with the words "Come, let us worship . . ." Our response to this invitation brings with it some questions that we must answer, like "What does it mean to belong to God?" If we respond with "OK!" and we come and worship God, we join ourselves to that community and are bound by God's commandments. All too

The Divine Liturgy has as a goal to teach us, to inform our lives, so that we can be transformed by it.

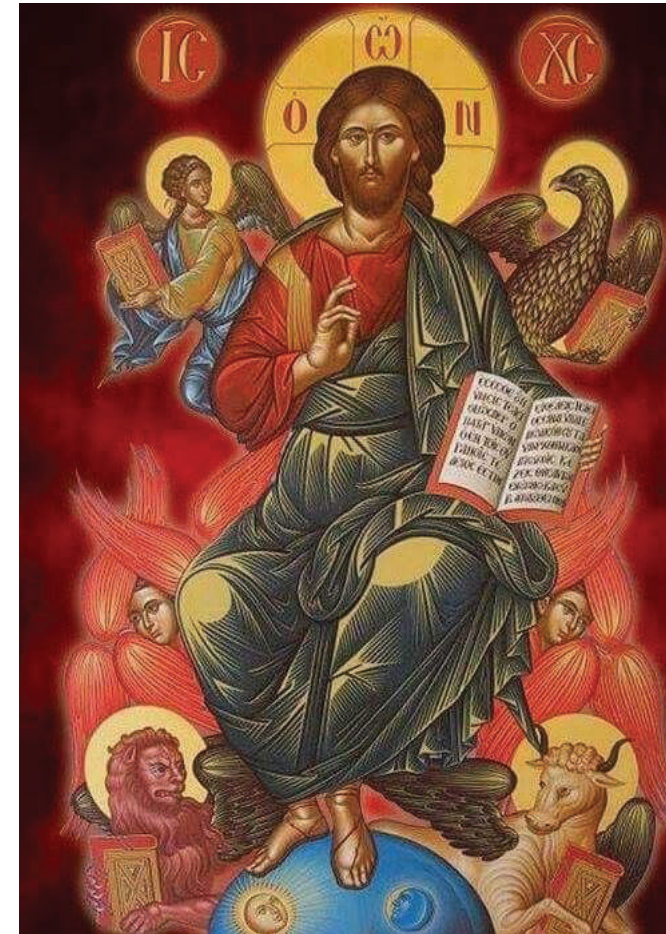
often, though, we forget this. We're more inclined to follow the terms and conditions laid out by the various clubs, groups, sports teams, and social media platforms to which we belong.

Let's look, for a moment, at social media. This is a great tool, but we often lose sight of the fact that it is a *tool*. On the surface, it's used to keep us connected to one another. When you probe more deeply, it's also used for marketing and to "get the word out" about things. In a 2012 article on uses of social media, Huffington Post founder Arianna Huffington wrote, "Social Media are a means, not an end." This is an important distinction for social media users. While most social media users view it as an end – a virtual community with a chance to connect to people around the world – there are others who

view it differently. Erik Qualman, a motivational speaker and author who focuses on social media marketing, says, "We don't have a choice on whether we do social media, the question is how well we do it." Marketers would argue that the best times to post are early in the morning, around lunch, between work/school and dinner, and around bedtime. These are when people are most likely to be checking their various social media outlets and, therefore, are the most vulnerable. They do this because they recognize that our communities influence us, though we often claim that they do not.

If we recognize that our communities influence us, we can see how right it is that the community formed in the Divine Liturgy influences our lives. The Divine Liturgy has as a goal to teach us, to inform our lives, so that we can be transformed by it. After we are invited to worship, we are given the saints as examples of the way to live, and we hear about their lives in the *troparia* and *kontakia* – Greek names for the hymns we sing after the entrance. These hymns are about the Resurrection of Christ, the lives of the saints, and the feasts celebrated throughout the year. These hymns introduce the portion of the liturgy that we often refer to as "The Liturgy of the Word."

Following the singing of these hymns, we sing the Thrice-Holy, or *Trisagion*, Hymn. This hymn is well known: "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us." We say the word *holy* three times, which is why it is called "Thrice-Holy." The origins of this hymn come from the book of Isaiah. In Chapter 6, Isaiah recounts his vision of the Throne of God. He writes: "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim;



each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.' And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke." The hymn of the angels includes the repetition of the word *holy* three times, just like the "Thrice-Holy Hymn." This angelic hymn is a theme that carries us throughout the entire Divine Liturgy. In this instance, the hymn is sung as the bishop, or priest in his absence, moves from before the altar to what is referred to as "the High Place," and is also called "the throne on high . . ." Often, there's an icon of Christ Enthroned in that place, with a throne for the bishop. With this movement, the deacon says "Bless, Master, the throne on high," to which the bishop, or priest in his absence, prays: "Blessed art Thou on the throne of the glory of Thy kingdom, Who art enthroned upon the cherubim." This reference to God's throne reminds us that where we are and what we are doing

is something extraordinary.

Following this hymn, we hear the Epistle and Gospel. These are a public reading of the Word of God (Scripture). We are given the Word of God because we need the Word of God. The calendar is set each year, outlining which readings we will hear each Sunday, according to the season of the church year. These readings are often tied to the hymns we heard earlier, the *troparia* and *kontakia*. For example, as we celebrate the Feast of the Entrance of the *Theotokos* into the Temple this month, we hear about the feast in the *troparion*, the *kontakion*, the Epistle, and the Gospel.

Tying all of this together is the Sermon. The primary goal of the sermon is to explain the Scripture readings in such a way that we might apply them to our daily lives. The primary goal of the hearer of a sermon is to take what he hears and apply it to his life. In a recent survey of 171 Orthodox Youth from 48 parishes and three Orthodox jurisdictions around the United States, 72 percent cited the sermon as that point which connects the Divine Liturgy to their daily lives. One teen said, "My priest incorporates modern-day issues into his homilies so we can connect the liturgy to our daily life." Another said, "I try to take what I learned from the homily into my daily life."

Let us return to our discussion of social media. We know that those who use social media influence us, some intentionally. We have influence, too. We need to look at what we're posting and be discerning with what we put out there, and how it might influence others. We need to ask ourselves: What does what I share say about me? We need to look with a critical eye at whom we let into our lives on social media. Are these actual friends? Do I know this person outside of Instagram, or Facebook, or Snapchat?

We're fooling ourselves if we think anything posted is private. Our posts are on display for the world to see. We must ask ourselves: "What are we allowing influence us, and what are we showing the world?"

Gregory Abdalah, D.Min.



Icons written by the hand of Issa Zoghbi

“Holiness and intelligence of soul are to be recognized from a man’s eye, walk, voice, laugh, and the way he spends his time and the company he keeps. Everything is transformed and reflects an inner beauty.” – St. Anthony the Great

The Divine Icon

Icons, or images of holy people, reflect this transformation, the inner spiritual beauty of an ordinary person who has extraordinary faith, humility, and obedience to God. Icons depict these holy people, or saints. The saints serve as role models and sources of inspiration, and as intercessors during difficult times in life. They are, to one degree or another, the image of Christ who created them. God is love, and because we are created in His image, we are love. We are God’s living icon.

The word *icon* comes from the Greek *eikon*, meaning “image, representation, or portrait.” Looking at the Old Testament “divine images,” we see the cherubim carved on the Ark of the Covenant, and frescos in the ancient synagogues depicting scenes of Abraham and his sacrifice of Isaac, and Daniel in the den with the lions. We do not see, however, an image of God Himself. God’s presence was depicted only as the Hand of God, the Temple, or the Ark of the Covenant.

human being, He enabled us to portray His human face and body. This is the reason we can paint a picture of Him, even though He is God. He is the Holy Trinity, one in essence with the Father and the Holy Spirit. So when we see an image of Christ, we also see His complete divine-human person, one with the Father and the Holy Spirit. This is the Holy Trinity, One God.

Early Christian symbols and images representing Christ, such as the Fish, the Shepherd, and the Lamb, were drawn on the walls of the catacombs. Scenes depicting events in the life of Christ were used to teach the mystery of Salvation to the new believers, many of whom were soon to become martyrs. The early Christians never worshipped these symbols or paintings. They only used them for their understanding of Christ and His teachings. These symbols not only had a teaching purpose; they also had a spiritual aspect. It was not only a way to attempt to understand God and His Word; it was also

Greeks and Romans of the later period venerated portraits of their gods and emperors, who were considered “divine.” Man has always desired to portray the divine, so that in seeing its image, he could better understand it and commune with it.

It was only natural that Christians wanted to depict Christ as well. They wanted to paint a picture of Him, not only to remember what He looked like, but to portray the divine. In light of God’s commandment, “Thou shalt not make any graven image,” wouldn’t it be wrong to portray the divine Person? John wrote in his Gospel that “no man has seen God.” These two things would be the main arguments that the iconoclasts would later use to justify destroying the icons. Christ, however, was not only divine, He was also human. And because God the Son came to earth and became a

a way of communion with Him. It was a transformation from the earthly and material to the heavenly and illumined.

The Roman Emperor Constantine declared Christianity to be the official religion of the Roman Empire in 330, and moved the capital from Rome to Byzantium, a small but very important trading city on the peninsula connecting the Mediterranean and Black Sea. From the name of this city, Byzantium, comes the word *Byzantine*. The Byzantine Empire lasted a thousand years. It was in this city that Byzantine iconography began to develop and flourish, now that the artists were free to paint. Byzantium was renamed Constantinople, after Emperor Constantine, and is now known as Istanbul.

The new Christian artists began painting images, or icons, of holy persons using a “new style” of art. They wanted to break away from everything pagan. So their “new” Christian art was not sensual and naturalistic, like the Roman-Greco art of the day, but rather a stylized, unsentimental harmony that expressed a “spiritual beauty.” They wanted to depict a person who had been transformed by the Holy Spirit, one who had, by God’s grace, attained the virtues of love, faith, meekness and humility.

How was the iconographer to portray this inner, “spiritual beauty, this “transformed” person? Many figures in early icons were shown in the *orans* position, with arms uplifted in the ancient position of prayer. The internal, spiritual state of the person was more important than the drama of the situation. The early Christian had to be prepared to suffer and die for his faith, so he was reminded, when he looked at these images, that prayer would strengthen and calm him, preparing him for any test he had to face.

The face of the saint in the icon is stylized. It reflects a spiritual beauty rather than a purely natural beauty. The ears of the saint are closed, closed to gossip, slander and distraction. They hear and obey only the Word of God. The eyes of the saint are large, seeing only the love, the image of God in all people and things. The mouth of the saint is closed, signifying that the tongue must be controlled and should only speak what is edifying for another. Our speech must be transformed into God’s Words. The hands of the saint are either in the form of prayer, giving a blessing or ready for works of charity. The fingers and hands are elongated, being transformed by doing God’s will. The feet of the saint walk in the path of God.

By submitting ourselves to the Will of God, we find that our bodies come into a harmony with God, as He created us to be. Union with God, or *theosis*, happens when God’s life fills and transforms us. Even when we see an icon of a martyr who is being tortured or beheaded, he is portrayed as calm, submissive, and totally in union with God. There is no need for great emotionalism or theatricality, as is seen so often in Western paintings. We see this peace, this complete submission to God, in the saint’s face and demeanor. We believe that, because of God’s great love and mercy, this holy person is in His presence and hears our prayer. We attempt to emulate the love and faith of the saint. His or her image reminds us that it is possible for us, too, to become holy.

Every color in an icon symbolizes something divine. Blue is the color of heaven, the mystical life, and the garments of Mary, Mother of God. Red is the blood of the martyrs and their garment. It is the color of the robe of Christ, of life, vitality, and beauty. Purple depicts royalty, wealth, and power. Gold symbolizes God’s divine presence in all creation, His glory, splendor and divine energy. White represents purity, innocence, and God’s uncreated light.

There are no shadows in an icon, because God’s light fills and permeates the saint. The body of the saint radiates this “uncreated light,” shining to illuminate all things, thereby casting no shadows.

Traditionally, iconographers do not sign their names on the front of icons. This would call attention to themselves. They either remain anonymous, or sign the back of the icon, printing above their name, “by the hand of,” or “through the hand of,” believing that God has painted the icon through their hand for His glory and for the salvation of those who venerate it and pray before it.

Iconographers are said to “write” an icon because, in essence, they are writing the theology of the Church in depicting the saints and their attributes, and the Feast Days. They follow, without change, the pattern of the images that have been passed down by generations of holy iconographers. If they add undue emotion, naturalism, or their own interpretation, they would be altering the dogma of the Church upon which these icons are based.

We are God’s living icons. Through Christ, the image of God has been renewed in us as we are transformed by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Linda Fowler

DRY AND SECULAR

C. S. LEWIS WAS AN ATHEIST WHEN HE CLIMBED ABOARD THE TRAIN. THE WHISTLES BLEW, THE TRAIN PULLED FORWARD, AND THE YOUNG SCHOLAR DELVED INTO HIS NEW BOOK. IT WAS A SCOTTISH FAIRYTALE OF THE WANDERING DISCOVERIES AND TRANSFORMATIONS OF A MAN LOST IN FAIRY LAND. BY THE TIME HE HAD TURNED THE LAST PAGE AND THE TRAIN CAME TO A STOP, HE WAS A CHANGED MAN. YEARS LATER HE EXPLAINED, “THAT NIGHT [ON THE TRAIN], MY IMAGINATION WAS, IN A CERTAIN SENSE, BAPTIZED . . .” (*SURPRISED BY JOY*, GLASCOW: COLLINS, 1982, P. 146).¹ THE BOOK SPARKED SOMETHING, MAKING THE REST OF HIS LIFE AN INSATIABLE PURSUIT OF GOD.

What does it take to waken up a sleeping soul to the reality of God? Secularism, consumerism, television, and all those comforts of our modern life have the effect of a narcotic. They make us drowsy and blasé, halfhearted, and only superficially concerned with spiritual matters. How can we shake it all off and walk with God?

As our Lord was walking along the Sea of Galilee, he met a man deaf and mute. “They brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and they begged him to lay his hand on him. And taking him aside from the crowd privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting touched his tongue. And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, ‘Ephphatha,’ that is, ‘Be opened.’ And his ears were opened, his tongue was released” (Mark 7:31–35).

If there was ever a miracle needed in our times, this is it. We are deaf and mute, not in body, but in heart. Christ has the cure. The man was deaf. On the Internet, there are a number of poetry blogs for the deaf. Among these, one anonymous author has described her experiences in a poem titled “Being Deaf.” She writes:

“I heard not a thing in my silent world, not the sweet choir of the birds nor the swish of the wind blowing the grass; not the bubbling brook, nor the swaying trees...I wanted to hear...instead I was locked inside my quiet world; separated from the delight of creation.”

To this woman, and many others, being deaf meant being cut off from the world. She can see the

trees blowing or watch the smiling faces of people enjoying a conversation, but all the richness and meaning that sound conveys is inaccessible. Instead, she is locked inside herself. In a way, we can all relate. In our secular times, we feel trapped in a disenchant-ed world. Despite our entertainment and technology, life so easily feels empty and stuffy. Whether or not we believe in God, He simply feels distant.

What is it like to be a modern person? A Canadian philosopher, James K. A. Smith, says we live in a secular age, in a time where the universe feels flattened and meaningless. “[We live today in a] flattened human universe where the escapes are boredom and distraction . . . most of the time the best ‘salvation’ we can hope for is found in behaviors that numb us to this reality: drugs, sex, entertainments of various sorts A specter haunts our secular age, ‘the specter of meaninglessness’ . . .” (*How (Not) To Be Secular*, Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014, pp. 14, 129). We have forgotten God or confined him at a safe distance. Consequently, nothing fills our hearts.

Sometimes the best way to understand a culture is by looking at its music. We are not satisfied, and that dissatisfaction permeates modern lyrics. Here is a song by the indie pop group, Post Services:

And I’m looking through the glass
Where the light bends at the cracks
And I’m screaming at the top of my lungs
Pretending the echoes belong to someone –
Someone I used to know [quoted in Smith, p. ix].

It is all in Holy Scripture. The Psalter goes to the

same place in the heart. “Lord . . . turn your ear to my cry. I am overwhelmed . . . I am counted among those who go down to the dead . . . I am set apart with the dead . . . I am confined and cannot escape; my eyes are dim” (Psalm 88:1–3, 5, 8–9). Some are depressed and turn to distractions to fill them. The rest of us may be simply dry.

Where is the hunger for God? Where is our fervor to pray and fast? When I read the lives of the saints, I always marvel at their passion. They spend their entire days in prayer. Yet why do I have so much trouble following their example? Why is it so hard to sit still long enough to pray a rosary, let alone, a rosary day after day? Why is it a struggle to stand for five minutes before an icon, let alone to pray unceasingly? Why do temptations suck us in like a vacuum? We are that man who was deaf and mute, and Jesus Christ is our hope.

Our Lord took the deaf man aside, put his fingers into his ears, and touched his tongue. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me” (Revelation 3:20).

The message of the Christian gospel is this: if we seek Him, God will reach down and touch us. The deaf man knew loneliness. He was cast away, rejected, and hopeless, when, all of a sudden, a hand touches him. This is the touch of the Creator. God can make us alive. There is no loneliness that God cannot break through. There is no meaninglessness that God cannot fill and permeate. With a touch, God can make us young again. Like dew in the morning, heaven brings freshness.

Why does Jesus Christ heal with spit and clay? This miracle could not be more beautiful. When God touches us, he heals our life, soul and body, spirit and matter. God permeates our daily, human life. A home blessed with prayers and holy water is a home full of angels. The air in the Christian home is different than the air in an atheist’s home. It buzzes with spirit. A day filled with prayer is a day filled with life. Even if you say the name *Jesus* over a sandwich,

that sandwich is transformed fundamentally. The presence of God fills our lives the way sunlight fills a landscape. God’s healing is real.

Yet, most of the time we settle. Maybe we feel that we have enough of God. Maybe life took a turn, it did not go the way we wanted, and so we are just waiting it out, living in the past, or dreaming about the future. Most of the time, we are not even aware that our soul is dry. We imagine we are good just the way we are. Meanwhile, Christ stands at the door and knocks. “If anyone hears my voice and opens...I will come in to him.” What does this mean? God will shower us with gifts as soon as our hands our empty enough to receive.

Looking up to heaven, he groaned, saying, “*Ephphatha*,” “Be opened” (Mark 7:35). St. Bede suggests that Christ groaned to teach us how to pray. “He looked up to heaven to teach us that it is from there the dumb must seek speech, the deaf hearing, and all who suffer healing. He groaned, not because He needed [anything] . . . but that He might give us an example of groaning, when we must call upon the assistance of the heavenly mercy” (St. Bede, in *The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000, volume 4, p. 2b).

So, your soul is numb and your heart is dry. When Ezekiel stood in the valley of the bones, the Lord commanded him: “Prophesy to these bones and say to them, ‘Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord’” (Ezekiel 37:4–6).

A little book was enough to spark life in the soul of C. S. Lewis. Heaven knows what is needed in our lives to wake us up. We must begin by praying. God will do the rest.

Fr. Peter Kavanaugh
St. Benedict of Nursia Church, Wichita Falls, Texas

1. *Surprised by Joy* (Glas-cow: Collins, 1982), p. 146

The Centrality of the Gospel Reading in the Divine Liturgy

Orthodox Christians have a lot of things to offer this world, but one of them is not punctuality. In many parishes, the faithful can be seen arriving for Sunday liturgy all throughout the first half of the service.

This may be a cultural habit, or a personal one, but it is something most of us find to varying degrees in our parishes. Most clergy try to find ways to convey to their congregations the importance of arriving on time for liturgy. Obviously, we can point to the fact that it's simply good manners, and we don't want to disturb the prayer of others who are there on time. Perhaps another approach is to teach about the centrality of the Gospel reading during the Divine Liturgy. If we understood more fully the vital importance of the Gospel within the context of the Divine Liturgy, as well as the necessity of hearing it, we would not only be more inclined to avoid habitual tardiness for Liturgy: we would rush to be in church in plenty of time for the proclamation of the Holy Gospel.

It seems that, unconsciously, we Orthodox tend to place the greatest value in the Divine Liturgy on the reception of the Holy Eucharist. Indeed, there is no Liturgy without the Eucharist, and it is the culmination of the service, to receive the all-holy Body and precious Blood of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, which was given for the life of the world and for its salvation. That said, we sometimes assign a lesser place to the reading of the Gospel. Are not some in our parishes perfectly fine with arriving after the Gospel reading, but wouldn't think of leaving the church without



receiving communion? Yet if we examine how the Gospel book itself is treated during the Liturgy, we would see that there is an inseparable connection between the proclamation of the teaching of Christ contained therein, and the reception of His Body and Blood in Holy Communion.

The Gospel Book takes center stage in our Liturgy from the get-go. As Fr. Paul Tarazi notes in his book, *The Rise of Scripture*, “the Gospel Book itself is never ‘blessed’ since it is the bestower of blessings as much as God himself” (St. Paul, Minnesota: OCABS Press, 2015, p. 473). “In the Orthodox church even

crosses and icons are blessed with the Gospel Book, whereas the

Gospel Book itself is never blessed or consecrated; it is the bestower of blessings” (p. 439). In all of our Orthodox sacramental liturgies (the Divine Liturgy, baptism, the sacrament of marriage), the service starts with the blessing of the altar itself *with* the Gospel Book, while the priest proclaims, “Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

After the initial litanies comes the Small Entrance, with the deacon or priest carrying the Gospel Book out among the people. Symbolically, this can be understood as Christ making His public appearance in the midst of the people, proclaiming His teaching. And then we lift high the Gospel book and proclaim loudly with joy: “Come let us worship and fall down before . . .” Before what? Before the book? No. Before the altar? No. *Before Christ*. Come let us worship and fall down *before Christ!* Functionally speaking, the Gospel Book is the presence of Christ among us at that point in the service!

Before the Gospel is read, the priest censes around the altar table. This is a censuring not so much of the altar itself, but of the Gospel book which lies upon it, just prior to it being opened and read. Then, the priest utters a prayer. This is usually done quietly, while the Epistle is being read, but perhaps it would be better if it were in the hearing of the faithful, and conveying the importance of what is about to take place. The priest says, “Illumine our hearts, O Master Who lovest mankind, with the pure light of Thy Divine Knowledge, and open the eyes of our mind to the understanding of thy Gospel teachings, that trampling down all carnal desires, we may enter upon a spiritual manner of living, both thinking and doing such things as are well pleasing unto Thee.” The divine knowledge of God, the wisdom of His teaching which gives life, is what we are asking the Lord to illumine us with; that teaching is contained within the Gospel, which we are praying to be made able to understand. This teaching is what makes us able, by the grace of God, to trample upon our fleshly desires, and to enter the fullness of spiritual life *here and now*, as we think and then do the things pleasing to God.

Then the Gospel is proclaimed, and the sermon is preached. Both are essential in the context of the Liturgy; they are not merely a “preamble” to Holy Communion; rather, the proclamation of the Good News is what “opens the door” for us to receive communion. (Even at baptisms, before the newly baptized receive communion, the Gospel is read.) When we hear the Gospel proclaimed, the words themselves contain a power all their own. It is as if we are looking in a mirror, seeing ourselves not only as we truly are, but as we should be. In this way, when the Gospel reading is literally “poured” into our ears, it functions for us as a judgment, for the sake of our instruction unto life. When we hear Jesus say things like, “If you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will my Father in heaven forgive your trespasses,” or, “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink . . . Inasmuch as you have done it to the least of these, you have done it to me,” we immediately know whether or not we are measuring up to Christ’s standard. So we are placed under judgment before the Final Day, not a judgment resulting in destruction, but a judgment unto *instruction* (the way a good father instructs his children!). This is done in the hope that, encouraged and instructed by the Lord, we would correct our life, getting back on the way that Christ has laid out for us. The Gospel gives us the teaching that enables us to do this. The grace comes from God, but the decision to trust in God, and live out

this trust in the way we act, is ours. The sermon which follows is not so much needed to “explain” the Gospel to the faithful. It is not a “Bible study” per se (which has its own place in the weekly schedule of the parish). Rather, it is an exhortation to place our trust in the One True and Living God, no matter what happens, and to be merciful, even as our Father in heaven is merciful.

Having heard and accepted the Gospel, we are given access to the Mystical Supper of the Lord. The Gospel book is moved out of the way so that the antimension can be opened up, in order for the Holy Gifts to be placed upon it. Note, however, that though the Gospel is moved, it is not *removed* from the Altar table. The liturgical rubrics call for the Gospel to be stood up on the altar, usually in a prominent place (often in direct line with the tabernacle containing the reserved Communion) so that everyone (especially the priest!) will be able to see it. Also, if we examine the antimension itself, we will notice that in the four corners are icons of the four Evangelists – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Similarly, if we look up into the dome of an Orthodox church, we’ll notice that at the four corners supporting the dome, with its icon of Christ the Pantocrator (the Almighty), are the same icons: the four Evangelists, the four accounts of the one Gospel, which “present” or “hold up” Christ to us through the text.

After hearing the words of Christ, we receive the Word of God in the flesh in Holy Communion, for the forgiveness of our sins, and unto life everlasting. After this, the Gifts are consumed, the communion vessels are cleaned and put away, and the Gospel book is replaced upon the altar, once again enthroned in its place. Everyone should take note of that – even after the Holy Communion is consumed, the vessels are cleaned and stored properly, the Gospel is *enthroned* upon the altar. It remains there as a witness of the presence of Christ in our midst, as a call to align our lives with His, and as a life-giving proclamation that the God of Scripture is the same yesterday, today, and forever. His words will be proclaimed, heard, and acted upon by the faithful of all generations, until He returns to judge the living and the dead. On that day, may we – having taken with the utmost seriousness the proclamation of the Gospel during the Divine Liturgy – be found worthy to be resurrected to life. May we join Christ at the eternal banquet in the heavenly Kingdom; the banquet of the One Who said: “Heaven and earth may pass away, but My words will by no means pass away” (Matt. 24:35).

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COMMUNITIES IN ACTION

SUMMER READING PROGRAM AT ST. PHILIP CHURCH, SOUDERTON

To many people, the words “summer” and “slide” conjure up warm images of sunshine-y days spent on the playground. For teachers and librarians, the dreaded “summer slide” refers to the educational progress that students lose in the months between academic years. One of the main goals of public libraries in running summer-reading programs is to combat this loss; likewise, it’s one of the primary goals of St. Philip’s Library Summer Reading Program. Not only do we hope to encourage kids to keep reading during their break from school, we hope to encourage them to keep learning about our faith during our break from Sunday School.

Kids participate by filling out a log, which consists of six boxes. Each box has a number of activities (e.g., reading a book from the St. Philip’s library, researching a twentieth-century saint, reading a Psalm, listening to a new hymn), and kids can choose to complete three of the activities in order to win a prize for that box.

In structuring the program this way, we hope to encourage kids to make exploring their faith a daily part of their lives. For example, one activity is to say a set prayer, such as St. Philaret’s morning prayer. Perhaps these beautiful words will touch a child’s heart and prompt him or her to add the

prayer to part of the morning ritual. Or perhaps in completing the task, “find and listen to a hymn you don’t know,” a child will decide to learn the hymn by heart and begin to sing it throughout the day.

Teens can also be involved in summer reading by joining our teen book club. Over the course of the summer, the teens, the librarian, and one of the teen Sunday School teachers will be reading *The Screwtape Letters* and meeting at the end of the summer to discuss it.

The library ministry also endeavors to get kids involved with the library by instituting our Junior Librarian program. Kids can help with library operations by checking-in books, reshelving them, and generally tidying up.

C.S. Lewis famously said, “We read to know we are not alone.” Although he was referring to the companionship we find in characters in books, we hope that, through the library ministry, we can also encourage community and grow together as “one body in Christ” through a shared love of books, reading, and lifelong learning.

FILLED WITH GRACE

The weekend of August 24–25, 2019, saw two significant milestones for Saint Ananias Orthodox Mission in Evansville, Indiana. The first was the presiding of His Grace Bishop ANTHONY of Toledo and the Midwest over the *Thyranoixa* (Door Open-

ing) Service that Saturday afternoon. This is a service for parishes whose temple is not quite ready to be consecrated, but which is nonetheless ready for sacred public usage.

The first day saw many visiting clergy and friends of the congregation. Of note in attendance were V. Rev. Fr. Nabil Hanna, who labored for many years mentoring and giving guidance to make this mission a reality, and Khouria Marilyn Gillquist, whose husband the late V. Rev. Fr. Peter Gillquist, as Director of Missions and Evangelism, partnered with the Diocese of Toledo and Indiana deanery to begin the process of bringing in a full-time clergyman. The choir was led by Mr. Nicholas Lannert, who as a newly chrismated Orthodox Christian contacted Fr. Nabil some ten years ago to ask that a priest be sent to form what is now a home for Orthodox Christians in the Evansville area, able to sustain its facilities and priest.

The next day saw a second milestone: Sub-deacon Sergius Vlas was ordained to the holy diaconate by His Grace Bishop ANTHONY; Deacons James Akin and Joseph Olas served as sponsors. Deacon Sergius is one of four members of the parish who have completed the Antiochian House of Studies course over the past decade. Currently there is another member who is beginning the course this fall. Regarding these graduates, Fr. Daniel Hackney says, “Being in a

remote area with respect to Orthodoxy (the closest parishes are some two hours away), we felt it important to create as many ties to our Archdiocese as possible; the Antiochian House of Studies is one means to achieve this.”

After the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, the Acropolis Restaurant (owned by members of the parish) hosted a congregational benefit luncheon for the Toledo diocesan chancery; \$3,067.00 was raised toward furnishing this home for our bishop and the administrative offices of our diocese. It was one way in which our mission could say “thank you” for all of the love and support over the years.

Saint Ananias is a daughter parish of Saint George Church, Indianapolis. St. George launched the mission in 1997 with the assistance of several Indiana deanery clergy, including V. Rev. Fr. Anthony Yazge and V. Rev. Fr. Athanasius Wilson. They alternated serving Liturgy in Evansville for years, before the arrival of Fr. Daniel Hackney as the first, resident mission planter in 2009. The temple was purchased by the mission in 2015, and V. Rev. Fr.

James Ellison provided invaluable assistance in designing the altar area and staircase during the remodeling process. Both St. George, Indianapolis, and St. Nicholas, Urbana, sent mission teams during the Feast of the Dormition in 2016 to help tear down parts of the nave so

that it might be reborn as a place of Orthodox worship.

Over the past decade since a mission planter was assigned, the Midwest Mission Council has provided the standard funds, which begin at \$500 a month, and are stair-stepped down over five years. It has also given block grants, such as the \$12,000 grant in 2018 to assist the mission in remodeling the temple and annex



Photos copyright by © Nichole Davis Photography

for Orthodox mission. This gracious gift gave our parish a “hand up,” so that its ministry might more effectively reach its community. Many thanks to all our sister churches for your missionary giving. You do not just bequeath money; you transform lives through mission grants like this. This is true not just for this endeavor, but for all mission giving across the Archdiocese.

May God, through the prayers of Saint Ananias, bless and keep this *ecclesia*, this assembly of Orthodox Christians in the area of Evansville, Indiana.

Filled with grace through the threefold Sun, thou didst illumine Christ’s chosen vessel. When thou hadst preached the faith, thou wast strengthened in grace by thy contests. O Apostle Ananias, grant the prayers of those who hymn thee.

Troparion for Saint Ananias (Tone 4)



ASSEMBLY OF CANONICAL ORTHODOX BISHOPS MEETS TO ADVANCE UNITY, ENCOURAGES LOCAL CONCELEBRATIONS

The Executive Committee of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America met September 18, under the chairmanship of Archbishop ELPIDOPHOROS, to discuss the state of Orthodox Christian unity in the U.S.A. Recognizing the challenges in global Orthodoxy, the jurisdictional representatives reiterated their commitment to the local faithful of America and rededicated themselves to fulfilling the call for canonical normalcy and pastoral unity on contemporary issues.

The meeting began with jurisdictional updates, which were followed by the Secretary's report on the activities of the body since the last Assembly meeting in October 2018. The Executive Committee went on to discuss the Assembly's structure, including committees, agencies, endorsed organizations, and dialogues. It decided to analyze all components prior to the next Assembly meeting in order to determine the best path to achieve the ultimate goal of unity. The heads of the jurisdictions committed to regular concelebration and

look forward to the annual Sunday of Orthodoxy celebration in March 2020 in New York. In addition, all other hierarchs, clergy, and laity are encouraged to organize regionally.

Responding to an appeal of Orthodox Christian mental health professionals, the Executive Committee decided to mandate its Endorsed Organization, Orthodox Christian Association of Medicine, Psychology and Religion (OCAMPR), to develop a task force to address the issue of mental health. OCAMPR will work in partnership with the Assembly, through the Office of the Secretariat. Additionally, the bishops received an appeal from Orthodox Christian organizations working on the crisis of homelessness. In response to their recommendations, a working group to develop an Orthodox Volunteer Corps, under the guidance of the Assembly Secretariat, was sanctioned.

Finally, the date and location was established for the 10th Anniversary Meeting of the Assembly of Bishops: May 2–5, 2020, in Washington, D.C.

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Purpose: To honor Arab-American students who excel in Media Studies.

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Applications: Hard copy applications only. Send the following items to the ADC Research Institute (address below):

- * A one-page statement explaining why you merit the scholarship, identifying your goals, and declaring that you are a U.S. citizen of Arab heritage.
- * Two original, signed letters of recommendation from professors of mass communications.

* Copies of your articles, DVDs, films, and so forth. (Items will not be returned to you.)

* Official academic transcripts (minimum 3.0 GPA).

* Your permanent home address, phone number, and e-mail address, and your phone number during the school year, if it is different.

Deadline: Wednesday, April 1, 2020

Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted; remember: only hard copy applications will be accepted.

Submit all materials at the address below:

ADC Research Institute

Att.: Mr. Nabil Mohamad, ADC Vice President

1705 Desales Street, N.W., Suite 500

Washington, D.C. 20036

If you have any questions, call 202-244-2990, or e-mail organizing@ADC.org.

Awards will be presented at ADC's 40th National Convention in Washington, D.C., in 2020.

Save the Date!

The Eastern Dioceses of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America invites all to our

2ND ANNUAL SPRING RETREAT & PILGRIMAGE

APRIL 3-5, 2020

**ANTIOCHIAN VILLAGE
CONFERENCE CENTER**

Special sessions for members of Parish Council, YAM, SOYO, & DMC



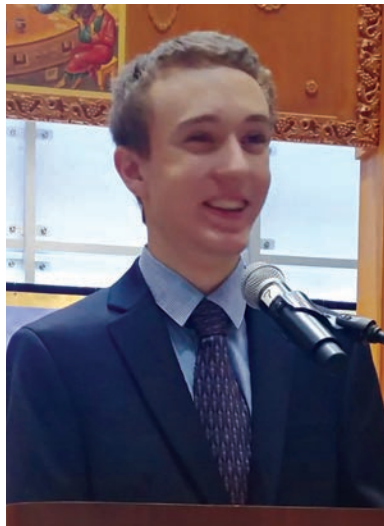
PUTTING ON THE MIND OF CHRIST, AND BEARING ALL THINGS

Judges' Choice, the Oratorical Festival
for the Diocese of Charleston, Pittsburgh and the Mid-Atlantic

Want to be the CEO of a Fortune 500, sign a recording deal, or find a cure for cancer? I have just the verse for you: Philippians 4:13. "I can do *all* things through Christ who strengthens me." One of the most quoted and popular verses in the New Testament, you can find it on T-shirts, key-chains, cup-holders, and dog collars. Christ will give me strength to do anything – my dreams can come true. This could be the best evangelistic tool ever: become a Christian and you can do all things. It's better than moving mountains! So, if I want to be the next Christian Bill Gates, all I have to do is pray and believe! Actually, I think that St. Paul had something else in mind.

Many modern Christians have a misconception of Christ's power in their lives. We pray, not only for the material things we *need*, which for many of us (at least in the West) are few, but for the possessions we *want*, which are numerous. More often than not, we believe in an image of Christ showering blessings on His followers, thinking, "If I confess Christ and have enough faith, then He will reward me and punish my enemies." This, however, is exactly the attitude that Christ tells us to avoid. We are not guaranteed prosperity, health, or the life we want. In Luke 14:33, Jesus says, "Whoever of you does not forsake *all*, he cannot be my disciple." In fact, Jesus told us that we will have trouble, we will be hated, we will suffer. The Orthodox Christian life is not an easy one. Take up your cross and follow me is *not* for the fainthearted.

So what *is* St. Paul telling us in Philippians 4? When reading Scripture, context is crucial. If we look a back a few verses in this chapter, we discover that St. Paul is talking about his physical and monetary situation. He writes, "I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content. I know how to get along with humble



means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; *in any and every circumstance* I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need." He reminds us to be content with what we have. That's why the context is incredibly important. By itself, Philippians 4:13 appears to promise us a heavenly fairy godfather, granting us whatever we wish. In reality, presented in its proper context, this verse is a call for contentment, exactly the antithesis of its mistaken meaning. One way that we might think of

this verse is, "I can *bear* all things through Christ who strengthens me."

My grandmother had to bear cancer, but never let it touch her faith. She served in the Church until the last few weeks of her life, when she was homebound with hospice care. Why didn't God heal her . . . at least for a while? She was teaching me; she was doing His work. I still remember asking my mom, "Why didn't God answer her prayers, our prayers?" Didn't we have enough faith?

God did answer, however: Grandma was able to do all things . . . even look cancer in the face, through Christ's strength. She knew the Truth. The last words she spoke to my mom and me were, "I'm going home now." My grandmother continued to fight the good fight and run the good race . . . all the way to the finish line!

The hospice nurse told us that she had witnessed many deaths, but none with such joy and peace as my grandma's. It's that contentment, that peace, to which St. Paul is calling us in Philippians 4. That is the peace that Christ promised in John 14: 27, when he said, "My peace I give to you, not as the world gives do I give to you."

In this world, however, we are seldom satisfied. I can have a pantry full of food and say that there's nothing to eat; a house full of games, books, and music, and complain that there is nothing to do. Sometimes I feel dissatisfied with everything around me . . . even with *everyone* around me. My parents don't understand; my brother is irritating; my friends aren't there for me.

These self-absorbed thoughts and desires are brought about by *logismoi* – those evil thoughts that influence our hearts and lead us astray if we do not keep on guard against them. *Logismoi* come to us in many forms. The Church fathers spoke of two, which I think are the most insidious: *tristitia*, thoughts of sadness and depression, and *acedia*, despondency or dejection, which steal our peace and leave us vulnerable to Satan's snares.

Fr. Maximos of Mount Athos explained the Church Elders' teachings about *logismoi*, writing that they begin with an assault or attack on our mind. Next, we may open up a dialogue with the thought. Fr. Maximos believes that this stage can be dangerous, because this is when we entertain the thought. It is not, however, until the third stage (consent), when we give in to the thought, that a sin occurs.

In Homily 24, St. John Chrysostom tells us that we can't overcome temptation by our own power. He says, "Not even those moderate temptations . . . may we bear by our own power: but even in them we require aid from Him in our warfare that we may pass through them, and until we have passed, bear them."

This is why we need continually to renew our minds in Christ, for it is only in His strength that we can defeat or put aside these *logismoi*, these harmful thoughts of selfish desire, discontentment, discouragement, and despondency.

One of my greatest struggles is with social anxiety. I am uncomfortable in groups and have trouble talking to people, even if I know them. My mind replays the same messages: No one really likes me; they think I'm boring. I am boring; if I weren't here, no one would even notice. Then I want to leave, to sit alone, to isolate myself to protect myself from rejection. I feel like I have no purpose and can become apathetic and discouraged.

I realized, however, that the one place I am never discouraged or listless is in Mass. Mass is not about me; I am immersed in a community, worshipping God and participating in the sacraments.

Last summer, I was really nervous before going on the Project Mexico mission. I wondered if I would

have anyone to talk to, if I would be able to fit in with the group, if I would be included. I wondered about *me*. When I got there, however, I saw the people we had come to serve and I wondered about *them*. When I put myself aside and focused on others, Christ could strengthen me and work through me. From building the house to playing with the children, the week was life-changing. I was part of the community, joined with my brothers and sisters, and perfectly content. Even sleeping on the hard ground in a tent, or working in hundred-degree heat, there was no sense of *acedia*.

You see, *acedia* and discontent are two sides of the same coin. They come from our thoughts. Last fall we read Elder Thaddeus's book, *Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives*. He writes, "Our life depends on the kind of thoughts we nurture. Everything both good and evil comes from our thoughts. Our thoughts become reality." So, whether we are in trouble, suffering, and insecure, or popular, wealthy, and talented, whether we are fighting cancer or heading off to that dream college, our thoughts, our refusal to interact with the *logismoi* that threaten us, determine our ability to find contentment in Christ.

So, how does the Orthodox Christian avoid discontentment, and banish the *logismoi* that try to ensnare us? The answer is simple: essentially we must "put on the mind of Christ" and imitate His life. Specifically, we should honestly seek the Father to know His will. As Orthodox Christians, we know that constant prayer and daily Scripture reading are crucial. Neither should we neglect reading the works of saints and godly men and women. Through these practices, our thoughts will become more aligned with God's purposes.

Furthermore to live as a Christian is not to isolate oneself. Living in the Orthodox community is vital. By singing in the choir, playing the organ, participating in the sacraments, co-leading Vacation Bible School, and volunteering in the community, I live my Orthodox faith.

In short, to paraphrase St. Augustine, "Love God and others, and do what you want." If we are truly aligned with God, it is not possible for us to deviate from His will. Our prayers would be answered, since they are encompassed in His will. We can do all things through Christ!

So prayer may not get me into MIT, but I will be successful if I can say, just like my grandmother did, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race."

References

Orthodox Study Bible:
Philippians 4:13
Luke 14:33
John 14: 27
In Homily 24, St. John Chrysostom writes that these self-absorbed thoughts and desires are brought about by *logismoi*—those evil thoughts that influence our hearts and lead us astray if we do not keep on constant guard against them. *Logismoi* come to us in *many* forms. The Church Fathers spoke of two, which I think are the most insidious: *tristitia* – thoughts of sadness and depression, and *acedia*—despondency or dejection, which steal our peace and leave us vulnerable to Satan's snares. Fr. Maximos of Mount Athos explained the Church Elders' teachings about *logismoi*, writing that they begin with an Assault or attack on our mind. Next we Interact, when we open up a dialogue with the thought. Fr. Maximos believes that this stage can be dangerous because this is when we entertain the thought. Although, he writes, it is not until the 3rd stage, Consent, when we give in to the thought that a sin occurs. Elder Thaddeus's book, Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives.

Connor Martin
St. Patrick Church, Bealton, Virginia

Food for Hungry People & Charitable Outreach

Application Procedures for Funding



Our Antiochian churches have, for many years, engaged in charitable outreach programs in their particular communities. Usually this is done with individual donations and/or fundraising efforts. Each year the need in the U.S. and Canada increases as the number of homeless and families living below the poverty line increases. For over forty-five years the Archdiocese has responded to world hunger and disasters worldwide through the Food for Hungry People & Charitable Outreach (FFHP&CO) Program. Our churches and individuals have given hundreds of thousands of dollars to this effort. While the Archdiocese will continue to respond to world needs, FFHP&CO recognizes our responsibility to assist churches through a structured process to combat hunger and its related effects in North America.

FFHP&CO recognizes the myriad of programs and projects sponsored by our churches and church organizations to make a difference in the community in which they are located. We also recognize that these efforts alone are not sufficient to alleviate the hunger and poverty that beset so many of our neighbors. Additional measures are required.

Beginning January 1, 2020, FFHP&CO will accept proposals for funding to assist Antiochian parishes and/or parish organizations establish, strengthen, and expand charitable programs. Applications for funding, including all required documentation and signatures, must be completed in accordance with the procedures given below. The FFHP&CO Funding Oversight Committee will grant funds for limited, specific purposes but not for general, ongoing sustaining of programs.



In short, FFHP&CO will fund the following:

1. Expansion of well-established charitable programs;
2. Establishment of new charitable initiatives (such funding may be granted to new programs to help cover legal expenses incurred in applying for 501(c)(3) status); and
3. Emergency Funding, to be given on a one-time basis (even outside of the designated proposal due dates, if necessary).

Decisions of the Committee will be final and cannot be appealed.

Procedures for Funding

The following procedures must be followed by all churches and church organizations applying for funding.

1. Submissions must be made by the following deadlines:

Spring: February 1
Fall: September 1

2. Proposals may be delivered electronically through e-mail to annethomas@abthomasesq.com
3. Optional relevant materials may be submitted to supplement the Grant Application form. Please number additional pages, and note attachments on the application form.

Food for Hungry People & Charitable Outreach GRANT APPLICATION FORM

Name of Church/Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

Priest: _____ Signature: _____

Contact Person/Ttle: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

Program Name: _____

Grant Request Amount: \$ _____

Have you applied for funding from any other organization(s)? _____ Yes _____ No

If Yes, Name(s) of Organization(s): _____

Amount Requested: \$ _____

My signature certifies that the applicant currently has tax-exempt status under §501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and is classified as “not a private foundation” as defined under §509(a). My signature is made as one authorized to do so on behalf of the applying organization.

Name / Title: _____

Signature of Authorized Person: _____ Date: _____

1. Program Overview:
2. What are the program goals? How will the program achieve these goals or objectives?
3. Staffing: Who will administer the program, and what are their qualifications? (*For established programs, this list should include the names of the Governing Board.*)
4. At what location will the operations of the program be carried out?
5. How long will the program continue? *For an established program:* How long has it been in existence?
6. How will the program be sustained, financially?
7. What criteria will be used to evaluate the program's effectiveness?

Submit a proposed budget, including a budget summary of income and expenses.

For an established program, submit as well a copy of the following documents:

- the latest Form 990, 990EZ, or 990-PF, if filed;
- the most recent Annual Report, including audited financials;
- the IRS determination letter indicating 501(c)(3) status, if applicable.

For a new program, submit as well an explanation of the steps being taken to apply for 501(c)(3) status, if applicable.

THE WORD
358 Mountain Road
PO Box 5238
Englewood, NJ 07631-5238

2019 PROJECT

Antiochian Women - North American Board



"BEHOLD,
THE
TABERNACLE
OF GOD
IS AMONG
MEN!"

❖ *Building a new Cathedral* ❖
for our Archdiocese at the Antiochian Village