

Go therefore and make disciples of
all nations
Mt 28:19



Allez, faites de toutes les nations
des disciples
Mt 28:19

CANADIAN ORTHODOX MESSENGER

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From the Bishop's desk . . .

Bishop encourages Assembly attendance

This summer, from July 22 to 25, we will be assembling as a diocesan family, as we regularly do every three years. This time the host parish is Holy Resurrection Sobor in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. There will be the usual Clergy Synaxis just before the beginning of the assembly, and we will be offering a Clergy Wives Retreat at the same time.

During the sessions of the Assembly itself, there will be the usual necessary business, which we like to keep from taking too much time. Instead of doing all business, we like to reinforce the bonds of love which unite this greatly-scattered diocese (Vancouver Island to Newfoundland, Windsor to Whitehorse). We offer social occasions, and educational opportunities, and, of course, daily worship—Divine Liturgy in the mornings, and Vespers in the evenings. There will also be a trip to Batoche, for those who are able, after the ending of the Assembly. The Assembly is designed to feed the whole family, so there is a youth section as well, which will participate in parts with the main sessions. To underline this family atmosphere, we are this time assembling in a retreat house in central Saskatoon, beside the Saskatchewan River.

For the Assembly, *please bring your Bible (not just the New Testament)*. Archbishop Job of Chicago and the Midwest will drive up to Saskatoon in order to lead us in a practical Bible Study of Proverbs. Later in the week, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman will arrive with other persons from the Central Administration in Syosset, to get to know us. This will be His Beatitude's second official visit to Canada.

On the Thursday and Friday will be a specially devoted time for considering the matter of an Auxiliary

Bishop for the Archdiocese. Concerning this process, I would like to say the following.

Five clergymen remain nominated for this responsibility. Their brief biographies were published in the last issue of the *Canadian Orthodox Messenger*. Not every one in attendance at the Assembly will know each clergyman, by any means, because of the vast territory of this diocese. However, it is my hope that all the candidates will be able to be present for the week so that everyone may get to know them. For choosing an Auxiliary Bishop, the custom is that the Ruling Bishop nominate to the Holy Synod his candidate for this responsibility. In this case, because of our territory and other characteristics of the Archdiocese of Canada, I am choosing to be advised by the representatives of the parishes as to who seems best suited to this responsibility, because this Auxiliary Bishop will be involved with the parishioners of the diocese. It is my intention, in general, to take the person with the most support to be the one I would nominate.

Depending on the circumstances of the week, however, it is possible that I might also consult the Lord directly in drawing the lot as well. Regardless, one person will be presented by me to the Holy Synod as the candidate. Then the Holy Synod will undertake its own process of investigating and considering this nomination. It is my intention for all of the other candidates nominated, in one way or another, to give them more responsibilities in the life of the Archdiocese of Canada, according to their gifts.

The Archdiocese of Canada requires regular and paternal pastoral visits. Because of the increasing

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size, and the number of missions, this is even more the case than before. Yet, my responsibilities in the OCA in general are requiring of me more absences from the diocese for various travels and meetings. Yet the sheep must be fed. Because of our very skimpy economy, it is our intention to begin life with the new Auxiliary (probably not sooner than one year from July) as half-time Bishop, and half-time Rector of one of the larger parishes. On this basis, we hope to be able to grow, as we have done before, into supporting the Auxiliary as a full-time Bishop. This full-time support will not likely be so large as some people expect of a Bishop, as is already the case.

Despite its age, this diocese is still very much a missionary endeavour. Probably we should never properly perceive ourselves as anything else than a missionary diocese, especially if we truly want to fulfil Christ's Great Commission. Anyway, please pray that we all may listen to and obey God's will in this necessary process. I have heard a number of statements from various persons which suggest that I have been, typically, unclear in my communication about this process, its purpose, and its direction. I hope that these words have helped in clarification.

Primal visit to Georgia

What can one say about a high-level delegations' official visit to Georgia, April 16 – 24? I suppose, the words of Bishop Gerasim, the chief of the Georgian Church's Department of Foreign Affairs : he thanked God for our visit, because we were concelebrating together. He expressed what is always so important in Orthodox life—expressing our unity in Christ at all levels of the Church's life by serving together and participating together in the Body and Blood of Christ at the Divine Liturgy.

Because of time, there was only one such Eucharistic celebration, on Thomas Sunday. In the historic Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, Metropolitan Herman and I, Protopresbyter Robert Kondratik, Archpriest Leonid Kishkovsky, Archdeacon Alexei Klimachev, and the other members of our delegation participated together with His Holiness, Patriarch Ilia II and twelve of his bishops in the Divine Liturgy. At the Vigil the evening before, we had the blessing of venerating the skull of the Apostle Thomas, as well as a cross of wood made in the 4th century by St Nino and bound together with her own hair.

Christianity came early to Georgia. The Apostle Andrew, on his missionary voyages, came to this area. Early, the Robe of Christ came with a Jewish family. Buried in the hands of a member of this family, a tree grew from it which provided the foundation of the

ancient cathedral in the old capital of Mtskheta, not far from Tblisi. Part of this tree remains protected inside a column in the middle of the cathedral. It was in the 4th century that St Nino from Cappadocia converted the royal family and overthrew paganism, bringing Christ to Georgia in a lasting way. The places where the Cross was raised in place of Mazda idols are marked still by churches of 4th-century foundation. In the 6th century there arrived 13 Syrian monks who established in various places monastic ascetical communities, the influence of which remains to this day, despite 70 years of communism and various invasions from Persia and elsewhere before that.

In the following days we visited many holy places, many churches from the 10th - 11th centuries, and venerated many saints' relics all over eastern Georgia—both in the foothills of the magnificent Caucasus mountains and in the fertile steppes. After the destruction of so many churches and monasteries and other institutions under communism, the Orthodox Church is being rapidly renewed under the paternal direction of Patriarch Ilia—truly a loving and strong father to the Church and to the Georgian nation. In a poor country with huge unemployment, like most other post-communist countries, resources are nevertheless found to rebuild churches, to rebuild and repopulate monasteries (by the dozen), and to build new ones as well, since there are many new towns without any churches at all.

The territory of Georgia is very diverse in character. It has the Caucasus mountains, 5,000 metres high; fertile temperate-climate plains; arid hills; foothills; and subtropical coastland along the Black Sea. In the eastern plains the conditions are ideal for grapes, hence over ten thousand hectares are given to viticulture. Eastern Georgia, which was ancient Iberia, was apparently the place where viticulture began in ancient days. Western Georgia, which was ancient Kolchis, is able to grow citrus fruit and tea. We travelled over much of the eastern part of Kakheli and Kartli, parts of which reminded me of Saskatchewan, South Alberta and BC. Spring was in full leaf and bloom.

I do not want to give an extended travelogue, but it is important to write a little more about the holy places, because it is important to know how long this people has been Christian, and how the Georgians influence the rest of the Church, most particularly Russia and Greece. The cathedral of Svetitskhoveli (“Pillar of Light”) in Mtskheta was begun in the 4th century but was rebuilt in the 11th. Besides the column over the Lord's Robe, there is also a cross from the fourth century. Nearby is Holy Cross Monastery, atop a high

hill, which protects one of St Nino's cross foundations. The church building is in Syrian style and the monastery re-opened. Nearby also is the Samtavro women's monastery, built where St Nino lived. A little bit more distant is the Shio-Mgvime Monastery where the great ascetic Shio lived with a large number of hermits in the 6th century. This community is also renewed.

Farther east, we visited the Bodbe women's monastery, site of St Nino's tomb. This monastery was destroyed several times, including by communists, but is now again flourishing. St Nino, it is said, was related to St George, also from Cappadocia. Near here is the 6th-century monastery of St Afif, and the 15th-century monastery of Gremi.

Near the city of Telavi is the 10th-century monastery of Alaverdi, newly re-opened. Here we venerated the relics of St Joseph, and of St Ketevan. Nearby is the Shuamta women's monastery, burial place of the princely Chavchavadze family. Between Tblisi and Mtskheta, on a mountain-top, is a newly-built skete, a metochion for Metropolitan David. In a southerly direction are the newly-repopulated desert cave-monasteries of St John the Forerunner, and of St David of Garejia from the 6th century. Here 6,000 monks were killed by Persians in the 17th century. In Tblisi also was a large martyrdom of 10,000 faithful along with Abo the Perfumer of Persia. None would deny Christ.

In the course of all this, there were meetings with each of the President, the Prime Minister, the Speaker of Parliament, and with the US Ambassador. We also visited several museums. There were always dinners. Everything was a blessing. And we expect a visit of Patriarch Ilia II (whom I compare to 10th-century St King David the Builder) to the USA in the autumn. Pray for the rebuilding and renewal of the life of the Church in Georgia!

+Seraphim



Meeting with the Speaker of the Georgian Parliament : from l. to r., Patriarch Ilia II, Speaker Nino Burjanidze, Metropolitan Herman, and Bishop Seraphim

Spring 2004 Holy Synod Awards

Igumen Georges (Leroy)	Jewelled Cross
Igumen Irénée (Rochon)	Jewelled Cross
Archpriest Nikolai Nicolaev	Jewelled Cross
Archpriest John Scratch	Jewelled Cross
Priest James McLuckie	Jewelled Cross
Igumen David (Edwards)	Palitsa
Priest John Jillions	Archpriest
Priest Waldemar Kuchta	Archpriest
Priest Symeon Rodger	Gold Cross
Priest Vladimir Tobin	Gold Cross
Protodeacon Cyprian Hutcheon	Purple Kamilavka

Spring 2004 Diocesan Awards

Priest James Griggs	Purple Kamilavka
Priest Vasyi Kolega	Purple Kamilavka
Priest Rodion Luciuk	Purple Kamilavka
Priest Gregory Nimijejan	Purple Kamilavka
Priest Phillip Eriksson	Purple Skoufia
Priest Ronald Poworoznik	Purple Skoufia
Priest Alexei Kalioujny	Nabedrenik
Priest Mark Korban	Nabedrenik
Hieromonk Luke (Majoros)	Nabedrenik
Priest John Hainsworth	Nabedrenik
Priest Anastasy Richter	Nabedrenik
Priest Michael Schaplowsky	Nabedrenik
Deacon Wilhelm Friesen	Double Orar

Pastoral Notes

On 1 March 2004, Bishop Seraphim blessed the establishment of the Mission Station of All Saints in Toronto, Ontario. **Archpriest Alexander Shkalov** is, in addition to his other duties, assigned Priest-in-Charge.

On 2 May 2004, in Sts Peter and Paul's Sobor in Montréal, Québec, Bishop Seraphim ordained **Monk Basile (Paradis)** to the Holy Diaconate. He is assigned to St Silouan's Chapel in Johnstown, Ontario and the Monastic Community of St Silouan the Athonite.

Prairies youth retreat the largest ever

The February 2003 Orthodox Youth Retreat was the largest retreat of its kind ever held in our diocese. There were one hundred and six people at Camp Kadash, Saskatchewan, including the staff. Young people from Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Regina and Yorkton came to hear a small nun from New York state talk about God's love.

Mother Raphaela was an Episcopal nun before she became Orthodox. Indeed, she had been a nun for about ten years before converting to Orthodoxy. Soon after her conversion, she received the blessing to establish the Community of the Holy Myrrhbearers in Otego, New York; now she is the abbess of that monastery. She has written several books on living a life in the Orthodox faith.



The topics which the abbess spoke of with the youth were: Becoming Icons of Christ's Peace, Prayer and Silence, Worship and Taboos. She dealt with these topics in about six sessions and also answered questions.

Mother Raphaela spoke a lot on how society today is afraid of silence. People go about their lives with a backdrop of continuous sound. She asked the youth to sit for five minutes in silence, and during that period not a sound was heard in the room. It was a very different experience for the youth.

The abbess also spoke of deepening one's relationship with Christ. Prayer is the only way to grow in a relationship with Him, she said, since prayer is consciously putting oneself in the presence of God. She also made the thought provoking statement that "God is the creator of the universe and most people cannot even say hello to him in the morning."

She spoke of the necessity of a daily prayer routine and about how going to church services is a way to worship together with and be supported by other Christians.

Besides the sessions with Mother Raphaela there were outdoor activities in the snow and a variety show on both Friday and Saturday nights where the youth showed off their various talents. There were several prayer services as well as Vespers and the Liturgy which were led by Fr Philip Eriksson of St Herman's Sobor in Edmonton. The retreat was organized by Lorraine Grier. It was a truly blessed retreat in which God worked in the hearts of these Canadian young people.—*Mary Friesen, Holy Resurrection Sobor, Saskatoon.*

Left, Mother Raphaela. Below, many of the youth and staff in attendance at the retreat.



Memory Eternal

Pillar of Sandy Lake community Falls asleep in the Lord

Church Reader Steven John Derhak passed away peacefully at the age of 84 years and 6 months on August 26, 2003. He was born on January 20, 1919 on the farm at Sandy Lake, Manitoba to parents John and Maria (Shindruk) Derhak. He spent his early life on the farm with his father and grandfather. In 1974 he sold his farm due to health conditions and moved to the village of Sandy Lake where he built a new house and enjoyed his retirement years with his wife, Helen. Steve and Helen were married on November 3, 1941, and would have celebrated their 62nd wedding anniversary. They raised



*Steven John Derhak,
1919 - 2003*

eight children: four boys: Gary, Dennis, Alvin, and Allan; and four girls: Diane, Darlene, Janice, and Angela, all of whom survive him. Also surviving is brother Walter and sister Ina. Steve was predeceased by his grandparents, parents, and his sister Helen.

Steve was very devoted to the Sandy Lake St Nicholas Orthodox Church. He was the president of the parish for over thirty years and cantor for more than twenty-five years. He took part in church singing from an early age, as his grandfather was the cantor in the early beginnings of the parish, followed by Steve's father, and then Steve—three generations of cantors!

Steve and Helen were both very active in all Church and community affairs. Whenever they were on holidays, they always sought out the Church, and attended many services throughout Canada. Steve participated in many diocesan and churchwide meetings and had a keen interest in and devotion to the Orthodox faith. Many priests, bishops, and metropolitans stayed at the home of Steve and Helen Derhak during their visits to Sandy Lake.

In the Sandy Lake community, Steve was always a member of some organization as president, vice-president, treasurer or any position where he was needed. He strove for perfection in his own participation and that of others, and valued progress wherever he was involved. Steve was known for his keen sense of humour and was able to relate to the young and the old. The Reader Steven John Derhak is greatly missed by the Church and the community. May his memory be eternal!—*Priest Robert Kennaugh, Dean of Manitoba*

Monk of St Silouan's Community ordained to diaconate

With the blessing of Metropolitan Herman, Bishop Seraphim ordained the Sub-Deacon Monk Basile (Paradis) to the Holy Diaconate on May 2, 2004, in Sts Peter and Paul Sobor, Montréal, Québec. Deacon Basile, a monk of the Monastic Community of St Silouan the Athonite in Johnstown ON, is assigned to the Bishop's Chapel of St Silouan.

Pictured from left to right are Hiérodiacre Amvrosi (Mlodzik), newly ordained Hiérodiacre Basile (Paradis), Bishop Seraphim, and Archpriest Alexander Janowsky, rector of Sts Peter and Paul



Two reflections on “Junk food for the soul”

Editor’s note: we received several responses to the article “Junk food for the soul” by Archbishop Lazar, which was published in the spring 2004 issue of this periodical. Below are two of the written reflections.

What Orthodox parents need

“Junk food for the soul” by Archbishop Lazar raises two interconnected issues: that of Orthodox parenting, and that of the concrete methods this parenting takes, using the example of parental leniency on television viewing. Although I agree that most TV programmes are both unedifying and even pernicious in their content and the “values” they carry, this article left me with a bitter taste. As a parent, I thought the tone of the article discouraging and unhelpful. It does not concern me personally, since my family does not watch TV in the home—ever. Yet as a Sunday School teacher of nine years, my heart ached for all those people—young or adult, “lost” or “on track”—who might have welcomed a gentler counsel.

Because of its tone, the article is unlikely, in my opinion, to help harassed, exhausted parents change their family’s lifestyle. Raising children is a very demanding, labour-intensive, self-sacrificing and tiring job—not to mention expensive. These hidden costs often go unacknowledged by both the secular society and the Church. Moreover, many people in our churches who grew up under the Communist oppression of Orthodoxy have an incomplete knowledge and experience of what truly Orthodox child-rearing might entail.

Most parents must juggle full-time jobs, household chores, parenting (including scholastic and religious education) and volunteering, and usually these things are done in the absence of any help from extended families, neighbours, or the Church community, which was often available in the past. The temptation to ‘park’ the children in front of the TV in order to buy an hour or two of relief from their incessant demands just to prepare the evening meal or run a load of laundry must be, indeed, great. Not all parents cave in to it, however, and those who do need help, not condemnation. Admittedly, it is much easier not to start, than to stop or taper off the habit of TV watching, once it is established.

What parents might need, nowadays (in no particular order), are:

- ◆ living examples of role models of the type of parents God meant us to be, starting with our clergy and Church hierarchs;

- ◆ continuous education, not only theoretical religious education, but ongoing building of Orthodox parenting skills, with the possibility of feedback and interaction from other experienced and reliable parents (clergy with many offspring have, in my limited experience, come with the best practical suggestions);

- ◆ support, encouragement, praise and congratulations for those things they *do* right, rather than endless criticism of a terrible *statu quo*;

- ◆ help and compassion when the family experiences difficult times, whatever the nature of those difficulties;

- ◆ unconditional love and valuing of the children and youth themselves by the Church community, its clergy and hierarchs. That would make the youngsters and their families want to come to church more often, and carry that love of Christ further into their daily lives;

- ◆ meaningful Sunday schools for their offspring, and a vibrant, caring, interconnected network of other Orthodox families with whom to share and celebrate the commonality of childhood and their faith.

Yes, children are a gift from God and it is the parents’ responsibility to raise them and prepare them spiritually not only for the Kingdom, but also for the daily warfare on our beliefs and their expression. Parents are the first whose duty it is to ground their offspring in Christian morality, and to teach children and youth how to cope with the many temptations and misleading messages of modern life. However, and in all humility, I must ask if, as a community, the Orthodox Church, its hierarchs and clergy, are not also jointly responsible for the salvation of every member’s soul, including the youngest ones’. Just looking at the points suggested above (and I am sure other parents will find a few more to add), there certainly is room for improvement in our Orthodox Church.

There are loving, inspirational clergy who do a fantastic work with and for families with children. The church might identify them and encourage them to run workshops to train the clergy who are less aware, less skilled, less welcoming to our young charges. They in turn might train their respective congregations, who sometimes ostracize or despise children. Only when the Church as an institution has accomplished its mandate of loving, educating, nurturing and welcoming all its

members, including parents with offspring, only then might it throw the first stone at those whose parenting style has fallen by the wayside.

The article that set this train of thoughts in motion also seems to assume an awareness and receptivity to sin of our children that contradicts my practical observations. Children have little experience of “every human passion.” While viewing inappropriate content, most children will lack the *context* that gives that content a truly sinful meaning. Not having being tainted yet by adult hypocrisy, children will simply speak out their mind and call a spade a spade when an adult would hesitate to do so. I think that we must trust the Lord God to have made our children in His image and endeavour to cultivate that aspect of their human nature.

Certainly most television programming is not appropriate for children, especially in quantity and without adult supervision/guidance. Certainly a lot of our children watch more television than is desirable. Certainly an effort should be made to curtail such brain-washing, and to replace it by more meaningful, spiritually-sustaining fare. But there are plenty of other sources right under the children’s noses that could have just as perverse an effect on them, and possibly a more pervasive one.

When children witness callous or aggressive interaction within the family or within the parish community, what are we adults teaching them? When we ignore them or allow them to be put down as if they did not matter, how do we demonstrate our love for them? When we say one thing but do another, what concept of truth do we instil in them? When we quote Scripture at them to further our own agenda(s), how do we prepare them for their salvation? When we value our church’s material assets more than its people, what sort of freedom of choice do we exercise? When we display selfishness or pride, how do we embody Christ’s example? Despite all the evils of TV watching, I believe that the living people closest to a child will have the greatest influence on him or her. And if one of those people is not the parish priest, or deacon, or church elder, is it always the parents’ fault? —*Ioana Bertrand, Toronto*

Reflections on life in Christ

As a mother of a young teenaged daughter, a religious educator in Toronto since 1975, and an Orthodox seminary graduate, I am prompted by Archbishop Lazar’s article “Junk food for the soul,” to try to “scratch the surface” on some of the issues involved in Orthodox parenting and, in general, in being Christian today.

In North America today we are constantly reminded that we do not live in an Orthodox world. We live in a secular world, in the midst of a melting pot of religious and secular teachings. It is the world of the Internet, e-mails, pop-ups on the screens, advertisements, junk mails, TV and radio broadcasting, newspapers, movies and so on. In a climate where “freedom of speech” is highly valued and protected, these things seem to rule much of our lives. Nevertheless, this is also the world in which each Orthodox Christian experiences his or her own spiritual warfare, a world which constantly challenges one’s spiritual growth. For just as in ages past, continuous, ongoing spiritual growth depends not only on the grace of the Holy Spirit, but also on each Christian’s efforts to live a life committed to Christ and His Church.

A commitment to life in Christ and His Church is not just the verbal promise the Godparents make on behalf of the baptized child, nor by the adult himself/herself in the case of adult Baptism and Chrismation. This commitment is sustained, expressed and fulfilled when supported by constant learning of the Faith and by integrating one’s knowledge and experience of faith into daily life. Sacramental experience and religious education are both parts of a lifelong process, which assists us to actualize the Holy Spirit in our lives. We grow in discernment of sins, acquiring the virtues, fighting vice, becoming holy, growing closer to God.

During this ongoing process of growth, Christians need the support of their community in Christ, their church. In today’s society, where everyone is expected to behave and talk in a “politically correct” way, and where we are often tempted to bend or twist our values or standards so we that do not offend others, we need more than ever the support of the Church community.

According to the saints, our attitude towards each other reflects our relationship with God, and our attitude towards God reflects our relationship with others. These “others” include children, teenagers, young adults, adults, the elderly, clergy and, of course, the members of one’s own family. The well-being of each Orthodox Christian community depends, in large part, on how the individual members of the Body of Christ relate to each other. We should therefore prayerfully ask ourselves the following:

Does my attitude towards my brothers and sisters in Christ reflect my love for Christ?

Am I welcoming the little children just as Christ welcomed them (Matt. 19:13-14)? Do I fret within myself at the smallest movement or sound from a

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little one in the church, instead of rejoicing that they are the church's future?

Am I welcoming the exhausted new mother, or any mother with children in the Church? Am I welcoming the father who works on shifts, but still brings his family to the Liturgy on Sunday, driving for more than thirty minutes? Am I looking at my watch to see how late they are instead of praying or thanking God for them?

Am I tolerant towards the little children, who make joyful noises exploring different places and things in the church, while the service is going on?

Am I welcoming the teenager who is dressed like a model from a fashion magazine, but who appropriately (surprise!) venerates the icons and follows the Liturgy? Or am I passing judgment on him or her and the parents?

Do I, clergy or lay person, correct misbehaviour in church, on the part of children or adults, with loving, kind and gentle firmness: or do I make a public "scene," humiliating the members of the flock and possibly even alienating them from Christ and His Church forever?

With my attitude and behaviour, am I bringing others to God or am I doing exactly the opposite? Am I being a witness for the love of Christ in my day-to-day life, and especially in my parish?

For the growth of our church communities, spiritual guidance and counselling by the parish priest or someone else, such as a *Starez*, is of crucial importance during the formative years of the children and particularly of the teenagers, as well as for anyone newly received or baptized into the parish community and anyone else in the Church, for that matter. The priest's ability to model Christian love, patience and gentleness when dealing with those entrusted to him by God, assists the spiritual formation of that person, no matter what age. Making confession a rigid ritual of absolution for less than a minute immediately before Holy Communion cannot lead to real spiritual growth.

From my youth in Bulgaria, I treasure the times I spent with my spiritual father discussing the Orthodox Faith, the saints, the virtues and the vices. He gave wise instructions about how to discern the various shapes of sinfulness. He supported my spiritual growth, urged me to participate in the Liturgical Services, and encouraged me to become more holy. This reminds me that our Holy

Orthodox Faith teaches us to believe that God is Love, and Christ is forgiving. Our God is not a dictator, a terrorist, a manipulator of people, nor an evaluator of rules and regulations.

We, both the clergy and the faithful, should witness to the love of Christ throughout, and in every area of our lives. We should be role models of kindness, righteousness, and love for our children and youth. We should be supportive of our brothers and sisters in need, and that includes especially the families with children, some of whom have great difficulties in these days.

Think a moment: Do you consider yourself a role model for others in your parish? Who is your role model

in your parish or in the diocese? Maybe some will answer: I am inspired by the saints, by the icons, by the Theotokos. That is good, but is this sufficient for the children and the teenagers? In today's world, despite the

parental control a family may have, the children and young people have easy access to the tempting role models of sin and of this "world" via TV and computers (even if not at home, definitely at school and with friends). To counter this, we need to offer them role models in the church community, and even try to be these role models ourselves by our Christ-like behaviour.

What our children and teenagers need to see is *God's love in action in the midst of the Church community and in the life of their own family*. This will assist them to understand that *Faith is a way of life*, not just a concept, that God exists not only like someone from the icons, or someone who will put on the vestments for the services and feel powerful. By loving example we can assist our children and teenagers to understand that Faith is a way of life, that God is present in the life of His people all the time, not just sometimes.

When we are better integrated into the Orthodox Faith, when we acquire a truly Orthodox identity (which is a continuing process), all of us—clergy and laypeople, adults and children—will be better equipped to deal with the challenges of today's world. We will be able together to learn what in this fallen society can be used in such a way that our Christian identity is not tarnished, and we will be able to support each other in turning away from those elements in the culture which cannot be edifying.

Would the world not be a better place, would the Church not be a healthier community, if all of us were to strive with all our hearts and minds and souls to put our commitment to life in Christ into practice? Let's try harder!—*Antonina Dunn, Toronto*

From the Russian diaspora:

Newly-glorified saints

July 20 / August 2 o.s.

Early in 2004, the Diocesan Council of the Russian Exarchate of Western Europe under the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople announced that the names of Mother Maria (Skobtsova), her son Georges Skobtsov, Fr Alexis Medvedkov, Fr Dimitri Klepinin, and Ilya Fondaminsky have been added to the Synaxarion of Saints of the Holy Orthodox Church. Their common feast will be 20 July; their dates of repose will be their feast days as well.

A pause before their lives, each unique and vibrant, brings us into the throes of war-torn Europe, and the building of community in the midst of need and intense human suffering. The variety of their ages, life situations and personal struggles is remarkable, but not as much as their common Orthodox Christian victory in the face of great and modern tests.

Mother Maria Skobtsova was described by the late Metropolitan ANTHONY (Bloom) as "...a woman holy, of our time and for our time, a woman of flesh and blood inhabited by the love of God, who knew how to face, without fear, the injustices of the century." She was closely related spiritually to Fr Sergei Bulgakov and the émigré circle in Paris at the time. From her work among the "paupers and tramps" there, to her death just weeks before the liberation of the German concentration camp, Ravensbruck, her life of service and her fearless

freedom to be herself in the Lord speak louder than words.

Sub-Deacon Yuri (Georges) Skobtsov was born in 1920, son of Maria from her second marriage. He worked with his mother in Orthodox Action, an organization giving help to the persecuted Jews, when he was imprisoned, together with Fr Dimitri Klepinin. They spent one year in a French detention camp, Campiègne, in which they celebrated a daily liturgy and Fr Dimitri prepared Georges for the priesthood. He reposed on February 6, 1944, at the age of twenty-four in a German prison camp. Until the end, he and his mother were constantly joined in the Jesus Prayer in their respective imprisonments.

Fr Dimitri Klepinin, born in 1904, was a close co-worker with Mother Maria in her soup kitchen and refugee community, and was imprisoned for his work in the protection of the Jews in France. He was a priest with a great amount of energy and vision, who held firm as a confessor of the faith until his end in Buckenwald prison camp on February 10, 1944.

Fr Alexander Medvedkov, born in 1867, was a Russian priest who had been disfigured by torture during the Revolution, served in Estonia, and became rector of a parish in Ugine, France. A man of humble and deep prayer, he suffered much in his life, even within his own parish. He passed away in 1934, and in the course of a cemetery move undertaken by civic decree, his body was found to be incorrupt, and since then, various miracles have been associated with his intercession.

Ilya Isidorovich Fondaminsky (pseudonym Bukanov) was a member of the Russian intelligentsia and a publisher. Born in Moscow in 1881, he studied philosophy in Germany and, returning to Russia, became a prominent member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. In 1906 he sought refuge in Paris, where he formed a strong friendship with the Russian literary figures/spiritualists, Z. Gippius and D. Merezhkovsky. Returning to Russia in the spring of 1917, he was briefly the Commissar of the Provisional Government, but shortly thereafter emigrated to Paris. In 1941 he turned to the Lord within the Orthodox Church, then becoming active in the saving of the Jews through the work of Orthodox Action. He was baptized in the detention camp, Campiègne, in France, and then was deported to Auschwitz where he reposed in 1942.

Holy saints of God, pray to the Lord for us!

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*Dedicated to the memory of St Tikhon,
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Archbishop Arseny (Chahovtsev),
and other missionary labourers
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The Body and Blood of Christ

—by Monk Raphael (Forshay), Edmonton AB

Those of us fortunate enough to be nourished frequently by the Holy Liturgy will perhaps find it difficult to recall just how strange it is to aspire, and indeed be commanded, to eat of the Body and Blood of Christ. Mysterious grace, peace, and healing so wonderfully flow to us in Holy Communion that it may never occur to us to wrestle with what, for many non-believers, easily seems the macabre, cannibalistic overtones of the Eucharist.

To a non-Christian this ritual act of sacrifice appears a bizarre, atavistic carryover from primitive, pre-rational forms of culture. Even among many otherwise sincere and devout Christians of Protestant or else liberal persuasion, who emphasize the obviously symbolic character of Christ's act of blessing at the Last Supper, the consecrated elements of the Holy Eucharist—which fulfil the Lord's command to "Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22: 19)—have no physical relation to the apparent physicality that they signify. After all, non-believers will rightly insist, in the Gospels the disciples quite obviously do not eat of Christ's literal physical body, either at the Last Supper itself, or after the crucifixion. The Body and Blood of Christ by which we claim to be nourished, Protestants in particular would argue, must clearly be a purely spiritual and non-physical (and therefore merely symbolic), as is consistent with Christ's emphatic teaching that true worship of God, under the New Covenant he announces, must be performed "in spirit and in truth" (John 4: 23).

And yet the Orthodox Church insists on the Real Presence of Christ in the consecrated elements of the Holy Eucharist, in the *actuality* of Christ's substantial presence there, of the tangibility of the saving and healing nourishment it provides. What is this Real Presence? What is really present in the Holy Eucharist such that we *really* eat of Christ's Body and Blood—yet not in a literal and cannibalistic fashion? How can we so eat in such an undeniably symbolical, immaterial and yet at the same time real fashion? What is symbolical and what is real in the consecrated elements of the Eucharist and the act of Communion?

The Church has traditionally protected the mysterious and transcendent character of the Real Presence by refusing to fix it in specific theological terminology. Theories such as *transubstantiation*, *consubstantiation*, and *impanation* have variously been presented in such attempts at definition, and one approach here would be to canvass their adequacies and

inadequacies in order to explore the range of implications of the mystery of Christ's Real Presence in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar. I will reserve such a theological inventory for another article and will pursue here instead a primarily scriptural exegesis.

A key factor in grasping the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist is to understand that Christ gives and makes himself available there in the fullness of his *glorified* substance and person, that is to say, in his fully transformed, *resurrected* Body. The immediate objection to such a view of the Eucharist is an historical and temporal one: namely, that Christ was not yet glorified when at the Last Supper he first gave to his disciples to eat, under the species of bread and wine, of his veritable Body and Blood. I would reply, however, that such an objection is inconsistent with the fuller implications of Christ's eternal, indivisible unity with the Father.

The Last Supper bears to the post-resurrectional and post-pentecostal Liturgy the same relation that the glory of the Transfiguration bears to the Resurrection and Ascension. The Transfiguration reveals to Peter, James, and John the perpetual glory of Christ's identity with the Father as well as his fulfillment, as represented by Moses and Elijah, of the Law and the Prophets. The Resurrection is the fuller realization and manifestation within his temporal ministry of the eternal reality of Christ as the Logos: "*All things were made through him. . . . In him was life and the life was the light of men*" (John 1: 3).

The Incarnation, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ, forasmuch as they perform *for us* the saving act of Redemption, neither add to nor subtract anything from, nor in any way inherently change, Christ's eternal relation to the Father. This can be a difficult point for us to grasp since our relation to Christ and the Father in the Holy Spirit are so profoundly and fundamentally transformed by his Incarnation, his historical coming among us and the eschatological revolution and redefinition it performs.

What, then, is this resurrected body, of which we partake in the Holy Eucharist? The most concise and profound teaching regarding the nature of the resurrected body is given by St Paul in the fifteenth chapter of his First Letter to the Corinthians. St Paul reproaches those in the Corinthian community who are giving credence to false teaching, at variance with the teaching of the Apostles, regarding the resurrection :

For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been

raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied. (I Cor. 15: 17-19)

St Paul goes on to explicate the centrality and significance of the Resurrection of Christ :

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. (I Cor. 15: 20-22)

Christ is the “first fruits” of the New Covenant. In him a transformation of the “old man,” the body of sin and death associated with the fallen creaturehood of Adam, has been raised to new life and now “sits at the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father” (Nicene Creed). Just as we participate through our bodies in the fallen condition of Adam, so do we by faith, by grace, by the Holy Spirit participate in the victory of Christ over that condition of sin and death. By offering himself in his innocence Christ makes that perfect act of obedience and surrender that we are unable, in our divided and wounded condition, to make. He is the spotless lamb who during the Passover feast on the eve of his crucifixion takes bread and wine in his hands, saying “*This is my body. . . . This is my blood.*” The body that will be offered on the altar of the cross, the body which on the third day disappears from the tomb, appears to the disciples as mysteriously both physical and spiritual, able to pass through walls and locked doors, but is also tangible to Thomas the doubter and able to eat and drink with the disciples.

But some will ask, ‘How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?’ You foolish man! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body which is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, to each kind of seed its own body. For not all flesh is alike, but there is one kind for men, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. (I Cor. 15: 35-39)

The physical body of man, of Adam, must die so that the grave can give birth to the spiritual body of Christ. Christ as first fruits of the Kingdom of God is the New

Man, possessing a new and unprecedented spiritual body. That is to say, he is neither merely bodily nor merely spiritual. He is a resurrected body, a transformed one, a New Creation.

So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. . . . The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those that are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall we also bear the image of the man of heaven. I tell you this, brethren: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. (I Cor. 15: 42-50)

The glorified body of Christ is not mere flesh and blood, subject to death. His physical and mortal body has been raised up as the first to manifest the imperishable “spiritual body” of the New Covenant, a body that is *both physical and spiritual*, and therefore it is something more than either. It is a New Creation. It is of this glorified body of Christ that we eat and drink in the Holy Eucharist. As first fruits of the Kingdom, it is offered to the eyes and senses of faith. With our merely physical senses we perceive bread and wine, but the consecrated elements have been transformed into a supernal substance, a food nourishing that in us which reaches through the opposition of body and spirit into the New Man within us. That new man of the new creation is beyond the divisions of flesh and blood, history and gender:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3: 28).

As the first fruits of this New Creation, Christ feeds us with a divine, eschatological substance, his very glorified self, His Resurrected Body now (which is of course to say, eternally) seated at the right hand of the Father. His Blood is the firstfruits of the New Heaven, his Body of the New Earth. We communicate in that glorified Life and Being which heals all illness, mortality, and division—within, between, and among us, and between ourselves and God, the Father of us all.

Spring meeting of diocesan council

The spring 2004 meeting of the Archdiocesan Council was held April 23 - 24 in Winnipeg and Narol, Manitoba. On the first day the host parish was Holy Trinity Sobor in Winnipeg ; on the second day, it was St Nicholas' Church in Narol. The warm Christian hospitality of each parish was most appreciated by everyone.

Council was presented with, and approved, the proposed 2004 budget, which is expected to end "in the black," as did the 2003 budget. The insurance broker who is handling the life, health, pension and disability insurance packages for the clergy of the diocese explained these plans, pointing out that the low premiums are a result of both the number of clergy involved and the high number of younger clergy insured. Chancellor Fr Dennis Pihach explained, in addition, that he and Fr Philip Eriksson are working with insurers to develop a group plan on property and liability insurance for all diocesan parishes. The rates should be at least a third less, if not even more, than a parish would normally pay if it is individually insured. When the plan is fully developed, the Chancellor will send information to parishes in order for them to decide whether they would like to join.

Besides the usual portfolio reports and unit meetings (administrative, programme, and communications), Council also heard presentations from Deacon Ignatius Rigden-Briscall of Abbotsford BC on possibilities for stewardship education in the diocese, and an account of the excellent sex-abuse prevention

Our "Roots of Community" now on-line

Thanks to the efforts of parishes and persons across the country, and the assistance of the History and Archives Department, Syosset, the Vladyka ARSENY Archives was able to put together a virtual exhibit on our beginnings and early years. This 500-photograph exhibit which covers the period, 1896-1937, is slated to go on-line even as this issue of the *Messenger* goes to press. It presents plenty of our history, and also has an attached educational packet for use in schools.

It is available on our website, www.archdiocese.ca and also on the Canadian Archival Information Network found at www.archivescanada.ca.

Please visit this exhibit, and if you can help to identify persons and places (always needed where historic photos are concerned) it would be much appreciated! Please send any and all such information to the diocesan archivist, Mrs K. Szalasznyj, at : szalwrite@shaw.ca.

workshops which he and Fr Lawrence Farley have developed to inform and educate church workers.

The date and place of the next Archdiocesan Council meeting will be set at the end of the Archdiocesan Assembly in Saskatoon, after the new members are elected.

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