



# HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX Parish Church Newsletter

RESTON

Future Site: Potomac View Road (behind NoVa).

June 2010

## THE WEEKS OF MATTHEW WILL FERRY US TO THE ELEVATION OF THE CROSS AND THE END OF THE CHURCH YEAR—OUR PILOT WILL BE THE HOLY SPIRIT.

MAY—DAY 14 HOURS, NIGHT 10

24 *Monday of the Holy Spirit — Begin the Weeks of Matthew*

■ After having celebrated Pentecost, **keep a feast for one week**, and after that **keep a fast for a week** [origin of the so-called Apostles' Fast—Ed.]: for it is right to rejoice over the Gift of God [meaning the Descent of the Holy Spirit—Ed.], and then to **keep a fast** after the time of relaxation [of fasting during the 50-day Paschal/Pentecost season].

—Apostolic Constitutions, Syria (ca. 380 A.D.)

30 Sun FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: **FEAST OF ALL SAINTS**

9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Matyuf**

JUNE—DAY 15 HOURS, NIGHT 9

6 Sun **8:45 a.m. Common Confession Rite in connection with the penitential season after Pentecost**

9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Smith**

10 Thu *Third anniversary of the death of Fr. Laurence (+2007)*

13 Sun FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: **FEAST OF ALL SAINTS**

9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Wayland**

19 Sat  *Food Pantry in Leesburg 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.*

20 Sun *St. Nicolas Kavalas of Thessaloniki (+ca.1385)*

9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Visos**

27 Sun 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Adams**

29 Tue ↑ *Saints Peter and Paul, Leaders of the Apostles*

30 Wed *Synaxis for the holy Apostles*

JULY—DAY 14 HOURS, NIGHT 10

4 Sun 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Belinsky**

11 Sun 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Briggs**

18 Sun 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Busenberg**

22 Thu *18<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sudden exodus of Fr. John Meyendorff (+1992)*

25 Sun 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Doyle**

AUGUST—DAY 13 HOURS, NIGHT 11

1 Sun 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Ellmore**

8 Sun 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Hawkins**

15 Sun 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Honshul**

22 Sun 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Lepnew**

29 Sun 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Lynch**

SEPTEMBER—DAY 12 HOURS, NIGHT 12

5 Sun 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Matyuf**

We Orthodox Christians in America must strive to revitalize the mystical, sacramental life of our churches and monasteries. **To re-new** sacramental participation in the life of the Church **we need only begin...** We need only receive what the Church gives us, practice what the Church teaches us. It is a very sad fact... that... we Orthodox... are so lacking in proper practice of those sacramental treasures which we possess by the grace of God and the gift of Holy Tradition.

—Encyclical Letter on the Spiritual Life, Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America, 1976

### A New Order Begins To Take Shape.

Implementing a protocol agreed upon in Chambessey, Switzerland, last Summer by the heads of 14 autocephalous Churches under the leadership of the Patriarch of Constantinople, 55 bishops (out of 65) from across North America met in New York City on May 26 through 28. The gathering is styled an Episcopal *Synaxis* or Assembly. Apparently *ipso facto* it replaces the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops that has been the venue for interjurisdictional dialogue in this country for these many years. It is called an *assembly* and not a *synod* to underscore the fact that in Constantinople's view the large Orthodox population in this country and Canada in no way constitutes a Church, and more specifically, a Church that can manage her own affairs. We are called *diaspora*—look that one up in the dictionary.

Chambessey stipulates that in every country outside the territory of the Mother Churches, the Exarch of the Patriarch of Constantinople is to preside at the Episcopal Assembly *ex officio*, and so it was here. Archbishop Demetrios gave a long speech full of quotations from Kyr Kyr Bartholomew, while Kyr Philip (Saliba) of the Antiochian Exarchate seemed to take up the position of the loyal opposition. Our own Archbishop, Kyr Jonah, was present—though not among the leadership, amidst noise in the Greek-American press that the Patriarch in

Istanbul was angry that he was invited and that Archbishop Demetrios was saying he was invited by mistake.

The main task of this new assembly is to address “canonical anomalies” and a host of churchy issues.

Many years ago Fr. John Meyendorff wrote an editorial in which he stated that leadership in the matter of Orthodox unity in this country belonged to the Greeks because of their large numbers here, not to mention their wealth. And so it happens. International Orthodox Charities owes its existence to this leadership. Then there is the Missions effort in Florida. Why, the Greek-American Exarchate paid all the costs of the Assembly, paid the bishops’ plane fares, paid for Leona Helmsley’s Hotel at Central Park where the Assembly was held and presumably where the bishops stayed. While the OCA may have a card or two to play, it won’t be in the money talks game.

The Episcopal Assembly took place just as Patriarch Bartholomew was concluding a 10-day visit to the Church of Russia. He and Patriarch Kirill (Cyril) agreed that the much discussed pan-Orthodox council must be held soon, perhaps even next year. On the agenda? Just who may grant autocephaly to maturing local communities? So even though our local Episcopal Assembly is charged with rectifying “canonical anomalies,” the status of the OCA—whose Moscow-granted autocephaly the Phanar does not recognize—falls outside its competence. So our bishops will sit with the multitude. Marginalized. Perhaps even disdained. The fact remains that we are the oldest jurisdiction in North America, we have the theological schools, and the voice for the local Church that is not diaspora.

Bishop Basil Essey (Antiochian)—a St.-Vladimir-Seminary graduate—was chosen Secretary. But leadership is with the Mother Churches—Greek, Russian, Syrian, Romanian, and Serbian.

## REMEMBERING FATHER LAURENCE OF NEW SKETE

*Archimandrite Laurence (Mancuso) fell asleep in the Lord three years ago on June 10 at the age of 73. He had a lot to say, and much of it is buried in books most people will never see. Here we give some of his thinking on language and translation—here in Reston we use many of his translations, Paschal Matins, for example, and the priestly prayers at the PreSanctified. To this we add his thoughts on bringing words to life in church. Though addressed to priests and deacons, they apply to readers as well, and to all who sing in church. We remind everyone that he gave us the red/black and flowery covers we use in church to mark the seasons, as well as those two fancy hand-carved analogia we gave on loan to St. Luke’s Serbian. The Monks of New Skete made our multipurpose ikon stands and candlestands.*

Is Orthodoxy now to pick up the discarded crumbs of other Christians? Are we really to muzzle the voice of the fathers, to say nothing of the epistles and gospels, with the clothing of bygone eras, to put the new wine of the Spirit into the old wineskins of faded glory? It seems strange to deny the sanctity of western Christian “saints” yet idolize the language of their faith! The words of scripture and hymns of the fathers deserve better, as do pilgrims of the spirit today.

Shall we not, as the apostles and the early church, as Chrysostom, Ephrem, and Roman, give a living voice and language of vitality to the people who are the church? The stilted and artificial constructs of “churchy” texts not only sound like translations, they are flat, dull, and academic. The fire of the spirit will not remain bound by such vessels; it will find other means of expression.

There is really no reason for saddling Orthodoxy with protestant hieratic language. The obscurity and unintelligibility that often marks the English of the King James version cannot serve authentic spiritual growth and integration in the Orthodox community in our times. To attempt to render liturgical poetry in this “language” today makes it appear not only heavy and archaic, but esoteric and often ridiculous even to the religious searcher and devoted worshipper. There is little, if any, effective catechesis today to enable people to grow and bear fruit through a real understanding of our liturgical life. To attempt, therefore, to squeeze the holy “work of the people” into an artificially and ineptly constructed language form is the height of folly and self-destructiveness.

The best hymnographers were artful poets and masters of rhetoric, never artificial and awkward. Only the color and vitality of the vernacular, that is, the heartfelt language of the listener of today, can begin to match the succinct style, direct feeling, and poetic depths of these creative geniuses. To use outdated grammatical constructions serves notice to outgrown meanings. The words of the King James Bible may still be familiar to our ears, but they certainly cannot be said to speak to us who live in the post-industrial, post-Christian world! They certainly do not lead to understanding of the truths of faith in a real world. To ape this language only compounds the delusion and perverts the development and knowledge of the faith, not to mention the language

As a curious aside, it is not impossible that one of the reasons many espouse old forms of language rests in their failure to understand and remember that the forms of religion are only means to God, they are not themselves in any way divine and therefore beyond change. And one of the perennial problems of religion and life is our tendency to worship, always, the things of God rather than the God of all things.

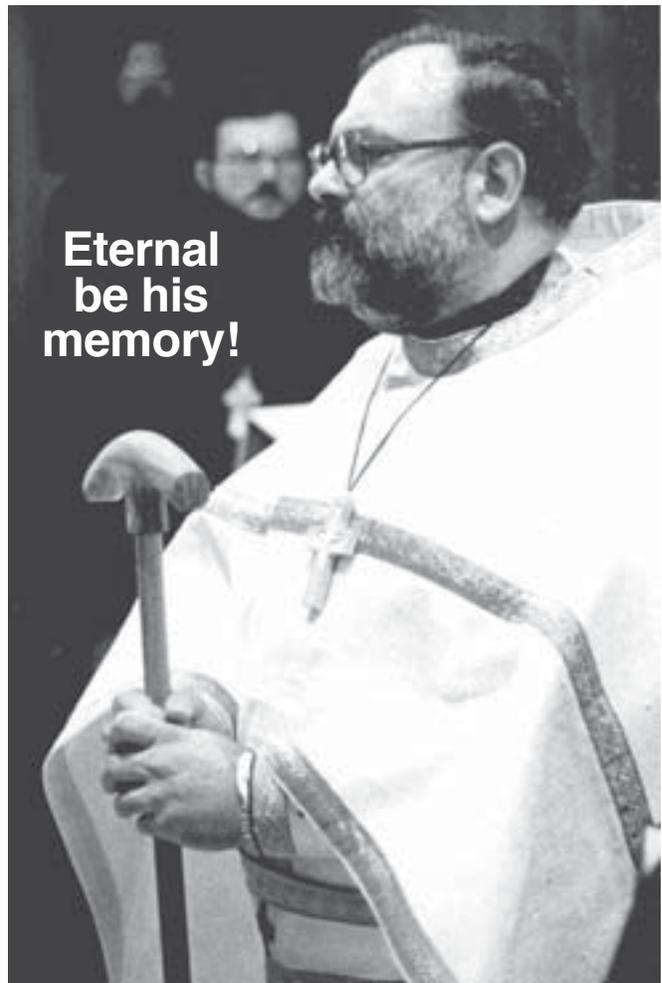
Today religion is viewed by most of the world as backward; God forbid that we should prove this true. To limit the English language of the liturgy exclusively to the actual words used by the Authorized Version is an injustice to the richness of a thousand years of hymnography, not to mention the English language. To bring into English the multitude of associations and nuances of a foreign word requires not that we find an English equivalent but that we make a statement, give birth to an insight in the new culture, touch what is real in a way that pierces the veil of the words themselves. For this, the dictionary is only a first step. One has simply to “say it in English.” This turns out to be, not just “adequate,” but a natural and dynamic vehicle to convey the message and, thereby, the grace of God.

It seems self-evident that the language we use with God must be as real and natural as possible to our everyday lives, precluding of course the trite and mundane, the improper and offensive. Obviously such language is simple and straightforward. It is not pretentious with heavy hieratic forms, unusual and archaic usages, or wooden literalism. Language is so vital an ingredient in the human condition that to use it lightly or without the proper reflection and understanding is to encourage further fragmentation and alienation in a world that is already rife with these. It should certainly say something significant to us that language has changed from age to age, and if the language of the church has not changed in a similar way with the language of other areas of life, then that very fact is clearly indicative of serious wrong. There is certainly ample reason to question the wisdom of espousing and maintaining an artificial language for worship. One wonders if this alone has not been sufficient to drive people away from the practice of religion.

Especially in public singing, for which our hymns were composed, the diction, rhythm, and grammatical structure of the text must serve today to communicate meaning and grace just as powerfully as musical forms. Therefore, the thought patterns and vocabulary of Chaucer, the Elizabethans, or even the Victorians simply will not do. Antiquity in certain areas of life (and this is one of those areas) conveys sentimentality and the mustiness of death, not birth and new life. In the end, it is only the power of beauty that compels our willing attention.

As we mentioned elsewhere many times, we see a profound need for the use of contemporary American English in the Orthodox situation in this country today. The use of anything else is fundamentally contrary to and counterproductive to the integration of all of life; a hieratic language is inherently fragmentive of the spiritual life.

—*Troparia and Kondakia*, New Skete, 1984



*Fr. Laurence, after the Liturgy marking the reception of New Skete into the OCA, 23 February 1979. On that day Fr. Alexander Schmemmann opined that the reception of New Skete was second in importance for the OCA after the granting of autocephaly in 1970. The staff presented to Fr. Laurence that day by Archbishop Theodosius was crafted from exotic woods by his brother Norman. Sharon Lefchick made the vesture.*

#### A PRACTICAL WORD TO PRIEST AND DEACON

As future servants of the divine ministry, our training included the proper celebration of our services. Yet, our celebrations very often leave something to be desired. Evidence of this is the perennial disenchantment with church attendance and the lack of love for the divine services among so many of our people.

Doubtlessly, this is a complex and delicate matter, but we may readily recognize the presence of two factors behind this sad commentary, factors which color parochial life everywhere and which seem bent on frustrating the church’s mission.

On the one hand, there is the interminable length of our offices. On the other hand, we have the unremitant pressure arising from the rush of contemporary life. Together, they bring to bear a terrible burden on every priest and deacon, no less than on others. As a result, the clergy very often find themselves responding in ways that

are ultimately quite detrimental to the growth of spiritual life in all of us.

In some cases, the services are curtailed haphazardly, without due consideration for their essential structures, themes, and purposes. Such abbreviations are forbidden in theory, but in practice they abound. Another way of coping with the length of the offices and the pressure of time is to rush through them, racing through word and ceremony so that the ethos, dignity, and symbolism are totally eroded. Thus, our people fail to hear the words clearly and meaningfully enunciated, and consequently they fail to grasp and understand the texts and meaning of the offices even when they are celebrated in their own tongue.

Frequently, both these responses characterize our celebrations. The result is that, instead of edifying and inspiring everyone, our services end up boring people, perhaps even those undaunted souls whom, it seems, nothing can dissuade from attending church.

The traditional length of our services, then, as well as the pace of today's life are two of the many considerations behind [our] restoration of simpler forms for the Eucharistic Liturgies. Accordingly, the first difficulty, the length of the services, is obviated by the usages herein contained. Each liturgy in this book should take more or less an hour for its celebration. An hour may not seem so small an amount of time, but the difference here is that the structures in this edition are sufficiently short to allow a dignified and solemn celebration, free of all haste and carelessness. Somewhat more time may be needed for greater numbers of communicants, for example, or for special occasions, but in any case each liturgy can be celebrated in a relaxed and fitting manner by clergy and congregation, all bearing themselves in a way befitting the nature of these offices.

No book, however, can cure the ills that arise from the pace of modern life. For any authentic renewal, each of us must reconsider his own individual way of celebrating. We must all reassess our physical bearing as we serve at the Holy Table, as we move through the temple, or even if we are present as less active participants in the divine drama. We must re-examine our behavior at divine services and desist from all mannerisms and actions foreign to the sacred services. All too often, these mannerisms are simply childish. At times, they are eccentric. Very often they are offensive or embarrassing. But no matter what they are in themselves, they are always in poor taste. It is not enough to abide by the letter of the injunctions of the liturgical books; we must strive to assimilate the inner meaning of these directives and make them part of our very beings as ministers of the divine services. In general, all our actions during services should harmonize with the

nature of these rites. They should be graceful and solemn, inspiring and edifying, free of all pretentiousness, affectation, and coarseness.

Our general diction and speech habits must also be seriously reviewed. We must strive for generally accepted correct pronunciation and clarity of enunciation, and we should so project our voices that those present, generally better educated than ever before, may easily find food for thought and meditation in the texts of the services. Of vital importance also is correct vocal punctuation with the proper pauses and tonal inflections, for we must make the texts live for all present, recalling that "faith comes through hearing."

Connected with the question of reciting the texts are the considerations of speed and music. All too often, in our efforts to prevent boredom and keep attendance up, we speed through the texts in such a way that the words are lost in the air, garbled beyond recognition. Our rate of recitation, on the contrary, should arise from the nature of the text itself: generally being neither too quick nor too slow, always conducive to reverence and devotion in all present.

As for the musical quality of our worship, it goes without saying that we should sing everything. People in general love to sing, especially in the temple, and during our services more than at any other time, we all express our innermost feelings and aspirations to Christ with one voice. As celebrants of the divine mysteries, we must be courageous and humble enough to re-examine our own singing habits; if necessary, we must seek out and seriously consider the advice, counsel, and assistance of capable chanters and choir directors who, so often, we persecute unwittingly by our failure to sing the services correctly. If more professionally knowledgeable individuals are available, let us even consult them, for it will be to our general advantage if we seek the opinion of such people on so important a matter. And furthermore, if we cannot sing, we must learn.

Finally, as priests and deacons, we have the duty of helping our people come to a better comprehension of our worship. The liturgy and other offices are indeed filled with riches, but like everything precious they must be purchased: in this case, by our bringing to bear on their celebration greater consciousness and awareness, greater effort, reverence, and devotion. This our people will willingly put forth if we will but guide them with example and capable instruction toward a growing understanding and appreciation for our worship. By our own conduct during the services, we must demonstrate that our worship is that sacred drama wherein we mystically encounter God, but we must also teach.

—*Service Book*, 1978