

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



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

CANADIAN ORTHODOX MESSENGER

*Founded by the blessed Archbishop Arseny (Chahovtsov), 1866 – 1945
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Across the Archdiocese of Canada :

First annual St Arseny commemoration held

On Sunday, 3 October 2004, at Bishop Seraphim's direction, the parishes across the Archdiocese of Canada celebrated a molieben, a special prayer service of thanksgiving and intercession with hymns and prayers, to Saint Archbishop Arseny (Chahovtsov). At the same service an offering was taken for the St Arseny Institute in Winnipeg, which offers theological training for the Archdiocese of Canada.

This particular Sunday was chosen for what is intended to be an annual event because it was the closest Sunday in 2004 to the date (4 October 1945) when Archbishop Arseny fell asleep in the Lord and was later buried at St Tikhon's Monastery in Pennsylvania, which he founded in 1905. The day of the falling asleep is, for the saints, according to Orthodox teaching, the entry into the Kingdom of God and eternal blessedness. It is most often on the day of their repose that saints are honoured on our Church calendar.

The director of the St Arseny Insitute, Spencer Estabrooks, notes that it was on October 3, 2002 that Bishop Seraphim gave officially by letter his blessing for the beginning of the Institute and outlined its mandate to provide theological education. A year later, in the fall of 2003, Mr Estabrooks continues, "we began our first official year of classes, and our administrative team was trying to find a time which would be best to hold our first gathering for teachers, students, supporters and the general public. We settled on Saturday, October 4, 2003. Not long after we had chosen this date, I was re-reading the *Messenger* article by Fr John Hainsworth on the life of St Arseny and was taken aback when I noticed that the date of his falling asleep in the Lord was October 4th, 1945! It was then that I decided to look back at the letter from Vladyka which gave official blessing for the Institute, and realized that it was October 3, 2002, the eve of the repose of St Arseny."

Mr Estabrooks says that the coincidence of dates does not prove anything in itself. "We Orthodox are not superstitious. Nevertheless, along with many other evidences, it seems that we are being made aware that our patron is interceding for us and, through this means, he is continuing to bless and serve his people and to bring to fruition the efforts which he began while he was serving Christ in the Canadian vineyard."

Along with Archbishop Tikhon (later Patriarch St Tikhon, Enlightener of North America), Priestmonk Arseny as he was then called, was the key figure who, in 1904-5, shortly after arriving in North America, established the monastery in Pennsylvania named for St Tikhon of Zadonsk. (There have been annual pilgrimages to St Tikhon's monastery for a hundred years, and next year there will be a major celebration of the 100th anniversary of its founding.) Not only did St Arseny establish St Tikhon's monastery in the USA, but in 1937-8, when he retired there in poor health from blood poisoning after being shot in the leg by enemies during the serving of Divine Liturgy at a farm house in Manitoba, he quickly established a theological school, which later became St Tikhon's Seminary.

In Manitoba, St Arseny established a monastery and orphanage at Sifton. Then, in 1926, he announced the establishment of a seminary there. Here is a newspaper item from 1926, about an announcement made by Bp Arseny at an evening service held in his cathedral, Holy Trinity in Winnipeg :

Necessity for the establishment of a theological seminary in Canada, and also parish schools from which candidates for the seminary could be drawn was emphasized by his Grace Bishop Arseny, head of the Russian Orthodox Church in Canada, Sunday evening when preaching at the Russian Orthodox Holy

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. . . continued from page 1:

Trinity Cathedral. Bishop Arseny announced that a new seminary will be established in the Russian Orthodox monastery at Sifton, Man., which it is intended to make a centre of a pilgrimage of all the faithful similar to what, under the old regime in Russia, were “the Kiev Pecherska Lavra” and “Suchavsky Monastery.” On May 29 a missionary festivity will be observed at this place marking the commencement of the seminary, it was stated. At present, at least ten priests could be placed in organized districts in Canada, and new churches are in process of organization, said Bishop Arseny. Due to the pressing need of priests, Bishop Arseny announced that Deacon John Kowalchuk will be ordained on May 22 at the cathedral here, and soon after will be sent to Saskatchewan. Arrangements will be made with the school board of Sifton and the provincial government for students in training at the seminary to also attend high school each half-day during the school year, so that they might acquire English and a general knowledge prescribed in the curriculum of the province. ‘It is possible that in the future, the English language will be used in all the Russian Orthodox churches,’ he said.

Bishop Seraphim, the director of the Institute, and its clergy/teachers, as well as the Archdiocesan committee preparing research materials on St Arseny, all believe that the circumstances which Bishop Arseny was describing above were very similar to our own today, and the vision which he presented was what has also emerged among ourselves—the need for priests, for the spread of the faith, for places for theological training, for providing opportunities in the parishes for raising the level of understanding of the faith, so that more would be drawn to service in the Church, the importance of English (and sometimes French) as the language in which to share the Orthodox faith in Canada, and the need for people being gathered together in spiritual effort and celebration.

Mr Estabrooks says that he believes “this passage reflects that what is being worked in our hearts is the sharing by St Arseny of his own heart and vision with us, through his intercessions and the grace of the Holy Spirit. It is wonderful that in the Orthodox faith our vision and service given to God is not restricted to our lifetime . . . we are connected forward and backward in time, fulfilling the work of the saints who went before, and having them serve us today, even though they have long gone to be with the Lord.

“St Arseny lived a remarkable life through many hardships, in a number of countries, and throughout this vast country and continent. He is not our saint only. Saints belong to the whole world because they belong first of all completely to the Lord and serve His purposes of salvation

of the world and His people wherever they are. Nevertheless, we now have our first acknowledged Canadian Orthodox saint. St Arseny became a Canadian citizen and retained his citizenship until his death, though he came from what is now Ukraine and retired to the United States in the last years of his life because of ill health.”

Although still small and humble, the Institute under St Arseny’s holy patronage has grown amazingly each year since its founding, both in courses offered and in the number of students. Mr Estabrooks notes that “Many illustrations could be given of how one development after another has fallen into place at the right time. I experience the St Arseny Institute as simply the continuation of beginnings made by St Arseny, and the fruition of his vision and efforts. I feel that the development of the Institute is being superintended by him, and empowered by the Holy Spirit through his intercessions. He is our patron and we are acting as servants in this venture.”

Inquiries about the St Arseny Orthodox Christian Theological Institute may be sent to the Director, Spencer Estabrooks, either by mail at 150 Canora Street, Winnipeg, MB, Canada, R3G 1T2 ; by phone at 1-204-783-5350, or by e-mail at institute@saintarseny.ca . Alternatively, one may contact the Registrar, Fr Mirone Klysh, at 3 Prestwood Place, Winnipeg, MB, Canada, R3T 4Y9, or at 1-204-269-3743, or by e-mail at lklysh@shaw.ca

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

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Remembering Beslan

At the beginning of September 2004 we heard, and perhaps on television saw, of the horrifying and painful events in Beslan, North Ossetia, of the Russian Federation, on the north slopes of the Caucasus Mountains. The killing of so many children, along with teachers and others, and under such disgusting circumstances, appals everyone. The perennial question “why” is really unanswerable, because such an act is clearly insane. There is no justification possible for such an act. It is just plain evil. Moreover, when such things happen in small towns in remote republics like this, it brings home to us the possibility that such horrors could be perpetrated even here.

However, like many of the population of Beslan, we are Orthodox Christians, and we must repond to this situation, as we must to so many others. How? As always, by turning to the Saviour.

Certainly we must be praying for those who are so deeply grieving. I know that in Canada there were services offered for the departed children and others, around the time of burial. But it is good for us, for some time after the initial pain, to pray for the departed, and also for those who remain alive, but in pain. Our prayers can help them recover, and to find consolation in Christ’s love. The constant reminders here of the catastrophe in New York in 2001 help to remind us to pray about those affected there ; but Beslan will, in our typical fashion, likely disappear from the front consciousness within days or weeks of the events, if for no other reason than than because it is far away, and just one of a multitude of regularly reported human tragedgies.

We have to guard against the usual response of anger, or desire for vengeance in events like these. Although very much understandable, this response only poisons our own hearts. It paralyses us. A similar result can come from a flight from reality, prompted partly by anger, partly by fear—a closing of the eyes so as not to see. Either way, the heart can become hardened because of inappropriate responses to pain.

The pain must be faced and embraced, according to the example of Christ our Saviour. It is He who forgave, and asked His Father to forgive His killers from the Cross, with His arms voluntarily stretched out, embracing them and all. It is He who, in the Beatitudes, exhorts us to pray for, and even to bless those who persecute or kill us for His sake. Even if the attack is not directly for His sake, we have to turn to Him and ask for His help to respond in His manner. This means that we have to pray not only for those who suffered such evil ; we have to pray also for

those who have inflicted it. They are deeply deceived persons, and when they die, either now or later, they have to answer for their actions before God. Moreover, perpetrators of such evil actions (which we see too often) are most likely prepared for it through processes of spiritual enslavement by those who are in an even darker condition. In all likelihood, their plan is to capitalise on passions of reaction, in order to increase violence towards their own hoped-for evil ends.

Both St Silouan of Mt Athos and Archimandrite Sophrony of Essex teach us about how to pray in this situation. It is simple, and direct, although not necessarily so very easy, and it is according to the Gospel. This response is to say either a version of the “Jesus Prayer” on behalf of the persons, the situation and oneself, or just to say “Lord, have mercy.”

To say “Lord, have mercy” is to ask the Lord to address ourselves, others and all situations with the activity of His love. In using this manner of prayer, we ask the Saviour to intervene according to His own nature and perfect understanding. We do not interject any of our fallen and passion-poisoned attitudes. In asking the Saviour to have mercy, we ask Him to pour out His love, to save, to rescue, to heal, to transfigure. We ask Him to act, but do not presume to tell Him how to act.

In praying in this manner, we support those in need. We help the suffering, but in so doing, especially when we pray for the evil-doers, we are also helping ourselves. We bring Christ’s love anew to our own hearts. It is this that overcomes the pain, anger, fear and other passions that arise in our hearts in the face of horrible events like Beslan’s. It brings the transfiguring love of Christ to irrational acts, and helps to stop the spread of the poison of anger and hatred which not only *causes* events like this one, but also *perpetuates* them and *multiplies* the response of non-forgiveness, anger, and vengeance. It is only the prayerful response that can bring light to this darkness, and set things on a correct course. No eye-for-an-eye response, no application of force, can make things right. Only the application of Christ’s love can make things right, can bring healing, and can bring hope.

These are very hard and trying times in every way. Especially we, Orthodox Christians, are being required to testify by our lives and living for the Truth, for Christ. Our protests of love for the Saviour, of faithfulness to Him, are being tested. May the Saviour enable us to have the strength to live up to the call as we say: “O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us, and on Your world.”

For those interested in aiding Beslan victims, see “Beslan Relief Fund” at www.o.ca.org .

“From the Bishop’s desk” continues, next page . . .

Pilgrimage to Romania

Many years ago, the late Archbishop John (Garklavs) of Chicago was asked by a little girl, what is it that bishops do. He replied that they bless.

In my experience this is so very accurate. It is the foundation of what Christ gave bishops, in representing Him, to do in the Church. First of all, they bless the Eucharistic Liturgy ; and they are, from this, responsible to bless all the things and persons and ministries that are necessary for the Christian life. For this reason, a bishop should never be long out of his diocese, and for this reason, he should be regularly visiting the communities of his diocese : to provide life—Christ’s life.

The visit to Romania on 3-15 August, 2004, was intended to be for the rest and refreshment of the bishop, and to a great extent it was—particularly spiritually speaking. But it was also very active in the blessing aspect, because the bishop cannot really go anywhere, and particularly to such a believing people, without sharing the blessing and love of Christ with those around. As always, we have to share Christ’s love in concrete ways, and He always provides more and more for us, so that we have more and more to share. The blessing goes in both directions, too, for if the bishop is bringing such a blessing from Christ to the people, the love for Christ in the people brings grace to the bishop, and through their faith and prayers strengthens the bishop. This is truly the wonder of life in Christ. So a bishop does not take a vacation in the way others often do, because it is neither possible, nor in his vocation, and a bishop cannot ever pretend he is not. He must always be what and who he is.

Like other Churches recovering from the years under godless communism, the Romanian Orthodox Church is one with many new martyrs, and with many new confessors—both departed and living. Truly, I met a number of these living confessors for Christ. As in some other places, the new government officially gives freedom to the Church, but it does not particularly support it. Sometimes, it actually hinders it, much as there are obstacles in our “capitalist” west, and this in the face of the well-known statistic that 80% of Romanians claim to be Orthodox Christians, and that the Orthodox Church in Romania is not divided.

Romania is a mostly agricultural economy, and there are not many heavy industries. There is a tension between the desire to maintain and foster traditional ways of living, and by contrast, the desire to enter the European

Union and become materially so-called “better off”(which usually benefits only those of higher income).

The Romanian faithful have a long history of tenacious fidelity to Christ and Orthodoxy. In this, the formative person was St King Stefan the Great, of the 15th Century. With God’s help, he united Bukovina and Romania, and defeated the attacking neighbouring kingdoms and empires, including the Ottomans and Tatars, over a period of fifty years. He was strictly faithful, a defender of Orthodoxy, and this heritage remains to this day in Romania, and particularly in Bukovina (north-east Romania and Moldova)—and, one may say, in the Chernovtsi area of Ukraine. On 2 July of this year, the 500th anniversary of his death was celebrated at the Dormition Monastery of Putna (near the Ukrainian border, west of Suceava), where also is his tomb in the main Church.

St King Stefan founded Putna Monastery. Among the many participants in the holy celebration were almost 600 mostly young people who, from 29 June, walked in procession, with singing and prayers, the 78 kilometres from the old fortress in Suceava, west to the monastery in Putna. This was organised by the Romanian Orthodox Student Christian Movement. Some of the participants, by the way, had walked all the way from Kishinau, Moldova, which means a walk of 500 km each way. Such pilgrimages are not uncommon in Romania, nor are they in Ukraine, even for the aged, and the age-range of this group was from nine to seventy.

The Christian hospitality of the family that hosted me, and of the monks of Putna, enabled me to experience, in a short time, some of the principal holy places, the historic monasteries, and the life and work of the Romanian Church. I visited in Bucharest the Patriarchate (where I served on Holy Transfiguration with Metropolitan Ciprian), and the historic Antim Monastery. And south of the Danube, near the currently Bulgarian city of Silistra (ancient Dorostolum), I had the blessing of visiting the monasteries of the Cave of the Apostle Andrew, and of Dervent. The Apostle Andrew did evangelical work all around the Black Sea, and along its tributary rivers. At Dervent, there is a spring which began at his prayers (he needed water for baptising), where pure water still flows; and there are rocks with crosses that rose from the ground over the graves of four early convert martyrs. Here, as elsewhere, it was evident that there has grown up a laudable symbiotic relationship between the monasteries and the people who live nearby (not forgetting the urbanites who also regularly visit them to receive, and also to give help).

Romania has very many monasteries everywhere, both new ones, and ones re-opened after communist closures. However, the Carpathian Mountains, which run through the midst of the country, are home to most of the old and historic ones, and many of these built by St King Stefan the Great and his family. It was a very great blessing to be able to spend most of ten days at the Dormition Monastery in Putna, and to attend the daily services, morning and evening. Just outside the monastery, in the village, is what is believed to be the oldest wooden Church in continental Europe.

During three consecutive days, I was taken to visit several of the area's historic churches and monasteries. Some of these had been monastic churches previously, but had been turned into parish churches in Austro-Hungarian days, and remain so still. In the nearby village of Radausti is the historic Bogdana Church, one of these. In this same village a new parish church is nearly completed, and there is being constructed a complex of houses, with their own church, for homeless and orphaned children. Many of these

churches are frescoed on the interior, and the exterior as well, and most are either being or have had the frescoes cleaned and conserved. I visited, then, the churches and monasteries in Arbore, Sucevitsa, Moldovitsa, Humor, Voronets, Dragomirna, Varatec, Agapia, Neamts, Secu, Sihastria, and Sihla. It is not possible in a short space to describe all of these. But anyone can find photos of these temples in libraries and on the internet.

In the end, although it was very moving, and very important that I see and experience these historic places, what was more important still was encountering the Christian life and love of those who worship in them, particularly the monastics. And how hard many of them work. The services of prayer take many hours every day, and there is a great deal of work required on the lands

around in order to feed and clothe the monks and nuns, and to offer hospitality to the many visitors and pilgrims. Those who are hearing confessions seem to do so for many hours daily, and especially on weekends. Each community has its own historic crafts, as well as those according to the gifts of the current monastics. Some communities are very large, like the women's communities of Varatec (600) and Agapia (350). Others, and particularly the more hesychastic ones, are rather smaller, and tend to be more isolated in the higher hills.

Thanks to some of the many publications of the monastery in Platina, California, one can read a lot about the spiritual heritage of the Romanian monasteries, and particularly about the well-known recently-reposed Elder Cleopa of Sihastria. Anyone who might have the opportunity to make a pilgrimage to these, and/or others of the monasteries in Romania, would be well-advised to seize the occasion and do so—probably the sooner, the better. And take extra resources for gifts to the monasteries, and

as well for the many needy persons one will encounter. One finds them often at a church or monastery, but very often elsewhere. For information, and to repeat what was published in the *Messenger* last year, there is a Calgarian woman in western Romania, Catherine Langstone, who is caring for children who have been given up for dead, and with God's help, brings them help. She does this on her own, as a Christian, without any government support here or there. I did not see her, because I was not in that part of Romania. But I strongly encourage anyone who can to support her in her Christian work. This can be done through Marina Mantle, her mother, in Calgary: **Missionary Relief Fund, 8020 Silver Springs Rd NW #31, Calgary AB T3B 5R6.**

More "From the Bishop's desk" on p.23 . . .



Bishop Seraphim blesses the faithful at the Putna Monastery; behind him is Bishop Callinic.

St Michael's, Sachava, celebrates 100th

On Wednesday, July 7, 2004, despite the inclement weather, nearly 200 people from near and far joined the parishioners of St Michael the Archangel's Church in Sachava, Alberta, in celebrating their 100th Anniversary. It was exactly to the date, July 7, 1904, that the title to forty acres of land was acquired by Bishop Tikhon of San Francisco for the Sachava Church. Shortly thereafter, a log church was built because a place of worship was of utmost importance to the early pioneers of the community. Sadly, in 1914 this church was destroyed by fire.

With strong faith, support, and hard work the Church was re-built by the fall of 1915, with a residence as well. The Church was a magnificent and elaborate building. The Iconostas was beautifully carved and the woodwork and pillars were stained mahogany and trimmed with gold dust paint. Despite the hard times, the Church prospered and flourished. Services were held every Sunday, as well as Baptisms, Marriages and Funerals. The two long-serving priests of the parish were Fr Theodore Varchal (1937 - 1951) and Fr William Ostashek (1968 - 1993). As well, many rotating priests served. On June 21, 1978 this beautiful church was struck by lightning and consumed by fire.

Once again, the parishioners set their minds to replace the church for the third time. Under the leadership

of Fr William and Matushka Ostashek, a totally different design was used for a rectangular building with two small domes. Donations poured in from the local community and parishioners from all over Canada and the USA. The new building was completed in 1980 and on July 7, 1980, Archbishop Sylvester consecrated the temple. Although the rural community has changed, families have moved, and membership and attendance have dwindled, the faithful from surrounding churches fill the temple for a Sunday service. For our 100th Anniversary, Bishop Seraphim of Ottawa, as well as priests from both Manitoba and Edmonton, Alberta were in attendance. Several deacons were also present.

The day began with a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy for the Feast day of St John the Baptist, followed by the Blessing of Water. Under the leadership of Fr Philip Speranza and local cantor John Shandro, the beautiful singing of the choir uplifted the service. A commemorative sign erected for the occasion was blessed by the Bishop. An Anniversary Dinner and Program followed at the Andrew Community Center.

The parishioners of St. Michael's Orthodox Church thank everyone who joined them in this 100th Anniversary celebration. It was an honour to commemorate this legacy. God bless you all. —by *Sophie Ewanowich*



Notables of St Michael's, Sachava: (l to r) Angie and Mike Pysar, Sophie and Victor Ewanowich, George Tichon, FrVasyl and Oksana Kolega, Katie Andruchow, Alex Domatreshuk, John Andruchow, and Kay Tichon.



Octogenarian president of St Michael's, Victor Ewanowich, greets Vladyka Seraphim with bread and salt. Beside him is octogenarian Katrina Andruchow with flowers for His Grace.

Centenary celebrations at St Mary's, Shandro

The cool damp weather didn't dampen the spirits of approximately 250 parishioners, family members and guests as they gathered to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of St Mary's (Holy Assumption) Orthodox Church at Shandro, Alberta, on Saturday, August 28.

The morning began with the arrival of His Grace, Bishop Seraphim of Ottawa. The children gleefully threw flower petals to adorn the Bishop's path to the church. Bishop Seraphim was greeted at the door with the traditional bread and salt by parish president Steve Hawrelak and was presented with flowers by parishioner Lena Lazaruk.



Bread and salt is offered to His Grace by parish president at Shandro, Mr Steve Hawrelak.

The parish's priest, Fr Vasyl Kolega, welcomed His Grace into the church. The Hierarchical Divine Liturgy was served by Bishop Seraphim, along with Protopresbyter Robert Kondratik, Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America; Archpriest Dennis Pihach, Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Canada, Canada; Deacon Gregory Kopchuk of Edmonton along with other members of the clergy, including Fr Vasyl. Following the Divine Liturgy and the traditional Blessing of Water, a short prayer service was held for the departed pioneers. Bishop Seraphim presented Fr Vasyl Kolega with a gold cross, in appreciation for work done here. Bishop Seraphim also presented the Order of St Innocent medals to John Shandro and Steve Hawrelak.

After the church service, everyone moved to the Willingdon Recreation Centre for more presentations and for a delicious dinner. Steve Hawrelak served as Master of Ceremonies for the programme. He paid tribute to the early pioneers for their faith and dedication in building the church, and for leaving such a great legacy for future generations. John Shandro, a long time member of the church, as well as being the parish cantor, presented the



On behalf of Metropolitan Herman, Bishop Seraphim presented the Order of St Innocent, 2nd class, to Mr John Shandro (r) and Mr Steve Hawrelak (l).

church history, recalling to mind the pioneers who came in 1899 from Bukowina, then in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, to start a new life in Canada. Stephan Shandro, Nickon Shandro, Simeon Hawreliak, Paul Boychuk, George Ostashek, Anton Russ, and Jacob Matichuk immigrated to Canada and settled in the area which later became known as the Shandro District. These faithful persons, along with their families, were the founders of St Mary's (Holy Assumption) Orthodox Church.

Celebrants were graced with speeches and greetings by the clergy, as well as by the Honourable Ed Stelmach, Member of the Legislative Assembly for the Vegreville-Viking Constituency and Mr John Leonty, Two Hills County Councillor. Written congratulatory messages were received from the Right Honourable Paul Martin, Prime Minister of Canada, the Honourable Ralph Klein, Premier of Alberta, and Mr Leon Benoit, Member of Parliament for the Vegreville Constituency. Lena Hawreliak (91 years), the eldest lifetime church member, was presented with an Icon by His Grace, and she also received flowers from the church membership. Fr Vasyl Kolega led the celebrants in prayer to close the celebration.—by Stella Hawrelak



Pastor of both the Sachava and Shandro churches, Fr Vasyl Kolega, with his Matushka, Oksana.

It's time to get started !

—by Deacon Gregory Kopchuk, St Herman's, Edmonton

In many parishes in the OCA, one can look around and see that the majority of the parishioners are seniors, and that there are few if any people under the age of fifty coming to church. Yet, whenever a discussion or plans are talked about relating to church growth, no one seems to want to participate or do anything about it. Many would prefer to leave things the way they are.

Many might even claim that we don't need to grow. If it were God's will that we grow, we would grow, they might say. Now granted, we do grow slowly. From the time of Pentecost to 313 AD, it took 280 years for Christianity to conquer the Roman Empire. Yet, from the time the OCA has been in North America (1794) up to now, less than 2% of Canadians claim to be Orthodox. The majority of this growth has been due to immigration from the old Orthodox countries to Canada. Historically, the Church has always grown. Yet, for many reasons too numerous to mention, our Orthodox Church has not grown very much in Canada.

Should the Orthodox Church grow? In Matthew 28:19-20, we are told that we must grow: "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 things that I have commanded you." That means all nations, not just Russians, Ukrainians or Greeks—all nations.

It has always been the nature of the Church to grow. Some examples from our past include Sts Cyril and Methodius who evangelized the Slavs, St Herman who worked with the Aleuts of Alaska, St Innocent who worked all over North America, and St Arseny who laboured in Canada. They knew that the Church is a living, breathing entity. Any living entity grows naturally. Therefore, if a parish is not growing, we have to ask what are we doing to prevent the growth? What are we doing to stand in the way of what God wants to happen, that is, for His Church to grow?

How do we grow?

The principles of church growth are scriptural, historical, and traditional. The Orthodox pioneered it! We know how to do it, we just have to awaken our evangelism and get back to doing it.

We should ask ourselves: who do we try to bring into the Church? The groups might include those of no religion; those who claim to be Christian but don't attend church; those who claim to be Orthodox but don't attend church; those who are Orthodox immigrants. If your parish is made up of Ukrainians or Russians, then it will likely attract other Ukrainians or Russians, and you will very likely not be able to attract any Protestant or Roman Catholic converts. If your

parish has a large number of converts, then you will likely attract more converts. There is a prevailing principle that says you will attract those like you and not the ones you would like!

Dealing with bringing any of these groups into the church is an acquired skill that can be learned through proper training.

What is a possible solution?

We should establish a vision, goals, and objectives for church growth over the next five years in the Archdiocese of Canada, in each deanery, and in every parish. There should be a person at each level assigned to church growth. Each such person in turn should recruit a church growth team. The team needs to:

- pray
- establish a vision, goals and objectives
- develop a plan
- get training in church growth
- share the ideas and resources across the Archdiocese
- implement the plan, and then measure it

We should also set up a central place to educate and train clergy and parishioners for church growth. Fr Jon Ivanoff, of the Department of Evangelization in Syosset, encouraged us here at St Herman's Sobor in Edmonton to establish an institute for leadership and church growth development.

Where do we start?

Many people have ideas about where we should begin, so we require an objective way to determine this. The "natural church development process" described by Fr Jon is an objective way of finding out where to start. This involves a principle which says that if you have the following eight characteristics present in your parish, your church will grow naturally, just as in Acts 2:42:

- deeply-committed daily life in Christ
- loving relationships present
- need-oriented outreach
- gift-oriented ministries
- functional parish structures
- strong liturgical life where the Holy Spirit is
- small groups to support each other
- empowered leadership

The most important one from this list, after strong liturgical life, is loving Orthodox relationships. Such

relationships put our faith into practice on a daily basis. It is often mentioned as the most important thing by Bishop Seraphim in his sermons.

How does one have Orthodox loving relationships? By loving God, loving our neighbour, loving ourselves, forgiveness, confession, being at peace with where we are, and acquiring the Holy Spirit and thereby, as St Seraphim of Sarov says, saving thousands around us. How do you actually start doing this outside of the church? After all, the week contains 168 hours, of which usually only about two or three hours are spent in church. This means that 98% of our life in Christ is spent in the world. We must show everyone that we come in contact with that we are different—loving, forgiving, peaceful in the Holy Spirit, etc. If people don't see us acting out our faith and being different, why should they bother to come to church? (Ghandi once said that if everyone who is Christian acted like it, everyone else would also want to be a Christian.)

The "natural church development survey," mentioned earlier, measures the health of a parish and establishes where the parish is now in relation to the eight characteristics noted. It will identify the parish's strengths, and these can be used to correct the weaknesses, helping to remove the obstacles to growth and allowing the parish to grow naturally.

We have been given a great gift by Jesus Christ to take to Canada. Canada needs the Orthodox Church. We must take the Light that shines in our faith to everyone possible. Much has been given to us, much is expected, and we still have much to do. If we don't take this treasure to the rest of Canada, we will have to answer for our sin of omission on our judgement day, the same way the servant did when he hid the talent given to him by his master.

Judgement day : a dream

—by Rod Tkachuk, St Herman's Sobor, Edmonton

I had a dream. It was eight days before The Day—The Last Judgement. God announced that all that would be required was an answer to one question : did you love God and your neighbour?

This was hardly a surprise question. What caused a stir was the revelation that the only evidence that would be received to determine the answer was each person's Last Will and Testament!

There was the normal range of reactions by humanity to a revelation from God—fear, anger, confusion, and panic, followed by justification, rationalization, procrastination, intellectual analysis, and the (self) righteous rejection of God's Ways by the stiff-necked.

There was of course the normal merciful response by God. We have been given eight days, and I who write this

had been appointed to make the proclamation, because I suffer all of the aforementioned normal range of reactions.

Notice the dictionary definitions of terms :

Testament : 1. A covenant between God and man; 2. A tangible proof or tribute; 3. An act by which a person determines the disposition of his property after death.

Will : 1. To determine by an act of choice; 2. To decree, ordain; 3. A desire, wish determination, disposition.

Meld these all together and, depending on what is in your Last Will and Testament, it would be a fine way to answer the question "did you love God and your neighbour?" because in it you make a free-willed declaration about who it is that you say you are, and what is of ultimate value to you.

The number of times people in my parish have taken up my offer to do their wills for free—if they would make the Church, the Archdiocese, or our parish, a beneficiary of some portion of their estate? *Zero*. Have I myself amended by Will to make the Church one of my beneficiaries? *No*. If we all actually did this, what would be the effect to our Archdiocese and to ourselves? *Priceless*. What would be the result on the Last Day?

But . . . but . . . but . . . this takes a lot of time, effort, meditation, planning, money.

Not! Believe it or not, you can do this *right now*. The law has found the following to be valid wills : a sailor who wrote it out on the back of his shirt ; a farmer, trapped under a tractor, who wrote "my wife" in the sand ; a man who wrote a few words on a napkin. The law goes a long way to honour your last words.

There is one main issue to understand, however. That is the need for witnesses. If your will, or any amendment to your will, is *fully and totally in your own handwriting*, dated and signed, this is all that is required, and no witnesses are needed. If you type it, or you use a form that you fill out, then no one can tell whether this was really you that did it, and therefore the law requires two witnesses to sign, who saw you sign, and these witnesses *are not to be beneficiaries*.

So, right now you can make a will, or amend your will, without witnesses, as long as it is all in your own handwriting, dated and signed. For example, if you have no Will, this is sufficient : "This is my last will and testament. I leave 90% of my estate to my wife, but if she dies before me or within 30 days of my death, then to my children, equally. I leave 10% to the Orthodox Church in America, Archdiocese of Canada (*or, to . . . [the name of your parish]*)."

If you already have a Will, this is sufficient : "I hereby amend my last will and testament, dated [*give the date, month, and year*] as follows: I leave 10% of the rest and

continued, next page . . .

Judgement Day : a dream, *continued from p. 9:*

residue of my estate to the Orthodox Church in America, Archdiocese of Canada.”

None of this, of course, is as proper as speaking with your own solicitor. However, this never seems to get done. And of course your last day on earth is _____?

Maybe you think that you hardly have enough to leave to your spouse or your children, and how can you “short them” by leaving money to the Church? Maybe your spouse or children will get really ticked off if you leave something to the Church instead of all to them. And really, the Church isn’t “about money,” is it?

It is astonishing how we manage to keep separate our “relationship with God” and our indifference to the Church, as if One is Divine and the other is not. Please refer back to the “normal reactions of humanity” mentioned above. Please call me with any questions (1-780-428-1593). See you on That Day. Bring your Will.

Learning to speak Orthodox

—by Evelyn Dumas, *The Sign of the Theotokos, Montréal*

Sometimes I am asked, point-blank : “Can you tell me what are the main differences between Catholicism and Orthodoxy?” I have always been taken aback by a question I found somewhat polemical. I answered things such as : “A Church is foremost a practice, these are two different practices” or some other *meaningless* thing. But now I have an answer, which will also be a question : “What are the main differences between English and French?”

One can use the metaphor of language—learned from parents; practiced in the family or with others who are close; perfected by studies; that one has never finished learning (at least I know that I have not finished learning English or French)—to speak of a Church, namely, in my case, the Orthodox Church. My father in this learning process is The Sign of the Theotokos’ parish priest, Fr John Tkachuk; my mother is the whole Orthodox Church, represented primarily by His Grace, Bishop Seraphim; and my family is the parish of The Sign itself, with its parishioners and friends. How did I learn this language, beginning at the age of 47?

It was a beautiful day in June 1988. I was speaking with an Orthodox person I had known for a long time, let’s call him Gabriel, like the archangel. Suddenly he asks me : “Are you satisfied with your life until now?” I say, Yes. “Are you thankful for your life until now?” I answer, Yes. Then (we are both believers) he adds: “Thanksgiving is very important. Eucharist, *eucharisto*

in Greek, means thanksgiving, thank you. I am just reading a book by an Orthodox theologian, Fr Alexander Schmemmann. The title is *The Eucharist . . .*” I had him spell the author’s name and wrote it down. Then I set off to find the book.

Religious bookstores in Montréal did not have it. I appealed to the parish priest at the Orthodox Cathedral of Sts Peter and Paul, where I had once been. He directed me to Fr John Tkachuk, priest of The Sign of the Theotokos. The following Sunday, after going to mass at the Benedictine Priory on Pine Avenue, where I was a novice Benedictine oblate and where I practiced, more or less, “Christian meditation,” I went to The Sign which was then located in the basement of St Léon Catholic Church in Westmount. The beauty of the chapel, with its rows of icons in candlelight, struck me. To go to the bookstore, I had to go through the hall and common room next to the chapel where, after the liturgy, people were talking in lively groups. I told myself : “There’s a lot going on here.”

I bought the book I was looking for, and also a tape of liturgical hymns by the parish choir, *Byzantine Music in the New World*. The sleeve of the tape represents a motorist looking through his rear view mirror at an Orthodox church in Greece, an icon on his radio, and a Montréal street scene in front of his eyes. I spent the week reading the book (crystal-clear despite its complexity) and listening tearfully to the beautiful music. The following Saturday, I showed up at The Sign for Vespers and shortly afterwards I settled into a routine : Catholic mass on Saturday afternoon, and Sunday morning Divine Liturgy (the Eucharist) at The Sign. Soon I was slipping into the parish choir.

From the start, I had a very good rapport with the parish priest, Fr John. We are almost the same age; we share a common experience of our continental environment and good memories of the Beatles. I think that he has a brilliant mind which he in no way shows off. From the direction he has given me, I draw the impression that two important virtues in his eyes are simplicity and sobriety. I was far from possessing them when I met him. He engaged me and followed up in their pursuit. I was suffering at the time from a major affective disorder, which caused abrupt mood swings. No treatment helped me as much as the way Fr John kept bringing me back to dry land. It started more or less like this : I admired icons, I was pleased by incense, and beautiful priestly vestments brought nostalgic memories of my childhood. He told me : “You know, Evelyn, icons, incense, priestly vestments, music, all that can be idolatry. One must be able to do without them.” His guidance is in that tone.

This does not mean that Orthodox spiritual life is a from of ancient pagan wisdom. Divine Liturgy is at the heart of worship, no little devotion. Christ is a real presence, alive. Our bishop, Seraphim, gave me in a period of several years, beginning in 1996 and continuing now, an enlightening illustration of that. I had been confined because of my illness. I was hearing intrusive voices, but I did not want to talk about it to anyone, fearing to be confined again. I opened myself to the Bishop. He said : “These are tribulations. Don’t talk to the voices, talk only to Christ.” I obeyed as best I could, but the voices were very powerful. However, the environment had changed. My illness was not incomprehensible any more; it was integrated in my spiritual life.

Soon after, I was again in the hospital, but for less time than during the immediately preceding years. It so happened that when I left the hospital on the Feast of the Dormition, I met my bishop. “You are going to come out of it,” he said. “As soon as you have a thought that evokes your illness—you will recognize them—fight it as if it were the devil. But never alone. Always with Christ. Little by little, you will control your illness.” I should continue to take my medication. “Good medication also comes from God.” Orthodox tradition maintains that bishops have a prophetic charisma. I believe it. Seven years after this conversation, I have come out of my mental hell, and there have been no further hospitalizations.

While learning how “to speak Orthodox,” I learned how to pray. Liturgical prayer. Prayer of the Hours, that can punctuate the day at home when circumstances permit. Prayers of intercession for others, considered vital in Orthodoxy. But also, and that I learned from Fr John, silent prayer. One day, six years ago, Fr John mentioned it in a sermon. I was leaving for Winnipeg, where I was going to attend a triennial Archdiocesan Assembly as a delegate, and I told myself : “I can do that, me. I have practiced Christian meditation.” After my return, I spoke about it to Fr John, who gave me a first brief initiation, and who kept giving me advice in the ensuing months and years. It has nothing to do with “Christian mediation” that I had known before.

Today, despite the minuscule nature of the progress I made in this way, I am attempting to give a temporary summary : One gets settled. One puts oneself in God’s presence; one pushes away any rational thought voluntarily formed, any recourse to imagination, and any invasion of prayer by one’s stream of consciousness. One has recognized that human reason cannot enclose God. One chases away idle thoughts, as one would chase away the flight of a bird, or as the swimmer pushes away the water with his arms, slowly, patiently, without rigidity,

without an ambitious desire to control oneself. There are sometimes a few instants where the head is empty and there is a glimpse of light.

Now I must talk about my family, the parishioners of The Sign. This in no way excludes my natural family, my sisters whom I adore, my dear friends outside the Church. But I see the parishioners of The Sign in family mode. Some of them are close friends. With all of them I have an affectionate rapport, be it fleeting, even those I rarely speak to, even those who sometimes irritate me. These are love relationships, sanctified by the Church. How many exchanges with some parishioners, for example during impromptu suppers after Vespers or during drives to and from Church, have formed my Orthodox thought. No group I was part of before my reception in the Church in 1989 has thus engulfed me. This has been living and developing for sixteen years and I know, as says the famous Orthodox Bishop Kallistos Ware, that I am participating in “the plenitude of Christianity,” in the bosom of the Orthodox Church, in the parish of The Sign of the Theotokos.—*translated from her original French version by the author.*

Pastoral Notes

On 21 August 2004, **Archpriest John Scratch** was tonsured a monk at the Cathedral of the Annunciation-St Nicholas in Ottawa, Ontario. He is now known as Igumen John (Scratch), a member of the Monastic Community of St Silouan the Athonite.

On 5 October 2004, **Priest Robert John Polson** was released from his responsibilities, and from the Archdiocese of Canada, and transferred to the Omophor of Metropolitan Herman, for transfer.

On 15 October 2004, **Priest Anastasy (Stacey) Richter** was released from his responsibility as Rector of Holy Trinity, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, and as Rector of Holy Trinity, Kayville, Saskatchewan and its dependencies. He is transferred to the Omophor of Archbishop Job and the Diocese of Chicago and the Midwest.

On 31 October 2004, **Priest Waldemar Kuchta** was released from his attachment to the Bishop’s Chapel of St Silouan in Johnstown, Ontario, and appointed Priest in Charge of Holy Trinity, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, and of Holy Trinity, Kayville, Saskatchewan, and its dependencies

Miracle of renewal at Sifton, Manitoba

Renewal and refreshment drew approximately 125 persons to Holy Resurrection Church on the outskirts of the village of Sifton, Manitoba near Dauphin on August 14th. For many decades, two pilgrimages a year took place at Sifton, begun by St Aseny. The Orthodox faithful would come from faraway places by horse and by train, and the tradition of the pilgrimage remained, even up to the early 1980s.

Now, once more, this church was filled to capacity. Morning prairie light touched the incense as it rose to the high central dome. Orthodox chants wafted through the open door to the surrounding community, and there were many friends of the parish present from Sifton and about. The prayerful proximity to Holy Ascension Monastery, located only one mile to the west until 1962, was keenly felt.

The renewal of the pilgrimage is one part of a larger Orthodox vision that continues to unfold by the prayers, many believe, of our St Arseny. The second part involves restoration : through a partnership of heritage philanthropists, the Sifton Historical Society, Manitoba Culture and Heritage,



Holy Resurrection Church, Sifton, Manitoba.

our Archdiocese, and the local parish, plans are moving forward to restore the church to its former glory. In order to be eligible for these funds, however, it was first necessary to obtain Municipal Heritage Designation status. On July 27, the Rural Municipality of Dauphin gave third and final reading to Bill 2878, which established the Sifton Russo-Orthodox Church of the Holy Resurrection as a municipal historic site. This was accomplished thanks to the hard work of the Sifton parish and the Sifton Historical Society, involving hours of completing applications and taking photographs.

All restoration grants are available on a match-basis, which means an effort on all parts. Parishioners across Canada were invited to contribute to the "Sifton Restoration Fund" in early October, near the date of repose of St Arseny (October 4th), founder of the parish. In the meantime, local initiatives continue at Sifton and they are busy getting quotations for a new foundation and a roof, with the hope that the actual work will be done in the spring-summer, 2005.



*The interior of the Holy Resurrection Church, Sifton.
Note the rather unusual arch wall above the iconostasis.*

Concelebrating the Divine Liturgy at the Sifton church on August 14th, preceded by the Procession of the Holy Cross (OS) and followed by the blessing of water, were Priest Robert Kennaugh, Dean of Manitoba; Archpriest Anatoly Melnyk of Holy Trinity Sobor, Winnipeg; Archpriest Dr Oleh Krawchenko of St Andrew's College, Winnipeg; and Protodeacons Andrew Piasta of Yorkton and Raphael Cole of Winnipeg. The Choir was led by Matushka Dianne Kennaugh and Mother Magdalen of Winnipeg. There was also the blessing of the cairn at the old Holy Ascension Monastery site, and the blessing of the graves. A grand prairie banquet followed, with inspirational talks, exchanges, and a programme of local talent.



Above, the blessing at the cairn on the site of Holy Ascension Monastery.

At right, the concelebrants from l to r : Fr Dn Andrew Piasta, Fr Oleh Krawchenko, Fr Robert Kennaugh, Fr Anatoly Melnyk, and Fr Dn Raphael Cole.



Below, the procession at the door of the church.



Your prayers and assistance for this project are much appreciated. For more information on the Sifton Restoration, please contact Archdiocesan archivist, Katya Szalasznyj, at katya.archives@shaw.ca who will put you in touch with local participants within the Sifton parish and the Sifton Historical Society.

A holy procession

We all have heard or read about Orthodox processions of old in which almost the entire population of villages and towns would participate. Crosses, banners, clergy and people carrying sacred objects would process down roads and across fields. All that ended with the brutality of the Communist regimes, although now, it is reappearing amongst the Orthodox populations of Eastern Europe, as these people, so long forbidden to fully express their religious beliefs, are once again struggling to re-establish Orthodoxy. Metropolitan Herman specifically highlighted this in his sermon at the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at the Assembly of the Archdiocese of Canada which was held in July in Saskatoon. In the West, with the exception of a few places, mainly at monasteries, this practice can only be encountered in historical works, lives of saints, and in the memory of the aged.

Here in Canada, this age-old pious custom is carried out each year on the second Sunday of August, when the Monastery of All Saints of North America in Dewdney BC celebrates its feast of the Theotokos, "Joy of Canada," as it did this year on August 8. After an outdoor Divine Liturgy served in the monastery's grotto, a chapel dedicated to the Theotokos "Joy of Canada," a procession wended its way down the lane to the monument located in the field where a "Slava" was served (a Serbian custom which is very like a Litya). The melodious ringing of the bells accompanied the singers who chanted "It is truly meet . . ." On its return to the grotto-chapel those who desired to have a special blessing either lay down on the grass or else sat on it in a long row. When the procession reached this line of expectant pilgrims, the wonder-working icon of the Theotokos was carried over them. As a final blessing, they arose and approached the icon, first kissing it, then stooping to walk under it.

In the procession twelve icons and twelve caskets of relics were carried. Perhaps the greatest treasure of the monastery is its relics, received mainly from ascetics who had once struggled on Mt Athos, and monastics from various places in Europe and North America. Although the relics are small in size, they nevertheless are authentic and a great joy to all who reverence them. In Orthodoxy we do not have the concept of first or second class relics as they do in the West. All relics are relics whether they are from the bodies of the saints, or from their vestments or clothing.

It would be of interest to mention that the Monastery of All Saints of North America

possesses the following relics: St Basil the Great; Apostle Barnabas; St Ignatios the God-bearer; St Mary Magdalene; St Cyprian of Carthage; St Theodosios the Great; St Boniface; St Monica; St Haralambos; St Panteleimon; St Spyridon; St Nectarios; St John of Kronstadt; St Seraphim of Sarov; St Alexis the Man of God; St Xenia of Petersburg; Patriarch St Tikhon the Martyr; St Seraphim Phanourion; the Martyrs of Volynia; St John the Russian; St Herman of Alaska; St John of San Francisco; St Peter the Athonite; St Paisy (Velichkovsky); St Dymphna; St Hilary of Poitiers; St Columban of Iona; Apostle James; St Tikhon, Bishop of Amathos; James the neo-Martyr; St Martyrios; Holy Martyr Akakios; Martyr Kyriakos of Nicomedia; Akakios the neo-martyr; two unknown saints; and more.

The greatest treasure of all the relics is a minute sliver from the Life-Bearing Cross of Jesus Christ, to Whom be given thanksgiving for bestowing such a blessing upon this little monastery and upon our Canadian land!—Bishop Varlaam of Vancouver (retired)

At right, pilgrims sit on the grass awaiting the "Theotokos Joy of Canada" to be carried over them.

Below, pilgrims take up their positions in the Cross procession, while holding icons and relics.



Our father among the saints

St John Kochurov

October 30 /November 12 OS

There is holy connectedness of place in the life of St. John Kochurov, whose modern, martyred life spans both Russia and America. St John as a missionary priest on the North American continent and builder of the beautiful Holy Trinity Cathedral, Chicago, is *ours*; yet to the Russian believers, in giving his life as the first clergy martyr of the Russian Revolution in 1917, he is also “*nash*” (*ours*). Thus St John, by his life declares the singularity of the holy Orthodox faith, believed everywhere and by all. He underlines the oneness of the vineyard, despite the unique needs and development of its parts.

St John was born within a clergy family on July 13, 1871 in the village of Bigildino-Surka in the Ryazan region of central Russia. His parents were Alexander and Anna (Perehvalskaya) Kochurov. He was an exemplary student at the Ryazan Seminary, and continued advanced studies at the St Petersburg Theological Academy, from which he graduated in 1895 at the age of twenty-four. Here his personal talents were recognized, and he was assigned to serve in America, being ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Nicholas (Ziorov) of the Aleutians and Alaska on August 27, 1895 at the St Alexander Nevsky Lavra in St Petersburg. His wife, Matushka Alexandra (Chernisheva) Kochurova, would be his spiritual helper in the new land.

In America, the Midwest would be his main area of mission work, Chicago particularly, from which he was responsible for developing a number of parish communities. He built with other builders, such as St AlexisToth, and was a close friend of St Tikhon. Blessed with a gift for organization and supervision, he founded parishes in Illinois at Madison (1900) and Joliet (1907). Working largely among Slavic workers, employees in the steel mills and other trades, Fr John encouraged the formation of brotherhoods as a means of seeding for future church organization, and followed by the construction of small chapels where services might begin.

A gifted preacher and writer, he was described as “a man with intensely intelligent eyes,” which is confirmed by his picture. His work in building the parish of the Holy Trinity in Chicago, was a gift to posterity appreciated by both the faithful and historic buildings preservationists alike. Employing Louis Sullivan as architect of the Holy Trinity Cathedral (who was later considered the Dean of American Architecture for his many fine buildings in Chicago, New York and elsewhere) Fr John was able to appeal to a number of financial backers, including Harold McCormick, son of the industrial magnate of McCormick Reaper fame. Sullivan, a student of the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris as well as being American-trained, built for the Orthodox a unique, embellished temple in the style of the Russian

provincial churches, magnificent in its detail. Consecrated by St Tikhon in 1903, this Cathedral for the Diocese of Chicago and the Midwest of the Orthodox Church in America, is also the seat of the bishop, the Most Reverend Job, Archbishop of Chicago; the church’s centenary was recently celebrated.

After twelve years in America, St John returned to Europe. Due to his skills in education he was assigned to teach catechism in the schools of Narva, Estonia, working within the Orthodox minority there. In 1916, he was assigned to St Catherine’s Cathedral in Tsarskoe Selo, translated literally as “The Tsar’s Village,” the place of residence of the royal family where the Alexander and Catherine Palaces were located, with urban environs, located twenty-four kilometers south of St Petersburg (later renamed Pushkin). Here he was known for his powerful, moving sermons.

Martyrdom came swiftly to the still-young priest. On October 30, 1917 as the town was under attack by Bolshevik forces during the turmoil of the Russian Revolution, people thronged to the churches seeking consolation. The clergy decided to conduct a prayer service and procession throughout the town to pray for peace. The following day, the town was seized by the Bolsheviks and Fr John was arrested as he attempted to quell the crowd. He was taken to the outskirts of town and there martyred. He thus became the first clergy martyr of the Russian Revolution in 1917, in a line of Russian New Hiero-Martyrs of the 20th century.

Seventy-seven years later, his sacrifice was fully recognized. On Sunday December 4, 1994, the Divine Liturgy with the Glorification of Sts Alexander Hotovitsky and John Kochurov took place in the 15th Century Dormition Cathedral in the Kremlin, Moscow. Concelebrating the Liturgy were His Holiness Alexei, Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia and His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius. It was a holy event remembered warmly by many in attendance, including His Grace, Bishop Seraphim.

The following excerpt from the Proclamation at that time clearly connects St John, martyr of the twentieth century, to the holy martyrs of old. “Aware of Her unbroken connection with the synaxis of the new martyrs of Russia, the Russian Orthodox Church continues to individually glorify those who, during the persecutions to which the Orthodox Church in Russia was subjected, through their righteous lives and martyrs’ deaths, manifested the highest ideal given to the Church of Christ by the Holy Apostle Paul: *For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord* (Rom. 14:8).” Combining the faith of both lands, he was found faithful unto death. St John is described as a *martyr for Christ and neighbour*, combining the two great commandments of which our Lord, God and Saviour, Jesus Christ clearly speaks. May St John pray for us!

Photographs of the life of St John can be viewed at oca.org, 2003 Events, Holy Trinity Cathedral Chicago, “Feast of St John Kochurov,” Oct. 31, 2003.

An accord with Satan

—by Archbishop Lazar (Puhalo), retired Bishop of Ottawa

Give, no more heed to astrologers; for the Divine Scripture says of them: 'Let them try to save you, those astrologers who gaze at the stars and new moons, who predict what will befall you... Behold, they shall be consumed as stubble in the fire; they cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame.' (*St Cyril of Jerusalem, Cat.Lec.4:18*)

It is a very great tragedy that so many of our people have become so faithless and full of superstition that they actually resort to astrologers, fortune tellers, palm readers, "seers" and give credence to publications such as *The National Enquirer*. Not only have such people turned away from real faith in God and His Providence, but they have truly placed themselves in the hands of demons and in an accord with Satan. We know from Divine Scripture, and from the holy and God-bearing fathers and from history, that demons both prophesy through people whom they possess, and offer guidance to any who will follow them. This is a terrifying and sobering fact. We should not merely write off our present-day soothsayers and prophesiers as rip-off artists. Many of them are just that, but many of the more successful ones prophesy with the aid of demons or are actually possessed by demons.

Although it is difficult for some deluded people to understand, demon-possessed people often confess Christ and appear to witness for Him. We have only to recall the soothsayer at Phillipi who troubled Apostle Paul:

And as we were going to the place of prayer a certain maid possessed by a spirit of divination, who earned much income for her masters by telling fortunes, met us. Following behind Paul, she cried out saying: 'These men are the servants of the most high God, and are announcing to us the way of salvation.'

She did this for many days, and Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, 'I command you, in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her.' And it departed from her at once. (*Acts 16:16-18*)

The same thing occurred in the life of our holy father St Nektarios of Pentapolis (+1920). He went secretly to the island of Aegina, but when the boat he was on arrived there, a large crowd had gathered at the pier to greet him. "How did you know I was coming?" the saint asked. "We have a young man here with the gift of prophecy. He tells us many things before they come to pass. He told us that a holy bishop would arrive here today to teach us." "Take me to this young prophet," the saint directed. As soon as St Nektarios was brought to the boy, he cast the demon out of him, and the young man never prophesied again. There are many other such

instances in the history of the Church. We learn from the holy fathers that the demons foretell even things which seem good and spiritually beneficial, in order to lead us toward faith in their servants and away from depending on God's Providence. Demons even cause Orthodox Christians to have false prophetic dreams, as we read in the *Ladder of Divine Ascent* :

The demons of vainglory prophesy in dreams. Being unscrupulous, they surmise the future and foretell it to us. When these visions come true, we are amazed; and we are elated with the thought that we are already near to the gift of foreknowledge. A demon is often a prophet to those who believe him ... Being a spirit, he sees what is happening near the earth, and seeing that someone is dying, he foretells it through dreams to the light minded ... Demons often transform themselves into angels of light and take on the form of martyrs, and make it appear to us during sleep that we are in communication with them ... **He who believes in dreams is completely inexperienced. But he who distrusts all dreams is a wise person.** (3:28-29)

Do not be astonished if the demons often suggest to us good thoughts and intellectual arguments against themselves. The aim of the enemy in this case is to make us believe that they also know the thoughts of our hearts. (26:154)

The Holy Scripture itself is full of condemnation for those who visit astrologers, palm readers, numerologists, soothsayers and the like. God warns us through the holy prophet Isaiah :

But evil shall come upon you ... and ruin shall come upon you suddenly ... let them try to save you, those astrologers who gaze at the stars and new moons, who predict what shall befall you. Behold, they are like stubble, the fire consumes them; they cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame. (47:12-14)

And through Jeremiah He says:

Hear the word which the Lord speaks, O house of Israel. Thus says the Lord: Do not learn the ways of the nations, nor be concerned by signs in the heavens ... for the customs of the peoples are false. (10:1-3)

We read the "Prayer of Repentance of Manasseh, King of Judah," a number of times during the year in Divine services. What was the sin of Manasseh that was so great that his repentance is repeatedly commemorated? Among other things, he honoured astrological signs, consulted "diviners, fortune-tellers and those who had a prophetic spirit," and thus "worked sufficient wickedness before the Lord to provoke Him." (2Chron.23:4-7).

Let us recall also that Saul lost his kingdom because he disobeyed God and consulted a woman with a prophetic spirit. Indeed, this is one of the most startling cases recorded in Holy Scripture. In a time of trouble,

Saul prayed to God, but God did not give Saul a special answer. He had given His law and Scripture, and it was sufficient. Saul, however, being disobedient to God, cowardly and superstitious, did not hope on repentance and God's Providence and promises, but went to consult a fortune-teller, a woman possessed by a prophetic spirit. He asked the woman to bring back the dead prophet Samuel, that he might consult him. By means of her "seance," a figure appeared which looked and spoke like Samuel. She told Saul, "I saw gods ascending out of the earth." When Saul saw the form like Samuel, he bowed to the ground before it and asked its advice about a coming battle. The demon who had appeared in the form of Samuel then spoke a prophecy to Saul which later came to pass. Saul had known Samuel well during his lifetime, and he was completely convinced that this demonized woman had power to call the soul from heaven and make it appear and speak to him. But Saul lost his kingdom to David because of his disobedience and lack of faith. (*See 1Ki 28:5-17, Orthodox Bible, 1Sam. in the KJV*).

We ought to give serious consideration to these things. Consulting astrologers, palm readers and fortune-tellers, believing dreams and chasing spectacular miracles is no joke. Such people are consorting with demons and playing with fire—eternal fire.

Among the more serious and spiritually dangerous events of our time, is the spread of a superstitious, agitated and very unsober spirituality. This type of spirituality, which is a fruitful ground for the deceits of Satan, usually appears at times and in places where a knowledge of sound, Orthodox theology is weak. Without the divinely inspired theology to guide us, we become like boats drifting in a sea of ecstatic, unsober mysticism and superstitious spiritualism. This condition, which may best be summarized as "National Enquirer spirituality," has become widespread among Orthodox people. Indeed, there are even one or two journals in circulation which might justly be referred to as "Orthodox National Enquirers." Such publications specialize in "dreams," "visions," "spiritual phenomena," and in interpreting every coincidence as some kind of "miracle." These publications, especially the "Orthodox" ones, are leading people into a spirituality of delusion and demonic phenomena, lacking in all biblical sobriety and theological soundness.

We are astounded at the number of people, especially among the wealthy, who consider themselves to be Orthodox Christians, but who, nevertheless, follow horoscopes, consult fortune-tellers, diviners and seers, and believe in omens, amulets, dreams and apparitions. This is especially shocking, since the Holy Scripture, as we have seen, speaks so sharply against these things.

It is clear from Holy Scripture that those who consult astrologers, fortune-tellers, palm readers, etc. are consulting demons, and God's law considers such people to be idolaters. It is equally clear that people who allow their lives to be guided by these things are agreeing to have their lives guided by demons rather than by Divine Providence.

They have an accord of faith with Satan.

It is time for Orthodox Christian people to turn to God and the theology of the Holy Church, to take seriously the Divine Scripture, and reject these things which are so clearly condemned by the Bible and the teachings of our holy and God-bearing fathers.

Une vie aux mille soucis Et privée de joie intérieure

—par Photios Kontoglou ; traduit par Père Pierre (Vachon)

L'homme est insatiable en tout. Il veut pouvoir jouir de tout mais il ne parvient jamais à tout atteindre; et le voilà tourmenté.

Et pourtant, celui qui en arrive à se contenter de peu, à ne pas trop convoiter alors même qu'il pourrait acquérir n'importe quoi, cet homme là est un homme heureux. En celà, il n'est mû ni par le souci d'économie ni par une notion quelconque qui lui ferait voir dans les richesses une menace pour son âme ou son corps. S'il vit ainsi, c'est qu'il trouve dans le peu qu'il a, dans cette simplicité, une satisfaction plus pure. Plus encore, dans ce peu et ce simple il ne se perd pas lui-même : "Quel est l'homme riche? C'est celui qui trouve sa joie en peu de choses."

Les hommes n'arrivent pas à trouver la quiétude, puisqu'ils font tout pour vivre à l'écart de leur propre soi. Ils courent ici et là à la recherche du bonheur. Mais ce bonheur, il n'existe pas hors de soi. Nous cherchons à nous plaire à un banquet d'où nous sommes absents. Quiconque a perdu son propre soi a perdu aussi son bonheur. Car le bonheur, ce n'est pas cette griserie que procurent les plaisirs, les jouissances et les soucis qui vont avec, mais c'est bien plutôt la paix de l'âme et la muette allégresse du coeur. Quand il se plonge au plus profond de lui-même, l'homme trouve Dieu. Voilà pourquoi le Christ a dit : "Le Royaume de Dieu ne viendra pas d'une manière qui se fasse remarquer, et l'on ne dira point : il est ici ou il est là, car, le Royaume de Dieu est au dedans de vous." Hommes étourdis, ne cherchez pas le bonheur par ici ou par là car il est au dedans de vous.

à suivre p. 18 . . .

Parole grandiose, comme le sont toutes les paroles divines. Le trésor, il est en nous. Au dehors, il n'y a qu'aridité. Aussi, ne soyons pas dupes du monde, de son tapage et de ses feux d'artifice. Qui vit à l'extérieur vit dans le faux. Mais pour qui vit au dedans, tout est vrai. Je la connais bien la vie de ces gens qu'on appelle les hommes du monde. Ils se divertissent, ils voyagent tout en se laissant prendre à toutes sortes de spectacles insignifiants, à des discours vides, à des scandales et à des futilités de tout genre. Toutes choses qui, de loin, paraissent sérieuses voire enviabiles alors qu'une fois qu'on s'en approche, on s'étonne de leur médiocrité et, du même coup, de la frivolité de ceux qui se laissent piéger par ces soi-disant recettes du bonheur.

Je la connais donc bien cette vie là puisque, forcément, j'ai vécu avec des hommes riches qui m'invitaient dans leurs maisons, dans leurs villas, à bord de leurs yachts et à leurs divertissements. Là, j'étais saisi de mélancolie. J'y voyais des hommes malheureux qui faisaient semblant d'être heureux, des condamnés qui jouaient à l'homme libre. Sans la fausse grâce qu'ils mettaient à jouer ce jeu, ils seraient vite devenus la proie d'une langueur insupportable—de l'ennui, ou de l'un ou l'autre. Vidés qu'ils sont de toute substance, ils sont trois fois malheureux. Il leur manque une âme, il leur manque le bonheur : le Royaume de Dieu. Comment faire du pain sans levain? Comment tout ne serait-il pas fade si le sel vient à manquer?

À l'époque, j'étais bien obligé de fréquenter, de tels hommes du monde, quoique rarement. Je ne voulais pas les froisser puisqu'après tout, ils m'invitaient de bon coeur. Une fois chez eux, par contre, je ne voyais ni quand ni comment j'arriverais à retourner dans ma coquille, à ma pauvre maison, au milieu des objets qui me sont chers. Je voyais bien qu'au lieu de recueillir quoi que ce soit de tout ce tintamarre, c'étais moi, en fait, qui apportais quelque chose ; aux endormis l'éveil, aux engourdis le dégourdissement, à leur monotonie, de la vie.

Et voilà qu'au moment où j'écris et malgré le fait que beaucoup de personnes fort aimables continuent de m'inviter, en Grèce mais aussi loin d'ici, voilà qu'en ce moment même, je suis assis dans mon petit jardin avec ses quelques arbres et ses humbles fleurs. Ici, je trouve le repos et mon âme est en paix. Ce petit coin de verdure est mon jardin d'Eden. Une brise embaume l'air alors que mon esprit voyage. Il erre ici et là mais, surtout, il s'enfonce au dedans de moi, là où sourd l'eau mystique, là où plongent les racines du monde.

Je remercie Dieu d'avoir pu dénicher un tel refuge. Je ressens un grand bonheur à m'y retrouver ainsi seul, là où nul ne me connaît, où nul ne pense à moi. C'est

comme être un naufragé rescapé d'une tempête et qui écoute le mugissement de la mer de son sûr abri. C'est comme avoir échappé à des brigands. Il me vient la chair de poule rien qu'à penser à cette bourrasque que mes semblables appellent "vie" ; vie de société, jungle remplie de scorpions, de serpents et de loups. Moi, je ne m'entend bien qu'avec deux ou trois personnes, simples, bonnes et qui s'aiment l'une et l'autre. Et dans leur coeur règne la paix. Je ne cherche pas l'admiration du monde ou la renommée ou tout autre fléau du genre. Je veux simplement être oublié, sans importance. Ô oubli, quel baume tu es pour ceux qui aspirent à la paix. Maudite soit cette soif des hommes pour la célébrité et l'adulation que donne le monde. Les voilà tourmentés au milieu de leur futilités, —les adulateurs de mêmes que les adulés.

Ici, dans mon coin, je me sens loin de tous ces tourments que les pauvres hommes prennent pour du bonheur. La brise fraîche qui souffle sur mon visage entre délicatement dans mes oreilles comme pour me saluer. Les branches et les cîmes des arbres se bercent tout doucement. Les petits insectes font leur chemin sur le sol embaumé, chacun poursuivant son but. Où allons-nous? Mystère. Des papillons, des mouches de toutes espèces, volent et se rassemblent autour de la lumière au dessus de ma tête. Tous ont leur importance, tous sont dignes d'être aimés. Et moi aussi, je suis l'un d'eux.

On n'entend rien si ce ne sont les gouttelettes qui coulent de mon robinet, rendant le silence plus profond encore. On dirait qu'autour de moi se déroule quelque mystagogie. Ce grand mystère du monde, je le sens en moi et hors de moi. De partout s'ouvrent des portes mystiques. Chaque arbre, chaque herbe, chaque fleur semble me regarder de leurs yeux de mystère.

Je suis bienheureux dans ce petit jardin à moi. En comparaison, les immenses jardins, les palais dispendieux, les magnifiques yachts passeraient inaperçus. Tout ce qui m'entoure m'est cher parce que rien de tout cela n'a été acheté avec beaucoup d'argent comme l'ont été les biens des riches. D'ailleurs, comment des objets qu'on a acheté apporteraient-ils à l'homme le bonheur?

Eh! vous qui possédez la richesse et qui ignorez de quelle sorte est la vraie joie, hommes tourmentés, désorientés par tous vos soucis et tous vos ennuis, esclaves de l'ambition et d'autres passions, fils prodigues qui avez mangé les caroubes mais sans vous rassasier : retournez donc à la maison de votre Père compatissant, cette demeure qui n'est rien d'autre que votre coeur et entrez-y pour vous y délasser, vous y délecter et y ressentir la vraie joie.

Photios Kontaglou est un iconographe, théologien, et peintre grec célèbre. □

Finding God in Harry Potter?

Looking for God in Harry Potter. By John Granger, Tyndale House Publishers, 2004. ISBN 1-4143-0091-3.

—reviewed by Matushka Donna Farley

Why would Christian readers even consider “looking for God” in *Harry Potter*—the phenomenally successful and controversial series of books about witches and wizards? That must be somebody’s wishful thinking, or worse yet, a plot hatched by C.S. Lewis’s craftily deceptive demon, Screwtape....

Orthodox Christian author John Granger certainly thought so when he first set out to read the books so that he could say *why* he didn’t want his seven children reading them. But Granger got a surprise: from the very first book, *Harry Potter* author J.K. Rowling’s themes, symbols, and character names rang bells—you might say church bells—with Granger’s classical and literary training.

After reading *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, Granger quickly devoured the rest of the series then in print in big gulps, read them aloud with his family, and began discussing them with friends at local gatherings of the C.S. Lewis Society. Those friends, fascinated and enlightened by his take on the controversial books, urged him to compile his material and present it more formally. Before long, Granger’s enthusiasm for Harry and the world of Hogwarts became something of a vocation, turning him into a featured speaker at numerous venues, including Nimbus 2003, a large convention of Harry Potter fans. He gathered his material into a self-published book, which sold out and was then picked up by Tyndale, a major Christian publishing house.

In the Introduction to his book, Granger writes: “My thesis is essentially this: *As images of God designed for life in Christ, all humans naturally resonate with stories that reflect the greatest story ever told—the story of God who became man.* The Harry Potter novels, the best-selling books in publishing history, touch our hearts because they contain themes, imagery, and engaging stories that echo the Great Story we are wired to receive and respond to.”

How can stories about the training of a boy wizard possibly relate to Christianity? Far from attempting to impose some sort of Christian moral on worldly or possibly demonic stories, Granger demonstrates in profuse detail that J.K. Rowling has structured her series around the alchemical purification of the soul—a system of Christian imagery used by writers in the tradition of

great literature stretching back to Shakespeare and beyond. The overarching themes of love and death bring Harry to a scene of momentous battle with evil and death at the conclusion of each volume. In each of those scenes, Granger points out, “Harry never saves himself, but is always saved by a symbol of Christ or by love.”

Some of those symbols of Christ are apparent to anyone familiar with C.S. Lewis’s *Narnia Chronicles* or with the medieval bestiary. Before the Reformation turned Christendom upside-down, resulting finally in the post-Christian world we have today, Christian writers delighted to find signs of Christ everywhere they looked. Among the traditional symbols adopted by Rowling from ancient and medieval sources are the unicorn (purest of all creatures, whose blood gives life); the phoenix (who dies and rises again); the stag (in which form Christ appeared to several different medieval saints); and the lion (whom the Apocalypse 5:5 identifies with Christ).

But what about the magic? Before reading the Harry Potter books, Granger was highly protective of his children’s minds and souls. He did not own a television, and would have no truck with anything occult. None of that changed after his discovery of Rowling’s books as Christian literature. Unplugged from so much of popular culture, Granger did not know of the anti-Harry attitudes in some Christian circles until after he had read the books, and was somewhat taken aback to learn of what he calls the “sound and fury in the popular media and coming from many pulpits.” To bring a little sanity amid that sound and fury, the opening chapter of his book deals with the fictional use of magic as a symbol for a spiritual worldview, opposed to the materialism that surrounds us daily, and with the difference between “invocational” and “incantational” magic.

“Invocational” magic is that practiced by real pagans, wiccans, Satanists and others in the world even today, in which spiritual powers—*i.e.*, demons—are called upon. The magic in Harry Potter, however, Granger demonstrates, is not invocational, but (like that in the *Narnia Chronicles* and *Lord of the Rings*) incantational : magic in a literary medium that symbolically “sings along” with the universe of which God is the all-wise and all-loving Creator.

As Granger’s introduction puts it, his book is a “step-by-step walk through ... images, themes, and stories to reveal the core of the Harry Potter books and why they are so popular : they address the need (really an innate need akin to our need for physical nourishment) that we have for spiritual nourishment in the form of edifying, imaginative experience of life in Christ.”

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Granger's book is a must-read for parents, educators and clergy. *Harry Potter* is a cultural phenomenon that will touch your children, your students, your parishoners, your mission field; *Looking For God in Harry Potter* unlocks the Christian theology smuggled into the heart of Rowling's books.

An important Canadian theologian

For a Culture of Co-suffering Love : the Theology of Archbishop Lazar Puhalo. By

Andrew J. Sopko. Archive Publications, 2004. ISBN 0-19672-15-9.

—reviewed by Nicholas Franck

Archbishop Lazar has enlightened Synaxis Press' readership for a quarter century and enthralled audiences throughout his career as author, lecturer and preacher. His mental acuity and scope of interests have seemed at times so mercurial and wide ranging as to require an equally encyclopedic knowledge to grasp them. Always, Vladyka Lazar's point of departure is the gospel of the man-befriending God-Man, articulated in the patristic tradition, passed down through such luminaries as the late Metropolitan Antony Khrapovitsky. Andrew Sopko's objective scholarship is able to convey in a comprehensive yet terse book the breadth of Archbishop Lazar's diverse works and place them succinctly in a thesis of Christian compassion. While followers of Archbishop Lazar's ministry, the present reviewer included, might have found his interests, from Patristics to astrophysics to physical anthropology to neuropsychiatry to existentialism, challenging if not exhausting, Sopko has little difficulty in keeping up. He is able to appreciate and describe Vladyka Lazar's work as a cohesive whole, consistent on a continuum, elucidating Orthodox Christian theology, and its mystical underpinnings in a manner which is less obtuse than sometimes rendered and more welcoming to a wider world.

Sopko sees Archbishop Lazar's work as proceeding across two related fronts. The foremost of these is the preaching of the core Christian doctrine of compassion or co-suffering love; those teachings which inform this doctrine, exposure and refutation of heresies and misapprehensions which do not. Vladyka Lazar's second, related, undertaking is understood as the development of a theology of culture. In order for Orthodox Christianity to witness to humanity, what have become her cultural limitations must be addressed. Fr John Romanides, another subject of Sopko, notes that Orthodoxy is perceived as a faith of "long services, long robes, long beards." Others, both within and without the Church have fretted and feared her decline into the narrow confines of ethnic ghetto siege mentality and/or a museum of religious curios.

Resisting, as many have not, an urge to modify the Church in a popular mania for "relevance," Archbishop Lazar has very consciously developed a theology of culture aimed at meeting the challenges posed by postmodern secular and religious society. This theology of culture, fully appreciated by Sopko, perhaps more thoroughly so than by any other commentator, includes a number of favoured and select themes. This careful selection may not have always been self-evident to past audiences, though with Sopko's help, this has been clarified. That is, Archbishop Lazar has presented traditional theology and developed original responses which speak to contemporary social issues and which frequently court reaction. "What is the Church position?" "but the Bible says otherwise!" typify such contentions. The dilemma characteristically faced by Orthodox Christians is whether to retreat into a sheltered spiritual refuge or to incur the risk inherent to our Saviour's request that we convey His Love to all the world.

The book's chapters review many of Archbishop Lazar's favourite cultural studies. While Vladyka's interests may seem boundless, his work is an ongoing response to critical ecclesiological issues. His ministry has benefited from spontaneity of thought and mental agility, and this would have not been so had it all been blueprinted. These areas have been etched out by Sopko as dogmatics, gender issues, existential moral philosophy, empirical science, aesthetics, eschatology and ecclesiology. Sopko notes that, historically, Orthodox Christianity was a powerful presence on the world cultural stage. Arguably, Byzantium's cultural repositories and academic tradition, uninterrupted through late antiquity infused the Renaissance as Europe emerged from the Dark Ages. It was, in part, the legacy of Byzantium and Tsarist Russia which embellished Orthodox culture throughout subsequent historic eras. Ironically, through the later diaspora of the Orthodox people, there has been a tendency for the faithful to grow more protectively insular, seeming less accommodating to potential catechumens. Thus, the Church has been dismissed by contemporary religionists as a preservation society maintained by diminishing numbers of devotees. Apologists for this perception take solace in our heritage as a holy people, a race apart from the world, and there is wisdom in this caution. Archbishop Lazar, however, has never ceased to remind us of the scriptural admonition to evangelise, and the theology described by Sopko is a platform for the full engagement of the World to the end of embracing its humanity.

Sopko organizes the text so as to identify the more salient areas of Archbishop Lazar's evangelism and describe how each correlates to concerns of post-Christian thought. Dr Sopko, professor of theology in a Roman Catholic seminary, intends the book as instruction for students conversant in Biblical narrative, scriptural teachings, early

Church history and patristics. Beyond these requisite expectations, he provides a fine summation of those more recent Orthodox theological writings which provide a context for Vladyka Lazar's. With the exception of Romanides and Khrapovitsky, Archbishop Lazar's work is not seen as heavily indebted to contemporaries, but as highly innovative. Though Archbishop Lazar uses, for example, existential philosophical writings as points of departure, it is by way of relating them to patristic thought. Sopko's many engaging cross-references to other contemporary theologians place Vladyka Lazar in good company among contemporary Orthodox scholars evangelising in an academic mode.

Dr Sopko's discussion concentrates on the most popular of Vladyka Lazar's teachings, those most familiar to his flock. He begins with the "Gender as Prophecy" lecture, illustrating how, though derived from scriptural sources it speaks to contemporary concerns surrounding the issue of gender equality. Archbishop Lazar's argument in these writings, in sum, entails a premise that observance of traditional roles and behaviours in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church carries no general value assumption as to the worth of men or women as such. Neither can any such valuations be generalized by Orthodox Christians or others to regarding gender roles in civic or political life. The text then turns to writings most central to an ethos of co-suffering: transvaluation of conventional mores as key to spiritual transfiguration. His Eminence is not alone in this observation, as it is central to all existential Christian thought. He is, however, select among Orthodox hierarchs in stressing such ethical insight as central to the doctrine of theosis. The "existential" ethos, that overreaches preoccupation with calculation of right and wrong toward a Good premised on Love is not altogether an invention of 19th century philosophy. Sopko mentions current discussion by Orthodox theologians regarding the existential flavour of St Gregory Palamas' writings. Kierkegaard, after all, in his desire to "Christianize" Christendom, and Nietzsche, in his desire to see it collapse, each recognized in the Gospel narratives an ethos of compassion as a love once lived and, thereafter, oddly absent in the institutions ostensibly founded upon these very narratives. Vladyka Lazar's ministry seeks to engage the postmodern sensibility also through a voiced enthusiasm for the physical sciences. While theoretical and applied physics and astronomy are favourite interests, his work also suggests an understanding of medicine and physical anthropology. These interests not only underscore Vladyka's curiosity, but an effort toward becoming conversant in the most topical areas of scientific research. Though one can be legitimately critical of false faith in scientific salvation or an idolatry of scientism, it will not do for those hoping to penetrate the Western consciousness to ignore science. Inasmuch as all postmoderns are so reliant upon scientific technology as to be transparent to it, we are

likely to be suspicious of zealots who insist upon its *prima facie* demonic evil. Science, after all, is our friend. Vladyka Lazar refers to this adversarial religious reaction as responsible for contrived "models of reality" set forth in order to shore up theological shortcomings and render unnecessary reassessments by complacent theologians. Examples of "models of reality" employed by defensive religionists range from the geocentric cosmology force-fed to Galileo to the "creationism" baked up in humble pie for us today by the religious right. Such abuses readily explain the Archbishop's urgent interest in astrophysics and evolutionary anthropology as ingredients of a cultural theology.

Sopko's text at its midpoint turns to Archbishop Lazar's more purely spiritual themes: iconography, eschatology, and evangelism. Orthodox Christian iconography can give rise to a sensitive impasse to interfaith dialogue with post-Reformation Christendom, defended gingerly by Orthodox apologists undertaking any such colloquy. Archbishop Lazar's most popular lecture may well be "Iconography as Scripture" and its delineation of the Christian aesthetic. Iconography is presented therein as not simply permissible but a necessary component of Gospel interpretation and catechism. From the Orthodox perspective, the greater risk of unintentional idolatry more likely lies in the exegetical approach of isolating Biblical "proof texts," at the expense of their broader context. Iconography is presented through Archbishop Lazar's lecture as a subtextual aid provided to the initiate; perhaps a more incisive teaching device than any other comparable medium.

In its eschatological commentary Archbishop Lazar's work shifts toward Orthodox audiences most exclusively. The afterlife and apocalyptic prediction are topics virtually guaranteed to arouse religious interest, yet neither Orthodox clergy nor laity are as fully agreed upon such beliefs as might be supposed. While popular folklore and supermarket tabloids abound with authoritative accounts of the afterlife and expert endtime forecasts, it may seem startling that Orthodox Christians are not of one mind in such matters. Andrew Sopko details Archbishop Lazar's eschatological commentaries, which significantly heralded his entrance onto the theological stage. Popular Christianity was long influenced by superstition, folklore, Manichean and neoPlatonic beliefs, among others, which paralleled Christian dogma at points but were never legitimate Christian teachings. By the mid nineteenth century, if not before, some of this lore had become such commonplace, even to the Orthodox, as to be treated as canonical. Had these tales been merely favoured by the unlettered with a tenuous grasp of doctrine, it would have been a simple matter for more erudite Christians, including the clergy, to

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correct. The problem, as Archbishop Lazar has pointed out, is that such heresy is inevitably promulgated by the clergy; from the top down. As Vladyka Lazar attacks the Gnostic foundations of these heresies, it is worth keeping in mind that what is under discussion is not the supposed ecclesiastical cover-up touted by contemporary Gnostics in works such as “DaVinci Code” or Pagel’s exegesis of apocrypha. Such arguments are, incidentally, implausible in that such apocrypha would have become hopelessly obscured were it not for the Church’s own painstaking preservation of her own artifacts. What Vladyka questions are those heresies of the present which are actively and openly taught in revered Church circles! I will not slake the reader’s curiosity further, but invite those piqued to peruse Sopko’s chapter on Vladyka’s eschatological doctrine as well as the many related publications offered by Synaxis Press.

Dr Sopko concludes with an epilogue which takes into account the strengths of the Archbishop’s “Theology of Co-Suffering” as well as its oversights. Sopko’s candour, needless to say, will tantalize former students of the Archbishop, still accustomed to soliciting his approval. Sopko’s criticism, however is impersonal and directed as much to Orthodoxy’s ambiguous attitude to external dialogue as to the Archbishop. Orthodox traditionalists, for instance are perpetually at odds with ecumenists: The latter ardently defending every vestige of high tradition, the former protesting the faith will wither if growth is inhibited. A recent wave of conversion in North America, followed by an influx of Old World Orthodox refugees, while increasing membership and revitalizing parish life, renewed the Church’s role as an “immigrant resource.” This consideration may diffuse some of Sopko’s observation that Archbishop Lazar, as most of our episcopacy, remains perpetually bound by Old World identity; *i.e.*, compassion for the newcomer will take precedence over, say, a move for vernacular liturgy. Sopko also observes that Orthodoxy’s harsh criticism of Western Christianity, indeed, of Western secular culture, deflates the Church’s postmodern dialectic currency. There is again the traditional/ecumenist tension to reconsider, but also the body of much of Sopko’s own study. Vladyka Lazar’s perpetual reinvention of himself as physicist, anthropologist, existentialist, gender spokesperson, metaphysician, etc. exhibits nothing if not a heartfelt effort on the part of a traditionalist hierarch to embrace a world not of his own predilection. A more pointed critique may be of Vladyka’s ecclesiology; that it would remain unclear to the unchurched reader of the Archbishop’s as to how expression of compassion was necessarily linked to Orthodox baptism and the ensuing theotic struggle: (*Can’t I just do this at home?!*) Nonetheless, Sopko’s conclusion leaves an impression of immense respect for Archbishop Lazar’s work, culminating with a moving and lyrical passage

on the nature of the gospel of co-suffering by Metropolitan Antony, key inspiration of the lifework of Lazar Puhalo.

Andrew Sopko’s text is, to this reader’s discerning eye, well-researched, highly articulate and impressively referenced. Several advance copies were distributed in an effort to gauge reader response. Reaction was favourable overall with reserved criticism. Some sampled found the text overly academic in tone; so demanding at points that earlier passages had to be reread in order to stay abreast. The reader, as already noted, is grateful to Dr Sopko for having consolidated Archbishop Lazar’s writings so singularly and artfully illustrating their central theology. His thoughts on encouraging universal Christian dialogue teem with fresh insight. While the text is material for seminarian seminar, Sopko is generous enough by way of explanation, notes and cross-reference that the reader maintains that any who could follow this taxing review should be able to follow Sopko’s generous text. The only genuinely upsetting response to it was from a parishioner who assumed the work was published as a retrospective upon His Eminence’s retirement from active life. This reader for one is thankful that the Archbishop is far from retiring from active life. God grant him many years!

Notice

At the Archdiocesan Council meeting at St Seraphim’s Church in Rawdon QC, on Friday, 5 November 2004, Bishop Seraphim announced to the Council that he had made his choice of a nominee to the Holy Synod for Auxiliary Bishop. Trusting in God’s direction alone on the subject, he had made the choice by lot. The result was Protodeacon Cyprian Hutcheon of Montréal, whose biography was published previously in the *Messenger*, and in whom His Grace expressed full confidence. The Archdiocesan Council unanimously confirmed the choice, and proceeded to make necessary adjustments to the Archdiocesan budget in order to provide for the eventual consecration of an Auxiliary Bishop. This name will be submitted to the Holy Synod, whose responsibility it is to examine the candidate, and to elect him, or not. Please pray, as you have in the past.

La réunion du Conseil de l’Archidiocèse du Canada s’est tenue le 5 novembre 2004 à l’église St-Séraphim dans la municipalité de Rawdon QC. Monseigneur Séraphim a annoncé le nom du postulant à la position d’assistant épiscopal, dont la candidature va être présentée devant le Saint Synode. La décision fut déterminée par tirage au sort reflétant le désir de Sa Grâce de s’en remettre à l’intervention divine. Le choix du Proto-Diacre Cyprien Hutcheon de Montréal a été approuvé de façon unanime par le Conseil. Les ajustements budgétaires furent entamés immédiatement dans l’espoir de la consécration du candidat par le Saint Synode, de qui dépend la décision finale. Prions ensemble comme nous l’avons toujours fait par le passé.

Visit to Czechia and Slovakia

18 – 26 September 2004

The agenda was quite demanding on this visit of the delegation of the OCA, accompanying Metropolitan Herman on his visit to the Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia. It entailed driving to each of the four dioceses, in two countries, serving, visiting Churches, meeting the faithful, and establishing or renewing personal contacts and friendships between our Churches. Our Metropolitan has been representing our Church for many years, and he is already well-known by many hierarchs around the world. In this case, he was visiting the land of his ancestors, or at least a part of it. His family comes from Trans-Carpathia, a region of Slovakia annexed to Ukraine during the time of Stalin. Because of this border, and lack of time, it was not possible for him to go to his home village during this particular visit. However, this Church of Czechia and Slovakia is ancestral home Church of a great many believers in the OCA, particularly in the USA. Our delegation consisted of Metropolitan Herman, Bishop Nikon, myself, Protopresbyter Robert Kondratick, Archpriest Daniel Ressetar, and members of the Chancery staff.

We arrived in Prague on Saturday, 18 September. Czechia is a union of two ancient well-known areas, Bohemia in the north, and Moravia in the south. We were greeted by His Eminence Kryšof, Archbishop of Prague (in Boheimia), and clergy. From there we drove to the Monastery of St Prokop of Sazava Monastery in Most, one of the several recently opened monastic communities in Czechia. Czechia is a growing part of this Church, both through conversion and immigration, which complement each other.

Later, we visited the historic Church of the Holy Cross in Teplice, nearby. Here, we venerated the relics of the 4th Century Roman Martyr, Clarus, brought to Teplice much earlier. On Sunday, we drove to Prague and served together in the Cathedral of Sts Cyril and Methodius. This cathedral was the site of a famous conflict in 1942, between the Nazi forces and Czechoslovak resistance, resulting in the death of parachutists, and it is therefore, in part, a historic site. Because Bishop Gorazd gave his life in the same year, in exchange for the Church, and tried to protect his flock, he is a revered New Martyr. After lunch, a large bag of charitable gifts, including medications, was given, because this Church has connections with Kosovo, the destination of the aid. Later, we first visited a nearby village in which is the rather recently-established Roma (Gypsie) parish, the only one in this Church, with its Roma priest, the first also. Then we visited St Vladimir's Church in Maria Lanske, and then went to Sts Peter and Paul's Church in Karlovy Vary (Karlsbad), which is a long-time and historic Moscow Patriarchate representation, begun by Tsar Peter I. We also drank the healing waters there.

Next, we visited the Russian, Canadian and US embassies in Prague. The Russian Embassy has an historic location with sufficient territory to allow for a "domestic"

Church on the grounds. We had time to visit the historic city hall, with its famous clock from the fifteenth century. As well, at the hour, for over 300 years, the twelve apostles appear in two windows above the face of the clock.

Then we drove to the Monastery for the Dormition in Velmov, via Olomouc, near Brno (Moravia). The nuns here, who came from Varatec in Romania, give additional service to the Church by providing a retreat and conference facility. There, during dinner, we were given an overview of the relationship among the Orthodox, Roman Catholics and Evangelicals through talks given by Archbishop Jan Graubner of Olomouc, and Bishop Vladislav Volny of the Silesian Evangelical Church. David Wagschal gave a presentation about the OCA's activities in the CCC, NCCC, and WCC. Next day, we served the Divine Liturgy together with Bishop Simeon of Olomouc and Brno in the Cathedral in Brno. Built in 1931 in Functionalist Style, it is situated on a prominent hill just below the historic castle.

After the dinner, we were given a brief tour of Brno, and then drove to Mikul. It was here that St Methodius, in the 9th Century lived and worked in a town with 12 Churches, and a population of 2500. Here, in the main Church, the third excavated, was found the first tomb of St Methodius (because the Pope later anathematised him, his relics were removed to a monastery in Austria). The Mission of St Methodius here was very effective in its day, but there was strong opposition from the western Church. As a result, in the 10th Century, the Franks destroyed, levelled and obliterated the town. It was found accidentally in excavations earlier in the 20th Century, and sheds much light on the state of affairs in the mid-800s.

It is perhaps important for us to pay attention to this particular town and its life, and its relationship to the Mission of Sts Cyril and Methodius. This is in fact the focus of the foundation of the missionary work in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, but the same principles of Orthodox missionary work have been used by all the children of these original missions during their missionary work, including our own OCA. Then we visited the Monastery of St Gorazd, at the place where he was born, in Hrubá Věbka.

From there, we drove to Bratislava in Slovakia, and its capital. We were greeted by His Beatitude, Nikolai of Presov, Bishop Jan of Michalovce, and clergy. The next day consisted in visiting the Chairman of Parliament, and various other civil authorities, and the US Embassy. We also saw the nearly completed new cathedral in Bratislava, and met the priest, choir and faithful who currently worship in an old Roman Catholic Church near the city castle. Then we were driven to Presov. En route, we saw by night a huge castle, the largest in Europe.

The following day included a meeting with the Holy Synod of the Czech Lands and Slovakia, visiting the Theological Faculty, the Seminary, the Mayor of Presov and the President of the Presov region. The meeting with the Holy Synod produced a number of agreements for future

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cooperation and mutual support, and this was reinforced by the meeting with the Theological Faculty, professors and students. The Mayor of Presov in particular stressed the fact that this city is multicultural, albeit seemingly isolated, and it is on the crossroads of east-west-north-south commerce from very ancient times (human presence from forty thousand years, and a town for 750 years).

The next day consisted in a tour of the Diocese of Michalovce and took us close to the Ukrainian border and Uzhorod. We began with a visit to the village where St Alexis Toth was born, and continued through Svidnik, Mezilaborce (near the birthplace of the artist Andy Warhol), Straske, Michalovce, and Sobrance. Because almost all property was taken from the Orthodox Church after 1989, and given to the Unia, most of the churches we visited were quite new. This included the diocesan offices and the cathedral. In these years, the Orthodox Church in Slovakia has built over 100 temples. Everywhere the faithful met us with beautiful plainchant singing.

We visited the St Nicholas Orphanage in Mezilaborce, which is one supported by the OCA's Christmas Stocking project. It brought into focus the great needs of the Roma people, and the many ways in which the Orthodox Church tries to meet these needs. We visited several Churches under construction. We visited in Michalovce the technical school operated by the Church, the first of its kind in Slovakia. All of this served to show to us the Church in Slovakia, but also to show to the faithful that the Church exists far beyond its own borders, and that others are interested in their situation, and might be able to help some aspects of their life. This is one of the major factors involved in a Primatial Visit of this sort.

The Divine Liturgy was concelebrated in Kosice, the second-largest city of Slovakia, by Metropolitan Herman, Bishop Jan, and six priests on 25 September. The rest of the delegation was in attendance, because of the awkward space in this church, which is a former soviet-style meeting-hall. As in so many other places, the Orthodox Church was deprived of its property first by the soviets, and then by the democratic

government as properties were returned to the Unia. However, the Orthodox faithful have continued in a Christian manner of forgiveness to build anew. Here, and also in Bratislava, a particularly large building is required, and sponsors willing to help are also required, more than the locals are able to provide. [If there is anyone who feels moved by the Lord to help, contact Bishop Jan of Michalovce, at Duklianska 16, 071 44 Michalovce, Republic of Slovakia.] Then there was a visit with the mayor of Kosice, and then with the Governor of the Kosice Region, actually a province similar to those of Canada.

Then came the consecration of the new Cathedral in Presov, yet another example of this rebuilding. This building, like the other new churches, is in much more traditional Orthodox style than most of the edifices taken away from the Church. It requires more finishing work still, which requires money not yet available. But the temple was full to overflowing of the faithful who sang very strongly and fervently in the traditional plainchant (*prostopeniye*). Present were many civil authorities of a rather high level, and similarly high ecclesiastical representation from other confessions. In itself, this indicates the significance of this visit, not only to the Church, but to the society in general. Our visit gave great encouragement to the faithful to persevere, and they strengthened us by their warm love in Christ.

The two countries are quite different in character, with somewhat different languages, and a generally common history under the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and as Czechoslovakia. Czechia is a more industrial country, and the society quite secularised, with a low number of believers in general. The majority of faithful there seem to be from conversion. Slovakia is more agrarian, a bit more eastern in character, with a large number of believers, and especially in the east it is conservative and traditional. In this society, conversion can cost even all relationship with one's family. Orthodox believers have suffered a great deal for a very long time, but they are active, strong singers, and lovingly hospitable.

†Seraphim

Bishop Seraphim represents Metropolitan Herman At Alexandrian enthronement

October 23–26, Bishop Seraphim headed the OCA delegation to Alexandria, Egypt to represent Metropolitan Herman at the enthronement of the new Patriarch of Alexandria, Theodoros II. The Orthodox Church in America was one of fifteen autocephalous Churches represented at the enthronement. On the day of their arrival, the OCA delegation was received by His Beatitude Theodoros, who was presented with gifts on behalf of the OCA. Pictured from left to right are John Mindala, OCA Communications Department; Metropolitan Dionysios of the Alexandrian Patriarchate; Bishop Seraphim; the new Patriarch, Theodoros; and Fr Robert Kondratik, OCA Chancellor.

