



HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

Parish Newsletter

RESTON

Future Site: Potomac View Road (behind NoVa).

December 2013

DECEMBER—DAY 9 HOURS, NIGHT 15

- 13 Thu *30th Anniversary of the death of Fr. Alexander Schmemmann*
 15 Sun^{25•VIII•Lk13} 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy—**Coffee Hour: Smith**
 21 Sat *Food Pantry Leesburg—10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.*
 22 Sun^{26•I•Lk14} **SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY**
 9:45 a.m. Common Confession Rite (*in conjunction with the penitential season*)
 ~10:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy—**Coffee Hour: Warden**

THE WEEKS OF LUKE BRING US TO THE FEASTS OF LIGHT

The Church reflects on the Divine Manifestations [ΤΑ ΦΩΤΑ] of the Lord Jesus Christ:
 Life from God (December 25) • Life with God (January 6)
 Encountered in the Sacramental Life of the Church (February 2)

- 24 Tue CHRISTMAS EVE—4:00 p.m. Vespers with the Divine Liturgy
 25 Wed **NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**
 NOTE: *Between Christmas and Theophany—what was long ago called by some the Dodekaímeron or Twelve Days—there is no Wednesday/Friday abstinence.*
 29 Sun^{27•II•Lk15} **SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY**
 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy—**Coffee Hour: Wayland**

JANUARY—DAY 10 HOURS, NIGHT 14

- 5 Sun^{28•III•Lk16} **SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY**
 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy—**Coffee Hour: Williams**
 6 Mon **↑THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**
 12 Sun^{29•IV•Lk17} **SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY**
 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy—**Coffee Hour: Belinsky**
 18 Sat *Food Pantry Leesburg—10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.*
 19 Sun^{30•V•Lk17} 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy—**Coffee Hour: Busenberg**
 26 Sun^{31•VI•Lk18} 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy—**Coffee Hour: Doyle**
Our Annual Parish Business Meeting will follow the Liturgy—weather permitting.

FEBRUARY—DAY 11 HOURS, NIGHT 13

- 2 Sun^{32•VII•Lk19} **ENCOUNTER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST [40TH DAY]**
 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy—**Coffee Hour: Ellmore**

BECAUSE WE ALL FALL SHORT IN MANY WAYS, as St. James says in his epistle, it is a good thing for a parish to prepare to greet the Feasts of Light with penitential prayer, driving home to ourselves, despite any evidence to the contrary, that we are in fact disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ—a people responsible, resourceful, and resilient... and accountable. **So plan on taking part in the Common Confession Rite on Sunday, December 22. Come on time. Come in the right frame of mind.**

there are three open special exception files. I was unaware of that fact. The last one, denoted SPEX 2011-0011-0011 relates to the application to remove several conditions from the previous special exception. Foremost of these is the requirement for public sewer and tree screening and the fence were also included.

SPEX 2004-0012 was the revived special exception that had as its condition, among other things, that construction had to begin in 8 years. That is January 3, 2014. I wanted to get on the BOS's agenda before the special exception expires a request for an extension of the eight years and to remove the sewer condition and whatever else you asked to remove. The County Attorney also gave the informal opinion that the date to start construction is a condition in the last special exception and it cannot be removed by the Board. Ironically, it was said if no time was stated, the Board in an executive session can extend the five years in the statute.

I was told that when the special exception was recommended for denial no appeal was filed and that application in SPEX 2011-0011-0011 is inactive. When I became involved I recall it was removed from the BOS's next month's hearing while I eliminate the alternative routes for a

Coup de grâce? Unedited text of a summarizing e.mail from John McGeehan, dated 21 November.

Evan Harlow, Ginni VanHorn and John E. (I didn't get the last name) of the Loudoun County Planning Office and I met yesterday. I believe all of them were professional, objective and, within their authority, helpful. There was no negativity toward Holy Trinity

and there was no run-a-round.

First, it was stated that the condition of the special exception is to obtain a building permit, which cannot be done without a site plan, which cannot be done unless the public sewer access is resolved. So, the water line will not get the building permit or be deemed starting construction.

Second, Evan Harlow said that

sewer and it was my belief that an appeal had been filed. I even recall Matt Lepnew saying he personally paid a fee for that. In order to re-activate it, it must go through the same review with the Planning Commission as before and that cannot be accomplished before January 4, 2014. In addition there is a little savings in the filing fee between reactivating it and filing a new application. In a new application, we can (directly or indirectly) address the pump and haul and, perhaps, the other things you want eliminated. With those exception, we should trace as closely as possible the 2004 application. It was suggested by John E. that we should do the traffic study ASAP and we can mostly use the earlier study as that will save money. Harlow also said he'd make available what we want from the file to be reused and save expense. If we withdraw the 2011 application, you will have refunded about 20% of approximate \$5900 fee paid but the fee for a new application is approximately \$15,000. That hurts, but we are to get a refund of most or all of the \$20,000 given to Loudoun Water, that offsets things.

The alternatives to a new special exception are , one, to not develop this land. The Loudoun people are surprised that Loudoun Water has not run sewer into this neighborhood with the poor soil and failing septic fields. That also can be a target through the supervisor. Then perhaps you will have it develop the sewer for no more than you connection fee, which you have anyway. In connection with that interim step, you can use the building fund to find interim space.

A second alternative is to sell the lot. I previous mentioned a tax free exchange or the developer swapping land for a price that may include a charitable tax deduction. I think this does not realize what you'd hope from that, however. I note in your recent letter you state that no one is donating to the building fund and it stands at \$316,953.42. That is not enough to finish the development and to build even the limited structure you want.

I understand this is disappointing news. But perhaps this closes or leave ajar one door and you should look to the other doors, the Lord is opening. It is not my business but you have to have a fundraising that will raise \$1,000,000 or more to be able to build a new church.

I am prepared to discuss this with the Board or the entire congregation at you request and convenience.

John P. McGeehan

VSB #9160

McGeehan Pascale PLC

11211 Waples Mill Road, St. 210

Fairfax, VA 22030

(703)273-5303

Rejoice for Track 30. Susan Matyuf reviews the last entry on Vladimir Morosan's new CD, *Panagia*.

And then we get to Track 30. We feel awakened from the ethereal praises sung to our Most Holy Theotokos. It is our community's song to honor her. A gift from Father Paul to his flock. Track 30 of the CD entitled, "Archangel Voices, *Panagia*, Orthodox Hymns to the Mother of God," is one of thirty prayers sung by Archangel Voices, a professional-level vocal ensemble directed by Vladimir Morosan. Somehow we feel the Theotokos smile as this song rejoices with her "Yes."

In the liner notes, "We Learn from the Angel" is described as a "paraliturgical" song. As the song begins, the choir sings in unison bringing to mind people walking door to door. Female and male sections introduce the familiar harmony as we journey along. When the choir comes together on verse four, singing in full volume and in harmony, it is as if a crowd joins us as we rejoice with the Theotokos. And we feel her presence, too, holding the hand of the Lord Jesus. Happiness. Playfulness. Joy.

The last gift at the end of many gifts, but truly the one to be treasured, "We Learn from the Angel" will have you hitting "repeat" over and over. With many thanks to Father Paul for sharing his heritage, and transforming a familiar Galician carol into a beloved, joyful song of praise for the Theotokos. We learn from and rejoice for the gift on Track 30.

[The CD is floating around, if you want to hear it.]

Father Michael Oleksa's Essay on the 30th Anniversary of the Repose of Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann 13 December 2013

As I consider not the details but the broad framework within which our beloved teacher, Father Alexander Schmemmann lived, taught, wrote and lectured, I realize that he shared, with all the Holy Fathers of the ancient Church, an approach, a vision, an experience of God, of Christ, of the Christian Faith and the life of the Church that was essentially contextual and pastoral. I hope to explore briefly these two themes in this essay which I write today in his memory.

Father Alexander is often misunderstood and even maligned today as an "innovator" or "modernist" as if he were trying to change and violate the spirit of the Orthodox Tradition according to his personal tastes or prejudices. But anyone who knew him also recognized how fundamentally "conservative" he was. While his academic and theological interests were essentially historical, he saw history as providing a wider context in which to understand and address contemporary issues. History, for Father Alexander, is the continuing story,

the next chapter for which we are now responsible, while remaining faithful to all that has gone before. Precisely because of the depth of his historical understanding of the Church and her many struggles, he was able to draw on two thousand years of experience to highlight whatever was pastorally appropriate to the problems of 20th century America. He did not see the liturgical practices of any one era as determinative for all times and places but sought to understand the evolution of the liturgy over the centuries so as to apply what was best and most useful from this heritage to the pastoral concerns of today. His vision and criteria were absolutely pastoral, and one might add in North America, missiological as well.

With his broad knowledge of Church history and the history of liturgy, Father Alexander sought to examine and highlight those practices, authentically Orthodox, from whatever time or place, from any epoch or ethnic tradition that might help better to convey the Orthodox Tradition, the spiritual treasures of the ancient Church, to modern North Americans, both “cradle” Orthodox and potential as well as actual converts. Applying this approach to the celebration of divine services, he recommended the extensive use of English, at a time when the vast majority of immigrant communities were still worshipping in their ancestral languages—rendering Orthodox worship unintelligible to any visitors or seekers who might attend a service. If the Church is in North America for all the people of this continent, Father Alexander would argue, then it must be accessible to them. This may not be true for many jurisdictions who define their mission as preserving an ancestral Faith in tact, in the same condition as they remember it in their homeland, somewhere else. But if the Orthodox Church in America remains true to its own history, as a mission to America for Americans (who were originally the indigenous tribes of Alaska) then it must translate and teach in the local language, continue an outreach to the local community, and focus on its situation, its needs, its heritage, its culture. This was the genius of the Alaskan missionary saints who learned the various languages, developed writing systems for them, produced translations and opened schools, training an indigenous clergy to lead the Church in the first half-century of its existence. The Church, as a mission, must adapt to the context into which it is sent.

But this is exactly what the Church has done through the centuries. What else was the adaptation of the Greek language necessary in the first centuries of Christianity? Why else did the Church spend seven centuries, struggling to find language adequate to God, adequate to her message, re-defining and virtually re-inventing Greek terms, bending them to the meaning the Church required to articulate and explain the Gospel to a Greek-speaking

intelligentsia? Every controversy that the Church entered, every heresy she confronted, arose from within the Greco-Roman classical worldview, a culture that radically separated the physical and spiritual worlds, making the incarnation of the Word of God “folly” to the Greeks. Christianity contradicted this basic axiomatic belief that the earthly, physical, material world was perishable and unimportant, while the heavenly, spiritual, intellectual world was eternal and of supreme value. Every heresy that arose during these centuries sought to “explain” Christ by minimizing either His humanity or His divinity and preserve the basic division between the the Spiritual and Material realms. All Patristic theology, all the debates and intellectual struggles in which Christian thinkers engaged during the Age of the Councils, erupted in this cultural context, and the Fathers composed their theological response not as philosophical speculation, but precisely as a pastoral necessity within this context. The Fathers were pastoral and contextual.

Liturgy adapted to the pastoral needs of each culture as well. One could write the history of the Orthodox Church precisely in these terms. “The Church,” Father Alexander used to say, “always changes to remain the Same.” Problems arose when later generations began approaching, understanding and explaining the writings and canons of the ancient church in an essentially fundamentalist way. In other words, the text dictates the solution to the problem: whatever is written must be true, and preserved in tact, forever. The difficulty with this approach is that it is fundamentally flawed. The Fathers never cited proof texts alone but were free to redefine and even invent new terms to meet the pastoral needs, which were always central to their thinking. Why worry about the difference between homoousios and homoiousios, one iota different? Because the very essence of “salvation” was at stake. But whose salvation? The salvation of Christians, the salvation of the world! The ancient church debated these issues for decades until, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Fathers could announce, as the Holy Apostles had done in the beginning, “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...” having arrived at a unanimous consensus on a particular issue. These arguments often lasted for years, with conflicting and contradictory conclusions, the discussions becoming rather heated and even violent at times. But when the Truth is finally articulated, it becomes self-evident. It requires no further discussion or “proof.” The Truth is what it is.

There is no external, or rather no empirical criterion, no guarantor of truth, either in the person of an infallible pope, nor in the letter of Scripture. We know the Truth when we encounter it. After this, we struggle to articulate it as best we can in human language. The Church never

has sought to define it, but has only sought to draw some boundaries, some parameters around the Truth so as to exclude certain distortions or misconceptions about it. God cannot be defined or reduced to a philosophy or system. A God who could be so comprehended by human thought would not be God but an idol. Anyone who claims to have figured God out has fallen into grave and dangerous delusion. “Never assume a rational universe!” was one of Father Alexander’s memorable warnings.

If our focus in North America is to be pastoral and contextual, we need to know what our context—21st century Western Civilization—is. Then we need to know thoroughly our Faith Tradition. And finally our “mission” is to apply the Orthodox Vision, to articulate it and celebrate it in a way that communicates the Eternal Truths of our Faith, to these people at this time and this place. Once we accept the pastoral imperative of our mission in this context, certain adjustments become reasonable and even necessary.

For example, if we accept the pastoral and contextual criteria, how should we best celebrate the Divine Liturgy? Should the Royal Doors (as in modern Russian practice) remain shut? Should the mystical prayers that render the Anaphora intelligible be read silently? Should we insist on worshipping in unintelligible languages? Should we refrain from any lengthy or meaningful preaching? Should we discourage the Faithful from participating in the Holy Mysteries except perhaps a few times a year?

Or should we rather allow the Royal Doors to remain open through all or most of the celebration? Should we read or chant the prayers aloud so that all may prayerfully participate? Should we use the language of the community in which we live? Should we explain our faith in thoughtful, well-articulated and challenging sermons? Should we encourage the Faithful to join in the celebration, singing, praying and participating in the Eucharistic banquet?

Father Alexander encouraged the latter, not because he was trying to stir up trouble, not because he enjoyed being an “innovator” or because he was a “modernist,” but because he was essentially a pastor concerned for the salvation of the people of this continent, this society. He was a contextualist, which means he was essentially Traditional, in the best Orthodox sense of the word, and not a fundamentalist, focused on a fixed text (as the ultimate criterion) and an attitude alien to the authentic Orthodox Tradition, alien to the mind of the Fathers.

His concerns extended to the language of translation. The original poetic masterpieces of Byzantine hymnography often do not translate well into modern English. The particular “genius” of the English language is its concision, its focus on expressing, in a minimum number of words, a concept with clarity and precision, while the

medieval and ancient Greek texts may come across as clumsy, wordy and even unintelligible. Once again applying the missiological and pastoral criteria, “accurate,” “word-for-word” translations often fall short of the goal.

Returning to Elizabethan English in no way guarantees pastoral or missiological “success.” In fact, literal translations usually fail in this regard. To be open and accepting of all who attend, isn’t it time to make the language of our services more inclusive, rather than give the impression that men have any priority over women? Our latest translations return to an archaic use of the word man that is at least controversial if not insulting to women—and inaccurate. The original Greek pronouns were inclusive of both sexes and perhaps in centuries past, the word “man” could be interpreted to mean both men and women. But this is no longer true in modern English usage. Should not the Church take this into account. Context demands another approach to liturgical translations.

Idealizing a particular usage or translation does not solve the problem. The most recent translations, published by the OCA and others, in fact represent a fundamentalist return to a word-for-word approach that abandons the grammatical and syntactical norms of 20th century English.... Is there a foreign criterion to the “correct” usage, or are we free, within the context of our own culture, to determine what is appropriate and necessary for our pastoral and missiological needs, here, in this country. Can there be a foreign—from another time and place—“right” way of doing things, or are we not required, in the pastoral spirit of the ancient Fathers, to determine how best to address our needs in this country?

Certainly a fundamentalist approach is simpler. We are relieved of any responsibility to think about or reflect upon what we are doing and why we are doing it. But in that case, the Church does not need human pastors and teachers. A computer can do the job! Or are we afraid to adjust to our context, afraid we might “get it wrong”? It seems to me, in the spirit of Father Schmemmann that the only way to “get it wrong” is to forget where we are and why we are here. We have been, since the arrival of the Valaam mission in 1794, to bring the Truth to Americans in America, not to replicate or transplant an alien faith and nurture it in a foreign land.

Father Alexander loved America. He was dismayed at the way some students rejected and condemned “the West,” knowing that you cannot teach, you cannot authentically bless, you cannot “save” what you do not love. Far from criticizing everything “Western” as in itself deficient, Father Alexander encouraged his students to appreciate and rejoice in whatever was good, wholesome, inspiring or beautiful in any culture, in any place, including the wonders of nearby Manhattan. If we are

truly patristic and Traditional, we must be pastoral and contextual. That was Father Alexander's vision, faithful to the Holy Fathers while rejecting any fundamentalist approach to the creative and challenging task before us: to bring Orthodoxy to North America, not by copying or idealizing any former expression of the Faith, but by drawing on all that is beautiful, true and indeed eternal in it, and applying that, courageously to the pastoral needs of North America today.

Perhaps some of his students became archeologists rather than pastors, thinking that if some practice had been abandoned centuries before, it was now their duty to restore it. But the antiquity of a given practice was never Father Alexander's concern or agenda. If he encouraged a return to certain usages, his perspective was always pastoral and missiological. In this he was fundamentally contextual and therefore traditional, following the pattern established by the ancient patristic tradition. He did not write theology as an exercise in philosophical speculation, but as a pastor seeking to make the Truth known and comprehensible to people living in a new century on a new continent.

Let us now, on the thirtieth anniversary of his repose, renew our commitment to his vision, the Traditional vision of the Orthodox Church, according to the example of the Holy Fathers of the ancient Church, and in the context of this culture, this society, strive to articulate, proclaim and celebrate our Faith so that the Truth of Christ, the Truth of the Gospel, the Truth, the Reality, the Beauty and Glory of His Kingdom might be known, accepted and embraced by the people of this land, for their salvation and the salvation of the world. Let us not fear to revive some ancient practices if they meet the needs of our mission in this challenging situation, but let us not experiment needless and foolishly either, trying to introduce change where pastorally and/or missiologically, none can be justified. Father Alexander would have cautioned us all against such inappropriate and potentially divisive tactics!

And let all of us who were blessed to know Father Alexander, on this anniversary of his falling-asleep, commend his soul, and ourselves and each other and all our life to Christ, our God.

An Affair to Remember.

Phanar. Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople confirmed that he would meet with the Pope Francis in Jerusalem. The meeting, scheduled for the spring of 2014, is timed to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the historic meeting of Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras, during which mutual anathemas imposed on Constantinople and Rome in 1054 were symbolically rescinded as each patriarch gifted the other with a chalice.

Preliminary decision about the upcoming meeting was decided in March, when Patriarch Bartholomew went to Rome for the enthronement of Pope Francis I.

November 30, the feast of the apostle St. Andrew—the patron saint of the Church of Constantinople—Patriarch Bartholomew served the Divine Liturgy at St. George's Church in Phanar (Istanbul), the main church of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. In his sermon the Primate of the Church of Constantinople paid special attention to relations with the Roman Catholic Church. According to custom, a delegation visited the Phanar from the Vatican—this time lead by the head of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Cardinal Kurt Koch.

Patriarch Bartholomew expressed his willingness to continue the dialogue with the sister Roman Church, adding that after the election of Pope Francis there will join “new blood” in this dialogue. “We are extremely saddened by the fact that we can not achieve full communion,” Patriarch Bartholomew said. “This circumstance brings a lot of evil in the relations between us Christians.” Bartholomew continued: “There are people who are trying to block the ‘dialogue of love’ between the two Churches, citing various procedural issues. That is why the impending meeting in Jerusalem is so important.”

On the eve of St. Andrew, the Vatican delegation first visited the now closed Ecumenical Patriarchate's Theological Seminary on the island of Halki near Istanbul.

Let's give Fr. Meyendorff's little book, *The Orthodox Church, a second chance.* And will someone provide a place for us to meet?

Acute and chronic theologitis is common among the Orthodox Christian population. And since Doctor Thomas Hopko and his peers have found no cure (if, indeed, they are searching for one) the common remedy is to plod on, with the occasional cup of strong tea with lemon and honey. So let's give some thought to another try “after the holidays,” when demands on our time ease up.

In November we contributed \$450 to the Loudoun Interfaith Food Pantry.