



World becoming Church : an Orthodox vision of mission

As a mission parish undertakes a formal outreach to the local community, the faithful naturally find themselves grappling with the meaning of Orthodox Christian mission. The Lord commands us to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you . . .” (Matt 28:19-20) What vision and practical principles will guide us as we go about fulfilling this Great Commission?

According to Church teaching, God entered creation to make it a part of who He is. He literally immersed the cosmos in Himself, so that, as St Paul says, “He has put all things under His feet and has made Him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fulness of him who fills *all in all*.” (Eph 1:22-23) Through the Incarnation, God’s Spirit and Being is “everywhere present and fills all things.” Although fully revealed and proclaimed in the Church’s sacramental life, His Presence can be found in all places and in every person, though concealed and obscured to varying degrees.

Imagine the Church as a great bonfire, and her members as living coals inside it. The bonfire is visible and its dimensions are clearly definable. However, not all the coals are accounted for. Scattered in all directions outside the bonfire are multitudes of embers, alive and glowing, but hidden on the earth. These are the human souls outside the canonical Church whom Christ has recreated through the Incarnation, but whose new identity as a members of Christ’s Body is as yet obscured in the life of this world.

In this vision, the ultimate goal of mission is to extend the nature of the Church *outward*. To use the bonfire analogy : the scattered and buried embers must be fanned and kindled until they burst into flame and the world itself becomes a bonfire. That is where we come in. Our mission is to inspire the world to burn brightly with its true life, the life of Christ’s Body. It is a vision of the world attaining its true identity by *becoming* Church.

In the short term, this may or may not mean that people will actually convert to canonical Orthodoxy. It is possible, according to the Gospel, for one to grow in a churchly spirit, to become Christ-like according to the Orthodox tradition, without changing one’s church membership, or even becoming a Christian at all. We may recall the incident in St Mark’s Gospel where St John the Theologian tells Jesus, “‘Teacher, we saw a man casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him, because he was not following us.’ But Jesus said, ‘Do not forbid him; for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon after to speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is for us’.” (Mark 9:38-40)

Of course, we still hope and pray that those outside of canonical Orthodoxy will come into full sacramental communion with us. Indeed, we will encourage anyone who is interested to be received into the Church at the appropriate time. Still, the *primary* task of our evangelism is not to devise strategies to change a person’s church membership. That is a matter of God’s providence, His mysterious working in the various complex personal circumstances that combine to bring people to the Orthodox Church. Our efforts must take a different focus, which is to bear to others the fire of divine love that we have received in the sacraments, and to inspire the same life that lies buried in the lives of those outside the Church. The tangible results of our efforts, including conversion to Orthodoxy, are up to God.

This means two things for us. First, we must immerse ourselves in the full sacramental life we have received—the life of personal and communal prayer and asceticism—in order to ensure that we are truly filled with the fire of God’s grace. After all, how can we spark the Presence of God if we are not ourselves in the process of absorbing His consuming fire, especially through quiet prayer and weekly participation in the Eucharist?

Secondly, we must actively seek contact with, serve, and love others, firstly through our actions. As the desert

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father Poemen once said, “When asked a question, answer; otherwise, keep silent.” If we are truly bearers of God’s divine fire, our deeds of love will inspire love in those around us. Christ within us will beget Christ in our neighbours. The churchly spirit of our lives will fan to life the churchly spirit waiting to be born in the world.

Coupled with these individual acts of love, we can also implement planned outreach activities as a community. These, of course, should not be ends in themselves, like an advertising campaign whose results can be measured by increased sales. Rather, activities such as publications, talks, open houses, festivals and so on, are simply contexts to spark personal relationships, and the true evangelism of loving action and service.

In all our missionary efforts, our attitude should demonstrate an utter lack of expectation. Whether or not the people whom we encounter ultimately choose to become members of the canonical Orthodox Church should never be a criterion for judging our missionary efforts. The Gospel vision of “the world becoming Church” tells us that as long as we fulfil our call to partake of the sacramental fire of God’s grace, and to kindle that fire for our neighbours, God Himself will in the fullness of time gather His scattered people into one Body—His Body filling the whole universe with His love and life forever.—*Fr Richard Rene, St Aidan’s Mission, Cranbrook BC*

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

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From the Archbishop’s desk:

Putting on Christ

As many as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ. (Galatians 3.27)

These are the words that we sing at every Holy Mystery of Baptism into the Body of Christ of every believer. These are the words that we repeat, too, on several major feast-days of the Church : Pascha, Pentecost, Nativity, Theophany. It is on such days that, long ago, baptisms were only done. Nowadays, we are receiving new faithful persons at almost any time of the year, and we can sing this hymn, words of the Apostle Paul, very often. How deep are the implications of these words! They are not just words to be said for the occasion. They are words that describe the baptised one’s *very being*, as he or she is then immediately Chrismated and, thereby, filled with the Holy Spirit.

Recently I had the blessing, during a retreat, of talking at length with a priest, Fr David Fontes, an American psychologist. He is in the process of writing a book in which he reflects on these words, and he gave me permission to share, in advance, something of what he understands of the implications of them.

For background, the “fruits of the Holy Spirit,” as described by the Apostle Paul in Galatians 5.22-23, are in fact one nine-fold “fruit”; and these all together reveal the character of Christ in the person who has put on Christ. These characteristics are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. They are not separated from one another, and one does not “pick-and-choose” among them. The Lord gives them to us to live. When one lives them, and expresses them, he often is not aware of it, although others often are.

According to the perception of Fr David Fontes, this “putting on Christ” in Baptism implies a deep identification with Christ Himself. He reflected on the fact that most people talk about the uniqueness of their personality, differing from that of others. Someone might say, “Well that’s just his/her personality,” or, “They just have a personality conflict.” He said that he has come to see that the fruits of the Spirit are, in reality, manifestations of Christ’s Personality. If this is the case, then there really is a “Christian personality” that we should all possess as baptised Christians, and should therefore manifest towards others. As the DSM IV (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*) lays out a number of personality criteria for specific personality disorders, so too the Bible also lays out nine personality characteristics that make up a holy Christian personality. Fr David perceives that these fruits of the Holy Spirit are, in fact, personality characteristics of Christ Himself. So, if we

are identifying with Christ, Who is definitely a Person, then we will also exhibit His personality characteristics, which are these very fruits. These nine fruits are clearly the characteristics of His Life, as we see throughout Scripture.

Fr Fontes' assertions are underscored by the writing of Jean-Claude Larchet in "Therapy of Spiritual Illnesses," partly quoted in the Lenten 2008 issue of *Divine Ascent* (St John of Shanghai Monastery, Manton CA). Living in France, Larchet holds doctorates in theology, and philosophy, and writing in the context of the Fathers is his specialty. In the context of a consideration of Adam and Eve, he cites Dorotheus of Gaza, St Maximus the Confessor, St Gregory of Nyssa, St Basil the Great, and others, in writing that God made human nature a participant in every good, in all virtue, and all the best imaginable. With St Isaac the Syrian, he writes that "Virtue is naturally in the soul." However, he notes that "Whereas the image is natural, the likeness is virtual—that is to be realized by man's free participation in God's deifying grace." This refers to the process that is involved in putting on Christ, and being identified with Him. And so, he cites St Basil, who writes ". . . when you see a portrait that conforms to the model exactly, you do not praise the portrait, but rather you admire the painter. And thus, so that I might be the object of admiration, and not another, He has left it to my care to become God's likeness. Verily, I possess rational being by means of the image, and I become the likeness by becoming Christian." This, Larchet adds, is directly connected to the admonition by the Lord in 3 Moses 20.26: "Be holy, as I am holy."

Anyone who loves and respects another person tries to emulate—to be like—that person. I remember in my own childhood wanting to be like a respected teacher, to be like a respected pastor. It is all the more the case with ourselves and the Lord. We love and respect Him. We wish to be identified with Him. We wish others would see Him in us. This is the practical application of the "putting-on" of Christ, which happens in our Baptism, and which happens in us daily. In being identified with Him, in imitating Him, in emulating Him, Who is Love itself, we cannot but take upon ourselves willingly those personality characteristics, as understood by Fr Fontes, to be exactly the fruits of the Holy Spirit. This all happens by the grace of the operation of the Holy Spirit within us, as we constantly put ourselves in the Lord's presence. This is the establishment of the Likeness of God in us.

May the Lord grant us the renewal, and the multiplication of the Grace of the Holy Spirit, so that we may, filled with Divine Love, exhibit in our whole being the fruits of the Holy Spirit, the personality characteristics of Christ Himself. May others clearly see the Saviour in us. May they acquire the desire to be, with us, like Him, and may they fulfil that desire.

+Seraphim

Walking with the wounded, part 2

Meeting Christ in the other

The first part of this article introduced some aspects of our ministry to people who suffer from mental illness, the significance of illness, and the Orthodox perspective on illness. The second part reviews a number of the elements necessary for understanding the dynamic of the relationship between the one suffering from mental illness and the one offering help. Relating fully to those who suffer from mental illness goes beyond the simple encounter of two peoples to an actual meeting of the other that requires erasing the walls we routinely erect around our own individuality. No matter how many people are around us, those walls keep us locked in a state of solitude. In such a state, we do not truly meet the other; we simply cross paths. Our Lord, Jesus Christ met people where they were. He still meets us where we are, and it is by acting likewise that we can hope to touch those who struggle with any type of emotional and psychological distress.

In order to reach those who are ill, we have to meet them where they are, in the conditions they are in, without stumbling over our prejudices about mental illness¹ or over preconceived ideas about how things ought to be. Problems arise because meeting another person, as Christ meets us, not only requires meekness, love, and humility; it also depends on our state of personhood. Very few amongst us have reached that state of full personhood which allows us to welcome the other without constructing seemingly insurmountable hurdles that stem from our own individuality.²

As individuals, we cannot commune with one another. The objectification of the person creates walls between self and non-self that renders the journey impossible. An individual has become object, the remnant of a fractured person who is in a state of disharmony harboring various levels of opposition toward others, rendering it difficult to meet the other as he really is. An individual is a distorted part of a person. The meeting of two individuals can only result in the creation of a world of illusions and delusions (*prelest*), that we mistake for reality; an encounter that over time will leave us with feelings of disquiet and emptiness.

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¹ Corrigan, P. W., Lundin, R. K., *Don't Call Me Nuts! Coping With the Stigma of Mental Illness*, Tinley Park ILL: Recovery Press, 2001, 456 pages.

² Paffhausen, Jonah (Metropolitan), "The Sanctity of Life," <http://www.oca.org/news/1750>, Visited Jan. 22, 2009.

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Individuals can be mistaken into thinking that they have connected with someone, when they find commonality of ideas and emotions, but these are often jointly shared illusions and not a genuine relationship. It is only as persons who have fully integrated the common nature of man that we can connect with others fully and in reality. Confronted with the abyss of our brokenness, it is very tempting to try to deny it by parceling ourselves into ever shrinking pieces of our original self. For instance, we frequently define ourselves by an activity that is dear to us—a hobby, a profession, or a quality—an illness, our nationality, and so forth. Those characteristics become overly invested emotionally and the main vehicle of interaction with others, and interaction is consequently reduced in scope and quality. Connection with others on the basis of such a reduced part of the person we were created to be, is bound to rest on tenuous grounds, and to be a source of dissatisfaction leading to an increased sense of alienation. We have to come to accept that, in our mutual state of brokenness, true relationships with others will hurt, and that it is only in co-suffering love that true bonds can be forged.³

We are all wounded by individualism, which is keeping us further apart from personhood. Our Western medical and scientific schools of thought, based mostly on the principles of the so-called “Enlightenment”—which has stripped science of the sacred⁴—can, because of the types of therapeutic methods they advocate, push the patient even deeper into a state of lifeless objectification. This depersonalization of the human person is noticeable in the way the healthcare system treats the very people it is supposed to be serving. It is only by walking away from the alienating cell of individualism that one can start on the long narrow path toward full personhood and health. The extent of our healing qualities also depends on our state of personhood. Only a fully integrated person can be truly healing and not simply a technician of health. It is no wonder that healthcare has become depersonalized and is depersonalizing, since individuals, who have lost the profound understanding of the oneness of human nature and of the sacredness of the human person, are responsible for running it.

The modern concept of mental health has distanced itself from an understanding of morality as a *sine qua*

³ Flovorosky, G., *The Darkness of Night – Evil amongst us.*, Missionary Leaflet #E095b, Trinity Orthodox Mission, La Canada, California, 2004.

⁴ Bockman, J.F., *Secular Humanism: An Orthodox Perspective*, St Nektarios Press, Seattle, WA, 1991, 84p.

non component of health. In an era of relative truths and shifting moral standards, the understanding that morality is best expressed in co-suffering love, is mostly disregarded, easily dismissed or completely unknown. Yet, without co-suffering love, it is impossible to reach the other inside of a healing relationship. Since secular culture no longer speaks of moral truth but of individual truths belonging only to our own sphere of influence without concerns for others, it has become very difficult to reach the other without the gospel teachings as firm common grounds. Without a common understanding that we are all joined in Jesus Christ, Who is the Truth—and, as St Cyprian of Carthage would say, “the Master of Unity”⁵—meeting another person becomes an encounter of two solitudes navigating on parallel courses for a time, but never truly merging paths. We are to meet the other who is mentally ill in the manner in which Christ meets us, whether in the Church or in the world. In so doing, it is important to avoid the trap of immediately expecting a feeling of well being. Difficulties and emotional upheaval are often a fact of these relationships and have to be accepted as part of this ministry of love.⁶ We have to meet the other with openness, along with a clear understanding of our roles and limitations.

It is not only by following Christ that one can grow toward the other and take care of those who are ill; it is also by growing in faith and love for the Holy Trinity. Without such, there are only the externals of virtue, which will not stand the testing of our armor that caring for those who are mentally ill will inevitably bring.⁷ A deep selfless love of the other is the basic virtue without which a therapeutic relationship cannot develop. The absence of such love denies God in any relationship. Selfless love is important in formal therapeutic relationships, but also for anyone who acts in any capacity with the mentally ill, which includes pastoral care. Selfless love is what allows some people to be calming to those in turmoil, hear their confidences, and open the path toward healing.

The more a person grows in the love of the Holy Trinity, the easier it will be to forget about divisive

⁵ Tertullian, Cyprian, and Origen, *On the Lord's Prayer*, Translated by Alistair Stuart-Skyes, St Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood NY, 2004. p. 69.

⁶ Pembroke, N.,F., “Empathy, Emotion and Ekstasis in the Patient-Physician Relationship,” *Journal of Religion and Health*, Vol. 46, No. 2, June 2007, 287-298.

⁷ www.jungseattle.org/jpa/eisenpres.pdf Visited January 28, 2009.

personal boundaries. Also, the easier it will be to grow closer in oneness and understanding with a renewed respect for the sanctity and uniqueness of the other. Renouncing the “I” / “non-I” dichotomy that we have grown accustomed to consider as normal, will appear absurd at first. Grace-filled Christian love will melt those boundaries that are so familiar and comfortable to natural reason. Human nature has become so weak that the prescription Our Lord gave us to love each other may seem out of reach—and it is, by human standards. The strength to do so can only be drawn from a life in Christ and His Church. This Grace-filled love can only grow when one’s life is steeped in the sacramental life of the Church, when one’s psyche has become ecclesial, which is at the heart of Orthodoxy. Without such love, therapeutic relationships will quickly show aberrations and distortions from which will evolve theories about the human person and mental illnesses that are strictly based on a natural understanding. It will shed light on our fallen nature in a state of *homeostasis* with the fallen world and not on what we were created to be. Without the perspective of the Kingdom and of our redemption, those theories evolve in closed loops with no hope of bringing lasting wellness. Trying to define normal mental health parameters away from Christ is akin to trying to describe the color blue to someone who was born blind, and will lead to some of the senseless and dangerous ideas that are in vogue today among mental professionals, that are unfortunately touted as science.

Unless one is able to progress beyond the nominal understanding that human nature is one and shared by all, this abstraction will remain a product of our fallen nature: a simple addition and not a life principle that dictates how we relate to others. Self-love and individualistic earthly pursuits blind our understanding of this commonality of the nature we all share. Consequently, the differences seem to overshadow the similarities. This attitude creates a wedge between caretaker and the one in need. Christ as the Suffering Servant penetrated to the core of the essence of humanity ; we have to come to the knowledge that when another person is ill, we all suffer at an ontological level. Unless we accept to share in this suffering, our help will remain superficial and largely ineffective over the long term. This does not mean that we have to take as ours the illness of the other and suffer the same results. Rather, it means that we have to take as ours the responsibility of the illness of the other, and, being healthy, we can become a comforter and help the other to heal within their own circumstances, without trying to impose our perspectives or will.

The type of relationship we have with God defines the relationship we have with others and vice versa. A significant element that helps structure those relationships, and therefore our ministry with those who are sick, is our Christological understanding of the two natures of Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ was fully man and fully God. Although we can recite this from rote memory, the profound implications of this truth is often beyond our understanding, hampered as it is by the splitting of the mind and the blindness that followed our fallen condition. It is difficult to hold this truth without ambivalence. In its day-to-day understanding and applications, we can see various degrees of corruption from tendencies toward the monophysite heresy—where the divine nature is emphasized—to the opposite, where the human nature of Our Savior is at the forefront. The latter leads to a trivialization of this mystery exemplified in the image of “Buddy Christ” favoured by some religious groups. Many who suffer from mental illness are even more at risk of using splitting—a defense mechanism that renders it difficult to understand and integrate antinomies without confusion—which affects their ability to relate fully to Christ. This makes it more difficult to perceive who He truly is, and will usually result in a significant amount of distortion. Thus amputated of their fullness by the mind, dogmas are only partially understood and integrated and will not lead to a corresponding increase in virtue. Due to emotional disturbances, the integration of dogmas becomes chaotic, which will invariably lead to various levels of distortion in any relationships.

Dogmas and virtues are a seamless whole. Unfortunately, the flow from one to the other is disjointed by corruption and sin. Instead of bringing integration of beliefs and behaviors, it will lead to absurd situations where Christian—even Orthodox Christian—mental health workers embrace theories and techniques that are in opposition to the Gospel teachings. For instance, it is common to see a lack of self-esteem (often a form of vanity) treated with techniques aimed at infusing in patients a sense of self-pride. On the contrary, a true healing process comprises the acquisition of genuine humility, which will correct the so-called lack of self-esteem. Too often, the Gospels are viewed as an edifying story that no human being can fulfill. This attitude can only leave the person with a profound sense of hopelessness. In a therapeutic relationship, perhaps more than in any other relationship, our desire to follow Christ and live in Christ should become apparent.

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Without such an *askesis* and love, our efforts will be mostly futile since we will at one time or another come to the eschatological reality that will crumble any efforts that are not filled by Grace.

Another situation that evolves from a distorted Christological perspective is a “paralyzing admiration” of Christ, where the person places Christ as an idol who cannot be truly imitated, a distant God who demands a series of rituals. This attitude stems from a spiritual illness that seems to find fertile ground in people suffering from mental illness—although it is not uncommon amongst the general population—and is essentially pagan in nature. The reasons behind this spiritual pathology are multifactorial, but the results are more damaging than an overt opposition that can be identified and addressed. Since in order to follow Christ, one has to go against what appears to be their own nature, and carry their own cross, such efforts will quickly become overwhelming without a strong faith in the divinity of Christ and an understanding of the fullness of His humanity. Moreover, many of those who struggle with mental illness have tried for a very long time “to fit in” with the world. This perceived need can become a serious obstacle in the way of healing, when one comes to the understanding that the world they so desperately tried to fit in, is not the one they belong to. This will be especially disturbing if the Orthodox community they are a part of is not decidedly engaged in the effort to abandon the old self and put on Christ, and will as a consequence often be judgmental and reject, to different extents, the lame and the maimed.

In the words of the late Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), “the world does not approve of continuous vice but will actively reject continuous virtue.”⁸ The world is penetrated by sin even to the core of the organic elements of life. This corruption is familiar, and its rejection will be at times perceived as more painful than the illness that it brings. Without this understanding, it will be hard for those in the capacity of caretakers, or in the pastoral ministry, to grasp that their role is not only as helpers but also as educators. Most importantly perhaps, the caretaker is also a fellow struggler who has to strive to be unconditional in his love of the person under his care and uncompromisingly rejecting of sin without confusing the two. The clarity between the absolute rejection of sin and the complete acceptance of the

sinner has to be explained in depth to those who have difficulty with boundaries, since they often fail to differentiate the act from the perpetrator. Not only does it have to be taught; it has to be apparent in the teacher’s actions as well. Otherwise, it is likely that the person will feel rejected along with his sins and will live with a sense of complete alienation, both from the world and from the Church. We reject what is fallen in the world, but not the world itself that is so loved by God. To those who fear rejection, we have to help redirect their desire to fit in the world toward the goal of being fit for the Bridal Chamber.

The image of Christ as Redeemer is also crucial to help us accept our cross, be it passions, illnesses, or any other trial. Without the acceptance that healing happens by Grace, we are bound to fall prey to the passion of pride. When we work in the capacity of healthcare providers or in a pastoral ministry, we are the instruments of God’s Grace and cannot take pride in any of our accomplishments in ministering to those who are ill. To do so, would not only consume us, it would harm the people we are trying to help by teaching them to rely on us and not on Him, *Who makes everything grow* (1Cor 3:7). As for us who minister to the mentally ill, all our care, ministrations, medicines and so forth are of minimal value unless we offer them in co-suffering love so that the one who is ill, is not fighting alone but with the will of two. Ultimately, no one is fighting with his own will, but with the Will of Christ, and by our participation in His suffering He becomes our Redeemer. A strong sense that we are not alone in our fight is what allows us to overcome our fears of those who are different and do not quite fit in. Fear only cuts bridges and closes doors and is a most damaging passion for anyone, but especially for those who are involved in therapy.

Ultimately, our most important role with the mentally ill is to accompany them as comforters, who support, strengthen and ease the sufferings of those who suffer in Christ. It is by our presence, our support, our words, our silence, our example and most importantly by our love, that we can become comforters. When someone with mental illness crosses the threshold of our parish church, they usually have encountered various types of care and treatments, but more than likely, they have not been welcomed with the one thing needful: the love that would go to the Cross.—*Nikita J Eike, M.D.*

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

⁸ Krapovitsky, Met. A., *The Moral Idea of the Main Dogmas of the Faith*, translated from Russian by Bishop Varlaam Novakshonoff, Dewdney BC: Synaxis Press, 2002, p.160.

Holy Synod elects New auxiliary bishop For Canadian diocese

After a long search process involving all the clergy and faithful of the Archdiocese of Canada some years ago, three clergymen were identified whom they would like to see as an auxiliary bishop to help Archbishop Seraphim serve our continent-wide diocese. Unfortunately, the first candidate was blocked by the two bishops of the Holy Synod who interviewed him. With the retirement of these two bishops, the way became clearer for our Archdiocese to have episcopal help for our beloved, long-serving Vladyka.

Earlier this year, Archbishop Seraphim asked the first candidate if he would agree to his name's being presented to the Holy Synod again. His answer was very firmly in the negative. Vladyka therefore asked the Archdiocesan Council, on 1 November 2008, for agreement with his putting forward the name of the second candidate of the search process—then Hieromonk (now Archimandrite) Irénée (Rochon), who has been for many years a missionary priest in Québec and the Atlantic Provinces.



*Archimandrite Irénée
(Rochon), Bishop-elect
of Québec City*

Currently rector of the francophone parish of St-Benoît-de-Nursie in Montréal and Dean of Québec and Atlantic Canada, Fr Irénée is a graduate of Holy Trinity Seminary in Jordanville NY, where he spent many years as a monk in Holy Trinity Monastery before returning to his hometown of Rawdon QC. He is trilingual and able to serve in French, English, and Slavonic.

The Archdiocesan Council unanimously agreed with Vladyka Seraphim's nomination of Fr Irénée. Thus Archbishop Seraphim, according to the Statute of the OCA, presented the new candidate to the Holy Synod, which promptly elected him. The official announcement from Syosset was made as follows:

The Holy Synod of Bishops of The Orthodox Church in America, meeting at the OCA Chancery in Oyster Bay Cove NY, April 2, 2009, has elected Archimandrite Irénée (Rochon), as Bishop of Québec City, Auxiliary to His Eminence, Archbishop Seraphim.

[Le 2 avril 2009, le Saint Synode des Évêques de l'Église Orthodoxe en Amérique a élevé au rang d'Archimandrite l'Higoumène Irénée (Rochon) qui fut ensuite élu Évêque Auxiliaire de Son Excellence, Archevêque Séraphim. Son titre sera Évêque de Québec.]

Canada will have its long-delayed auxiliary bishop at last. Details of his consecration are yet to be announced. Archbishop Seraphim says, however, that until the consecration of the new auxiliary, the clergy and faithful of the Archdiocese should address Archimandrite Irénée as "Bishop-elect of Québec City," and he may be called "Vladyka." *[Dès lors, on s'adressera à lui comme "Évêque-désigné de Québec" en utilisant le terme poli de "Vladyka."]*

Meanwhile, Archbishop Seraphim urges all of the clergy and faithful of the Archdiocese to pray for the new bishop-elect, Archimandrite Irénée, as we prepare for his consecration later this year. *[Veuillez le garder dans vos prières personnelles. Les détails de sa future ordination seront annoncés plus tard.]*

Lebanese priest ordained For St-Benoît's parish

On 18 October 2008, Archbishop Seraphim ordained Hierodeacon Silouan (Bourjeily) to the Holy Priesthood at St-Benoît-de-Nursie in Montréal.

Born in 1969 to an Orthodox family in Lebanon, Michel Bourjeily, as he was then, became as a teenager very active in ecclesiastical youth groups, such as the Young Orthodox Movement and the National Orthodox Scouts, assuming many responsibilities in both communities. In 1988 he began studies in theology at Lebanon's Balamand Clerical School (Balamand Monastery) and graduated from the school in 1991.

At the Dormition of the Mother of God Monastery in the North Lebanon Diocese, in December 2002 he was tonsured a rassophore monk. In July 2004, in the same monastery, he was ordained a deacon by Metropolitan Elias Korban (Antiochian Orthodox Metropolitan of North Lebanon).

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Then in January of 2005, he arrived in Canada to complete the process of naturalization, and began studying at the University of Sherbrooke in the Orthodox department of the Theology Faculty. He received a B.A. and an M.A. from Sherbrooke in theology. Presently, he is studying for a Ph.D. there in the same field.

On 16 June 2008, he was tonsured a stavrophone monk by Higoumen Irénée (Rochon) at St-Benoît-de-Nursie in Montréal. Following his priestly ordination, he was blessed by Archbishop Seraphim to serve in St-Benoît. Fr Silouan is also by profession a tailor of ecclesiastical vestments and an iconographer (<http://eglivest.canalblog.com>).



Hieromonk Silouan

New deacon ordained For All Saints' in Victoria BC

On 31 January 2009, parishioners of All Saints of Alaska in Victoria, plus a good number of the candidate's family and friends, roared a resounding "Axios!" to the diaconal ordination of Achilleas Kasapi. A lifetime Orthodox Christian, and a member of All Saints for the last four years, Deacon Achilleas noted that it was "a great blessing to hear the people proclaim" his worthiness.

Deacon Achilleas is a distance education student in the diaconal studies programme at St Arseny Institute in Winnipeg and, according to the congratulatory email he received from his professors at the institute, has set a new standard in his studies. Beginning in January of 2008, he has completed, on average, one and a half courses per month. Only four courses remain before his studies are complete. Deacon Achilleas said that he "didn't know it was an unorthodox approach" when he first set his goals, but says it was "absolutely worth it" and that he has learned, not only what the courses have taught him, but a lot about himself.

The ordination was attended by a number of clergy: Archbishop Seraphim, of course, and the priest and deacon of All Saints of Alaska, Fr John Hainsworth and Deacon Kevin Miller. In addition, Fr Lawrence Farley, Dean of British Columbia and pastor of St Herman of Alaska's parish in Langely BC was present, as was Deacon Kurt Jordan, of the same parish. Fr Kosta Kalsidis

of the Greek Church of the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple, and a close friend of Deacon Achilleas was also witness to the ordination. Fr Charles Baxter, of the Ukrainian Church of St George, and Hieromonk Peter (Kontratiev) were also on hand.

At All Saints of Alaska, Fr Deacon Achilleas will share diaconal duties with Fr Deacon Kevin Miller, who is the only parish-paid deacon in the Archdiocese of Canada, and possibly in the entire OCA.

The ordination had been changed from March to January, to accommodate His Eminence's crowded schedule, which left the newly ordained deacon feeling, "totally unprepared. I was very nervous, and there was a lot of fear at what I have given up and done to prepare for this. I wanted to see the fruits of my labour come forth."

His wife, Matushka Brianne Kasapi, totally supports his ordination, he said. She is "as relieved as I am; because Brianne bore witness to the best and the worst of me during the learning; she suffered with me during the low times. The fact that this has happened, she feels quite a bit of relief; she's happy for me."

Said Fr John Hainsworth, Deacon Achilleas' priest and friend, "Deacon Achilleas will make a vibrant, joyful addition to the Archdiocese. His talents and gifts are evident to everyone who knows him, and his willingness to serve is exemplary." Axios!

— *Bev Cooke, All Saints of Alaska Church, Victoria BC*



In the ordination photograph, bottom row, left to right: Matushka Brianne Kasapi, Deacon Achilleas Kasapi, Hieromonk Peter (Kontratiev), Deacon Kevin Miller. Second row, left to right: Deacon Kurt Jordan, Fr Lawrence Farley, Father Charles Baxter, Fr John Hainsworth. Back row: His Eminence, Archbishop Seraphim and Fr Kosta Kalsidis.

Do You Have a Year to give For a mission opportunity?

— Fr Roberto Ubertino, Executive Director,
St John the Compassionate Orthodox Mission, Toronto ON
(Carpatho-Russian Archdiocese, Ecumenical Patriarchate)

Toronto houses a unique Orthodox resource for anyone over the age of eighteen. The Lived Theology School – LTS – under the patronage of St Maria of Paris, is a house located in downtown Toronto, where interns experience a year of studying Orthodox mission, in both a theoretical and very practical way.

LTS has four pillars at the core of its intern program:

- regular study periods;
- hands-on practical experience at St John the Compassionate Mission;
- living a full liturgical life in the context of a mission parish; and
- community life among interns.

The interns share an adequate, but simple, seven-bedroom house within walking distance of St John the Compassionate Mission.

LTS taps into twenty three years of experience living out mission work at St John the Compassionate Mission. All this provides a unique opportunity for people to really learn what Orthodox mission could look like.

LTS does not try to duplicate any of the otherwise excellent Orthodox learning institutes. Rather, it addresses a fundamental need of our Orthodox Church in North America—to have places where one can ask hard questions about, and try to grow into, the wisdom needed to do mission work. This work is understood not as a simple “let’s convert them,” or “handouts.” Rather, true mission work must engage the Church with the world, especially with people who are lost and suffering and poor.

We need to understand that we can only evangelize in vulnerability and that evangelization is not just a one-way street. We need to learn ways of doing mission work that flow out of our theology, our liturgy, and our Orthodox experience of God and salvation. This finally cannot be done simply by reading a book or in academic discussion detached from the reality of the lives of real people and situations.

At the same time we need to have our mission work rooted in a theological understanding and not in sentimentality. That is why LTS was born: to give an opportunity to “do theology”—live it, pray it and share it.

LTS seeks to address a particular crisis in Orthodoxy in North America. This is a zealous rush to “do mission work” without having much actual experience or

theological reflection at its base. Nowhere is the split between Orthodoxy and Orthopraxis more painfully evident than in much of our so-called “mission work.”

There are a number of dubious ideas and approaches to Orthodox mission circulating among well-intentioned Orthodox faithful and institutions. First, Orthodox “mission work” sometimes simply seeks to copy existing models from other churches. The question for such an approach is this: if we in our mission practice look no different from the Salvation Army, then why bother to have a different theology in the first place? Also, sometimes there is a dangerous spirit of naïve sentimentalism in our attempts at mission work ; such a spirit is fundamentally disrespectful of the poor. Last, and not least worrisome, is the possibility that if we do not have a clear theological understanding of what we are doing, we could be using the poor to feed an Orthodox agenda, which is a fundamentally sinful approach to missionizing.

Having listed just a few of the most common misconceptions, it becomes clear that we need a place of sober reflection and living so that a solid Patristic and realistic understanding of Orthodox mission can grow for this generation.

The aim of the Lived Theology School is not to encourage a replica of St John the Compassionate Mission. Each intern is encouraged to take what he or she learns and apply it creatively to whatever parish or life circumstances they might find themselves in the future.

LTS receives applications throughout the year. If you want to know more, please consult the LTS website at www.livedtheologyschool.org or write to us at livedtheologyschool@yahoo.ca

‘Joy of Canada’ icon Visits Ottawa cathedral

On 7-8 February 2009, Archbishop Lazar brought the “Theotokos Joy of Canada” icon to Annunciation Cathedral in Ottawa for veneration. The icon was written by Slavko Protic as a gift for the Monastery of All Saints of North America in Dewdney BC in 1986. Archbishop Lazar believes that the maple leaves and *fleur-de-lys* motifs on the garments,



With the icon are Archpriest John Jillions (L.) and Archbishop Lazar.

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With particular regard to parishes:

Church governance in Orthodox Christian tradition

The following paper is by Matthew Root of All Saints of Alaska parish in Victoria BC. Researched by him and Deacon Achilleas Kasapi, its immediate goal was to provide theological background to the revision of their parish's by-laws, a task assigned by their parish council ; but it also sought to answer the question, "How can our parish manifest the Kingdom of God in its organisational structures?"

Introduction

As Canadians, we are inheritors of a tradition of responsible governance. Indeed, "peace, order, and good government" have defined the ideals of the Canadian state since the terms were first incorporated into the *British North America Act* of 1867.¹ This political tradition has become marked by such characteristics as democracy, equality, and secularism, all of which are either explicitly or implicitly enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.² Politically, these ideals have created a public square in which all ethnic, social, political, or religious groups are able to participate freely. Yet these political ideals have also seeped into much North American Christianity. It is not uncommon for Canadian Christians to assume that religious truth should be decided by popular vote, that Christianity is radically egalitarian, or that life, like society, can be compartmentalized into "religious" and "non-religious" spheres. As we Orthodox Christians seek to establish the criteria and procedures through which our parishes will make decisions, it is important to keep the influence of these cultural values in mind before simply adopting established cultural decision-making structures as our own. If we truly desire to manifest the Kingdom of God in all we do as a parish, we must be certain that our processes and procedures are defined by the Gospel, and not by the assumptions we have picked up from our culture at large. We must be, to paraphrase St James, hearers and doers of the Word, lest we become like the man who looks in the mirror and immediately forgets what he looks like.³

The task of this paper is to assist in this process by providing parishes with a theological rationale and recommendations for a way of structuring our parish life in a way that conforms to Christ as proclaimed by the Orthodox Christian Tradition, starting with the Scriptures, and ending with current ecclesiological approaches and Archdiocesan guidelines.

¹ *British North America Act*, Section 91.

² *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

³ See James 1.23-24.

Church and Authority in the Scriptures

The Old Testament

Neither the Old Testament nor the New Testament offers regulations about how the People of God should organize themselves on the level of practical, day-to-day decision-making. It is possible, however, to glean from the Scriptures general themes that can assist us in discerning how we might faithfully organize our parishes. When looking at the Hebrew Scriptures, the most obvious pattern in terms of the exercise of authority is God's choosing leaders—patriarchs, high priests, judges, prophets, and kings—for specific purposes. This process is often associated with a special means of empowerment, such as a vision (*e.g.*, Jacob, Isaiah) or anointing (the priests and kings).⁴ The Spirit of the LORD is given to these people in a unique way and leaders are viewed as God's chosen vessels. Yet this general pattern of special, charismatic leadership is balanced by a consistent encouragement to counsel. For example, Jethro urges Moses to delegate some of his responsibilities (Exod 18) and Divine Wisdom is given such characteristics as instruction and counsel (Prov 8). It is said that "the evil man will not obey counsel" (Prov 15.25). Similarly, in Isaiah's vision of the Rod from the root of Jesse (Isa 11), counsel is counted among the sevenfold Spirit of the Messiah. Psalm 88 (89) provocatively states even that "God is glorified (LXX; MT 'awesome, terrifying') in the council of the saints" (v. 8).

Despite such passages emphasising the importance of counsel, the Hebrew Scriptures also view councils and counsel in a negative light.⁵ For example, Psalm 1 warns against "the counsel of the ungodly"; Psalm 2 reviles kings and rulers who "gather together against the Lord and against His anointed"; and Isaiah denounces his contemporaries among the priests and prophets whose counsel is motivated by greed (Isa 28.8). Counsel and deliberation, then, are not viewed in the Old Testament as good in themselves; they can be for good or they can be for evil. To ensure councils are true, it is necessary for them to hear *God's* counsel as well as their own deliberations. Speaking of false prophets, the LORD says through Jeremiah, "If they had stood in My counsel and heard My words, then they would have turned my people away from their evil practices" (Jer 23.22). Similarly, Job rejects

⁴ See for example, Gen. 12, 28; Ex. 3; Jud. 611ff; 1 Kdm. 10.1; Isa. 6.

⁵ While English differentiates between council, a decision-making body, and counsel, advice, this distinction is not found in either Greek or Hebrew, where the corresponding terms . . . cover both English concepts.

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the counsel of his friends, insisting rather that true counsel and understanding are with God (Job 12.13).

Bringing all of these strands of thought together, we have a picture of authority wherein specially called or anointed individuals lead, but with the understanding that, if they are to be wise, they will seek counsel, from the people and most especially from God. Indeed, every human council that wishes to make wise decisions *must* be dependent on Divine counsel, which is seen in the Old Testament context as the *dabar'elohim*—the Word of God, namely the Law and its prophetic interpretations.

The New Testament

Turning to the New Testament, we find both continuities and divergences from the earlier pattern; or, more accurately, we find a similar pattern of authority *transfigured* by the Incarnation of the Wisdom and Word of God and by the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost.

There are still particular individuals who are called and appointed for specific tasks—most obviously the Apostles, but also the bishops and deacons whom they appoint to lead and serve the Church. Yet it is no longer the case that these select individuals uniquely receive the Gift of the Spirit. The Apostles and bishops are not inspired leaders of communities according to the Old Testament pattern, but are rather the appointed leaders of *inspired communities*. The difference is no longer one of empowerment but one of economy. The Apostle Paul famously expresses this in his First Epistle to the Corinthians:

There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all (12.4-7; cf., 12.28-29).

There is therefore a diversity of people and a diversity of gifts. Equally important, however, is that this diversity in no way diminishes the Church's fundamental unity. Indeed, as St Paul's beautiful image of the body demonstrates, the diversity within the body is the *condition* for its unity, just as the body's unity is the *condition* for its diversity (1 Cor 12.15-26). This Divine gift of unity in diversity and diversity in unity makes possible the realization of Christ's prayer for the Church: "that they may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us" (Jn 17.20ff).

If Pentecost transforms the composition of and relationships among the People of God, it is through the Incarnation of the Wisdom and Word of God that we learn just how these relationships are to work out in practice; for it is in Jesus of Nazareth that the Law and

Prophets are fulfilled. The implications of this for the organization of the community of faith are clearly stated in Christ's recapitulation of the Law in the Sermon on the Mount. Here the Lord lays out a radical vision for human relationships.⁶ In Christ's vision—or to use the common Gospel term, in the Kingdom of God, it is the poor in heart, the mournful, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake who are blessed; prohibitions against murder and adultery are extended to the thoughts which motivate them; and human understandings of justice are overturned to the extent that enemies are loved and blessed (Mt 5).

Later, before His betrayal and Passion, Christ describes the consequences of this ethic for leadership: "You know that the leaders of the nations lord it over them and that the powerful exert their power over them. It will not be so with you; rather, whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mt 20.25-27). The way of leadership in the Church, then, is nothing other than the way of the Incarnation (cf. Phil. 2.1-11), which is itself fulfilled in the Cross.

It is also the Church's teaching that the Incarnation not only demonstrates an ethic or way of life, but also renews humanity. Thus, St Paul says, "As in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive" (1 Cor 15.22), and again, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ . . ." (2 Cor 5.17-18). Thus, the Church—as the *Body of Christ*—is the manifestation of humanity renewed in Christ.

In all its teachings on the Church, the Scriptures' focus is on the nature of the Church, rather than its organization and administration. Even when the New Testament mentions specific offices—such as bishops and deacons—the emphasis is not on what they do but on *who* they are, on their character. So, regarding bishops, St Paul says:

A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (1 Tim. 3.2-4).⁷

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⁶ The Lord's vision is "radical" in both senses of the word: it is scandalously extreme on the one hand and profoundly rooted in the Law on the other.

⁷ Cf. vv 9-10 regarding the character of deacons.

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Summary

From this overview of the Scriptures, two major themes can be discerned. The first involves concepts such as unity and catholicity, and focuses on the *corporate* dimension of the Church, that is, the Church as both humanity renewed by the Incarnation and as the Body of Christ. The second groups together such terms as pneumatological, special, anointed, diverse, and hierarchical, and focuses on the *charismatic* dimension of the Church, that is, the Church as constituted by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. These two concepts are integrally connected, and in fact each is dependent on the other.

The Church in the Fathers

With the repose of the Apostles, new issues surfaced within the Church. Foremost among these was the relationship between the bishops and their flocks. In this context we again see an interrelationship of unity and diversity. For example, from the generation directly after the Apostles, we have bishops of local churches writing to encourage and exhort the faithful in other local churches. This suggests that both the writers and recipients of these letters understood themselves as holding each other in common in Christ. This unity is *sacramental* in nature, being centred in the gathering of the faithful around their bishops in the breaking of the bread.⁸ The very early emergence of monoepiscopal Church government throughout the Church also testifies to an understanding of Church unity; as Fr John Meyendorff notes, “[W]hile Jesus did not leave the Christian communities with detailed institutional directives, the extraordinary fact remains that by the middle of the second century there existed a uniform pattern of church structure, adopted by all local churches. This basic unity . . . can be explained either by an unlikely, extra-Christian influence decisive enough to be universally accepted without controversy, or by the very nature of the Church herself.”⁹

As early as the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, dating from the late first and early second centuries, the faithful are exhorted to submit to their bishops, not as to an earthly authority, but, to use later Orthodox language,

⁸ St Ignatius of Antioch, *Eph* 5.1-2, translated by J.B. Lightfoot and J.R. Harmer, edited and revised by Michael W. Holmes, in *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 138-141. All subsequent quotations from *1 Clement*, the *Didache*, and the Epistles of St Ignatius are from this volume. Cf. Georges Florovsky, “The Church: Her Nature and Task,” Chapter 4 in *Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View*, Volume 1 in the *Collected Works of Georges Florovsky* (Belmont, Mass.: Nordland Publishing, 1972), 61.

⁹ John Meyendorff, *Catholicity and the Church* (Crestwood: SVS Press, 1983), 52.

as an icon of their obedience to Christ.¹⁰ The bishops are said to be “firstfruits” of the apostles and exercise their ministry “in the image of the apostles.”¹¹ The Fathers are well aware that for this paternal image to work—for it to truly be an icon and not just another human authority structure—the bishops must be of the highest character. St Gregory the Great, for example, writes:

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.¹²

Similarly, St John Chrysostom writes,

As, then, their [the presbyters’] right actions benefit many and challenge them to equal efforts, so their faults make other men careless in the quest of virtue, and encourage them to shirk hard work for the things that matter. Therefore the beauty of his soul must shine out brightly all around, to be able to gladden and enlighten the souls of those who see.¹³

The authority of the clergy in no way impinges on the biblical teaching of the Church’s charismatic diversity. St Ignatius, himself a bishop, insists that the hierarchy is not one-directional: “I am not commanding you, as though I were somebody important . . . For now I am only beginning to be a disciple, and I speak to you *as my fellow students*. For I need to be trained by you in faith, instruction, endurance, and patience.”¹⁴ Indeed, the Fathers argue for obedience to bishops, not from any ontological distinction between “clergy” and “laity,” but because of the diversity of gifts within the Body of Christ, as we have seen St Paul argued as well.¹⁵

¹⁰ See especially *1 Clement*, *passim*; *Didache* 4.1-4; St Ignatius of Antioch, *Ephesians* 2.2, 4, *Magnesians* 6-7, *Trallians* 2.2, etc.

¹¹ *1 Clement* 42.4; St Ignatius of Antioch, *Trallians*, prologue. The word which St Ignatius uses here to describe the relationship between the episcopal and apostolic ministries is the same word used to describe the relationship between the Son and the Father in the Epistle to the Hebrews (1.3).

¹² St Gregory the Great, *Reg. Past.* II cap. 3, cited by Joseph J. Allen, *The Ministry of the Church: Image of Pastoral Care* (Crestwood: SVS Press, 1986), 121.

¹³ St John Chrysostom, *On the Priesthood* III.14, Translated by Graham Neville (Crestwood: SVS Press, 1996), 85.

¹⁴ St Ignatius of Antioch, *Ephesians* 3.1, emphases added.

¹⁵ *1 Clement* 38.1-2; St Symeon the New Theologian, *First Ethical Discourse* VI (*On the Mystical Life: The Ethical Discourses*), Vol. 1, *The Church and the Last Things*, translated by Alexander Golitzin (Crestwood: SVS Press, 1995), 43-4. Indeed, while it is obscured in most English translations, according to the Acts of the Apostles, St Paul exhorts the bishops to watch over the flocks *in* which they have been made overseers, not *over* which (Acts 20.28). The bishop leads from within the people.

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The Church Fathers place great emphasis on this image of the Church as Christ's body, on the diversity of gifts being the means in which the Church's unity is manifested. For example, *1 Clement*, one of the earliest extant extra-Biblical writings, reads, "The strong must not neglect the weak, and the weak must respect the strong. Let the rich support the poor; and let the poor give thanks to God, because He has given him someone through whom his needs may be met. Let the wise display his wisdom not in words but in good works. The humble person should not testify to his own humility, but leave it to someone else to testify about him."¹⁶ The same writing also compares the Church to an army, whose strength is also to be found in its diversity.¹⁷

The point of the early patristic emphasis on submission to bishops is not simply to keep the faithful in line—though this is clearly an important part of it—but is primarily the *spirit* and attitude which this engenders. Unity is not ontological oneness but the existence of *many as one*.¹⁸ This by nature involves "humility," "hospitality," "obedience," "harmony," and "likemindedness."¹⁹

We find the Fathers, like the Scriptures, to be silent on the question of how the Church should operate or make decisions. Submission to the clergy is certainly emphasized, but there is no prescription for how this works out in day-to-day decision-making. And again like the Scriptures, the Fathers focus instead on the nature of the Church and on the character of its leaders and members rather than on organization and administration.

Russian Religious Philosophy

It is not until the nineteenth century that we find systematic Orthodox reflection on ecclesiology. The origins of such reflection are not to be found in the hierarchs or the monastics, but in Russian philosophers who sought a 'Russian' and 'Orthodox' alternative to the individualism and rationalism they saw in Western philosophy.²⁰

¹⁶ *1 Clement* 38.1-2.

¹⁷ *1 Clement* 37.3-4.

¹⁸ The Greek word most commonly used . . . makes this point clear. It is a noun derived from the verb . . . "I make one, unite, compress." It is therefore not a simple oneness but a coming together of many *as one*. This teaching has obvious Trinitarian connections. Cf., St Gregory Palamas' teachings on the essence and energies of God, in which the unity of the Trinity is not based on their shared essence alone, but also on their completely shared energies, the divine *perichoresis*. (See for example, St Gregory Palamas, *The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters*, especially chapters 109 and 112).

¹⁹ *1 Clement* 2, 10; 19.1; St Ignatius, *Ephesians* 2.2; *Magnesians* 6-7, 13.2; and *Trallians* 12.2. These texts are only representative of the Patristic witness.

²⁰ Richard F. Gustafson, Introduction to *Pillar and Ground of Truth*, by Pavel Florensky (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997), ix.

While the Orthodoxy of their efforts is ultimately debatable, many of their reflections have proven highly influential.²¹

As much as the so-called "Slavophile" philosophical movement was a reaction against contemporary Western European thought, it was also dependent on it to a large degree. The mid nineteenth century was a period of social upheaval across Europe, with romantic, nationalist, idealist, and socialist thought driving dissidents to revolt in many countries.²² The young Russian philosophers could not help but be influenced by these movements and essentially sought "uniquely Russian" romantic ideals to replace German ones. The "Russian" way they discovered was the way of the Church, of the Liturgy, of Communion and Catholicity—*Sobornost'* as they called it.²³ While much could be said about this, most important for our purposes is that one prominent Slavophile, Aleksei Khomyakov, developed this focus into a theology of Councils.

Khomyakov takes his cue from the response of the Orthodox patriarchs to the Roman Pope's invitation to the First Vatican Council, in which they said: "Infallibility resides solely in the ecumenicity of the Church bound together by mutual love, and that the unchangeableness of dogma as well as the purity of rite are entrusted to the care not of one hierarchy [*sic*] but of all the people of the Church, who are the Body of Christ."²⁴ Khomyakov stressed this idea of the reception of councils by the

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²¹ The theological influence of such individuals should not be worrisome; indeed, some of the most influential thinkers in the Church's history have been ultimately cast as heretics for some of their presuppositions and conclusions—Origen and Evagrius come immediately to mind; even St Dionysius the Areopagite's writings ultimately needed, if not a corrective, to be placed securely within an Orthodox interpretive framework in the work of St Gregory Palamas.

²² For example, the revolutions which swept through France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Poland, and Hungary, in 1848 alone.

²³ Regarding the development of this term, Vladimir Lossky explains: "The Slavonic text of the Creed translates the adjective 'catholic' of the original Greek very happily by the word *soborny*. From this Khomiakov produced the Russian neologism *sobornost'*, which corresponds exactly to the idea of catholicity which he developed in his writings on the Church; further, since the Slav root *sobor* means assembly and more particularly a council or synod, the derived words *soborny* and *sobornost'* thereby take on a fresh shade of meaning for the Russian ear, without losing their direct meaning of 'catholic' and 'catholicity.'" [Vladimir Lossky, "Concerning the Third Mark of the Church: Catholicity," in *In the Image and Likeness of God*, edited by John H. Erickson and Thomas E. Bird (Crestwood: SVS Press, 1985), 170n.1].

²⁴ Encyclical dated May 6, 1848, cited by Aleksei Khomyakov, "On the Western Confessions of Faith," in *Ultimate Questions: An Anthology of Modern Russian Religious Thought*, edited by Alexander Schmemmann (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), 55.

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people. On the question of why some councils gathered in accordance with the canons and with great numbers of bishops were ultimately rejected, he states:

Why were these councils rejected, when outwardly they did not differ from the Ecumenical Councils? Solely because their decisions were not acknowledged as the voice of the Church by the whole people of the Church, by that people and within that world where, in questions of faith, there is no difference between a scholar and an untutored person, between cleric and layman, between man and woman, king and subject, slaveowner and slave, and where, if in God's judgment it is needed, a youth receives the gift of knowledge, a word of infinite wisdom is given to a child, and the heresy of a learned bishop is confuted by an illiterate cowherd, so that all might be joined in that free unity of living faith which is the manifestation of the Spirit of God. Such is the dogma lying beneath the idea of the council.²⁵

While many would take issue with the force of this statement, which indeed seems to limit the historical role of the episcopate, it demonstrates nonetheless the presence within the Orthodox tradition of an understanding of authority that is neither authoritarian nor individualistic, but rather stresses the bonds of communion amongst the faithful.²⁶

This concept was eventually taken up by Pavel Florensky. Florensky wrote extensively on the Church as "the pillar and ground of truth" (1 Tim 3.15). He argues that if the Church is the ground of truth, then Truth must be found in the nature of the Church, the unity of the faithful in Christ, which finds its ultimate goal in deification, and which is seen most profoundly in the lives of the saints, monastics, and ascetics.²⁷ Thus, knowing the truth involves not cognition but rather love. He writes, "The metaphysical nature of love lies in the supralogical overcoming of the naked self-identity 'I = I' and in the going out of oneself."²⁸ This is nothing other than a highly academic way of saying, "No greater love has no one than this, that one should lay down his life for his friends" (John 15.13). The way of love—which is the way of the Truth and the way of the Church—is the way of the Incarnation.²⁹ I would also add that it is especially the way of the cross.

²⁵ Khomyakov, "On the Western Confessions," 62. The Council of Florence of the mid fifteenth century is the clearest example of this phenomenon; though all of the Eastern bishops save one supported the Council's decisions, it was strongly rejected by the Eastern Church.

²⁶ T. McKibben, *Orthodox Christian Meetings* (Columbus: St Ignatius of Antioch Press, 1990), 111.

²⁷ Richard F. Gustafson, Introduction to *Pillar and Ground of Truth*, xiii.

²⁸ Pavel Florensky, *Pillar and Ground of Truth*, translated by Richard F. Gustafson (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997), 67.

²⁹ Gustafson, Introduction, xvii.

Such reflections by the Russian religious philosophers have significant implications for the life of the Church, if indeed they faithfully represent the Orthodox tradition. The Church, even as it exists in hierarchy, is not authoritarian—nor is it democratic—but is a shared existence of love in Christ. Thus humility, patience, and a peace-making spirit are needed by all in the Church. We begin to see in this that it is not enough to say that the Church is conciliar, for conciliarity itself needs to be defined, and *true* conciliarity in any sense which fulfills the commandments of Christ depends entirely on the grace of God and the character and attitudes of those whose counsel is sought.

Current Orthodox Ecclesiological Thought

Orthodox ecclesiology in the twentieth century continued contemplating the theme of *sobornost'*/catholicity. This is due not only to the towering influence of the Russian philosophers, particularly among the *émigrés* in France after the Russian Revolution, but also due to increased contacts with the ecumenical movement. Indeed, as the centre of Russian religious thought moved from Russia to the West during the Soviet era, this could not be prevented. Surrounded by alternatives to Orthodoxy, both ecclesiastic and secular, Orthodox churchmen naturally increased their reflections on what the Church is according to the Orthodox Christian Tradition.

The first characteristic of catholicity the theologians stress is unity. "The task of the Church," says Metropolitan Georges Khodre, is "'gathering' the whole universe in Christ."³⁰ Similarly, Georges Florovsky speaks of "the very being" of the Church as "reuniting separated and divided mankind."³¹ As such the unity or catholicity of the Church "is inner, intimate, organic. It is the unity of the living body, the unity of the organism."³² This has two important consequences. First, catholicity does not reside in external or empirical data.³³ And second, all personal or local agendas—be they of race, ethnicity, culture, gender, or politics—are replaced by a

³⁰ Metr. Georges Khodre, "The Church in Movement" in *Orthodox Synthesis: The Unity of Theological Thought*, edited by Joseph J. Allen (Crestwood: SVS Press, 1981), 21.

³¹ Georges Florovsky, "The Catholicity of the Church," Chapter 3 in *Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View*, Volume 1 in the *Collected Works of Georges Florovsky* (Belmont, Mass.: Nordland Publishing, 1972), 39.

³² Khodre, "Church in Movement," 23.

³³ This emphasis in contemporary Orthodox reflection is no doubt a commentary on Roman Catholic ecclesiology, where Church unity is found precisely in such empirical categories, namely communion with the Bishop of Rome (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Section 834).

consciousness that is truly catholic . . . , linked to redeemed humanity as a whole.³⁴

Yet, as we have seen consistently in the Tradition, this organic unity does not inhibit the diversity of gifts within the Church. To this balance . . . contemporary Orthodox theologians have added a second emphasis on diversity within the Church, namely that of *personality*. Christ renews and recapitulates human nature and gathers all together as one in His Church, but, in the words of Vladimir Lossky, this “dispensation . . . is directed to each human person in particular, consecrating personal multiplicity in the unity of the Body of Christ.”³⁵ And, although Christians are called to die to self and reject their own will, “Catholicity is not collectivism.”³⁶

To this point, it may appear that whereas patristic reflection on the Church focused on hierarchy rather than the life of the Church *together*, Orthodox thought of the past two centuries has flipped this, focusing on the Royal Priesthood at the expense of the hierarchy. This apparent tension represents a false dichotomy, however—a dichotomy which is overcome by the renewed focus on the Trinitarian nature of the Church by many important twentieth century Orthodox theologians. Fr Alexander Schmemmann, for one, notes, “The Church is *conciliar* and the Church is *hierarchical* The Trinity is the perfect council *because* the Trinity is perfect hierarchy.”³⁷ Similarly, Michael T. McKibben, an Orthodox churchman who has written extensively on the issue of the governance of the local parish, writes, “Hierarchy and conciliarity are essential, inseparable and dynamic relationships among the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”³⁸ This is to say that the Trinity is the ideal model for the Church : distinct Persons who are differentiated hierarchically united entirely in essence and energies.

Historical Considerations: Church Councils

One of the recurring themes in this paper has been that of counsel and councils. Indeed, no matter what the historical or political situation has been, the Church—whenever it has been able—has convened councils. The

³⁴ Vladimir Lossky, “Catholic Consciousness: Anthropological Implications of the Dogma of the Church,” in *In the Image and Likeness of God*, 184; Florovsky, “Catholicity,” 55. Cf. Galatians 3.28.

³⁵ Vladimir Lossky, “Catholic Consciousness,” 189.

³⁶ Florovsky, “Catholicity of the Church,” 43. He adds, “On the contrary, self-denial widens the scope of our own personality; in self-denial we possess the multitude within our own self; we enclose the many without our own ego. Therein lies the similarity with the Divine Oneness of the Holy Trinity.”

³⁷ Alexander Schmemmann, *Church, World, Mission* (Crestwood: SVS Press, 1979), 164-5.

³⁸ Michael T. McKibben, *Orthodox Christian Meetings* (Columbus: St Ignatius of Antioch Press, 1990, 55; cf. 67.

Apostles convened a council to discuss the Gentile mission; the Ecumenical Councils were convened to deal with particularly divisive theological questions; a series of local councils in the fourteenth century surrounding Barlaam of Calabria have received *de facto* ecumenical status; Russian hierarchs held a council at the earliest possible opportunity once the state’s grip on the Church loosened; and local councils continue to be convened as part of the canonical operations of the Church. While space does not permit discussion of all of these, for our purposes two merit special attention: the Council of Jerusalem and the pre-conciliar “Ligonier Meeting” of North American hierarchs in 1994.

The first Church council is recorded the Acts of the Apostles. In St Luke’s narrative (Acts 15.6-29), a division occurred within the Church over the question of to what extent Gentile converts had to become Jewish to follow the Jewish Messiah. The council that meets to resolve the division has five components: 1) the Apostles and presbyters debate the issue; 2) St Peter, the foremost of those present, addresses the council, speaking both from his experiences with the Gentile mission and the Scriptures; 3) the council listens as Sts Paul and Barnabas present their case; 4) St James, the Bishop of Jerusalem and therefore the president of the council, announces his judgment, a verdict reached on the basis of the testimony presented and the witness of the Scriptures; and 5) James’ judgment is received by the council and they confirm it in a letter (essentially, canon) to the whole Church.

Because of the apostolic presence, the Council of Jerusalem is both paradigmatic and anomalous. It is paradigmatic in that the narrative presents a clear pattern of holy decision-making; it is anomalous in that the idealized picture of how St Luke presents the council is unlikely to be repeated today. Despite our failures at repeating its consensus, it remains the ideal Orthodox Church Council.

North American Orthodox hierarchs attempted to live up to this ideal in their preparations for a local ecclesial gathering in Ligonier, Pennsylvania in 1994. While its results have been a matter of great debate, both in North America and abroad, it is an effort that is worth looking at in greater detail. The issue confronting this local gathering was the status and mission of the Orthodox Churches in North America. The hierarchs gathered, prayed, and debated. And, under the oversight of Metropolitan Philip of the Antiochian Archdiocese (as his was the host jurisdiction), leading members of the episcopate addressed the meeting. Finally, the gathering issued two significant statements concerning

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the bishops' judgments. While this gathering produced significant turmoil, at great personal cost to some of the hierarchs, its intentions and conciliar spirit are evident from some of the reflections given by the hierarchs on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the gathering: Metropolitan Philip calls the Ligonier meeting "the brightest moment in the history of Orthodoxy in North America" and the spirit of the gathering "brotherly."³⁹ Bishop Basil (Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America, Antiochian Archdiocese) fondly remembers the "dozens of bishops me[eting] and pray[ing]" and "the common hope and vision expressed by [his] brother bishops."⁴⁰ And, Archbishop Nathaniel (OCA Romanian Episcopate and Diocese of Detroit), writes, "The discussions and the statements generated in the Assembly bear witness to the communal testimony to the already existing reality of a united Church. In the documents, the hierarchs speak of 'our' and 'us' and 'we.' The hierarchs speak with one voice, as a single synod, moving along the same road, thinking with the same mind and purpose, to pastor the flock of the one Church in America . . . There is no hint of one or another expressing or claiming a priority of honor or prestige."⁴¹ Regardless of the immediate outcomes of the Ligonier meeting, then, the testimony of participating bishops suggests that it was governed by precisely the spirit of catholicity witnessed by the Council of Jerusalem, in keeping with the ideals of the Church as we have seen throughout this paper.

This cannot be taken for granted, as the same cannot necessarily be said for the most important of the Orthodox Councils, the seven Ecumenical Councils. These great councils were, when compared to the ideal of the Council of Jerusalem, fraught with infighting, scandal, and at times political interference. The First Ecumenical Council was not even effective at first. It took another generation's worth of debate, the providential contributions of the Cappadocian Fathers, and a second Ecumenical Council to finally establish Nicaea's Orthodoxy.⁴² The theological and political divisions at the Fourth Ecumenical Council were so severe that the Council resulted in a schism which has not been fully

healed to this day. And, there were iconoclast councils that had to be later overturned. Finally, leaving aside the Ecumenical Councils, only one of the Eastern bishops dissented to the compromises of the Council of Florence.⁴³ All this is to say that Orthodoxy is often apparent only in hindsight and that holding a council does not guarantee Orthodoxy. Moreover, even a council which makes Orthodox decisions can do so in a way that falls far short of the Church's nature. It would seem therefore that the New Testament and Church Fathers were wise to focus on the character of Christian leaders more than the structures by which the Church organizes itself. Regardless, it remains that the Church has always organized itself in a conciliar fashion and this cannot be accidental. Despite the ever apparent sinfulness of people in the Church, the Church has always sought a collegial, truly catholic approach to decision-making.

Practical Considerations

Before moving to conclusions and recommendations, it is important to examine the guidelines for parish governance set out by the Archdiocese of Canada. The purpose of the parish is explicitly stated in Article II of the Sample By-Laws: "To corporately worship Almighty God, the Holy Trinity One in Essence and Undivided: Father, Son and Holy Spirit."⁴⁴ This means that the work of the parish council is to facilitate the liturgical life of the parish. The next thing to note is the relationships set forth in the sample by-laws amongst the bishop, priest, and parish. First, "this Parish and its members are . . . governed by the Diocesan Bishop . . ."⁴⁵ Second, the parish priest is the "representative of the Diocesan Bishop" and therefore convenes the parish council and "guide(s) its discussions."⁴⁶ And third, the role of the parish council is to "assist the Rector/Priest in the administration of the Parish." The council must do nothing without his "knowledge, approval and blessing," except with the blessing of the bishop.⁴⁷

The sample bylaws also offer strong guidelines for how parish councils should attempt to make decisions. Article VII, Section 5a reads:

The decision-making process within the Church is more accurately understood as a course of conduct leading to an

³⁹ "Reflections on 1994 Conference of Bishops from our Orthodox Hierarchs in America," *The Word*, 48.9 (November 2004), 4.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴¹ Archbishop Nathaniel (Popp), "The Vision of Ligonier: Inter-Orthodox Cooperation" (address given to the OCL Orthodox Christian Ministries Networking Conference, October 31, 2003) <http://www.ocl.org/index.cfm?CFID=115322063&CFTOKEN=61598430&fuseaction=OrthodoxUnity.one&content_id=6843> (June 8, 2008).

⁴² Justo, L. González, *A History of Christian Thought, Vol. 1, From the Beginnings to the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970), 277-297.

⁴³ V.Rev. Thomas Hopko, *The Orthodox Faith, Vol. III, Bible and Church History, "Fifteenth Century"* <<http://www.oca.org/OCchapter.asp?SID=2&ID=148>> (June 8, 2008).

⁴⁴ Archdiocese of Canada, "Sample Parish By-Laws," <http://www.archdiocese.ca/resources/bylaws/Sample_Parish_Bylaws.pdf>, Article II (June 8, 2008).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Articles IV and VIII.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Article VIII.

enlightenment of the faithful to God's Will. This course of conduct should lead to consensus, by which it is meant that there remains no objection to the decision. This course of conduct necessarily embraces, and allows fully the time and opportunity to embrace, the following elements: prayer, discussion and reflection. Voting forces decisions, while pursuing consensus allows for decisions to be formulated in a peaceful, orderly manner as the Parish integrates new matters into its life. Resolutions shall be considered in a manner and in a process that is searching for consensus.⁴⁸

Provision is made for some degree of dissent, but the standards for passing resolutions are very high: 80% for "ordinary" or "special" resolutions, 90% for "extraordinary."⁴⁹ On this point, the Archdiocese of Canada's "Workbook for Creating Parish By-Laws" explains, "The Orthodox Christian way is to take time to discuss, and more importantly to pray about matters, so that we arrive at the ability to act with unanimity—'with one heart and mind.' If we cannot agree, we wait, pray, discuss, and adjust until we can agree before we act. This is sometimes a slow process, but it puts us in the hands of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, allowing for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, which is where we ought always to be."⁵⁰

While this is a wise recommendation on the part of the Archdiocese, it is also important to remember that, as Georges Florovsky wrote, "In general, no consensus can prove truth On the contrary, truth is the measure by which we can evaluate the worth of 'general opinion'." Catholic experience can be expressed even by the few, even by single confessors of faith; and this is quite sufficient."⁵¹ Like conciliarity, consensus is no guarantee of truth.

Conclusions

This study has offered a brief and cursory glance at the beliefs and practices of the Orthodox Christian Tradition which touch on organization and decision-making. The clearest conclusion to be drawn from this study is that, as witnessed by the Scriptures, the Fathers, and the contemporary Church, the Orthodox Christian Tradition offers no prescription for the governance of the local parish. All that can be offered are general principles:

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Article V, Section 5a.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Archdiocesan Council of the Archdiocese of Canada, "Workbook for Creating Parish By-Laws," (July 1998) <<http://www.archdiocese.ca/resources/bylaws/Work-book.pdf>> (June 8, 2008), 7-8.

⁵¹ Florovsky, "Catholicity," 52f.

The Church

The Church is the Body of Christ, the coming together of the creation restored and united in Christ;

The Church is both One and many : it is One in Christ, but within it a diversity of both persons and gifts; and

The Church refers to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, of which each local Church, and by extension, every parish, is a manifestation.

Shepherds and Flock

The administrative and spiritual head of the local Church is the Diocesan Bishop, who is an icon of Christ to his flock, and to whom is owed obedience by the faithful as to Christ;

The day-to-day needs of the parish are overseen by the Bishop's delegate, the Rector/Priest of the parish: as the Bishop's delegate, the Priest deserves the respect and obedience of the faithful;

The role of the Parish Council is to assist and provide counsel to the Rector/Priest. Final decisions on all matters relating to the parish are his, in conjunction with the Bishop and with the Bishop's blessing;

There is no division between the Clergy and the Laity (the Royal Priesthood), but a difference in gifts, role, and ministry. All within the parish are called to serve and to minister. The Clergy are responsible for enabling and empowering the ministry of the Royal Priesthood; and

In all things, the Clergy are to act in humility and love within the parish in which they have been placed as leaders. This necessarily involves seeking and acting on godly counsel from respected members of the parish.

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Organization and Decision-making

No institutional structure can guarantee Orthodoxy;

The normal and canonical structure of Orthodox decision-making at the ecumenical, local, and parish levels is conciliar;

The Church is neither democratic nor autocratic;

The focus in the Scriptures and Fathers is on the *spirit* rather than the structures in which decisions are made, and on the character of those who make them.

Orthodox decision-making requires obedience, patience, humility, peace-making, and a desire for unity; and

Private political, social, ethnic, or cultural agendas must be subordinate to the catholicity of Christ's Church.

Recommendations of this report to parishes

1. The Parish Council should view itself primarily as an advisory rather than a decision-making body;
2. The final decision on all matters relating to the parish should rest in the Rector/Priest, in counsel with the Parish Council, and with the blessing of the Diocesan Bishop;
3. Provision should be made to protect all parties (Rector/Priest, Parish Council, and Bishop) from abuse of power;
4. All decisions should be made with the goal of worshipping God.
5. All decisions should be made in a loving and gracious spirit that seeks to build consensus rather than force decisions;

6. Provision must be made for adequate pastoral care, as well as discussion and prayer, in the event of serious disputes; and
7. Members of Parish Council should be chosen primarily on their Christian character rather than on their experiences or areas of expertise.

Pastoral Notes

On 15 September 2008, the Mission Station of St Nino of Georgia, in Vancouver BC, was closed, and it was merged with the Mission Station of St John of Shanghai in Vancouver BC.

On 15 September 2008, the Mission Station of St John of Shanghai was named a Mission of the Archdiocese. It will observe the feast-days of both St John of Shanghai and St Nino of Georgia.

On 31 January 2009, **Subdeacon Achilleas Kasapi** was ordained to the Holy Diaconate at the Church of All Saints of Alaska and St Arseny of Konevits in Victoria BC. He was assigned to this parish as Second Deacon.

On 22 March 2009, the Archbishop blessed the establishment of the Hesychastic Society of the Most Holy Mary (an aboriginal brotherhood), as part of the Monastic Community of St Silouan the Athonite.

On 5 April 2009, **Igumen Sevastjan (Derkach)** was released from his responsibilities at Holy Trinity Sobor in Winnipeg MB, and returned to the Omophor of Archbishop Avgustin of Galich and Lviv in Ukraine.

On 9 April 2009, **Priest John Beal** was released from his assignment as Second Priest at the Church of the Holy Martyr Peter in Calgary AB, but remains attached to this temple, pending transfer.

On 14 April 2009, the University Mission of St Gabriel in Toronto ON was renamed as the University Chaplaincy of the Archangel Gabriel at the University of Toronto. **Priest Nicholas Young** is assigned as Priest-in-Charge, in addition to all his other duties.

A brief meditation On the Vespers of Pascha

—Larissa Rodger, Annunciation Cathedral, Ottawa

CHRIST IS RISEN!

We come back to the Church Paschal Sunday afternoon (why did we ever leave it?) groggy from insufficient sleep, voices raspy from having sung for 3 ½ hours in the middle of the night. It is very strange, coming to Church in mid-afternoon with food in our bellies, having been there throughout the past 50 days in fasting mode. Having had even a small brunch before the Paschal Vespers lends an element of the surreal to the day: how can we walk into Church satiated?

For we are satiated, with more than just food, surrounded by the strong, living, and present memory of psalm and song, of the darkness of despair, and the penetrating, radiant light that conquered the darkness. We are actually vibrating with the intensity of all that

we've been through. And yet, as replete and exhausted as we are that Sunday afternoon, we come back to the Church (why did we ever leave it?), wanting more, needing more—still incomplete and feeling bereft because we dared leave it for a few hours. We dare not; *we must not stop the song of joy: Christ is Risen!*

And yet, as full as we are with the joy of the Risen Lord, with His triumph over death, and with the knowledge that truly we the faithful are sanctified by the holy, sacred, and mystical Pascha which has dawned for us—and yet—the refrain we sing most often during the Vespers of Pascha is not “Christ is Risen!” (17 times), but rather, “Lord have mercy!” (*i.e.*, 37 times, not counting the “Grant it O Lord” refrains).

The Vespers of Pascha is, in many ways, much like having to take down your Christmas tree when the Feast of the Nativity comes to an end. There's that feeling of complete let-down, of the sadness of “it's over for another year,” the unwillingness to part with the shimmering brightness of the beauty of Pascha.

The Vespers of Pascha sets us back into normal time and space with somewhat of a thunk. The litanies are just the same as before. We are still praying for “mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, visitation, pardon and remission of sins.” It is the ultimate paradox that although sanctified by the Holy Pascha, we are still seeking holiness fervently in all that we say and think and do and pray. We are still “putting on Christ” in our search and struggle for sanctification, even though we affirm “As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” at the Paschal Liturgy. “Have put on”—it's been done, yet we continue to strive to make it a perfect fit.

Our holiness has been completed by Christ, but the struggle to become holy, to grow into “the best possible person we were meant to be” is ongoing. Orthodoxy is full of paradoxes, with conflicting truths that co-exist without compromise, alteration, or loss of meaning. The Vespers of Pascha exemplifies this, with the hymnography from the Matins of Pascha juxtaposed with the penitential litanies which urge us to be transformed into the image and likeness of God. We pray for the world, we pray for each other, we pray for ourselves, and that prayer is the unchanging and unceasing “Lord have mercy.” We can't begin to seek *theosis* without His help, even though we have been sanctified both with our baptism and with participation in the Holy Pascha, heeding the call of the sermon of St John Chrysostom, “Come!”

CHRIST IS RISEN!

Clergy Awards 2009

Effective Pascha 2009, the following **Diocesan Awards** were given:

The blessing to wear the *Double Orar* was given to **Deacon Alexei Vassiouchkine**.

The blessing to wear the *Purple Skoufia* was given to the **Priests John Bingham, Justin Hewlett, Constantine Katsilas, Richard René, and Nicholas Young**.

The blessing to wear the *Kamilavka* was given to the **Priests John Hainsworth, Mark Korban, Geoffrey Korz, Alexis Nikkel, and Walter Smith**.

Effective Pascha 2009, the following **Holy Synod of Bishops Awards** were given:

The blessing to wear the *Gold Cross* was given to the **Priest Jacques-Jude Lépine and Hieromonk Vladimir (Lysak)**.

The blessing to wear the *Jewelled Cross* was given to the **Archpriests John Jillions and Stephen Keaschuk**.

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and the annual Joy of Canada Pilgrimage mark the advent of a specifically *Canadian* Orthodox tradition. The annual pilgrimage for the feast of the “Theotokos, Joy of Canada” is always a highlight of the summer for Orthodox Canadians who visit the monastery. The festal pilgrimage of the icon is held on the first weekend

of August each year, and everyone who comes to it is always welcome. Many people who were born in Eastern Europe attend the pilgrimage and find a special comfort in participating in a procession and service that they have not seen since they left their native lands. The icon has visited a number of parishes in the Archdiocese of Canada. This was its first visit to Ottawa.

*Remember the Our Father and the Beatitudes :
you only love Christ as much as you love your enemies.*

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