



HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX Church RESTON Parish Newsletter

Future Site: Potomac View Road (behind NoVa).

July ~2011

SUMMER

JULY—DAY 14 HOURS, NIGHT 10

- 10 Sun 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy—**Coffee Hour: Lynch**
- 16 Sat *Food Pamtry—10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.*
- 17 Sun 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy—**Coffee Hour: Matyuf**
- 22 Fri *19th anniversary of the sudden exodus of Fr. John Meyendorff (+1992)*
- 24 Sun 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy—**Coffee Hour: Morrow**
- 31 Sun 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy—**Coffee Hour: Smith**

AUGUST—DAY 13 HOURS, NIGHT 11

- 6 Sat ↓Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ—*Bless grapes and fruit*
- 7 Sun 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy—**Coffee Hour: Wayland**
- 14 Sun 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy—**Coffee Hour: Adams**
- 15 Mon ↑Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos—*Bless flowers*
- 20 Sat *Food Pamtry—10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.*
- 21 Sun 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy—**Coffee Hour: Belinsky**
- 28 Sun 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy—**Coffee Hour: Busenberg**

SEPTEMBER—DAY 12 HOURS, NIGHT 12

- 4 Sun 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy—**Coffee Hour: Doyle**
- 11 Sun **10:00 a.m.** Divine Liturgy—**Coffee Hour: Ellmore**
- 14 Wed ↑Elevation of the Life-giving Cross
- 17 Sat *Food Pamtry—10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.*
- 18 Sun The New Church Year

Highlight of the Summer: the Visit of Father Taft.

The consummate historian of the liturgical tradition of the Orthodox Catholic East has pointed out somewhere that before building the edifice, one must clear the land, quarry the stone, and bake the bricks; and that he has behind him 40 years of doing just that, quarrying and brick-baking, first as a doctoral student (under the great Fr. Juan Mateos), and later as a professor of Oriental Liturgy at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome. In the Summer of 1965 at Fordham University his teacher told us that “his student” would complete the work he had begun, that the goal was to do for the Liturgy of Constantinople what Fr. Joseph Jungmann had done for the Liturgy of Rome. But if truth be told, the work of Father Robert Taft has simply eclipsed the work of Jungmann in depth and breadth and scope.

In his remarks after the Divine Liturgy, Father Taft plugged the *Oriental Lumen* Conferences his host has been organizing for 15 years, insisted that the Orthodox Catholic East and Roman Catholic West need each other—a unity which will come about not by one lording it over the other, but by contemplating and living the vision of unity advanced in the Gospel of John—and the importance of the OCA in the future of Orthodoxy in America. His response to our Prayer, our song, our welcome was, “Wonderful.”



With the local clergy, Father Robert Taft of the Oriental Institute in Rome and Mr. Jack Figel, sponsor of *Oriental Lumen* Conference XV (in which Metropolitan Jonah took part) and Father Taft’s local host.



Remembering Father Laurence of New Skete

In this paean to a dead monk penned almost 40 years ago we catch a glimpse of the depth and breadth of a remarkable man.

Brother Thomas Dobush died November 7, 1972 as a result of injuries sustained in an automobile accident. He was 32. His car hit a tree on the way home. Perhaps a sudden sharp back pain going over a bump in the road caused him to lose control and hit a tree. He died within hours in the Cambridge hospital. 400 people attended his obsequies.

What we reprint here is the first piece in the first issue of New Skete's late journal Gleanings, Winter 1973.

The hills of Israel are steep, but not so steep that a man cannot ascend them rather easily. Picture a young man doing just that—he jumps the ditch along the road, makes his way through the brush up the hillside, and runs along the ridge toward a grove of fig trees. He is quite out of breath when he stumbles to his knees before his friend, seated under a tree, nonchalantly munching a fig. He pleads, “Nathanael, come on! We’ve found the one Moses and the prophets spoke of! He’s from Nazareth.”

“What good can come out of Nazareth?” retorts the other, unmoved by this show of urgency.

But, he gets up anyway, and follows his friend.

Meanwhile, on the road below, two men stroll along. Suddenly, one notices the two figures coming down the hillside. He draws the other’s attention to the fig-eater, saying: “Now there is a true Israelite! one in whom there is no guile!”

The fig-eater, hearing this, calls out, “How do you know me?”

“When you were still up there under the fig tree, Nathanael, I knew you.”

On Saturday, the tenth of November of this year, we buried our own beloved fig-eater, a true Israelite in whom there was no guile. He now rests just outside the monastery Temple, and while I do not want to eulogize him, I feel his presence quite closely, and he is urging, “*Otche [Father]*, tell them about me.” And what, what shall I say to you, to you who knew him and to you who never had that pleasure?

He was indeed the true Jew, totally without guile, without any deviousness whatever. As these sad days go by, the truth of this becomes ever clearer, for we see just how great an influence he had on all who met him, just how vibrant was the power of his person on everyone he encountered. Yes, the quality of ‘nathanaelism’ was rooted

deeply in the depths of his being. How well I recall him from our very first meeting! Much to my humble pleasure, it was to me that he turned some thirteen years ago, with all the idealism and simplicity so characteristic of him, but with an equally astute intelligence. He asked me to be his *starets*, his spiritual father, and completely confided himself to my direction. From that day on, there was never the slightest question about his absolute trust and confidence in me, of his deep genuine love and affection for me. Yes, he was the true Israelite, and much was he to suffer for this quality, for the total integrity and nobility of soul that his exterior often concealed in spite of his warm smile and the twinkle of his eyes.

The number who loved him runs into the hundreds. Many reflected on their affection and admiration, surprised that such could result from just a brief meeting with him. But, unfortunately, there were many who ran from him, who could not believe or comprehend his thoroughly uncomplicated goodness, the genuinely “other-oriented” flavor of his life.

Today, it is not fashionable to weep, to mourn for those who have died. By some warped interpretation of religion and human nature, we are urged to believe that these emotions are somewhat less than human and noble, certainly less than Christian. Hence, today finds us somewhat uptight about still another human experience, sorrow for the loss of our dear ones. For myself, and for all those who knew Tom, the world will never be the same. The river of our tears has not yet dried up. For me, personally, I do not know what I will do without him. I do not know of any other man who has been so graced as have I, by the total love and confidence, the complete dedication of such a young man. Our relationship was indeed rare. So, you see, I cannot put my fig-eater aside. I must, somehow, however clumsily, try to give you a greater insight into this remarkable young man, an insight that may somehow do for you what Thomas himself would want—to make life for everyone a more beautiful and a fuller experience.

He was—and is now more than ever—beautiful! He was thoroughly at home with his humanness, and he enjoyed and loved life to the hilt with incredible intensity. For him, there was never a problem of ‘natural vs. supernatural’, nor did he ever imprison the Almighty in the heavens, separating him from mankind. He was convinced that by being authentically himself he would achieve the deification for

which all men are born. If there was ever a child for whom the Kingdom of Heaven was intended, it was this young man: at once simple and direct, utterly sincere. Though many mistook this childlike simplicity for childishness, it was not so. He was gifted with a better than average intellect and astuteness. He was by no means naive, and in fact he possessed all the shrewdness of a thoroughly able and honest businessman. True to Nathanael, he was not to be taken for a fool—"How do you know me...? What good can come out of Nazareth...?" Like his Gospel counterpart, he had the real potential of becoming a cynic unless he kept his heart and mind attuned to his goal, to his ideal of life. I personally thank God that the pain of being misunderstood and disliked never made him the cynic such as [is] done to lesser men.

Those who ran from him pained him deeply. Their own insecurities were more often than not the reason they failed to comprehend him, the reason they rejected him as a phony. And let us not deceive ourselves—this happened even among his own brothers and sisters in religion. Yet, he always reconnoitered. He got hold of himself, continued to be himself, confident in his innate trust in the goodness of men, whatever the cost. It was these past few years that his understanding and maturity grew in great strides. It was becoming experientially clearer and clearer that life was not simple. Yet, he never lost faith in men. Nothing pleased him more than seeing people enjoy each other, really sincerely getting along in the best sense of the phrase. He loved everyone, no matter what, with a strong virile love, emotions in control. It is in this love that we see the very marrow of his life as a monk.

His Ukrainian heritage was a great inspiration to him as was his native Eastern Christian faith, and Dostoyevsky especially had a tremendous impact on his religious life. A monk, this Russian writer had suggested, was nothing more than what all men ought to be. Thomas caught hold of this as only a Nathanael would, and its implications consumed him. How well I remember!

He saw clearly, that men were not called to plaster sanctity. Salvation, for him, lay in embracing our humanity just as the Savior had done. He realized that the monk's life was a sign of this truth for all men. Tom never had time for negative thinking, much less negative acting. As a monk, he was simply and entirely interested in building up every man, in rebuilding ruptured relations and disappointed spirits. Perhaps he did this best by his simple existence, once again through the power of his person. He had no time for tearing down of any kind. When people tore each other down, in any way whatever, it also somehow or other knocked at the brick of his own existence. If love is the proof of one's dedication to Christ, then Thomas the Monk, our Nathanael, was a Christian in the finest sense of the word.

But his love did not stop with people. His sensitivity put him in tune with all creation. Those who lived with him will never forget his love for the German Shepherd, and for all animals without exception. His tenderness and gentle strength were visible whether he dealt with animals or flowers. He despised nothing, though he wrote a poem that began "I hate cats.:" Yet, we ought not look on him as something out of the ordinary though he was in fact extraordinary. And if that sounds paradoxical, it is worth recalling how he appreciated the paradox of life. His life was certainly not pure sunshine. All of us who made up his monastic family are only too familiar with the sheer exhaustion that bore down on him in many instances, whether it arose from several draining hours whelping a bitch or from the totally demanding confrontation with others or with his own weaknesses. Yes, he was thoroughly human. He had his shortcomings and his frustrations, but they never carried the day with him. If he was not able to be victor with one of his battles in growth, he would rally back, never giving up. And he was, in the final analysis, the victor indeed!

Perhaps the proof of his goodness, of his simplicity and nobility, was the way children flocked to him. How many are the youngsters of the Cambridge area who were his personal friends, whom he enlisted to 'help' him train puppies, with whom he sat down with all the drama and flair of those in tune with children, to tell them Bible stories, to joke and tease with them. And how he glowed over his baby niece Tanya! All children, without exception, loved and idolized him.

Yes, he had his difficulties like all men. Many were the hours of discouragement and frustration. He often got into his own way. But nothing could ever overcome his undaunted optimism. Men like Tom come through life every now and then. The brilliance they radiate makes most of us hesitate to look them squarely in the eye. And to attempt to give to the rest of the world an insight into the magnificence of such souls—as I am hopeful of doing now—leaves one with the feeling of unfathomable inadequacy. It is, as it were, too good to be true. But thank God that it was and is true!

So, in the midst of our sorrow, a sorrow that quite frankly seems bent on crushing us, we must not lose sight of the meaning of Thomas's life. He has not died, simply. He has answered the call to that higher spiritual dimension, a dimension which he seemed forever about to burst into, he lived so intensely. For him, this was possible only because of his thorough humanness. This is the mystery of human life, and Thomas had a deep reverence for mystery. He always joked about being 'nothing but a philosophy major.' Actually, he was a mystic in the truest sense of the word. He had nothing saccharine or pietistic about him, but looked reality squarely in the eye. And what is mysticism

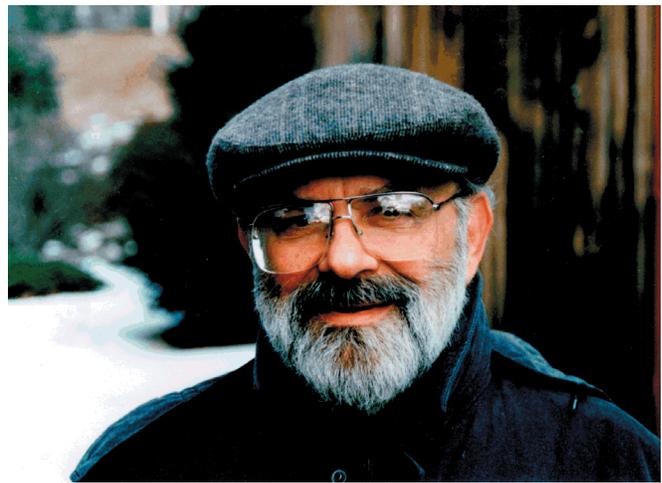
if not the ultimate in realism? With his total being firmly planted in the stuff of humanness, he was never out of touch with that life for which he was created.

If we are to do him honor, then, if we are to be faithful to the message of his life, we, too, must face reality, placing first things first, adjusting the order of the priorities of our lives. We, too, must find the Nathanael of our own being. We, too, must cherish sincerity and guilelessness. But, the good Lord knows, it is a difficult task for us who are not Thomases! Difficult indeed, but not beyond us!

As I write this, the beauty of the Hebrew comes back to me, just as it did thirteen years ago when I sat with Tom, offering him this Gospel lesson as the theme and ideal for his life. In Hebrew, Nathanael means 'Gift of God.' At baptism, Tom was called Theodore; this, too, means 'Gift of God'. Finally, when he gave himself to God as a monk, he was given the name Thomas—of all things!—after the truly Nathanael-like doubting disciple! So, no matter how we reflect on him, he was the true Jew. No deviousness, no duplicity, without guile. He was and remains a gift from God to us all.

Here among his own, Thomas carried great responsibility. He had spearheaded and developed the German Shepherd breeding program to such dimensions that its effects on the breed will doubtlessly be seen in years to come. He was especially enthusiastic about our liturgical life here at New Skete, and vitally interested in the possibilities it heralded for Byzantine worship in our land and times. There is not one aspect of our life here that did not receive his attention. His vitality and energy were beyond belief, and he was forever confronting me with new ideas, new possibilities to advance our existence and benefit all who came to us. And for me, personally, there is no word to describe him. He was at once a son, a friend, a disciple, a lieutenant and right arm, the elder brother to his brothers and sisters. Yet, none of these tells it the way it was, for he was more than any of those titles say. He was Thomas.

One of his dearest projects was this literary journal. He wanted it because of his interest in his brothers and sisters



in religion, as a way of encouraging them and bringing out the best of their talents. This first issue is the realization of this dream, another indication of his love for us and for truth. The Sunday before his death, he excitedly told his 'Magic Lady', Rose Oliver, how thrilled he was that his journal was to become a reality. Two days after his death he was to have put this first issue 'to bed'.

My words can never do you justice, Molodets, so let me give the world your own work—Gleanings, Vol. I, No. 1, Winter '73.

On 23 February 1979 at the end of the Liturgy celebrating the induction of New Skete into the Orthodox Church in America, Archbishop Theodosius joined a Litany for the Dead to bring the memory of Brother Thomas into the picture. When the Věčnaja pámjat's were sung, Fr. Meyendorff was fighting back tears. Looking back, Fr. Laurence divined that Thomas's death represented some sort of turning point in the community's life—a return to sources and original inspiration—that culminated in their abandoning Uniatism and embracing the Church as she is.

FOOD PANTRY WISH LIST

Canned items—Peanut butter, Jelly, Juices (100% fruit), Vegetables, Canned fruit, Canned beans, Tomato products, Stews, Soups. Boxed Items—Macaroni and cheese, Cereal, Pasta, Rice, Potatoes, Crackers. Other Items—Sugar, Powdered milk, Coffee, Tea bags, Dry beans. Needs for the Homeless—Pop-top canned foods, Individual serve items, Can opener. Infant Needs—Diapers (all sizes), Baby personal hygiene. Personal Hygiene—Deodorant, Shampoo and conditioner, Bath/hand soap, Tissues, Tooth paste, Toothbrush, Laundry soap, Women's hygiene products, Shaving cream and razors. Distribution Center Supplies—Ziploc bags (all types), Paper towels, Disposable gloves, Disinfectants, Bleach, Window cleaner, Antibacterial hand soap, Copy paper (white and colors), File folders.

Let's plan on a pot-luck for our parish feast following the Vespers of Pentecost evening, Sunday, June 12, at St. Luke's Serbian, which we have from 5:00 p.m. on.

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