

The CANADIAN ORTHODOX MISSIONARY

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CANADIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH MOVES AHEAD

By God's mercy, a new chapter recently began in the history of the Canadian Orthodox Mission. The acquisition of a large new forty acre complex for the monastery, a seminary and a diocesan centre for the Canadian Orthodox Church; marks a major step forward for Traditional Orthodoxy in Canada.

While much work lies ahead in developing the new centre, parishioners of the diocese are looking forward eagerly to building for the future of the Apostolic Faith in Canada.

We thank our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, that He has blessed us and made this advance possible. We are certain that the prayers and intercessions of St Nicholas and St Tikhon and of Blessed Archbishop Ioasaph of Calgary, the true enlightener of Canada, made the acquisition of this new property possible.



Main wing of the diocesan centre building looking against the small lake. The forty acres of the monastery grounds runs over the top of the mountain seen in the background, and down toward a small valley behind.



Diocesan centre. The wing for the Canadian Orthodox Seminary is seen in the back



The monastery "konak" (monks' residence)



The guest house for pilgrims



Looking across the monastery meadows and fields. The road in the foreground is Archbishop Ioasaph Road

BLESSING OF THE NEW MONASTERY

On Sunday afternoon, 1 December, over sixty members of the Canadian Orthodox parishes of St Tikhon in Chilliwack and St Nicholas in Langley, gathered for vespers and the blessing of the new monastery buildings. Since the monastery church is not yet ready, the service was held in the main hall of the seminary building. The new "Joy of Canada" ikon, painted by brother Slavko Protic, was consecrated during the service.

Reader John Presson of the St Innokenty Orthodox Parish in Seattle added his beautiful voice to the chanting for the service.

The entrance road to the monastery crosses a bridge over the Chilqua River near the gate, and winds 900 metres (2000 ft) through the meadows. It joins a second road which runs along the stream and small lake which acts as a "moat" in front of the diocesan centre/monastery complex. The entrance road was officially named "St Tikhon's Drive," while the cross road leading along the small lake was named "Archbishop Ioasaph Road," after Archbishop Ioasaph of Calgary, the true enlightener of Canada.

Scenes from the thanksgiving service and blessing of the new monastery buildings. The service took place in the main hall of the seminary.



FAREWELL TO A BELOVED CHAPEL

The last Divine Liturgy in the old monastery chapel was a bitter-sweet event for those who have worshipped there over the past twenty years. The tears were shared by the brotherhood, and by the founding members of St Tikhon's Canadian Orthodox Church, who began the parish in the monastery's chapel some ten years ago. The sadness was more than offset by the joy of moving to the new monastery. The "farewell" took place on the first day of the feast of the "Joy of Canada".



Vladika Lazar reminisces about the history of the monastery chapel and the founding of St Tikhon Church.



Bishop Lazar, Laura Hailes, Sharon Parent, Archimandrite Varlaam and Hieromonk Moses. Laura and Sharon were among those present at the first St Tikhon's Liturgy held in the monastery chapel.



NEWS From Around the Diocese

Vancouver, B.C.



St Nicholas Parishioners Reda Akladios and Maria Fernanda Gomes were married on 1 September, 1991. The wedding was served at St Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Vancouver, B.C.

Woodburn, Oregon

Russian "Old-Rite" Baptism



Viktoria Sopriko was baptised at the Russian Old-Rite parish of "The Kursk Ikon" during the Divine Liturgy on 24 November, 1991. God-mother Juliana Zyryanoff is shown placing Viktoria's head covering following the baptism.

Langley, B.C.

Classical entertainment graces annual "ethnic dinner."



Mr George Comeanu and Mr Jurgen Ilander, both professional musicians from Chilliwack, entertained at the St Nicholas ethnic dinner in Langley, with classical and Romanian folk music. Their contribution added much to the event and was greatly appreciated.

{Continued on p.5: "NEWS."}

MEDIEVAL IGNORANCE – IS IT A NECESSARY PART OF OUR FAITH?

[The following editorial is a response to a letter we received in November. I have taken the opportunity of this letter to write about a problem I consider to be quite serious: the obscuring of the Gospel of our Saviour Jesus Christ with superstitions, folk myths and a certain dark cloud of medieval ignorance which has been perpetuated even by some well educated people. Ignorance and intelligence can, in fact, walk together in an atmosphere of occult or theosophical mysticism; a mysticism which is not properly informed by sound theology and a firm, Orthodox understanding of the Holy Scripture. Many people are so wrapped up in these superstitions and mythologies that they have allowed them to become their actual religion, and the radiance of the Gospel of our Saviour seldom shines into their lives. Such people are emotionally Orthodox, but their is a great question as to whether or not they are truly acquainted with a saving faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.]

Letter to the Editor:

I have been told that you defend the game "Dungeons and Dragons." I consider this game to be demonic and evil, and I was wondering if it is true that you approve of the game.

Millie Karagiannis
Houston, Texas

Reply:

We once printed an article which concerned the game "Dungeons and Dragons". However, the article was more about ignorance, dark age superstitions and sensationalist journalism than it was about the game. An article about "Dungeons and Dragons" had appeared in one of the "National Enquirer" type of Orthodox Journals in America. If I recall, it was a journal which advanced the theory that U.F.O.'s are demons, and similar hysteria.

Our objection to the article relating to "Dungeons and Dragons", was not a defence of the game, but a defence of human beings. The thrust of the article which had disturbed us was this:

There are elves, dwarves and other twisted, deformed personages in the game, and these obviously were demons. After all, we would not want our children to learn to accept and relate to dwarves, elves and ugly, twisted personages, because that is how demons appear, and young people who play "D and D" will be prepared to be friendly with demons.

Totally disregarding the fact that "satan appears as an angel of light" (2Cor.11:14) the article made a very great point of the fact that short, deformed, ugly or pixy-like personages are evil, and such an appearance is a sign of evil.

I am not sure it is necessary to go further in explaining what is wrong about teaching our children something like that; most intelligent people would catch on right away. Nevertheless, when we objected to this idea of instilling a fear and hatred of people with Downs Syndrome, dwarfism, Williams Syndrome and other birth defects, we received a certain amount of hate mail and we were accused by one Russian bishop of being "pro-demon."

What troubled us most about both the article and some of the responses to our counter article, was the evidence of a deep, abiding attachment to dark, medieval superstitions and ignorance — an evil ignorance that caused much suffering and many religiously justified murders and outrages even in the not to distant past.

Let me explain the danger in the attitudes that some of this "supermarket tabloid" type of journalism creates. There were articles written against the movie "E.T.", the "Star Wars" series and the game "Dungeons and Dragons" among others. Supposing you had read these articles and "learned" that pixy looking creatures such as Yoda ("Star Wars") and E.T. were horrid demons. Dwarfed people with deformities, strange gaits and penetrating eyes with star shaped colouration are demons at worst, witches and warlocks at best — but all satanic.

Now suppose you were a young person walking home from school and you encountered a young teenager — or even an older person — who fit this description: *short, a narrow face, but broad forehead. The bridge of the nose appears sunken, the chin is very sharp. The eyes are widely spaced apart and the irises have a star-shaped pattern in them.* The person might even have slightly pointed ears, and walk strangely because he/she does not have good control of their motor skills, and he or she will not have good spatial discernment.

What should you do? Scream and run? Cross yourself frantically and call out exorcisms? Perhaps you should gather some acquaintances, collect firewood and set up a stake?

Is the person a demon or a satanic being? As a matter of fact, the person is merely suffering from a birth defect called "Williams Syndrome." The person will be intelligent in many areas, yet they will display a low I.Q. in mathematic related fields, and they will have difficulty taking items from a shelf, tying their shoes and sometimes walking gracefully.

In the dark ages (which still exists in the minds of some people) this, kind, gentle person might have been tortured and/or brutally killed. Even in our own day such a person might be scorned, maltreated, mocked or beaten. A person with Downs Syndrome, Huntington's Chorea or La Tourette's Syndrome will often be subjected to the same vile treatment. I venture to say that a large number of people deemed to be "possessed by demons" are, in fact only suffering from a more severe form of Tourette's Syndrome.

{Continued on P.4, Col. 1: "EDITORIAL."}

{ "EDITORIAL," continued from page 3 }

Now let us look at the problem. In former centuries, especially in the dark ages and the middle ages, everything that was not known and not understood was classed as either holy or demonic. People who had birth defects were usually classed as evil or possessed by demons, while people with mental illnesses might be either burned at stake or canonized (Joan of Arc received both honours). One can only imagine how many people with Tourette or Multiple Personalities were tortured, endured the long, terrifying exorcisms of the Latin West, or were burned at stake, ostracized or murdered on the grounds that they were evil or possessed.

Many birth defects leave a person dwarfed, deformed, "ugly", or "elflike", and with bizarre seeming movements of the limbs. It is tragic — even wicked — that now when we have come to understand these things and learn how to treat them, some writers within the Orthodox Church should want to take us back to the dark days of ignorance and blind superstitions.

We once remarked in another article that a spirituality which can be cured with psychotropic medication cannot be authentic. Deformities and bizarre behaviour and limb movements which can be traced to a defective gene are certainly not demonic or evil.

To answer your question more precisely: No, we did not write an article in defence of the game "Dungeons and Dragons". We did write an article protesting strongly against teaching children something which might cause them to hate and fear people with birth defects and genetic disabilities or accident-caused deformities. We as Orthodox Christians must not fear knowledge and understanding. We have no reason (no excuse) for fearing scientific advancement. Medieval ignorance and dark superstitions are not necessary to our faith. They can only undermine the faith of our younger people and a reasonably educated generation. There are many Orthodox people who are labouring under superstitions and medieval fetishes and fears. It is vital to bring these people out of such burdensome darkness into the clear, radiant light of the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. People who's religion is based in superstition and ignorance rather than in a clear knowledge of Christ and a struggle to assimilate His life to themselves, are not saving their souls, no matter how much pious mysticism they subscribe to or how carefully they are fulling the typikon and various pious rites.

Vladika Lazar.

LIVES OF SAINTS

1 September (14 September N.S.)

SAINT GILLES

"The Compassionate"

+ (c 590)

Born in Athens of a wealthy Greek family, this holy father displayed a Christian love in his early youth. He would often distribute everything that he had to the poor. More than once, the young man would give out whatever money he had and then, being approached by some beggar, give away his cloak or his shoes. Gilles was also a strict faster, and spent much time in prayer and spiritual struggles.

When Gilles parents departed to the Lord, he was still a young man, and he inherited a very large fortune. The saint feared that his great wealth would ruin his soul, and so he quickly distributed most of it to the poorest citizens of Athens. Soon, however, he found that he was being praised everywhere for his love and generosity, and because of several miracles that had been worked by God through his prayers.

The saint now began to fear this praise more than he had feared the corruption of wealth. Since he had heard many stories about the holy monks of Lerins Island, near Marseilles in Gaul (France), he decided to go to those parts, so that he could become a simple monk. "There" he thought, "no one will know me, nor will any have heard of the things men praise me for. There, with God's help, I may be able to discover humility and save my soul."

God did not lead St Gilles to Lerins, however, but to the city of Arles. The bishop of Arles had long been a renowned defender of the Orthodox Faith. After spending two years with the bishop, St Gilles resolved to go into the forest, find a small cave and live the life of a hermit.

No one knows of the great struggles of this man of God — how strictly he fasted, nourishing himself a little on berries and plants; how many prostrations he undertook and how many tears he shed in prayer. Fearing vainglory and pride, he closed himself off from the world of man, while pouring forth fervent prayers for all mankind.

Nevertheless, he found another world in those deep forests: a world of God's creatures, great and small. He discovered that those lovely animals of the woods which we ignorantly call "dumb beasts", were full of love and had a special kind of intelligence. St Gilles lived at peace and with a deep love and reverence for all of creation. Soon, therefore, he began to be be-

friendled by the animals around him. He had a special love for the small deer that roamed in the forests of the Rhone Valley. One deer in particular often came into his cave to sleep.

St Gilles lived such a life for many years, "alone" with God and the forest animals. Near the end of his life, however, God chose to reveal St Gilles to the world so that people might be edified by the example of his holy life. Once, a nobleman was hunting in the forest. He spotted a deer and both he and his hounds started to pursue it. The deer ran straight to the cave of St Gilles, and the saint concealed the terrified animal. The nobleman, finding St Gilles, asked who he was and what manner of life he lived. The saint told him very little, but chastised him for slaughtering helpless creatures for "sport". "If you hunt for food from necessity, that is one thing, but when you wish only to slaughter these creatures of God to fulfil your passions, this is an evil thing," the saint instructed the hunter.

The nobleman, a Goth by birth, went his way and told the bishop about the curious monk he had discovered in the woods. Soon, the bishop began to hear other stories of a marvellous monk living in the forest who protected animals from sport hunters. Sometimes the saint would conceal the animals while other times he would plead with the hunters for their lives.

Once, a deer came bounding through the woods toward the cave of St Gilles. Hearing the baying of hounds, St Gilles rushed out to see what was happening. The deer rushed into the clearing with the hunter in hot pursuit. Just as the hunter was about to shoot an arrow into the terrified and exhausted deer, St Gilles leapt to cover the trembling creature. The arrow was loosed, but it struck the saint, who had suddenly placed himself between the hunter and the deer.

The hunter was greatly distressed. He rushed back to town to seek help. As soon as the bishop heard what had happened, he followed the hunter back to St Gilles' cave. There, he found the wounded monk, with deer keeping watch over him. The bishop knelt down and removed the arrow. "Come back with me so that we can look after you and care for your wound." "Your Grace, I beseech you: leave me in God's hands for I have committed my life and my soul to Him. I trust God that all things shall be according to His wisdom." The bishop spent some time with St Gilles, and was much edified by his words.

After this, the saint could no longer conceal himself and soon other monks sought him out. A monastery began to grow up around the saint's cave. The saint became renowned everywhere, and soon pilgrims arrived from many countries to receive his blessings and be instructed by him.

St Gilles had a special compassion for crippled people, and also for injured or crippled animals. The animals he treated and bandaged, and he spent many hours praying with crippled people who came to his monastery. Many lame and crippled people were healed at the saint's monastery, but it was not God's will that all should be healed. Nevertheless, everyone who came received spiritual healing, and those who left still lame or crippled, left glorifying God, filled with a sure hope in our Lord Jesus Christ and His Kingdom.

Our holy father Gilles reposed in peace in deep old age. He was gathered to the Lord near the end of the 500's. St Gilles' humble, compassionate life preached the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ more profoundly than the words of great preachers. His monastery continued to grow and to stand as a beacon light of love and charity for all who drew near to it.

SERBIAN NEW MARTYRS HONOURED

First Church to be Named for the Martyrs of 1940's

A new chapel at the Monastery of All Saints of North America is being named in memory of "The 700,000 New Serbian Martyrs." It is the first church anywhere in the world to be named for the Serbian Orthodox martyrs slain by the Roman Catholics and Ustashe in the 1940's.

The new site of the Monastery has been dubbed "New Ostrog," because of its appearance, and the plans to build a replica of "old Ostrog" on the mountainside which rises on the monastery property. When the "Ostrog" building is completed, it will also be dedicated to the Holy New Martyrs of Serbia of the 1940's.

["NEWS," continued from page 3]



The St Nicholas Parish "ethnic dinner crew." A number of people not present for the photo also worked hard to make the annual event its usual success. The parish was especially grateful to John and Zoe Velonis of the St Tikhon parish in Chilliwack who donated and prepared lamb and Aurel Holovaci of Mission also donated a lamb.

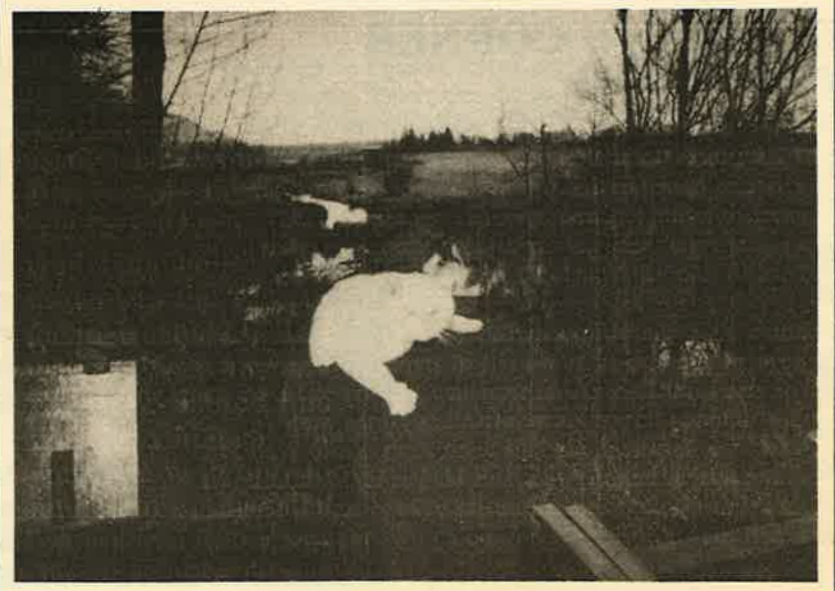
Mission, B.C. (Monastery of All Saints of North America)



Theodore Almas became the first official seminarian of the Canadian Orthodox Seminary. Ted is the son of John and Magdalena Almas of Vancouver. Ted, his wife Marina, and two daughters Sara and Amy are parishioners of the St Nicholas Canadian Orthodox Church in Langley, B.C.



Slavko Protic recently completed a set of ikons of all the glorified saints who have lived and struggled in North America. Before commencing this sacred task, brother Slavko carefully studied the physical features of the Aleut people. He then painted the first correct ikon of St Peter the Aleut (who is usually shown in ikons as a Mediterranean youth of about twelve years age). St Peter would have been closer to thirty. In Slavko's ikon, the martyr is clearly an Aleut, clothed in Aleut style. His ikon of the Aleut Elder Smirninikov, the first to be painted of this locally glorified saint, is also correct in every detail (seen here in Slavko's hands). Also included in the set: Patriarch Tikhon, the holy confessor who served as bishop in America and occasionally visited Canada; St John the Wonderworker of San Francisco, St Inno-kenty of Alaska; St Juvenaly the Priestmartyr; St Nikolai of Zhicha and America



Stefanie Merinuk and the Monastery's most spoiled cat. The Merinuk family attended the service for the blessing of the new monastery.

QUESTIONS TO THE EDITOR

Question:

I recently heard a speaker in an Orthodox Church, whom I felt was very Protestant in his approach. Reading a book by this same speaker, I came across a statement which shocked me very much. The author asserted that, in Gethsemane, Christ fell into complete despair. The author asserted that this is the meaning of the "agony in Gethsemane." This cannot be true can it? Isn't despair a sin? If Jesus Christ is truly God, how could He fall into despair? What is the true meaning of the "agony in Gethsemane?"

M.Z.

Reply:

Christ did not fall into despair at all. Despair is a temporary, sinful loss of faith in God and His Providence. Did Christ, being God, lose His faith in God? To suggest that Jesus fell into despair is simply blasphemous.

As to the actual meaning of the "agony in Gethsemane," let us ready the works of a great holy father of the Church, Metropolitan Antony of Kiev:

"Before turning to the explanation of this law, one must first refute the opinion that Christ's prayer in Gethsemane was inspired by fear of His approaching sufferings and death. This would have been extremely unworthy of the Lord, whose servants both after this, and even before it (the Maccabees, for instance) faced torments, rejoicing and exulting amidst the tortures of their bodies, longing to die for Christ as if it were the greatest blessing. The Saviour knew very well that His Spirit would be separated from His body for less than three full days; and for this reason alone, He would not have looked upon bodily death as something terrifying.

"We understand that the heavy torments of the Saviour in Gethsemane came from a contemplation of the sinful life and evil disposition of all human generations, beginning with His enemies and betrayers. The Lord's words: 'Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me,' refer, not to His impending crucifixion and death, but precisely to this crushing state of profound grief for sinful humanity which He so dearly loved.

"Apostle Paul confirms the correctness of our understanding, when he expresses himself relative to the Gethsemane prayer in connection with the morally regenerating action of Christ upon people as their common High Priest:

"Christ did not glorify Himself to become a high priest; but He Who said to Him, 'Thou art My Son...,' Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His reverence.'¹ (Hb.5:7)

"You see, therefore, that the Lord did not pray for deliverance from crucifixion and death, for then it would be impossible to say that He was heard, since He was not delivered from crucifixion and death. He prayed for relief from His overwhelming grief for sinful mankind. This grief was the "cup" that He asked the Heavenly Father to remove from Him. 'He prayed, saying, O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me' (Mt.26:39). From these words it is clear that the Lord prayed, not concerning His impending sufferings, but about that which He suffered 'in this hour,' the very hour in which He prayed. Following this understanding of the event, how, then, was He heard?

"An angel appeared to Him and supported Him. The Heavenly Father heard His suffering Son, crushed by the picture of the sinful world of man, and sent to Him a witness from another world — the world of the holy angels, who had not apostatized from His will nor forsaken His love. The appearance of the angel comforted Jesus and He boldly went forth to meet the enemies and the betrayer. This is the sense in which He was heard, and the further words of the Apostle confirm our understanding of the Gethsemane prayer as the prayer of a high priest:

"Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the cause of eternal salvation unto all those who obey Him; designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek' (Hb.5:8-10).

"These words literally confirm what we wrote above: precisely that Christ's co-suffering love appears in our hearts as a sanctifying power; and in this sense, He is our High Priest".²

CHILDREN'S CORNER
by Fr Moses Armstrong

Things in the Church

In our last issue, we learned of the (A) narthex; (B) nave; and (C) sanctuary (illus.1), of a traditional Orthodox Church. It is easy to see these three divisions which lead us to the sanctuary. We learned before about the ikonostas and so will learn in this lesson about other ikons which we find in a traditional Orthodox Church.

First, we often see ikons on special stands, in front of the ikonostas and along the walls of the church. These stands are called "analog" and are slanted on top so that the ikon can be easily seen and venerated. There

is often a candlestand nearby to help us remember that the life of the holy saints shown in the ikon is a light shining to guide us on the path to God.(illus.2)

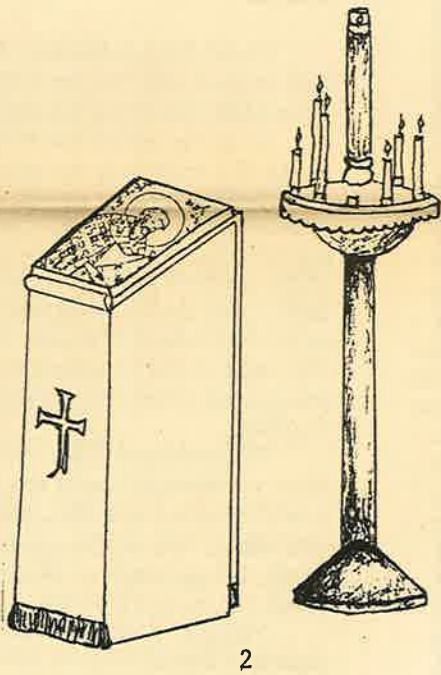
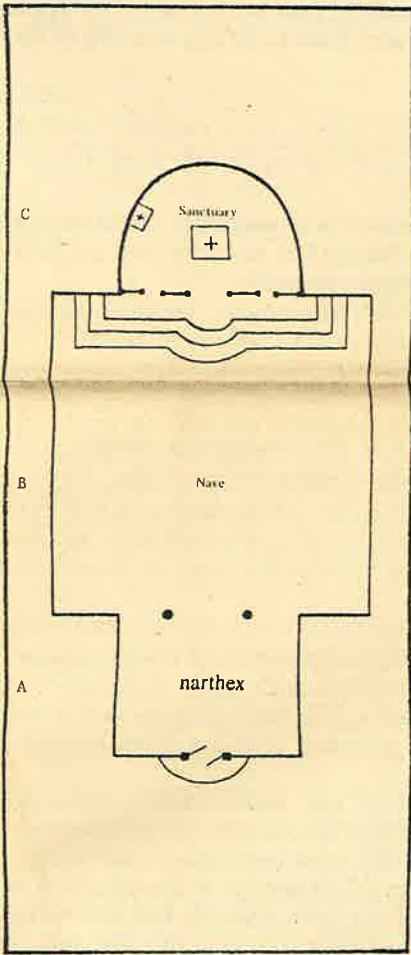
We also find ikons in stands which rest flat against a wall or column. These usually have an oil lamp or a candlestand or both, in front of the ikon. Again, these lights remind us that these saints are a "living Gospel" who can teach us the way to follow Christ, who can lead us to the Heavenly Kingdom. The holy ones are spiritually alive and we ask their holy prayers and honour their

struggle to love God. Just as we love people on earth who help us and guide us, so we love the saints who pray for us and show us the way to God. (illus.3)

Since holy parades, which we call in our Orthodox Faith, "processions", are an important part of our Orthodox Christian way of life, we also include ikons in our processions. We have ikons of the Holy Cross, the six-winged seraphim, holy saints, which are mounted on long poles to make it easier to carry them. Also, we often carry a lighted lamp, also mounted on a pole, to remind us that all

of the world is guided to the Heavenly Kingdom and blessed, by the holy lives of the saints. (illus.4)

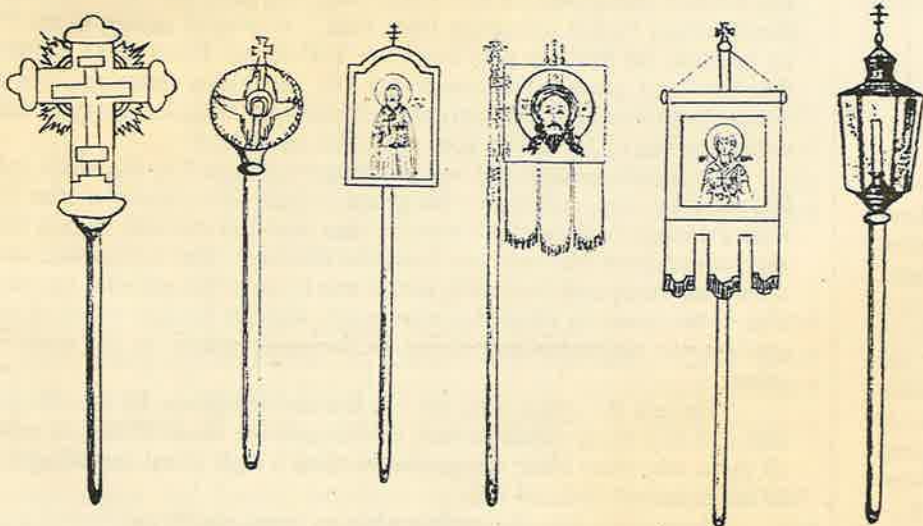
Many Orthodox Churches have an ikon of the crucifixion with a special candlestand where pious people say prayers in memory of Orthodox people who are no longer living. Sometimes the candlestand is shaped like a table with an ikon of the Holy Cross. Sometimes it is a cross with a candlestand in front and sometimes it is a rock with an ikon of the crucifixion resting on top of it. (illus.5)



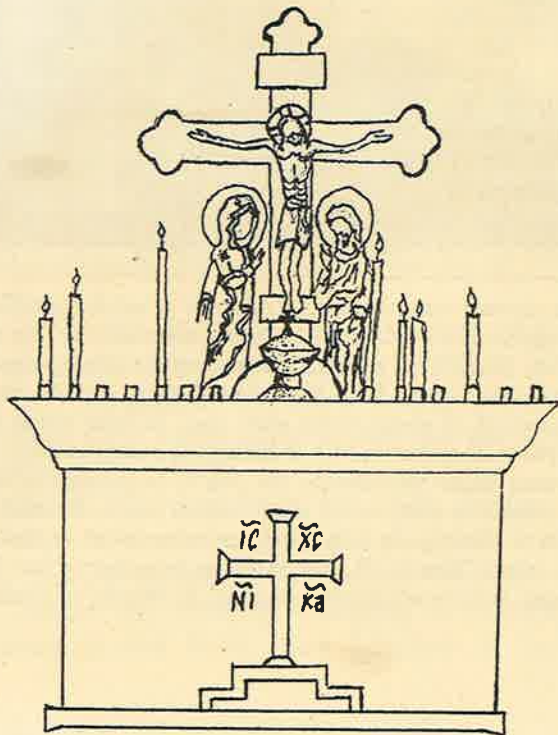
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{*QUESTIONS*, continued from page 5}

One wonders why Orthodox people would want to turn to some roving sectarian "prophet" when fifty years of their divine revelations about the Soviet Union and the battle of Armageddon have just been so completely swept away and proven to be false (even fraudulent). Would it not be better to adhere to the words of those proven Orthodox New Testament prophets, and to seek in the words of the holy and God-bearing fathers, a true understanding of Holy Scripture, delivered through them by the Holy Spirit?

1. Some Protestant versions of the Bible completely mistranslate this verse to read, "...because He feared." Consequently, they arrive at an erroneous understanding.

2. From *The Moral Idea of the Main Dogmas of the Church*, ch. 5, "The Moral Idea of the Dogma of Redemption," pp.118-120.

We should note that the interpretation given by our holy and God-bearing father, Metropolitan Antony, is precisely confirmed by St Hilary of Poitiers, St Cyril of Alexandria and St Ambrose of Milan (see the footnotes in the cited book, available from Synaxis Press, Box 404, Chilliwack, B.C., V2P-6J7).

Question:

Christianity is becoming so confusing. What are we to think about the recent problem with Jimmy Swaggart and the report that he has AIDS? We always watched him on television and felt inspired by him. He was always defending Christian morality and preaching the Gospel. Now this. What is one to think?

Ella Hatsispiros, Chicago.

Reply:

The only thing to think about Mr Swaggart personally is to recall that he needs our prayers and compassion. Something must be said, however, about the things that he taught on television, because there is a very great lesson to be learned in all this. We must explain why Orthodox Christians must not look outside the faith for teaching and inspiration, why, for example, it is so desperately wrong (even evil) to include quotations from various non-Orthodox mystics and New Age philosophers on calendars and bulletins in Orthodox parishes.

MORAL OUTRAGE IS USUALLY AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL

There is an old English saying that "patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel." We might correctly add that moral outrage is the last refuge of the morally sick. Those of us who can well remember the dark days of McCarthyism in America, are aware that, sometimes, precisely this type of patriotism and moral outrage are combined in one sick demagogue on a power trip.

It is noteworthy that when Mr Swaggart was caught in this most recent sexual tragedy, he was in the process of prosecuting and persecuting a fellow evangelical minister for doing something of the same nature, but less serious. Why would a man who for years has continually pursued the most unclean type of prostitutes, paying them to perform perverse sexual acts with him, preach moral outrage and persecute another man who is doing something similar but less serious? Would not the Orthodox Christian faith have taught Mr Swaggart to have struggled against his own passions with prayer, fasting, prostrations, self-examination and confession, while refraining from making moral judgments and condemnations of others?

There are two reasons for preaching "moral outrage." One reason is that the preacher himself is consumed with the passions that he or she is raging about. Political demagogues seeking power and control over people may also use the technique of moral outrage in much the same way that Hitler used the Jews (remember, Hitler was half-Jewish and had a twisted self-hatred because of it).

Here is the real problem in the context of Mr Swaggart's teachings and preaching — indeed of evangelical Protestantism in general. The first time that Mr Swaggart was forced to publicly acknowledge his sexual predilections, he professed a tearful repentance. He added an interesting statement. He said that he had tried fasting, and found that it was not necessary or God-pleasing. He asserted that all that had been necessary was for him to say that he was sorry to God. Events certainly have proved him wrong, and I recall that he occasionally preached against the Orthodox Church for its practices, and that most sectarians either condemn or scoff at our Orthodox Christian practice of fasting, prostrations and moral struggle in general. Perhaps if he had followed a more Orthodox Christian approach, confession, fasting, prostrations, the Jesus Prayer, consulting a spiritual father in obedience, etc, he would have been able to come to grips with his passions. With God's help in his own effort of great moral struggle, he could have been able to control himself. Repentance does not mean "saying you are sorry," it means struggling with your whole being to overcome the root causes of your separation from God, struggling diligently, with God's help, to overcome the bonds of our fallen human nature and assimilate the renewed human nature manifested in Jesus Christ.

The problem for us is not Mr Swaggart's moral failings, which should be more a cause of sincere sorrow over his suffering and tragedy. The problem is the teachings and doctrines which would allow one to indulge in such things while persecuting and prosecuting someone else for a lesser problem, and all the while openly condemning the Orthodox doctrine of fasting and moral struggle.

MORAL CONDEMNATION OF OTHERS IS ALWAYS A TRAP OF SATAN

It is very troubling when we read an Orthodox publication which "harps" on a given moral problem, for experience has taught us that moral outrage or a fixation on a given moral problem is usually autobiographical. Sometimes, however, hypermoralism is only an expression of an arrogant self-righteousness. Recently, during a visit to Europe, I was riding across one city with a young man of Greek descent. He was clinging to Orthodoxy in a certain way, but very much under the influence of "Born-againism." When the conversation turned to an election that was underway, my young acquaintance suddenly became agitated. His face twisted in a cold and discomforting way and he hissed, "Politicians are all liars." "Well,

perhaps only some of them, eh," I replied, trying to soften the conversation. The young man ground out the words, "Don't they know that liars will not inherit the Kingdom of God. We ought to be preaching this to them." He spoke in harsh, supercilious and self-righteous tones. I could only reply, "When we attain total perfection ourselves, perhaps we can instruct them with understanding love, meanwhile, after we pray about our own sins, we might also pray for them." My acquaintance was quite unsatisfied by this answer. I wonder if such people can ever take time out from judging others to take a close, hard look at their own sins. If not, then Satan already owns them.

COMPASSION DOES NOT INDICATE APPROVAL OR ACCEPTANCE; BUT A REFUSAL TO MAKE MORAL CONDEMNATIONS IS AN EXPRESSION OF UNRESERVED CHRISTIAN LOVE.

"For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (Jn.3:17); "Woman, where are thine accusers?" 'Sir, there are none'. Then Jesus Said, 'Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more'" (Jn.8:3-11).

The tenderness and gentle touch of Christ's love did not imply that adultery was acceptable, but showed how human passions were to be healed. It is notable that Christ was tender and loving toward the woman taken in adultery, but He had nothing to say and no time for the self-righteous, morally outraged accusers. The sinful woman left his presence with her head upright, full of joy, hope and the sense of healing. The self-righteous accusers slithered out the door with their heads toward the ground, burning with a shame that became malice instead of repentance.

Who was in the greatest danger of losing their souls and being separated from God forever, the humble adulteress, or the righteous, morally outraged accusers?

This is one of the great dangers of falling under the influence of non-Orthodox preachers and teachers. Heresy always has a way of slowly and subtly raising a wall between man and God. The cold, self-righteousness and arrogance of the "born again" message is a prime example. It leads us away from the understanding that Christ's ministry was a healing ministry, and that His primary medicine was the revelation of God's co-suffering love for mankind. It leads one into the delusion that Christ's ministry consisted in assuaging the passions of an angry God by offering Himself as a vicarious sacrifice to fulfil God's need for vengeful justice. We, then, by having emotional, "born again" experience, become righteous without any kind of moral struggle. Such people are so self-righteous that they do not judge their own hearts, but rather become "morally outraged" at others. Perhaps if Mr Swaggart had not been labouring under such a delusion, he would have struggled in a proper manner with his own passions. Struggling with his own passions would have made it far more difficult for him to have persecuted others for their weaknesses. In fact, had Mr Swaggart been sincerely struggling with his own sins, in an Orthodox fashion, he might have been in a position to un hypocritically help his brother, rather than condemning or persecuting him.

You see, Mr Swaggart's moral condition is a matter between him and God, and his present tragedy is a cause of sorrow and compassion. His teachings, being heretical and soul-destroying are another matter. They really must be "judged" and avoided because they are the cause of the spiritual destruction of many souls. There is a very great lesson to be learned in all this, and let us hope that, with prayer and self-examination, everyone will learn it.

Question:

Not long ago, I was told something that is supposed to be Orthodox doctrines. It sounds fishy to me. I was told that a girl must not get wet in anyway if she has had Communion. Is this true, or is it just some mythology.

(a parishioner of St Tikhon's Church, Chilliwack).

Reply:

Perhaps we are to presume that, while a girl cannot get wet on Sunday, a boy can even if he has had Communion? This injunction sounds like one more of the pagan Turkish fetish taboos that found their way into peasant Balkan folklore during the occupation. To explain why Moslems (such as the Turks) may have influenced the idea that a girl (an inferior being?) cannot get wet after taking Communion, while it is fine for a boy (a superior being?) to do so, might be vulgar. Turkish influence is responsible for much of the maltreatment of women in the Balkans.

The idea that a girl cannot get wet if she has had Communion is simply offensive. The reasoning for this fetish is too vulgar to discuss in print. It may also be rooted in dark, pagan superstition (the water gods will get angry if a menstruating maiden approaches the water, after all, if a menstruating maiden approaches a well, the well god might dry it up). The trouble is, a maiden who is in her monthlies would not have received Communion, so there is nothing for the superstitious to fear from the "water gods."

You figure out why we, as Christian people, must still endure these crude, pagan myths which seem almost intentionally designed to humiliate young women and crush their spirits.

What is better: silence or words? Whosoever speaks to the glory of God does well and whosoever keeps silence to the glory of God does well too.

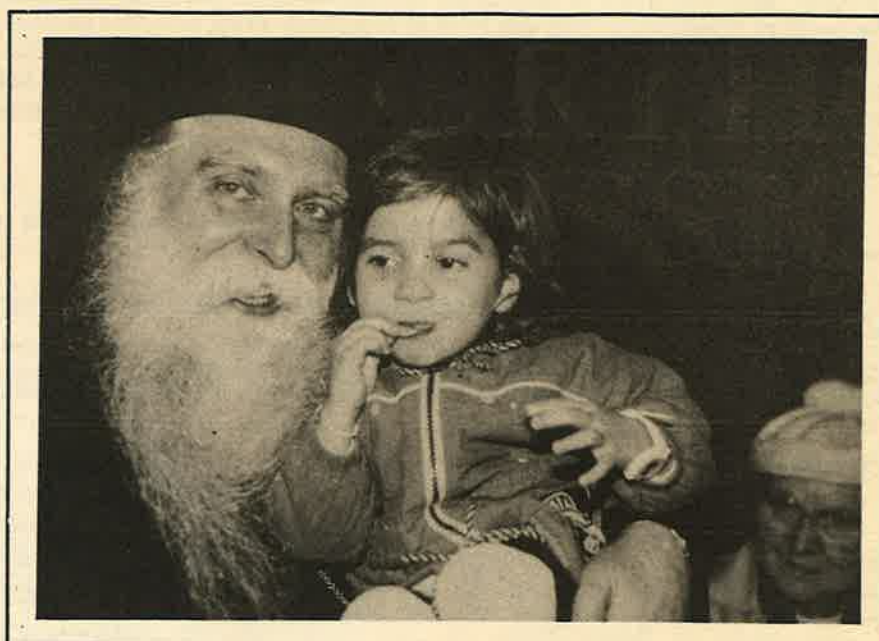
Some people seem to keep silence, yet they are inwardly talkative, for ceaselessly, in their hearts, they criticize their brethren. Others talk from morning till night, yet they have the virtue of silence, for their hearts say no evil of anyone.

St Pimen of Egypt (340-450 A.D.)

OUR CHILDREN – OUR FUTURE



Adam Morgan with his god-sister Kyra Sword. Both are members of the St Nicholas Canadian Orthodox Church in Langley, B.C.



Stella Lagios with Archimandrite Varlaam.



Anastasia Billy-Wilson, daughter of Fr Ioasaph Billy-Wilson, a missionary priest of the diocese.



The Evans, Morgan, Almas and Sword children, with Neil Sword, following the blessing of the new monastery buildings.

The Monastery of All Saints of North America and the diocesan offices have a new address and telephone number. The new telephone number is (604) 826-9336. The mailing address is still P.O. Box 404, Chilliwack, B.C., V2P-6J7, however, the location of the Monastery and offices is now 37323 Hawkins Road, Dewdney, B.C. (just east of Mission, B.C.)

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