

# HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH Parish Newsletter

New Parish Center: 20937 Ashburn Rd., #110, Ashburn, VA February 2017

**FEBRUARY—DAY 11 HOURS, NIGHT 13**

- 4 Sat 5:00 p.m. Vespers  
*BEGINS THE TRIODION (WHICH ENDS WITH PENTECOST)*
- 5 Sun<sup>32•VIII•Lk20</sup> **GOSPEL: A MAN WHO NEEDS GOD vs. ONE WHO DOESN'T** (Luke 18.9+) 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Tarassova**  
*In light of the Gospel reading, no Wednesday/Friday abstinence.*
- 11 Sat 5:00 p.m. Vespers
- 12 Sun<sup>33•I•Lk21</sup> **GOSPEL: WAYWARD SONS, LOVING FATHER** (Luke 15.11+) 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Warden**
- 18 Sat *Diocesan Council Meeting 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.—No Vespers*
- 19 Sun<sup>34•II•Lk22</sup> **GOSPEL: JUDGMENT—BEFORE TIME RUNS OUT REACH OUT** (Mat. 25.31+) 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Doyle**
- 25 Sat 5:00 p.m. Vespers
- 26 Sun<sup>35•II•Lk23</sup> **GOSPEL: FORGIVENESS—LETTING GO** (Mat. 6.14+) 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Williams**  
5:00 p.m. Penitential Vespers, followed by *Bliny* and all the fixings.

**THE WEEKS OF MARK**

**Н МЕЛАН ТЕСГАРАКОСТН • ВЕЛИКАД ЧЕТЫРЕДЕСАТНИЦА**  
**BEGIN THE GREAT FORTY DAYS**

27 Mon *Day 1*

**MARCH—DAY 12 HOURS, NIGHT 12 (THE EQUINOX FALLS ON 20 MARCH)**

- 1 Wed 7:00 p.m. Presanctified Liturgy, *followed by a pot-luck meal.*
- 5 Sun **SUNDAY I: CHRIST, MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MAN** (John 1.43–51) 10:00 a.m. Communal Confession Rite—*first of two* 10:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Wayland** 5:00 p.m. Penitential Vespers
- 8 Wed 7:00 p.m. PreSanctified Liturgy, *followed by a pot-luck meal.*
- 10 Fri 7:00 p.m. Parastasis—*Coming to the side of the deceased*
- 11 Sat Saturday of Souls
- 12 Sun **SUNDAY II: CHRIST, SOURCE OF FORGIVENESS AND HEALING** (Mark 2.1–12) 10:00 a.m. Communal Confession Rite—*second of two* 10:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Belinsky** 5:00 p.m. Penitential Vespers
- 15 Wed 7:00 p.m. PreSanctified Liturgy, *followed by a pot-luck meal.*
- 17 Fri 7:00 p.m. Parastasis—*Coming to the side of the deceased*
- 18 Sat Saturday of Souls

At our Annual Parish Business meeting we reviewed our finances (welcomed news of the Dickerman bequest to our parish), approved a budget for 2017,

elected Greg Honshul, Susan Matyuf, and Marsha Morrow to the Parish Council, and briefly considered our offer to host the Diocesan Council.



**Mrs. Juliana Ossorguine Schmemmann Asleep in the Lord.**

Riverdale, NY  
January 29, 2017

Mrs. Juliana Schmemmann, 93, wife of the late Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann (surviving him by more than 30 years), lifelong educator in New York girls' schools and former headmistress of the Spence School, fell asleep in the Lord at the Hebrew Home at Riverdale where she had been in residence since the Fall of 2016, on Sunday evening, January 29, 2017.

Juliana was born to a family of White Russian émigrés and was raised and educated in France. In 1951, she and Father Alexander moved to New York, where she began a long teaching career at the Chapin School, the Spence School, and the Brearley School.

In 1977, she was appointed headmistress of Spence, on East 91st Street. A serious illness compelled her to resign in 1981, but once recovered, she joined the faculty of Brearley, where she remained until her retirement. She is warmly remembered by many generations of women whom she taught French and Russian, and to whom she was always “Madame Schmemmann.” The French government awarded her the *Palme d'Argent* medal for service to French culture.

Juliana was born on October 6, 1923, in Baden-Baden, Germany, where the Ossorguine family found themselves after the Russian revolution. Her son, Serge Schmemmann, a

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member of *The New York Times* editorial board and for many years a *Times* foreign correspondent, wrote a book, *Echoes of a Native Land*, tracing 200 years of Russian history through the former estate of the Ossorguines south of Moscow. Her family soon moved to Paris, where she attended the *College Sainte Marie de Neuilly* outside Paris and the University of Paris-Sorbonne, where she earned a *licence ès lettres* degree in classics. In 1943, she married Alexander Schmemmann, widely acclaimed theologian who became Dean of Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, Yonkers, N.Y. in 1956, and played a key rôle in the 1970 *dénouement* with the Church of Russia that resulted in the so-called Russian Metropolia becoming the Orthodox Church in America. Father Alexander fell asleep in the Lord in December, 1983.

In retirement, Juliana was active in Church affairs and wrote two books, *My Journey With Father Alexander* and *The Joy to Serve*, which discussed the challenges of being an Orthodox Christian in the modern world. She travelled all over the country lecturing to women's groups.

Juliana is survived by three children: Mrs. Anne Hopko, Ellwood City, PA; Serge Schmemmann, Paris, France; and Mrs. Mary Tkachuk, Bronxville, NY; and by nine grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren; and four great-great-grandchildren.

Her Exodus Rite was held at 7:00 p.m., February 2, at Holy Trinity Church in Yonkers, NY, where the Divine Liturgy was served the next day. Prayers for the Dead and interment followed at Saint Tikhon's Monastery, South Canaan, PA, where Father Alexander of blessed memory is interred.

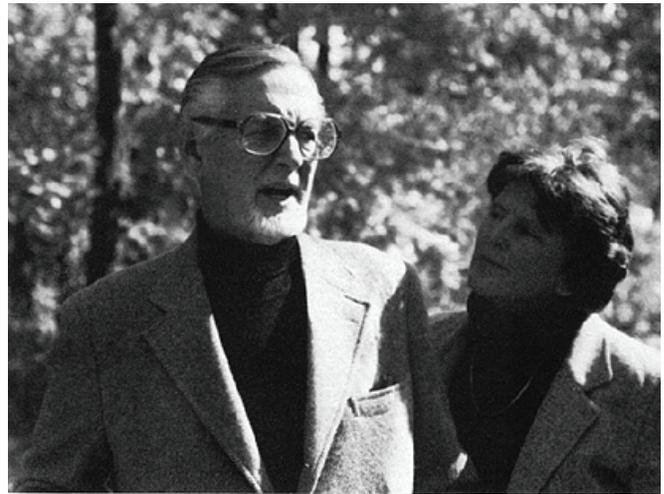
May the Kingdom of Heaven be hers! May her memory be eternal!

**Economos Antony Gabriel's Tribute  
to Mrs. Juliana Schmemmann,  
January 30, 2017.**

Dear Mary,

I learned today your beloved mother has passed into Eternity, her natural home. I have known Juliana since 1959 at the "old" St. Vladimir's Seminary on 100 West 121st Street as a young seminarian. I was engaged by Juliana and Father Alexander to watch over the children in their absence. I got to know them not simply as our dear mentors but as beautifully caring and spiritually loving persons.

I remember the sacrifices they made in order to plant the seedlings of Orthodoxy on this soil. They were true rôle models for us in a very distinctive way. They, as a wonderful family unit, were living testimonies to the truth "that God is with us," in every sense of the word. Their love was electric, and all of us wanted to be like them. I still see Alexander and Juliana in my mind's eye, hand-



in-hand exploring New York as they enjoyed the arts, intellectual gatherings, concerts, or when they participated in a number of *sobors* [church concils] of what was then the Metropolia. What an influence and impact Alexander had on these proceedings.

Your mother Juliana, as we discovered, had a saintly ancestor who I believe she emulated in her daily life. There was always a mysterious air about her. As teacher, headmistress, and mother, she had a measure of discipline and authenticity in her daily life, both private and in reaching out to others. One knew instinctively that she was a person of deep faith and prayer. Light emanated from her persona at the Seminary because she took interest in her husband's students, and she was always ready to comfort and embrace us in a special and unique manner.

In the winter of her years, she came to live in Montreal. I will forever relish our afternoon teas together as she took an avid interest in all our affairs, whether personal or ecclesiastical. She had a particular fondness for Lynn, my wife, who was the first female student to study theology. Later after Fr. John [Tkachuk] and Masha retired from the parish they had inaugurated, they joyfully participated in the Liturgy at St. George (Antiochian), where she was revered, respected and loved. At each coffee hour following the Divine Liturgy, Juliana was surrounded by a sea of admirers. We loved her, and she loved us.

Whenever she lectured, the faithful were immensely attentive to her comments, both serious and lighthearted in content and in delivery. She was a true "eldress" incarnating the spirituality that was borne in her heart as well as through her experiences at that holy convent in Pennsylvania [Holy Transfiguration in Ellwood City—Ed.], where she retreated from time to time; or at La Belle where she could contemplate silently surrounded by the beauty of nature. This was also a place where her family could come and experience the expanse of her open and loving heart. She bore herself with great dignity with an air of self assurance combined with humility made her

presence luminous. She encountered others with a touch of grace that made each person feel they were special to her. Truly a unique gift.

Juliana, I shall never forget the gift of friendship that you extended to Lynn and myself. We felt so blessed that you spent a part of your last sojourn on earth close to us. Khalil Gibran once wrote in *The Prophet*: “Do not say that I have God in my heart; but rather, I am in the heart of God.” Indeed, Juliana, you are in the Heart of God by your blameless and honorable life; celebrating the Eternal Liturgy.

“Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of the Lord!” There is that certitude that you are in that Joy without End, where every tear is wiped away. May your memory be eternal! *Ma Cher Amie, restez en paix avec ton mari dans la royame de Dieu aux ciel!*

Antony Gabriel [Montreal]

Great Economos (Antiochian Archbishopate)



**Joy, Gratitude, Freedom—An Interview:  
Juliana Schmemann, with daughter, Mary Tkachuk**

(This interview was published in the *St. Nina Quarterly*, Volume 2, No. 4.)

Mary Tkachuk: *Although you have spent more than half your life in North America, your childhood and youth were spent in Paris, where you grew up and were educated. How did your life as an Orthodox Christian mix with your secular education? Were the two completely separate, or did your Orthodoxy influence the direction that your education took?*

Juliana Schmemann: My education was anything but secular. I was educated in a prominent Catholic boarding school, headed by the mother of (later) Cardinal Jean Daniélou [the late great Roman Catholic priest and patristic scholar who was first exposed to the subject by the Russian priest serving in Nice—Ed.]. The school had been founded as a very liberal, yet thoroughly Catholic center for women. From an early age we were made to realize the strength and potential influence of women in society,

in the Church, in the world of culture. This Catholic upbringing did nothing to undermine my Orthodox faith. On the contrary, it reinforced the universal character of the Orthodox faith in contrast to the strictly ethnic and often parochial character of my home parish in the suburbs of Paris. It gave me, at an early age, a detailed knowledge of Church history and liturgics and an intense desire to continue, in my own Church, the great teachings of Eucharist-centeredness, tolerance, questioning, and total dedication.

M.T.: *Your education led you to become an educator. For a number of years you were the head of a very large girls' private school in New York City. Did you feel free to make use of your beliefs as an Orthodox Christian in your leadership of a large secular educational institution?*

J.S.: Feel free? I was always free to be myself and never felt the need to compromise with my girls. Had I lied, they would have known it! Joy of life, respect for life, to live rather than cope with life, life as a gift—these were the things that I talked about with my agnostic, atheistic, falsely liberal students. I remember so many conversations with older girls trying to pull them to a higher way of thinking, having very little in common with them as far as dogmas, rites, traditions were concerned. But I felt completely at ease in taking them from love, poetry, history, real joy, a respect for truth, to the evidence of eternal life, the evidence of a Lord, the Lord, the open-ended striving for a simpler, better life, for what is real and true.

M.T.: *Since the death of Fr. Alexander, you have traveled extensively, addressing the concerns of Orthodox Christian women in this troubled secular world. What concerns have you encountered most often, and how did you attempt to address these concerns?*

J.S.: Most of the time women wanted to know what should be their rôle in the Church. That question troubled me, since I think that playing a rôle is not a Christian way of looking at one's life. Did Mary think of her “rôle,” her “rights,” her “privileges”? Women are often quite confused about the way the Church views them. In fact, in the Church's tradition, beginning with the Virgin Mary, women have a unique and most beautiful place. There are the Myrrhbearers with their total dedication, love, and faithfulness; Martha and Mary who knew the one thing needed and chose it; the Samaritan woman who experienced the joy of faith at her encounter with Jesus. The Church is us—now. The ethos of the world changes, evolves, so do ways of dressing, appearances, but the total gift of self by women, as well as by men, is where it starts. Dedicating one's talents and faithful service to the Lord are the responsibility of all.

Whatever the needs of the Church are, or the demands of the job, or of the family, or of the parish, that is where the woman (as well as the man!) serves, in whatever

capacity that she is called to serve. Since ordination [to the priesthood] is not an option, there are so many other ways to use one's talents, not by playing a rôle, but by being a rôle-model, by giving oneself. What should be nurtured is the unique gift of womanhood, of a woman who follows Mary's living example.

M.T.: *What do you feel has been your contribution to Orthodox Christians today?*

J.S.: What I wish that my contribution may have been, is to have given women a feeling of intense joy in being women, without rancor, comparisons, needless speculations, but with a sense of gratitude in being themselves and in giving, endlessly giving....

M.T.: *Gratitude! How well I know that word!*

J.S.: Indeed, gratitude is the only possible answer to God's gift to us: the gift of his Son, of life, of the world. "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good." Whatever our life is like, our occupation, our beliefs, how can there be anything but an enormous surge of gratitude? Yes, I know: suffering, inadequacies, unfairness, *et cetera*; but also a firm belief that essentially the world is good, very good... and that the Lord is good, and that it is good to be here....

M.T.: *Hanging on your kitchen bulletin board is J. W. Krutch's quotation, "Joy comes easier the more often one is joyous." Can you expand on that beautiful thought?*

J.S.: Joy is not light-hearted laughter—it is an effort, a daily exercise of seeing the beauty of one's life, through thick and thin; of singing "Alleluia!" on a happy day as well as on one's dying day. And then truly "joy comes easier the more often one is joyous!" Joy then becomes a habit, an attitude, a state of being.

M.T.: *Joy and gratitude are certainly two words that I have heard from your lips throughout the years. Another word is freedom. I'd like to hear your thoughts on freedom to conclude our dialogue today.*

J.S.: Freedom. The world advocates freedom for women, total freedom. Christ advocated freedom of the spirit: "For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand fast, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (Galatians 5.1). Among many other goals, I hope for women to possess a free vision of their life, of the Church, of their allegiance to Christ—through total freedom of choice, of love, of free acceptance, of humble obedience.

Freedom in choosing the kind of job that would not interfere with one's beliefs. Freedom in having a partner/husband, with whom one would share one's convictions and faith, with whom one would find respect, love, and communion. Freedom instilled in children, along with respect and trust for authority. Freedom: much more difficult than blind obedience to rules. Free and humble loving acceptance of Christ, his teaching, and his Church.

M.T.: *I'm so glad that you shared your thoughts with*



*us, those thoughts and beliefs that I grew up with and that I try in my own life to carry in my heart and in my actions. Thank you!*

### **Married to a Priest—Text of a Talk.**

All who are familiar with the life of the Orthodox Church will be aware of the important rôle played in it by the wives of parish priests. In this article, which is the text of a talk given on French television, Juliana Schmemmann, the widow of Father Alexander, describes, with clarity and depth of feeling, her experience as a participant in her husband's life and ministry. She is herself a remarkable woman and her story is all the more interesting because her husband was a remarkable man. The French text appeared in *Le Messenger Orthodoxe*, 133 (January 1986), pp. 121–123.

In France, with its Roman Catholic tradition, the very idea of being married to a priest must seem rather strange and out of place.

Especially when we are experiencing the liberation of women, their independence and equal career opportunities for both men and women, the position of a priest's wife, given the absolute impossibility of the ordination of women to the priesthood, may well appear to be an anomaly. Yet this anomaly—this absurdity—is not only accepted by the wife of a priest, but even incorporated into her existence with joy, yes, with pride and thankfulness that she is part, though indirectly, of the priestly ministry.

It is not easy to speak impartially of a husband who has died recently, to speak with objectivity; yet on the other hand it is a joy to speak of him and to share with others one's memories.

There was nothing out of the ordinary in our youth or in the way we met: he was a graduate of the *Lycée Carnot* [see side-note — Ed.] and the *Gymnase Russe*, I of the *Collège Sainte Marie de Neuilly*; both of us had been brought up, on the one hand, in the enduring idealistic structures of Old Russia, with the whole of life patterned on the rhythms of the Church, her feast days, on that Russian heritage and tradition which implied obligations of loyalty and of service; while, on the other hand, we lived in the world of Voltaire, of Verlaine and Proust, of Parisian beauty and the phantom past of Moscow and Saint Petersburg. And in the midst of these varied influences came my meeting on the church steps, at the age of seventeen, with a nineteen-year-old seminarian, the very day he entered the St. Sergius Theological Institute: “Pleased to meet you... and do bear in mind that I have no intention of becoming a monk!” The same evening he remarked to someone that he had just met his future wife.

He entered the Institute with the intention of becoming a priest, and at nineteen he was already fully that which he was to be all his life. He had dedicated himself to priesthood from childhood, the Church was in his blood, and he wanted to be a priest before anything else and more than anything else. His priesthood, his desire for priesthood, reflected his nature, reflected that for which he had been created. There was no conflict in him.

He was a fully balanced man: educated first at the Russian military high school, then at the *Lycée Carnot* and the *Gymnase Russe*, he developed a passion for two literatures which he came to know very thoroughly: Russian literature which he later taught in New York, and French literature which he knew not only while he lived in France, but which he never ceased to read, appreciate and imbibe with love—one might say, almost greedily. He loved both French and Russian poetry, and could recite by heart from them for hours on end without ever getting tired.

Neither poetry nor literature were for him mere pastimes. And in general he was a voracious reader: works on politics and philosophy, contemporary ideas and theories. His interests and his curiosity were truly universal. In poetry he saw a transcendental beauty and took delight in it. Rather than seeking to find his soul in poetry, after the manner of the Romantics, he followed with openness and sincerity the path taken by the poets themselves in their creative endeavor. He loved Baudelaire and his inclination to the ideal; he loved Voltaire and Rimbaud: he was never one to look for morality in art (his love for Baudelaire and for Proust are proof enough of that!). In poetry, as in literature in general, he saw the spoken word, the word which expresses life.

He enjoyed reading the notebooks of Gide and of Leautaud; he enjoyed biographies, works on Talleyrand,

The *Lycée Carnot* is a public secondary and higher education school located at 145 Boulevard Maiesherbes in the 17th *arrondissement*, Paris, France. Recognized as one of the most prestigious high schools in France, it is also ranked as one of the best *classe préparatoire aux écoles de commerce*. Some of its former students have been among the most influential personalities in the country, including Jacques Chirac, the former French President. The school has a long tradition of excellence, and has been regularly sending its graduates to the best schools in France and abroad.

on Proust, on the life of Simenon and others, following in them the development of human lives, of suffering and joy. All of these works brought him close to other human beings, to the most diverse human destinies and he gave himself up to them.

Language was of primary importance for him, more than music, which he enjoyed, but not passionately, more than the visual arts to which he was basically indifferent. He loved the streets, cities, houses, curtains at windows, cemeteries, cafes, evening papers—everything which reflected human life. I remember well how, young thing that I was, I was rather taken aback, not to say more, when he would take me to the *Pere Lachaise* cemetery, then for walks along the Grands Boulevards, to the country of Maigret, and finally to sit in the cafe *Lutetia*, well ensconced with black coffee and a copy of *Le Monde*. The passers by, the world of the street... I confess that I remained somewhat reserved and on my guard. Yet I was gradually achieving a greater measure of independence and a deeper degree of understanding.

I have mentioned his equilibrium, his tastes, his education at once both French and Russian, the systematic, constant, continual reading, which resulted in a very broad and comprehensive culture, close to life and to the development of mankind. But in the midst of all these concerns, what as strongest and most sincere in him was his joy in the priesthood, his joy in being a priest. The character of his ministry was determined by the influence he was able to exercise through speech, by the immediate influence, direct and almost inevitable, which he had on those he met. As a result he was always absorbed by other people, sought out by them; he never said 'no'. If in conversation he was asked peculiar or muddled questions, he had the ability to understand what the questioners wished to ask, why they had difficulties, and he gave them an answer without ever imposing a solution, without ever moralizing. He had a marvelous way of relaxing people and putting them at their ease, encouraging them, communicating to them what was essential, in the light of which all would become simpler, happier, more reassuring. Truly he lifted up people's hearts. Some were almost disappointed, since they hoped to obtain solution or a judgment and he gave them rather a vision.

One of his students recently said to me ( I quote from memory): “I used to come to see Father with a list of problems, problems which appeared serious to me, with no solution. We would discuss politics, literature, my children, the Church, the feasts, nature, and in the end Father used to put his heavy and gentle hand on my shoulder and say: ‘Well, everything’s alright, isn’t it? No more problems?’ And I would go away, my spirits and my heart warmed by his joy and his radiance, somewhat confused, but in peace.” One could not help laughing with him, even over theological issues.

His feeling for the true perspectives, his good common sense, his vision of life which would not admit of false problems, together with his ever-present sense of humor and a certain inner reticence, a certain reserve *vis-à-vis* any emotion or feeling which was too personal, made of him a man who was often sought out as a source of comfort, of well-being, of the confidence which he dispensed so profusely. More than a thousand people came to his funeral [Father Paul was there—and everyone sang—Ed.] and I received hundreds of letters, all witnesses to the number of people he had touched.

In 1951 we left Paris for New York with our three children, and it was in America, at Saint Vladimir’s Seminary where he was professor and dean, that he assembled a group of workers, teachers and administrators, all his friends, who are carrying on the same mission, who speak with one voice of the Church, the Liturgy, the Eucharist. It was at St Vladimir’s that he wrote his books and realized his full potential, there that he truly worked for the renewal of the liturgical life, for the renewal of the feeling for the Eucharist. [Which, sadly, the OCA of today has lost sight of—Ed.]

Other people will speak of his theological mission. What I know is that this mission was fully at one with his function as a priest, as the servant and instrument of the Lord. He did not have a feeling for social problems: “Others do this better than I,” he used to say.

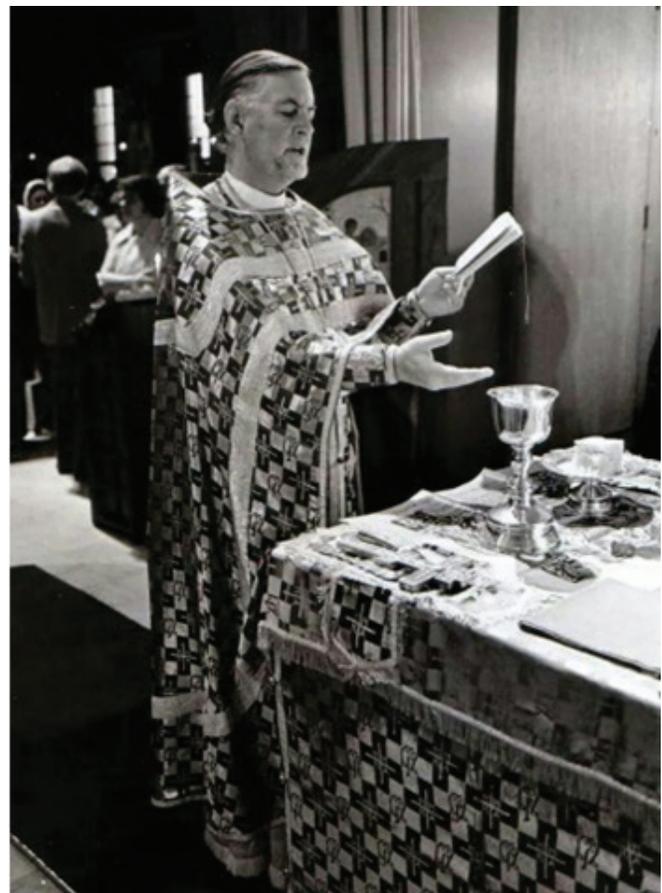
What saved both of us from a fragmentation which would have been difficult to avoid, from a pull into different directions—the children, their education (our three children who, by the way, never gave us anything but happiness), the seminary, the difficulty of making ends meet each month, students and all the rest—what saved us was above all our belonging to the Church, the services, the joy of Great Saturday, or of a simple weekday Liturgy. And all this came to us by and through his priesthood.

To preserve our sanity we used to spend long summers in the Canadian countryside on the shores of the Lake Labelle, where we went to steep ourselves once more in the fount of life which is Nature, in the northern beauty of the Canadian forests, in family life, the wooded chapel on Sundays and feast days, the arrival of his [twin] brother

Andrei whose importance in his life I cannot exaggerate. Our summers were marked by the rhythm of his eagerly awaited arrival, the joy of his stay with us and the sadness of his departure. Our summers were truly a haven of peace.

I would like to add to these somewhat disjointed remarks some words on Father Alexander’s illness and death, on the feast of his death, for such it truly was.

When he learned, in a totally unexpected and unforeseeable manner, that he had cancer in his lungs and in his brain, already in a rather advanced stage, he accepted his destiny in the full meaning of the word, calmly and serenely, without useless words, and with an immense strength which was altogether hidden. I remember very well the exact time when this took place. It was a moment of total clarity and total lucidity, and the signal for departure on a journey. His acceptance was without emotion, but a great joy entered our lives. It was not the joy of self-sacrifice or of a martyr who accepts his fate. It was joy pure and simple, the joy he had preached all his life, but which was now intensified because one felt that he was seeing the Kingdom, the doors of the Kingdom. Everything else was finished—or rather was about to begin. A lifetime’s struggle to preach, to communicate, to convince was past, while the great journey which, in effect, would set him free had begun. He was like the women to whom Christ appeared after his Resurrection and said: “Rejoice!” His



illness and progress towards death were without a doubt an even more immediate vision of the Lord. With even greater simplicity, with total faith, he waited, as he had once written, for “the never-ending day of the Kingdom.” His death was in truth an act of life, the feast of his death.

As death approached, it was like a train which, after the whistle, moves off, puffs and begins to roll slowly at first with all the sounds of the wheels and the steam, then travels even faster and even more quietly towards... towards the goal of everyone’s journey, towards the doors of the Kingdom which were standing open for him and which he approached with peace and thanksgiving. Never had I seen him so radiant, so thankful, so patient.

Three days before his death he was anointed. He was very weak, and we were not sure how he would react, but at the end of the prayers, he said in a clear and strong voice: “Amen, amen, amen.”

This was the *fiat*, the “so be it,” of his whole life.

I would like to conclude with an extract from the end of the chapter on death in his book, *For the Life of the World* (this passage is the only one written in the first person):

“...And if I make this new life mine, mine this hunger and thirst of the Kingdom, mine this expectation of Christ, mine the certitude that Christ is Life, my very death will be an act of communion with Life. For neither Life nor death can separate us from the love of Christ. I do not know when and how the fulfillment will come, I do not know when all things will be consummated in Christ. I know nothing about the “whens” and “hows.” But I know that in Christ this great Passage, the Pascha of the world, has begun, that the light of the “Age to come” comes to us in the joy and peace of the Holy Spirit, for Christ is risen and Life reigns.”

Translated by Elisabeth Obolensky  
Reprinted from the *Sourozsh*.

### **Protopresbyter Alexander and His Wife.**

Together with his twin brother Andrei Dimitriyevich, Alexander Dimitriyevich Schmemann was born on 13 September, 1921, in Tallinn (Reval), Estonia, into a family of German ancestry whose members had previously been in the service of the Russian Empire in Saint Petersburg. His grandfather had been a senator and a member of the State Council of the Russian Empire, and his father had been an officer of the Imperial Life-Guards in Saint Petersburg. When he was a child, at the age of seven, his family moved to Paris, France. There, he attended church at the Saint Alexander Nevsky Cathedral on the *rue Daru*, and he served in the altar under Metropolitan Evlogiy (Georgiyevsky). It was certainly at this time that he began seriously to love the solemnity, dignity and mystery of Orthodox worship.

In Paris, Alexander Dimitriyevich was educated in the Russian Military School, the *Lycée Carnot* and the *Gymnase Russe*. During his days in Paris, poverty and primitive living conditions were the characteristics of his life: throughout his student years, after marriage, and during his early teaching years.

The years of World War II and the German occupation of France were very difficult years, to say the least. However, Alexander was providentially sheltered to some extent from the tragedies of war. Alexander was able to begin and complete studies at the Saint Sergius Theological Institute of Paris (1940–1945). In 1943, he married Juliana Osorguine, then a student in classics at the Sorbonne and a member of a traditional, Church-oriented Russian family. She is a descendant of Saint Juliana of Lazarevo who lived in Murom, in the Vladimir province, and who reposed in 1604. Juliana was a graduate of the *Collège Sainte-Marie-de-Neuilly* (founded by Madeleine Daniélou), in the western suburbs of Paris. It became quite clear in those years, to all his friends and acquaintances, that Alexander had found his true vocation, and also that God had blessed him with a successful marriage and family life. The inspiration and joy that he knew in his life contributed much to the power with which, in all later years, he was able to communicate to others.

The *Institut Saint-Serge* in Paris had gathered a somewhat heterogeneous but remarkable faculty, which included representatives of the old theological establishment of pre-Revolutionary Russia (Anton V. Kartashov), intellectuals who came to Orthodoxy during the revolution (V. V. Zenkovsky) and former students from Belgrade (Father Cyprian Kern, Father Nicolas Afanassieff). The school was still dominated by the personality of Father Sergius Bulgakov, a former Russian seminarian, then a Marxist philosopher, and finally (through the influence of Vladimir Soloviev and Paul Florensky) a priest and a theologian. During the war years at *Saint-Serge*, the students were few, but the enthusiasm and the hopes for an Orthodox revival remained strong.

Never attracted by the “sophiological” speculations of Bulgakov (for whom he nevertheless had the greatest personal respect), Alexander Schmemann was primarily seeking specialization in the area of Church history. He became a pupil of A. V. Kartashov, whose brilliant lectures and skeptical mind matched Alexander Schmemann’s own tendency to critical analysis of reality around him. The result was a candidate’s thesis on Byzantine theocracy. Having completed the five-year program of studies at *Saint-Serge* in 1945, Alexander Schmemann became an instructor in Church History, first as a layman, then as a priest. In 1946, he was ordained to the holy diaconate, and to the holy priesthood by Archbishop Vladimir (Tikhonitsky), who was heading the Russian Exarchate of

Western Europe under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

The Priest Alexander Schmemmann was assigned to serve in the Russian parish in Clamart, a suburb of Paris. Besides his pastoral duties there, from 1946–1951, he taught Church History at the “Institut Saint-Serge” in Paris. He was already recognized as a leading exponent of Orthodox liturgical theology, which sees the liturgical tradition of the Church as a major sign and expression of the Christian Faith.

In his teachings and writings, he sought to demonstrate (amongst other things) the close links amongst Christian theology, Christian liturgy, and Christian living.

After Father Georges Florovsky had gone to be the Dean of Saint Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary, Father Alexander was invited two years later to join the faculty of this seminary, which was at that time situated in cramped quarters in several apartments near Columbia University in New York City. He began to teach there from 1951 onwards.

Upon moving to New York City, Father Alexander and his family also began to visit the summer-home of Prince Serge Troubetzkoy and his family north of Montréal, at Lac Labelle, Québec. There, during the summer, he began serving in the newly constructed chapel next to the Troubetzkoy home. He was, therefore, the first rector of the Chapel of Saint Sergius in Labelle (1951–1983). There, also, the Schmemmann family established a permanent summer residence nearby the Troubetzkoy home. Besides his service in Labelle, Father Alexander was often asked to speak in various parishes and institutions and at retreats across Canada. Always, there was good fruit that developed from these personal encounters with him.

When the seminary moved to its present campus in Yonkers, New York, in 1962, Father Alexander was assigned to be the Dean of Saint Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary, a responsibility which he would fulfill until the day of his repose in Christ. When the seminary moved from Manhattan to Yonkers, Father Alexander and his family moved to a house on Hollywood Avenue in Crestwood, within walking-distance of the seminary. Father Alexander took every aspect of his service seriously. He cared for the seminary as for his family. The words following this are concerned with his academic recognition and with his writings. However, at the same time that he was writing and teaching, Father Alexander was very much concerned with the personal situation of each student, and with the condition of the buildings in which the students lived, prayed and studied. He would say words to the effect that people may consider it very prestigious that he is the Dean of Saint Vladimir’s, but in fact, every time he turned around, it seemed that he was confronted with trouble with the plumbing in the buildings.

In addition to his responsibility as the Dean of Saint Vladimir’s, Father Alexander served as adjunct professor at Columbia University, at New York University, at Union Theological Seminary and at General Theological Seminary in New York. Much of his focus in teaching at Saint Vladimir’s was on liturgical theology, as well as Church history. As part of his service to the Central Church Administration, Father Alexander was active as a representative of the Orthodox Church in the so-called ecumenical movement, in that he held positions in the Youth Department and the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches.

Father Schmemmann was elevated to the dignity of protopresbyter, the highest honor that can be bestowed on a married Orthodox priest in the Orthodox Church. This title is conferred upon a very few. Father Schmemmann received honorary doctoral degrees from Butler University, General Theological Seminary, Lafayette College, Iona College, and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology.

Father Alexander was sent by the Holy Synod of Bishops to be an Orthodox observer for sessions of the Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church from 1962 to 1965.

Father Schmemmann (together with Father John Meyendorff, Father Dmitri Grigorieff, and others) was active in transforming the so-called Russian Metropolia into the Orthodox Church in America, and in her being granted autocephaly by the Church of Russia in 1970. He was also instrumental in helping the Church develop an operating structure that reflected, first, the normal Orthodox Christian ecclesiology and canonical tradition, and then also the necessary elements required by civil law for corporate entities. He served as an advisor to the Holy Synod of Bishops and to the Metropolitan Council of the OCA. Likewise, his wife Juliana served for many years as an elected member of the Metropolitan Council.

Father Schmemmann always remained concerned with the fate of believers in the Soviet Union. His sermons were broadcast weekly in Russian on Radio Liberty for 30 years. He gained a broad following of listeners across the Soviet Union. Among these, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn who became his friend after he emigrated to the West in 1974.

In 1975, Father Alexander wrote an article regarding the celebration of the bicentennial of the arrival in Alaska of the first missionary monks from Valaam Monastery. This article was entitled “To Love is to Remember.” The opening words of this article serve as a vehicle to help to describe him personally. He wrote :

“To love is to remember. And to remember with love is truly to understand that which one loves and remembers, to appropriate it as God’s gift.”

Mrs. Juliana Schmemmann spent her whole married life with Father Alexander in supporting his work and service.

She, herself, gave a clear example of how a Christian lives a life of service. It is true that how she served and serves has a distinct character from that of her husband, but her service is and was completely complementary to his service. As they walked hand-in-hand through life, as they prayed hand-in-hand (as it were) through life, they worked hand-in-hand as well. They nurtured their own family. They nurtured the administration of Saint Vladimir's Seminary. They nurtured the sense of brotherhood and sisterhood amongst the members of the faculty and staff. They nurtured the sense of family and community amongst the students and their families. They built a living Christian family in the seminary. As with the wives of other faculty members, it was necessary that Juliana work outside the home for the sake of the family economy. Juliana was a competent teacher. So much was this so that she became the ninth headmistress of the Spence School for girls in New York City. She served in this capacity only from 1977–1981. This service could have been for a rather longer time; but by 1981, Juliana had contracted a very serious illness which caused her to withdraw from this work because of the treatments for the illness. She recovered, by God's mercy, but it would not be long before she would be left widowed. She, however, has never ceased regarding herself as married to her husband, and she continues to mark every anniversary of their marriage over 70 years ago.

Father Alexander Schmemmann was a gifted teacher. He was able to inspire love for Jesus Christ and for the Church in his hearers, no matter how young or how old they might be. Everything that he did in his life of service

in Christ's Church was inspired by and founded in the love and joy that flowed from Christ to him and through him. As a young man in Paris, he would teach young people, and rooms would overflow with youth who were eager to hear him. The same reaction was expressed by others who heard him in North America and elsewhere. This was the case in catechetical classes for children near the Troubetzkoy home by Lac Labelle, Québec. This was the case in classes of seminary students. This was also the case in the hungry listeners to Radio Liberty broadcasts in the Soviet Union. The love and joy of Jesus Christ showed. It showed in his care for the bishops he served on different occasions, and in his pastoral care for the many students who would telephone him to ask for help and advice after their graduation.

Father Alexander had a particular insight into the ways in which Orthodox Christian influences can be seen in the writings of great Russian authors. He loved to show his students such evidence in writers such as Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, and how it was different in each. Our Orthodox Faith influences our whole life.

During the last several years of his life, a major construction project was begun. It centred on the construction of the new Three Hierarchs Chapel, which was dedicated in 1983, and a new building for classrooms, the bookstore, and offices. For the duration of the construction, weekday services in the seminary were offered under improvised conditions in the solarium of the old main building. On weekends, the services were offered also under improvised conditions in the nearby Roman Catholic parish church.

It was during these years that Father Alexander dis-



covered that he had cancer, for which he was treated, but without cure. However, he lived to see the completion of the chapel and its dedication. He was at peace, and full of the joy of Christ to the end.

During the very last days of his suffering, even though Father Alexander was at peace, he was not without his painful struggles. Such are the effects of cancer. Students at that time report that the weather at the time of his death was incomparable. There were periods of heavy storms alternating with periods of sun and calm. Later, it was understood that these variations coincided with the times when Father Alexander was suffering greatly, and times when he was not. Two students also reported that just after the time of his repose, their lampadas before their icons in their rooms lit spontaneously, without the aid of matches.

The Protopresbyter Alexander D Schmemann reposed in Christ on 13 December, 1983, at his home in Crestwood, New York. The funeral services were offered at the new Three Hierarchs Chapel of the seminary, and they were led by Metropolitan Theodosius (Lazor). Afterwards, his body was taken to be interred in the Cemetery of Saint Tikhon's Monastery in South Canaan, Pennsylvania.

After the repose of her husband, Juliana Schmemann continued to live and to work as she had previously done. She eventually moved to Montréal, Québec, in order to live near her daughter Mary and son-in-law, the Archpriest John Tkachuk. In this city, she actively participated in the life of the parish of the Sign of the Theotokos (which had been founded by her son-in-law and daughter). From there, she travelled extensively, as she gave many talks and lectures, led retreats, and participated in meetings. Always, her concern was the welfare of the Orthodox Church in America. Her personal relationship with the Monastery of the Holy Transfiguration in Ellwood City, PA, continued to develop, and she would annually spend periods of time living and praying with the nuns there. The monastery is also close to the residence of her daughter Anna (and her late husband, Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko).

In October, 2014, because of increasing years and less physical strength, Mrs. Schmemann moved (along with her daughter Mary and her husband) to Bronxville, New York. There, she entered a residence for seniors, and continued to live in a similar fashion, as far as possible.

On Sunday, 29 January, 2017, Juliana Schmemann fell asleep in the Lord in Bronx, New York. Her repose was on the eve of her wedding anniversary (which she had continued to keep annually). The funeral service was offered at Holy Trinity Church in Yonkers in the evening of 2 February, and the Divine Liturgy was served there the day following. Afterwards, her body was interred beside that of her husband at Saint Tikhon's Monastery Cemetery.



#### **Main Writings by Father Alexander Schmemann:**

Father Alexander Schmemann published many books and articles. *For the Life of the World*, a popular volume on Christian faith as reflected in liturgy, has been translated into eleven languages. Originally prepared as study guide for the National Student Christian Federation in 1963, it even had an anonymous version published by the underground *samizdat* in the Soviet Union. *The Eucharist* was finished just before his death. This, and several collections of his writings were published posthumously.

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*The Journals of Father Alexander Schmemann, 1973–1983* (2000).

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**Articles:**

Fr. Schmemmann Addresses Antiochian Archdiocesan Convention in Toronto. *The Orthodox Church*, November 1983, p. 2, available at : <http://www.schmemmann.org/byhim/addressesantiochian.html>.

*Apostleship and America*, St. Vladimir's Seminary, 12th Orthodox Education Day, 1979, available at : <http://www.schmemmann.org/byhim/apostleshipandamerica.html>.

*Between Utopia and Escape*, Lecture delivered in Delaware, 22 March, 1981, Available at : [1]

"On the Question of Liturgical Practices, A Letter to My Bishop," available at : [http://www.jacwell.org/Supplements/liturgical\\_practices.htm](http://www.jacwell.org/Supplements/liturgical_practices.htm). Also published in *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, vol. 17, no. 3, 1973, pp. 239–243.

"The Problems of Orthodoxy in America" (1964), available on the internet at "Jacob's Well", the OCA web-site of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey, at : [http://www.jacwell.org/Fall\\_Winter99/Fr\\_Schmemmann\\_The\\_canonical\\_problem.htm](http://www.jacwell.org/Fall_Winter99/Fr_Schmemmann_The_canonical_problem.htm) :

I. "The Canonical Problem," in *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly*, vol. 8, no. 2, 1964, pp. 67–85.

II. "The Liturgical Problem," in *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly*, vol. 8, no. 4, 1964, pp. 164–185, and available at : [http://www.jacwell.org/Fall\\_Winter99/Fr\\_Schmemmann\\_The\\_liturgical\\_problem.htm](http://www.jacwell.org/Fall_Winter99/Fr_Schmemmann_The_liturgical_problem.htm)

III. "The Spiritual Problem," in *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly*, vol. 9, no. 4, 1965, pp. 171–193.

"A permanent home for St. Vladimir's: An Editorial," in *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly*, vol. 5, no. 4, Winter 1961, p. 2, and available at : <http://www.schmemmann.org/byhim/permanenthome.html>.

**Further reading:**

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Meyendorff, John, "Postscript: A Life Worth Living," in *Liturgy and Tradition: Theological Reflections of Alexander Schmemmann* (Crestwood, NY, SVS Press, 2003), pp. 145–154.

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**W**e cannot teach what we do not practice ourselves.... And it is obvious that the rebirth of "liturgical catechesis" requires first of all a rebirth of the liturgical life of the Church, its better understanding by the faithful, a more responsible attitude to it, a more active participation in it.... to see in the liturgical services the very essence of the Church, of its teachings and its life. We need a liturgical catechesis for adults, and in the clergy itself. We need a rebirth of the very concept of Church, the spiritualization of the parish, the renovation of our prayer life. All this is the basic condition for a true Christian education of our children....

—Father Alexander Schmemmann,  
*Liturgy and Life*, pgs. 14, 15