



MISSIONARY

Year 14 Issue 6

November/December, 1987

Number 123

BUSY WEEK IN EDMONTON

Canadian Orthodoxy was well represented in Edmonton, Alberta during the second week of November. Amidst the exhibits and booths at the Federal Government's Multicultural/Intercultural Conference at the Edmonton Convention Centre, there was a large red and white sign:

SYNAXIS PRESS
The Canadian Orthodox Publisher



Synaxis Press had a booth exhibiting and distributing Canadian Orthodox books and publications. Fr Lazar was on hand during much of the conference to answer questions and converse with delegates. In addition, father delivered the popular slide lecture on ikons at the University of Alberta, for a group made up of professors and students of the departments of Religion, Eastern European Studies and Art. On 12 November, he delivered the opening lecture of the current Alberta Provincial Museum series, "Listening to the Eastern Church." (This series is being sponsored in honour of the 1000th anniversary of the "baptism of Rus".)

Synaxis Press and the Canadian Orthodox Monastery of All Saints of North America have been leading a lonely struggle for the advancement of Canadian Orthodoxy for nearly twenty years, and the exhibit and lectures are part of this struggle.

BAPTISM AT LANGLEY



Laura Nicole Papuc was baptized in to the Holy Church on October 25. Godparents were Richard Papuc and Tammy Papuc, shown at top of next column, with Laura Nicole and here mother, Bonnie.



ST TIKHON'S PARISH READER PAINTS IKONS FOR ST NICHOLAS PARISH

Ikonographer John Ormsby, reader of the St Tikhon Canadian Orthodox Church, is hard at work painting ikons for the St Nicholas Parish in Langley.

Working with the fathers of the Canadian Orthodox Monastery of All Saints of North America, Reader John is striving to toward a style of Liturgical ikonography which emulates the Serbian school. The Serbo-Macedonian school of ikonography powerfully captured authentic Orthodox liturgical art, but was free of the often grotesque deformities of many periods in the Byzantine school.



Working at the Monastery, Mr Ormsby will paint a series of ikons for the St Nicholas parish and for the Monastery itself. God willing, he will also visit Cedar Rapids and help with the planning for the interior of the new St John the Baptist Orthodox Christian Church, to be built in the near future.

CHAPEL OFFERED IN SURREY, B. C.

A group of Greek Traditionalists recently asked the Monastery to assist them in the formation of a new Traditionalist parish in Surrey (south suburban Vancouver).

The community recently chartered a parish in the name of St Nektarios. They have asked that the Monastery serve for them at least once a month, in Greek and, perhaps, Slavonic. Activities of the parish would be coordinated with the St Nicholas Parish in Langley, B.C.

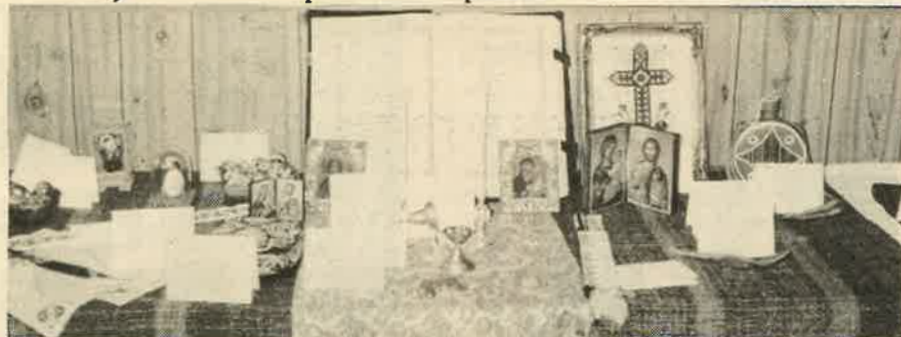
(continued from page 1)

The chapel (shown in the photos below) was inspected by the fathers, and it was determined to commence serving there once a month, beginning in January.



ETHNIC BANQUET FUN FOR EVERYONE

The annual St Nicholas Parish ethnic dinner "fundraiser" was its usual success. This year, the event featured a display of Balkan and other East European artifacts, art, utensils and religious items. A 19th century Slavonic Gospel book, carvings from Mount Athos, Greek enamel and handwoven Russian rugs, over 150 years old, were popular features in the exhibit, which was open to the public.



Also a centre of attention was Helen (Papuc) Holland, who wore traditional Romanian gypsie dress (seen below standing by the Russian section of the display).



The dinner was served buffet style, and featured dishes from Russia (Fr Varlaam's famous North Russian borshch), Romania, the Ukraine, Serbia and Greece. And, since we are a

Canadian parish, North American pies were offered for dessert along with the baklava. Each dish was clearly labeled with its name and country of origin.



BACK FROM KOREA, "FIRST ALTAR BOY" VISITS "HOME"

To our surprise and joy, the mission's first "altar boy" arrived, unannounced, at the Monastery on the first of December. John Ragland, who served as the first altar boy when the Monastery began to serve parish communities in British Columbia ten years ago, had been stationed in Korea with the United States Army. He attended services at St Tikhon's and St Nicholas during his week-long visit.



John will be stationed at Monterey, California for the next two years, and plans to return to the Chilliwack area after completion of his service.

You Asked:

[1]

You Asked:

Why the Orthodox Church refers to the Psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd" as the 22nd Psalm, whereas the King James version of the Bible calls it Psalm 23?

Answer:

The Orthodox Church uses an older arrangement of the Old Testament Scripture. The King James version erroneously divides Psalm 9 into two, making them Psalms 9 and 10. Psalm 9 actually has 38 verses. It is a poem in which — in Hebrew — each verse begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet (this would be called an acrostic poem). In the King James version, there are only 20

verses in Psalm 9, and the other 18 verses are wrongly called Psalm 10.

The Orthodox Church has kept the original form, and so the Orthodox numbering is correct, while the King James version numbering is wrong.

There is also a good example of the differences between the Orthodox Bible and the Western Bible in this psalm. Let us compare the Orthodox version of Psalm 9:20 with the Protestant (Western) version.

The Orthodox version reads:

"O Lord, set a law-giver over them; let the nations know that they are but men."

The Protestant (K.J.V.) version reads:

"Strike them with terror, O Lord; let the heathens know that they are but men".

[continued on page 3]

[continued from page 2]

As you can see, there is a considerable difference in the content and spirit of the two versions. The authentic (Orthodox) version is a part of the prophecies about the coming of the Messiah (Christ). This is completely missing in the Protestant version.

[2]

You Asked:

There is an incident in the Old Testament that bothers me and I actually get upset whenever it comes to mind. In Judges, chapter 11, we read about Jephthah who vowed that if he won a certain battle, he would make a burnt offering to God of whatever he met first as he approached the door of his house. His only daughter came rushing out to meet him when he came home and, according to scripture, he offered her as a sacrifice.

How could that be? God did not allow human sacrifices. Surely, Jephthah would have been stoned by other Jews if he had tried to offer his daughter as a sacrifice. This seems so horrible, yet from the Scripture, it almost seems as if God accepted a human burnt offering.

Please answer this, as it is causing me a great deal of confusion.

Answer:

Perhaps the first thing to do in order to understand this story better is to read Romans 12:1: "...offer yourselves as living sacrifices, holy

and well-pleasing, to God; this is your 'reasonable service'".

There are some very definite and clear statements in the narrative about Jephthah's daughter that let us know what actually happened.

First of all, when the daughter heard of her father's vow, and realized that it was her who must be offered, she asked to be allowed to lament for two months because she would never be married: not because she would be killed, but that she would never marry. Secondly, at Judges 11:39, we read, "And he did to her as he had vowed. AND SHE REMAINED A VIRGIN."

It is quite clear then, that she was not literally offered as a burnt sacrifice, but was offered to the temple as a consecrated virgin (what we now call "nuns") to serve in the House of God. We know from many references that virgins served in the temple.

It is not at all possible that Jephthah offered his daughter as a slain sacrifice, because God had already absolutely forbidden such a thing and established the strictest punishment for anyone who should attempt to offer a human sacrifice (see, for example, Lev.18:21; 20:2-5; Deut.12:31; 18:10)—especially one of his sons or daughters (Deut.18:10-12)—but to have offered her to the service of God in the temple was not an uncommon practice. However, in this case, since she was his only child, it was a great sacrifice, for it meant that his family line would die with him, since she would have to remain ever-virgin.

the husband is like Christ and the wife is like the Church.

2. Marriage is a union (binding) of two people together so they can work out their salvation as one.
3. Marriage makes a man and woman "one flesh". This means that in the eyes of God, they are as one person instead of two.

A divorce:

1. Breaks this image of Christ and the Church;
2. Destroys this "salvation partnership";
3. Rips apart the bond which was made by God's Grace, which united the two people into "one flesh".

Why is divorce permitted at all, and why does the Church permit a person to be married up to three times?

The Orthodox Church does not approve of divorce and remarriage at all. However, the Church does understand human problems and the human condition. Sometimes, a marriage simply cannot work out. Sometimes, the children and either the husband or wife are being completely destroyed mentally, emotionally, even physically, in a marriage. In many cases, nothing the bishop or priest can do or say will save a marriage.

When there is a civil divorce, the husband and wife are living apart. They still have their human passions and needs, and it is asking too much to insist that they live out the rest of their lives in perfect chastity. Not everyone is strong enough or called to monasticism.

Therefore, out of love and compassion and understanding, the Orthodox Church hears the words of Apostle Paul, "It is better for them to marry than to burn" and permits a sanctified re-marriage. However, the Divine Service for a re-marriage is nothing like the crowning of the original marriage.

It should be evident, however, that the Church cannot "re-marry" you unless it has dissolved the marriage which it previously bound you in. If the Orthodox Church did not insist that you obtain a canonical divorce before it allowed you to re-marry, this would mean that the Church did not even take marriage seriously.

HOMILIES ON MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

Archimandrite Lazar Puhalo

I X

MATTHEW 5:13-16

(The Salt of the Earth; The Light of the Word)

"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its savour [saltiness; become tainted] [debased] how shall its saltiness be restored. It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men" (5:13)

You are the salt of the earth. Salt is not a spice, not a mere flavouring substance. It is a mineral and a necessity of life; like water, salt is a most fundamental requirement of life.

Christ has just given His disciples a description of the characteristics of His true disciples — it is in fact, a description of characteristics manifested in His own life. The Beatitudes clearly set forth those attributes and dispositions of soul necessary for a true and effective discipleship of Christ. They presuppose faith, which is the foundation of them all because He is speaking to those who are already His followers; since only His immediate disciples were gathered there.

If we who believe and profess our discipleship are the salt of the earth, it is He Himself who is salting the earth with us. He is using us for His service, for His ministry. We are becoming necessary elements in the spiritual life of the world. Apostle Paul says it directly, "You are co-workers with God in salvation". If we believe in Him, if we truly give ourselves over to Him and to His service, then through spiritual struggle, with the help of His Grace, we strive to acquire those virtues which He describes in the "Beatitudes".

While we struggle to acquire these things, rooting out our passions, we bear witness of Him, not in mere words, but in the nature and quality of our lives. Then, we are the salt of the world, and added leavening to the loaf, a savour of godliness in the life of humanity.

If, having been His disciples, we become tainted with the world, however, if we fall again into a worldly mode of thought and life, we lose our saltiness and are no longer useful to the ministry of God, we are not even saving our own selves and can offer nothing to anyone. In such a condition, when we speak of Christ, our words are vain and empty, lacking in Grace. They may be heavy in artificial vocal inflections, well practiced in drama and inspiring catch-phrases, sustained by theatrical piety and well practiced "ecstasies", laced with a studied repertoire of religious cliches, so that to carnal minds they seem to be something as they play on our passions and untrained emotions. But they have not the savour of true godliness, not being substantiated by a life which sincerely and truly manifests the qualities revealed in the Beatitudes.

[continued on page 4]

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LETTER:

I feel just terrible. I am confused and upset, and I need an answer.

Two years ago, I went through a very unpleasant divorce. Since I am a believing Orthodox Christian, I didn't accept the breakup of my marriage easily, but it was one of those situations where real brutality was involved and the marriage was destroying me and my four year old daughter.

I have met a wonderful man, and we have been seeing each other for a year. We want to get married. He has been coming to church with me for several months and is now a catechumen. We want to get married soon after Pascha, and while we were discussing it with our priest, he asked if I had a "Church divorce" from my former marriage. I was very upset. I didn't know anything about a "Church divorce". I thought that was Roman Catholic. Now I have to make a petition to the bishop for a Church divorce. Is this right? And if so, why?

Response:

Christ told the Apostles, as the bishops of His Church, "Whatever you bind on earth is bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth is loosed in heaven." (Mt.18:18)

Since you were married in the Orthodox Church, your marriage was "bound on earth and in heaven." If this bond is to be loosed, it must be loosed "on earth and in heaven" by those to whom Christ gave this authority.

If you will pause to contemplate this in a spiritual manner, you will see the clear logic of it. Nevertheless, it is not the whole answer. When someone requests a canonical divorce, it is the duty of the priest to try his best to work with the couple to try to reconcile them and save their marriage. Divorce is a very serious matter. Let us look at the meaning of marriage in simple form:

1. Marriage is a type of Christ and the Church, in which

[continued from page 3]

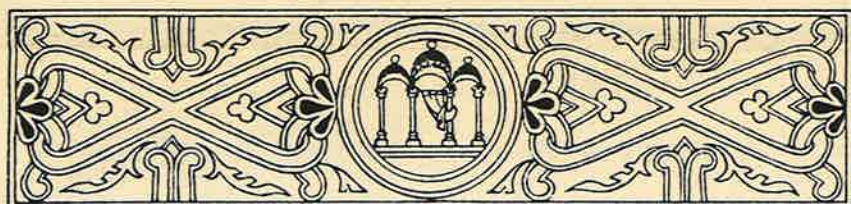
When we come to sincerely believe and follow Christ, we become salt in the world. Unless we struggle to make that faith truly alive in us, to acquire Christ-like attributes of a living, spiritual disposition, always growing and developing in love, Truth and faith, we will indeed "lose our saltiness" and be useless for the ministry and witness of Christ and His Holy Church.

"You are the light of the world....Let your light so shine before men that they can see your virtues and glorify your Father Who is in the heavens" (Mt.5:16).

There are many preachers in our world. Some are sincere, some are not. In an era of media religion hawkers, when the preaching of the Gospel is being made an object of merchandise and ridicule, preaching alone is hardly effective. Our preaching must be more in deeds than in words, and our sermons must be substantiated by works. In the first centuries of the Church, more people were converted to Christ by the martyrdoms of the saints than by all the preaching of the Apostles. The early Christians were preaching something new and astounding: the liberation from the fear of death and the resurrection of the dead. Their doctrine was so amazing to the ancient pagans that it might never have been received had it not been so clearly substantiated by deeds. The martyrs went forth to their brutal executions rejoicing and glorifying God, devoid of fear, filled with hope in eternity. This is what shook the Roman empire and conquered it for Christ. The unshakable faith of the ancient Christians manifested itself in clear deeds and proved stronger and more enduring than emperors and armies.

Not only were the ancient martyrs giants of faith, manifested in such deeds, but their incomparable charity won the souls of thousands. Their charity was completely different in nature from much of modern charity, because it was so absolute. The charity of the early martyrs and Christians in general was based on a complete disdain for the things of this world, a love for the poor which held back nothing because their faith needed no worldly crutches, because they truly hoped on God for all things. They truly took no thought for the things of tomorrow, and thus their lives preached the Gospel more profoundly than any words possibly could.

[Continued: On the meaning of the Law. In what manner we are no longer subject to it, though it has not been abolished].



[7 January]
HOLY MARTYR ABOUN
"The Jasmine Worker"
(+786)

Aboun lived in the great Arab city of Baghdad. Baghdad is a very old city, built just where the desert meets the sea.

As a young teenager, Aboun went to work for a man who made medicine and beautiful perfume from jasmine and other plants.

When Aboun was seventeen years old, the prince of a land called Georgia came to Baghdad. In those days, the Arabs had conquered part of Georgia, and the Georgian princes had to visit the Arab king every year to show their obedience to him. Aboun met some of the Georgians they told him of the beautiful, high mountains and green forests of their country. Aboun decided that he wanted to go there.

The Prince of Georgia was named Nerses. When he started back to Georgia with his people, Aboun begged to be allowed to go also. The prince agreed.

Prince Nerses and Aboun became good friends and, when they came to Georgia, the prince asked Aboun to work for his family, making "jasmynes" (fragrant ointments and perfumes), and medicines.

The Georgians were Orthodox Christians, and soon after Aboun learned their language, he began to read the Holy Gospel and other Christian books which he found in Prince Nerses' library. Before long, Aboun realized that Christ is



truly God, and that He is truly our Saviour.

Aboun wanted to be baptized, but Georgia was ruled by the Arab king and Aboun was an Arab. In those days, it was against the law for an Arab to be baptized into the Christian Church. Aboun was afraid that if he was baptized, the Arab king would have him killed, and he might even kill Prince Nerses, so he did not ask to be baptized.

In the year 780, the Arab king became angry with Prince Nerses, and the prince and all his family had to flee and hide in another country. Aboun went with them. Since they were now outside the Arab lands, Aboun was baptized. He was filled with joy, and began to live like a monk, praying and fasting all the time.

A few years later, Prince Nerses was able to go back to his own home, and Saint Aboun went with him. Even though he was an Arab, Saint Aboun would not hide the fact that he had become a Christian. Some of his friends told him, "You can pray in secret and receive Communion when no one is around. That way, the Arabs will not know that you are an Orthodox Christian and they will not kill you."

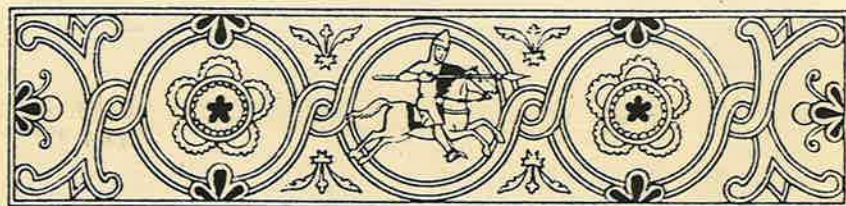
Saint Aboun replied, "I will not be ashamed of Christ in front of men, for He said that if anyone denies Him before men, He will deny them before the Father."

Saint Aboun went to church for every service, and he even began to teach other Arabs about Christ. "You must believe in Christ and be baptized into His Holy Church," the saint told them. Soon, some of the Arabs began to complain to the governor. Aboun's friends begged him to go somewhere and hide, but he answered, "I will not hide the Gospel from those who are in darkness."

Saint Aboun was arrested and brought to trial before the governor. He was convicted of being a Christian and sentenced to death. The holy martyr was put into a prison, and there he was tortured for more than a week. Each day, the governor came and asked him, "Aboun, will you deny Christ and return to the Moslem religion?" But Aboun always joyfully replied, "O governor, will you deny the empty, vain religion of Mohammed and follow the true God, Jesus Christ?" This made the governor very angry, and finally, on the feast of Theophany, Saint Aboun was taken to the prison yard, and there his head was cut off.

Through the prayers of the Holy Martyr Aboun, may we find strength not to deny Christ or hide His Holy Gospel from the unbelievers who surround us.

Amen!



OUR LADY 'JOY OF CANADA'
AKATHIST BOOK AVAILABLE

The Akathist to the Ikon of the Theotokos, 'Joy of Canada' is now available. In addition to the Akathist hymn, the booklet contains the Dismissal Troparion and Kondakion, and the "Megalanarion" (Magnification) for the ikon. Also included are the Troparion and Kondakion for All Saints of North America and the "Canadian" Troparion and Kondakion for the Holy Martyr Tikhon, The Patriarch, who consecrated most of the Older Orthodox Churches in the Canadian prairies.

At the end of the booklet, the complete instructions for serving an Akathist alone are given.

Proceeds from the sale of the Akathist book will go toward building the shrine kiot for the Ikon of the Theotokos, 'Joy of Canada.'

The Akathist book is available, at \$3.50 a copy (post paid), from Synaxis Press, Box 404, Chilliwack, B.C., V2P-6J7.

Publishing Staff

Rt. Rev. Archimandrite Lazar Puhalo, Hieromonks Varlaam Novakshonoff and Moses Armstrong.

Contributing Editors: Fr Moses Mwuara and Mr. Alexios M. Bruno.

U S P S 688-830/I S S N 0893-7796

**CANADIAN
ORTHODOX
MISSIONARY**

**2nd Class Postage Paid
Lynden, W A. 98264**

USA

Box 689,
Lynden, WA.
98264.

**Published Bi-Monthly
Synaxis Press**

113-16th St
Lynden, WA.
98264

CANADA

Box 404
Chilliwack, B.C.
V2P-6J7

4062 Slesse Rd
Sardis, B.C.
V2R-2P1