



The CANADIAN ORTHODOX MISSIONARY

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IN MEMORIAM

Ronald Eleazar (Elia) Puhalo, Jr.
9 May 1962—23 July 1998

THE CANADIAN ORTHODOX MISSIONARY

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FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE:

SUBDEACON ORDAINED FOR SAN LUIS OBISPO

James Matta was ordained subdeacon at St Nicholas Parish, Langley, B.C., on 12 July. James is the leader of the San Luis Obispo, CA mission of The Descent of the Holy Spirit. He will be ordained deacon for the parish soon.



DRAZHAN DAN CELEBRATED AT THE MONASTERY

The feast of the Holy New Martyr, Dragolub (Drazha) Mihailovich was celebrated at New Ostrog Monastery with a moleben for the saint, and all the New Serbian Martyrs. The feast of the 700,000 Serbian Martyrs slain by the Roman Catholics and Fascists in the 1940's is celebrated by the monastery on 31 August (13 September, Secular Calendar).



VISITOR FROM ROMANIA

It was a blessing for the parish to have Toma Aldea, father of St Nicholas Parishioner Virgil Aldea, at St Nicholas Parish in Langley, B.C. for several weeks. He always wore his regional national dress to church and touched everyone with his genuine, rural Romanian piety and beautiful rendition of Romanian carols and hymns as well as folk songs. Seen above, Toma, the two vladikas and the Matta family from San Luis Obispo, CA.

EDITORIAL

ON GURU CULTISM IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

There are many great problems facing the Orthodox world in our times. We have often discussed the pan-heresy of Ecumenism, modernism, the growing ignorance of the faith among our people, and similar problems.

There is one such problem which I feel is of very immediate importance, and which must be discussed. This is the problem of cultish "guruism," and we have encountered striking examples of it recently. One usually expects to encounter such problems in relation to some cases of deluded monastic "elders," however, Archbishop Lazar has often warned about the problem of such cultism developing around married parish priests (an example of which is being lived out at this very time). Because of this most recent tragic incident, I am reprinting here an excerpt from a letter which Archbishop (then Archimandrite) Lazar wrote in 1989 to a group of catechumens who were falling under the influence of "guru cultism."

The Editor

Excerpt from a 1989 letter of Archimandrite Lazar Puhalo to a group of catechumens:

....It is necessary for you to know that the Orthodox Church has no tradition of, and does not recognize, the kind of obedience into which you are being led. There has somehow developed in recent times a kind of "elder cult." This kind of extreme "guruism" is very much a perversion and distortion of the concept of monastic obedience and the real function of a spiritual father and an elder. It is not at all normal for lay people in the Church to be asked to be in blind obedience to an elder, or even to their parish priest, even if he is one of the two or three parish priests in America today who could truthfully be called a spiritual father. Indeed, even monastics should not be in *blind* obedience. This would be contrary to the fundamental concepts of the *meaning* of faith, and certainly to the Orthodox doctrine of what the laity is.....One should be extremely cautious of anyone who wants to gain such absolute control over your mind and thought that they cannot allow you to freely associate and to freely and intelligently weigh and choose between seemingly conflicting ideas and "schools" of thought. Truth does not fear exposure and comparison. Cultism must always fear these things, and therefore it seeks to gain total control over and total obedience from its adherents, first through isolation and then through fear.

Almost inevitably in a cult, there is one central personality who remains the sole interpreter of all things. One is not supposed to be able to question his interpretation, but one must accept what he says simply because he has said it. He is never (or at least very seldom) called upon to explain or prove his interpretation or instruction.

From an Orthodox Christian point of view, freedom of choice is very important. We are required to know and to choose intelligently and reasonably. The division between laity and clergy in the Orthodox Church is not a sharp one. We are all part of the "holy priesthood," just as the priest is part of the "laity." There is no special esoteric or arcane knowledge which the clergy or monastics — even spiritual fathers and elders — can acquire but the people cannot. We are all supposed to have sufficient knowledge and understanding

to make intelligent theological, moral and spiritual decisions. Our spiritual fathers and elders are supposed to help *educate* us, give us spiritual comfort, consolation and guidance. What authority they do have to "impose" a decision is this: the parish priest, bishop or other Church authority cannot allow anything contrary to the canons of the Ecumenical Councils to occur in the parishes. He cannot allow, and he certainly has the authority not to allow, for example, uncanonical "iconography" in the parish church. However, when the spiritual "authority" does have to impose such a solution to a conflict or problem, he is completely obligated to give a full explanation and, if asked, demonstrate proof of what he is imposing. In other words, there can be neither blind obedience, nor chaos and un-Orthodox activity in the parishes or dioceses....

We are told in Scripture that we are all co-workers in the salvation of our souls, and that we must work out our salvation with fear and trembling. We often need to be guided by someone with more experience, and this is the role of the spiritual father and elder. We can go to confession to our parish priest or we can also go to confession in the monasteries where, in general, we expect the monk-priests to have more experience and understanding, not through some magical means because they are monks, and not because they are holier, but because they have more time to devote to prayer and study than do people living in the world.

Monastics do not form a special class or caste in the Orthodox Church; they are only a category of the laity who have a special kind of life with special order, which is prescribed by the Church, because they are living together in a close community and devoting themselves more thoroughly to prayer. In a monastery a special kind of obedience is necessary to maintain good order, avoid chaos and promote mutual cooperation and respect, and to avoid spiritual delusion. However, the same order of life does not apply to people living in the world, raising families and competing in the work place.

We are all striving to grow and develop spiritually and to acquire the Holy Spirit to a greater degree. This struggle and spiritual growth is intended for the broad masses of the people, for all who wish to be saved. It is not some kind of secret, hyper-mystical gnosis. It is something clearly revealed and clearly defined.

It is true that in any family where good order and a healthy family environment are to be maintained, a certain discipline and obedience are required, and this is certainly true of a parish church. Obviously, this obedience is primarily to the canons and doctrines of the Orthodox Faith, and a respect for the office of the parish priest. However, *blind obedience to an individual is not at all a part of this concept*, and the family — including the parish family — works *together*....

Often the details and spirit conveyed in the paterikons and lives of the saints and histories of famous monastic houses are misunderstood or interpreted in an exaggerated fashion. For example, the service of the famous Optina Elders in Russia was often in stabilizing people in a confused and deteriorating society. The Optina fathers never attempted to claim a unique eldership for themselves, and they never attempted to isolate or control those who came to them. They never sought to limit the access of their spiritual children to other Orthodox centres and experiences. On the other hand, the era which produced the great Optina elders also produced Rasputin and Mad Mika, examples of the great and profound spiritual delusion available in that era, and in any era.

You should be *extremely* suspicious and wary of any would be elder who must seek to isolate you and who demands absolute obedience, or even excessive obedience. In fact, if you belong to an Old Calendar jurisdiction which tells you that you cannot receive Holy Communion or attend Liturgies at another Old Calendar parish, just because it is not "in

communion" with them, you should flee from that jurisdiction at once, because it is not authentic, it is not a Traditional Orthodox Church, it is some kind of cult which is trying to isolate you and ensnare you.

Everyone is aware that an Orthodox Christian may not receive communion in a non-Orthodox Church and should not attend divine services in heterodox churches, however, the attempt to isolate you from other clearly Orthodox churches because "they are not in communion with us" is the first and most certain sign that you are involved in a cult, and you should extricate yourself from it with all haste.... And I say this not only about individual jurisdictions; whole groups of jurisdictions can fall into this sort of unhealthy cultism....

There is no unique "ascetic theology" in the Orthodox Church. Orthodoxy does not know of a mysticism separate from its theology, and certainly not a mysticism divergent from the general experience of the whole Body of Christ, that is, all the people of the Church. That which is extreme, esoteric or which claims special arcane knowledge, or which isolates one in an absolute obedience to one priest or monastic, is by no means a valid expression of the Orthodox Christian spiritual experience.

I ask you to weigh all these things carefully in your mind and heart before you allow yourselves to become involved in something which might be more of a perversion of the faith than a valid expression of the Orthodox Faith....

One more thing: every cult I know of — Jonestown, the Jehovah's Witnesses, Hari Krishna, the Hubbardites (Scientology), all of them, — have the practice of declaring that those who leave their cult or who speak against it are "insane," "completely mad," "not well," etc., and they have the practice of "shunning" those who leave their cult. When you hear these catch-phrases used about practically everyone who has left a group or broken relations with it, and when you see a group which "shuns" those whom they think to be objectionable, you are most certainly looking at a cult.

We invite you to visit us and our parishes, and we also encourage you to visit others, and to study and weigh all that you see and hear carefully. As a matter of fact, you should also visit and talk to clergy and laity of the O.C.A. and other non-Traditional jurisdictions and observe them and hear what they have to say. You should hear *both sides of the story*. That, I think, is the only way you will be able to arrive at a healthy and sound conclusion to your search.

Finally, whatever path you choose, if you have a parish priest who attempts to "shepherd" you, or who seeks to control your way of thinking, isolate you or insist that you must be present in *his* church every Sunday, or answer for where you were, you should flee from him as you would from a poisonous serpent. If you, as married people, become involved with a monastic community which seeks to control you, using your sex life as married people as a lever for such control, you would do well to flee from them also. There are many who claim the role of elder in the Church, many of them are not. They may be charlatans, they may be psychotic men in a deep state of delusion, they may simply be self-deceived. If any monastic elder seeks to control your life, requires absolute, unquestioning obedience or pries too deeply into your private life, you should be most wary and cautious of him and his community. If you find yourself thinking that your salvation depends on some elder or spiritual father, and you stop focusing on Jesus Christ as the Author and Finisher of your salvation, then you are, indeed, hooked in a cult situation and you should struggle to extricate yourself from it....

FROM THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS

11 October

THE HOLY UNMERCENARY PHYSICIANS ZENAIDA AND PHILONELLA, THE FRIENDS OF PEACE

So far as we know, the first of the great "unmercenary physicians" were women.

The holy sisters, Zenaida and Philonella were born in the district of Tarsus early in the first century. They were cousins of the Apostle Paul and were born into a highly educated Jewish family. Both sisters had a natural intelligence and a love for learning. When they entered the famous school at Tarsus to study philosophy, the sisters were instantly attracted to the lectures of the medical theorists. Their cousin Jason, Bishop of Tarsus, was an early convert to Christianity and a follower of their kinsman, Apostle Paul. The two sisters learned the Christian Faith from St Jason and were attracted by the love and compassion of Christ. After their baptism, the two gave themselves over more fully to the study of medicine and began to apply Christian principles and ideas to medical philosophy. They understood that salvation is a healing process and they were deeply impressed with the realization that Christ tied the healing of the whole person, spiritual and physical, with the presence of the Heavenly Kingdom.

When Saints Zenaida and Philonella completed their studies, they moved to Thessaly, where there were many medicinal mineral springs flowing in the numerous caverns of the Felion Mountains. Here, the Greeks had centres of pagan worship tied to the philosophy of medicine and the worship of Asklepios, the patron of healing. The holy sisters desired to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the great crowds of people who visited these mineral hot springs for healing. Their earnest desire was to combine scientific medicine with prayer and faith and so reveal the nature of salvation and proclaim Jesus Christ to whomever would hear the words of the glorious Gospel.

Finding a cavern with a mineral spring, Zenaida and Philonella built two cells and a small chapel for themselves. Having thus established a women's monastery, they used their wealth to create a clinic. The pagan physicians not only sought out the wealthy and generally ignored the poor, but they mixed their medical practice with magic, superstition and witchcraft. Much money was earned from the sale of medical amulets, charms and useless compounds. The two sisters opened their hearts to the poor.

Philonella was a patient and careful scholar. Almost at once she set herself to developing experimental medicine which would approach a scientific medicine. All her life she would labour to free medicine from the idea of magic, astrology and superstition. Zenaida, on the other hand, was more contemplative. She was keenly interested in the suffering of children and worked to develop pediatric care, but her first love was monasticism. So famous did she become as a spiritual elder that both men and women sought her spiritual counsel. Three of her spiritual children, Papias, Pateras and Philocyrrus built a men's monastery not far from the cavern-hospital of the holy sisters.

The sisters' love, compassion and openness to the poor and humble attracted many to the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ and not only the medical skill of the two sisters became renowned, but the miracles worked through their prayers established many in the Gospel.

Toward the end of her life, Saint Zenaida became interested in psychiatric medicine. Many of those who came to their hospital suffered from severe depression and other

psychiatric illnesses. Zenaida had the wisdom to recognize these as actual illnesses and concerned herself with their causes and cure.

It is not known in what year Saint Zenaida departed this life, but she left her sister Philonella to carry on their work and instruct others in Christian medicine and the faith. After the death of her beloved sister, Philonella entered more deeply into the spiritual life, leaving the treatment and care of patients more and more to the students and other nuns. She also became renowned as a wonderworker and reposed in peace and at a great age.

The Holy Church bestowed the title, "Friends of Peace" on the two saints because they both preached and practiced peace, serenity and charity. Philonella often said that a peaceful and serene disposition could not only aid in healing but could even prevent illness. For her, the source of true peace was the Holy Spirit and the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. The disciples of Saint Zenaida reported that her last words in this life were a prayer for the peace of the world.

Not only were Saints Zenaida and Philonella the first Christian doctors (after Apostle Luke), but they were the first of those saints whom we call the "unmercenary physicians"; Christian medicine began with holy women.

4 September

THE HOLY UNMERCENARY PHYSICIAN, SAINT HERMIONE THE MARTYR

Founder of Christian Xenodokion (hospital-inn)

Our holy mother Hermione was a daughter of Saint Philip the Deacon (Acts chapter 6). She was born in Caesarea of Palestine early in the first century. Inspired by a true understanding of the Gospel, she studied the philosophy of medicine in her native city. After the Christians were driven out of Palestine, Saint Hermione travelled to Ephesus to seek out the beloved Apostle John. By the time she arrived, the great evangelist had already departed this life.

Joined by her sister Eukhidia, Saint Hermione bought a house and founded a medical clinic devoted to the treatment of the poor and the homeless. Soon, she added rooms for these homeless ones and for poor travellers who were ill. Thus was established the first of those hospital-hostels or "xenodokia", which would become so much a part of the Orthodox Christian tradition.

Like the other unmercenary physicians who would come after her, she understood that salvation consisted in the healing and liberation of the whole person — body and soul together. While ministering to the physical illnesses of those who came to her, the saint also nourished them with the Gospel and led them to that true healing and freedom in Jesus Christ.

Filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, Saint Hermione was given the gift of prophecy and became a link in that chain of New Testament prophets who were united in spirit and calling to the great Old Testament prophets.

After a long life of service as physician, evangelist and prophet, Saint Hermione was granted the crown of martyrdom. During the reign of Emperors Trajan and Hadrian,

she was arrested and, in spite of her great old age and renown, subjected to terrible tortures in an effort to force her to renounce our Lord Jesus Christ. She was beheaded on September the fourth and received the glorious crown of those who choose everlasting life in our Lord Jesus Christ above this transitory earthly life.

Through her holy prayers, may we also find healing and salvation.

CONFERENCE PLANS SET FOR 1999

The Monastery, the Centre for Canadian Orthodox Studies and the Nemanjic Institute will jointly host a number of conferences next year. First on the agenda is the annual women's conference. This conference is open to everyone, but the speakers are women and the subject matters is family oriented. Award winning social worker Meredith Franck will conduct a seminar on anger management and theologian Irene Matta will also speak. This annual conference, under the patronage of the great Cappadocian Mother St Macrina will take place in the first week of May, 1999.

Two other conferences planned for next year are a symposium on St Gregory Palamas, under the auspices of The Nemanjic Institute for Serbo-Byzantine Studies and the regular annual summer conference. The summer conference, under the auspices of The Centre for Canadian Orthodox Studies will be titled *Ministry to the Church and the World (Spiritual life at the end of the Christian Era)*. This latter conference will be held in conjunction with the annual Joy of Canada Pilgrimage during the first week of August.

Details of all these conferences will appear in issues of The Canadian Orthodox Missionary before the end of this year.

SERMONS ON MATTHEW'S GOSPEL
by Archbishop Lazar Puhalo

MATTHEW, CHAPTER 8

2

On the Authority of Christ and why we still remain subject to the things over which He has authority.

Behold, a leper came and bowed down before Him and said, "Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean" (v.2).

Here, once more, faith and hope overcome shame and fear. The leper has no reservations, no doubts. He does not say, "Can you heal me?" or "Are you able to help me?" He is completely certain that Jesus, by an act of will, can cleanse him and make him whole. Here, too, it is not physical health only that is being given. The faith of the leper is already the beginning of his spiritual healing, which Christ completes with His love. "I will," He says. But Christ does not merely speak to this wretched, unclean man. He reaches out and touches his diseased, scarred and disfigured head. The Lord touches the untouchable and lays His hand upon one from whom others flee, not wanting even to be close to him. In a few moments, we will see that Christ heals another man's servant from a distance. Not only does He not touch the servant, but He does not even see him. Why, then, does he not simply say to the leper, "I will, be thou clean?"

There is a different revelation in each of these acts of healing. In the first, Christ touches the head of the untouchable, moved by tender compassion, for to God, no one is "untouchable." The love of Jesus Christ is not a condescending pity, but a full and bountiful cosuffering love. Christ does not judge the leper in his uncleanness or suggest that he is ill because of some sin. He simply reaches out from His loving heart and touches the man, both body and soul, offering healing to both — to the whole person. Not only is the man being healed physically, but the power of Satan in his life is being pushed back.

When Jesus had come into Capernaum, a centurion came to him and besought Him, "Lord, my servant is lying at home sick with palsy, tormented grievously." And Jesus said, "I will come and heal him." The centurion, however, replied, "Lord, I am not worthy for Thee to enter my home, but with only a word [from Thee], my servant shall be healed. For I am a man with authority, with soldiers under me. If I say to a man, 'go,' he goeth; and to another, 'come,' he cometh; and to my servant, 'do this,' he doeth it" (v.5-9).

See here, once again, with what complete faith this man approaches Jesus. Such faith appears only in one who is already in the process of spiritual healing. Perhaps the centurion did not fully realize who Christ was or understand the full meaning of his own confession of faith in Christ. Like that other gentile who sought a miracle, the Syro-

Phoenician woman (Mk.7:26f) the centurion's faith was born of love and compassion. Surely he had heard enough about Christ, and perhaps even seen Him, so that he knew Jesus had a special sort of authority. As St John Chrysostom mentions, neither the leper nor the centurion said to Jesus, "Pray that I may be healed," or "Beseech God that my servant might be healed." Rather each confessed directly that Christ Himself has authority to accomplish this by His own will and His own word. In this their faith was greater than that of Martha who would say, "If you ask God, He will grant it.." while the centurion says, "If Thou commandest...."

Yet a little earlier, those who heard Christ on the mountain were "astonished" because He "taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (7:28-29). If, in the case of the leper whom Christ "touched" and healed we had a revelation of the solidarity of God with the lowest and most wretched of humanity, in the case of the centurion, we have a testimony of the divine authority of Jesus Christ. This authority is implied in the first miracle, but spelled out clearly and directly in the events of the second.

To have such complete faith in Christ and such direct humility before Him, the centurion must have had a special sense and awareness that he was in the presence of holiness and grace. This same sense and awareness was lacking in those very children of the promise who ought to have had it in abundance, for Christ says:

I have not found so great faith in Israel, and I tell you that many will come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the children of the kingdom will be cast into outer darkness (v.11-12).

Jesus sends the centurion away without a word of command about the healing of the servant. "Go thy way," He says, "as thou hast believed, so be it done to Thee." And the servant was healed at that very moment.

The ministry of Jesus continues with healing and yet those who have chosen darkness remain in darkness. It is not only on the Last Day that they shall be "cast into outer darkness," for they have already cast themselves into that darkness.

Later, Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law and then a "multitude of those who were ill" spiritually and physically. We are informed that this was done "so that the words of the Prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled, 'He took our infirmities on Himself and bore our sicknesses.'"

In this prophecy of Isaiah, both the nature of Redemption and of the ministry of Christ are revealed. Christ took on Himself the human nature not only to share with us our infirmities and pain, but to bear away our shame and renew our nature fallen into sin. Manifesting in Himself the perfect, unfallen nature, He yet endures those things common to that which is fallen, not excepting even death itself. Taking our infirmities on Himself, He heals them all, for the Kingdom of God comes in healing grace and not in vengeance or punishment. That he bore our poverty on Himself, he next demonstrated by showing that He has not so much as a home in which to lie down, for, "The foxes have dens and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head" (8:20).

And He got into a boat, and His disciples followed Him. And a great tempest arose.... (8:23-24).

While the disciples are terrified, Jesus Himself sleeps peacefully. The disciples do

not yet understand the fulness of His authority, which extended even to the elements and forces of nature. How could these fearful mortals comprehend that the beloved teacher Who lay sleeping in the boat was also the Creator of heaven and earth? Jesus lay sleeping peacefully, for He understood not only the nature of the tempest, but His own authority over it. "Lord, save us, for we are perishing," the terrified cry of the disciples rings out.

"He teaches as one Who has authority, and not as the scribes...." Now, Jesus reveals even more profoundly His divine authority. He rises, unperturbed by the raging storm which seems to be sinking the small ship, and "rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm" (v.26).

Why, with such demonstrations of complete authority, does He not at once assume power over the people, or at least use power over nature to compel people to obey Him? Or why, if He does not intend to use such power to compel men, does He demonstrate His authority so profoundly?

First of all, at the temptation on the mount, Christ rejected power, and showed that the desire for power and the exercise of power will be a sign of Antichrist. Authority can come from God but power and the lust for power are of Satan. Christ demonstrated His authority so that men could freely choose whether to respect and obey that authority out of love, or reject it and cut themselves off from it by their own free-will choice. It is of no benefit for man to obey Christ out of fear or even from the hope of benefit to be seen as a courtier of one so powerful. Christ seeks rather to lead man into a faith born of love, to bring about in him that compliance which a child gives in full love to a trusted parent. He demonstrates His authority not in ways that show a human power — for His revelations of His own authority are always accompanied by a life of genuine humility: on the one hand He heals by a word and rebukes the wind while on the other hand, "the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." He spoke "as one with authority," but He also demonstrated this authority with deeds. Every demonstration of His authority by Jesus is given as a healing of some sort,¹ and the purpose of this is threefold. First, that we may understand that redemption consists, not in punishment or juridical justice, but in the healing of the fallen nature. Secondly, so that we may perceive the loving care which God has for each of us — that our obedience might be a response of love to love and not simply a conformity driven by fear, although a kind of fear is also necessary. Thirdly, to give us a sure hope that when the kingdom of God is fully manifested, not only illness and death and the adversities of nature and of demons will be done away, but that every human sorrow and grief will vanish and every injustice and unrighteousness will be abolished.

Why then, having ascended, did Jesus yet leave us in apparent subjection to these same forces? If we are yet subject to temptations, falls, illness, storms and other forces of nature and wiles of Satan, then it is obvious that redemption is not instantaneous, not merely agreeing to "accept Jesus as one's own personal Saviour." We are not immediately delivered from conflict with Satan, though redemption from his power has been accomplished by Christ. Our holy father John Chrysostom, commenting on the words of the Lord's Prayer, "deliver us from the evil-one," says, "Here He calls the devil 'the evil-one,' commanding us to wage against him a war that knows no truce." The saint adds, "for evil is not something natural [or, is not from nature], but is of those things which are added

1. With the notable exceptions of the miracle of the wine at the wedding of Cana, which he worked "out of time" because of His mother's intercession, and the miraculous feeding of the multitudes, which was an act of loving compassion.

by choice."²

Thus, our salvation, which is made possible by our redemption from bondage to Satan and by Christ's fulfilment of the Law for us, depends not only upon that which Christ has done, but also upon what we ourselves do with that gift. "Man was all his lifetime held in bondage by him who held the power of death...." (Hb.2:15). Christ redeemed us from bondage to death — and thus from him who held the power of death — and the Apostle tells us that we are "reconciled by His death" but "saved by His life" (Rm.5:10). It is, therefore, not only redemption from this bondage that saves us, but the healing of our fallen nature, the restoration in us of the image and likeness of God in which we were created in the beginning. The image and likeness of God, however, includes freedom of will, unqualified love and an unshakable will to virtue.³ The restoration of these things, therefore, depends on our free cooperation with the grace of God, and so the conquest of those things of this world which subject us is a process of life, a transformation which takes place in us little by little. Even those great saints who, being filled with the Holy Spirit, received power over evil spirits and were able to heal others, still endured temptations and fell ill and died — though in the hope of resurrection to life everlasting.

Still, one asks, why is this so? Why are we not all at once set free into the freedom of paradise? Because we could no more handle that complete freedom than Adam and Eve did in Eden. If we all at once had such complete freedom from our infirmities and trials of this present life, we would without fail follow the same path back into bondage that our forebears followed. The Hebrews being led out of Egypt are a perfect example of this, and they are a type and revelation about each of us, and about the whole of mankind. Thus the fact that Christ, after His Ascension, left us in apparent subjection to the forces of nature — destructive weather, illness and often want — is in itself part of the process of our salvation. Being subject to infirmity and death, we may hope on everlasting life and be brought to repentance and moral struggle and prayer, instilling in us humility and the realization of our need of Jesus Christ. The presence of the Holy Spirit, Who comforts us in the face of all these things, giving us assurance and strength in our struggle, bestows grace upon us and leads us in our gradual deliverance, which comes through our growth in a life in Christ and our gradual acquisition of the Holy Spirit.

(Continued: The Gadarene Swine: The real meaning of salvation and the heresy of "justification theology;" why we must still struggle with Satan though Christ has broken his power.)

2. Homily On Matthew's Gospel 19:58 (Eerdman's Edition)

3. See, eg., St John Damascene, *Concise Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*.-

QUESTIONS TO THE ARCHBISHOP:

(Answered by Archbishop Lazar Puhalo)

QUESTION 1

Last time I wrote, I forgot to ask you if you could answer a question for me, which in particular interests my twin sister. She would like to know why it is a sin in the Orthodox Church to donate your organs, and if Orthodox Christians are able to donate blood.

Svetlana Zivkovic

REPLY:

I cannot imagine where your sister got the idea that the Orthodox Church considers it a sin to donate organs. I can imagine that some semi-converts from various Western fundamentalist or scholastic traditions might have brought some such idea with them, but I assure you that there is no such teaching of the Orthodox Church. The opinions of individuals of whatever rank are simply personal opinions, but they certainly do not speak for the Orthodox Church. There is nothing wrong with donating organs; indeed the first organ transplant we hear of occurred in Eden when a rib was transplanted.

Because blood is a liquid, some people appear unaware that blood is an organ of the body just as is a kidney or heart. Blood transfusions are, indeed, organ transplants and I am sure that no Orthodox person would suggest to you that donating blood is "a sin."

The question arises sometimes about the heart, but only because some people are labouring under the notion that the "soul is located in the heart." The heart is no more than an electrically driven pump, and people who espouse the idea that the soul dwells in the ventricles of the heart have a heretical idea of the nature of the soul, so the objection to heart transplants is based on sheer superstition and ignorance. When we speak of "purifying the heart" in prayer and spiritual struggle, we are speaking of the conscience and using the term "heart" metaphorically. There is nothing wrong with heart transplants or, for that matter, the use of pig heart valves to replace valves in the human heart which have failed. While one might expect an outcry from the scholastic fringe, but I am quite adamant about this answer.

QUESTION 2

*I have just read the book, **The Theology of John Romanides**. I could not help but notice that his teaching concerning the relationship of body and soul and the meaning of heaven and the Last Judgment are identical to what you wrote in **The Soul, The Body and Death**. I feel I owe you an apology because, as a priest in the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, I had taken the criticism of your book by some of our hierarchs seriously. The Romanides book and a little of my own research and reading in the Holy Fathers has shown me that your position in **The Soul, The Body and Death** is correct. For the first time in my life, I have discovered that the Orthodox Church does not believe and does not teach that hell is a physical, material place created by God for the eternal punishment of humans. This is a great relief to me, but why was I not taught this in the seminary, and why do so many Orthodox clergy continue to teach something that is so evidently false?*

Please do not print my name because I might be punished by our hierarchs for speaking the truth.....

(A priest of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad)

REPLY:

Anyone who teaches that hell is a physical, material place created by God, with a material fire, also created by God for the punishment of sinners is not only teaching heresy, but is without fail, an idolater. Such a teaching is idolatrous and presents an idolatrous concept of God. Moreover, such a teaching is so obviously in radical disagreement with the teachings of the holy and God-bearing fathers that it is inexcusable for an Orthodox hierarch or priest to teach it. The clear, patristic, Orthodox Christian doctrine about these matters is set forth not only in my own book, which you mentioned, but in Dr Alexandre Kalomiros' *The River of Fire* and the works of Rev Dr John Romanides, the most important dogmatic theologian of our day.

You were not taught the Orthodox doctrine of these matters in the seminary you attended because that seminary, like the entire jurisdiction, is in the bonds of an almost fanatical medieval Latin scholasticism. In some respects, the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad contains the last known echoes of Bogomilism. The condemnation of my book by some of the hierarchs of the ROCA was not only based in their own scholasticism and ignorance, but to a great degree in sheer malice. Those among them who are aware of the truth are far too arrogant and self-interested to express the truth. That is their loss, not ours. Thank you for your own personal integrity.



FROM THE LIFE OF OUR HOLY AND GODBEARING FATHER, SAINT ANTONY (KHRAPOVITSKY), METROPOLITAN OF KIEV (CONTINUED)

Saint Antony's zealotry in the academy soon bore fruit. Drunkenness among the students, which was rife and probably based in despair and low self-esteem, soon ceased. An active participation in the divine services and the life of the academy church rapidly increased, and there was practically no absenteeism from the services. Both the educational and spiritual life of the students became more elevated and meaningful and a lively, sincere interest in theology budded among both the faculty and the students. Soon, young people who would normally have pursued worldly careers, shunning the seminary and academy, began to apply for admittance, expressing a desire to serve our Lord Jesus Christ. Following Saint Antony's own example, relationships among the students and between students and faculty became more warm, Christian and fraternal. Under the leadership of Saint Antony, the Moscow Academy became a spiritual centre which attracted attention and students from all parts of the Russian Empire.

The saint was to serve for only five years at his beloved Moscow Academy. In 1892, his mentor, Metropolitan Leonty, reposed in the Lord, and was replaced by Metropolitan Serge Lyatidevsky, and ardent scholastic with an arrogant, condescending attitude toward the students. The new Metropolitan demanded a return to the over regimented, prison-like atmosphere in the academy, in which professors maintained a remote and overbearing attitude toward the students. Saint Antony attempted to protect the students and defend the great progress that had been experienced during his five year tenure, but Metropolitan Serge had him dismissed and, in 1895, exiled to the Kazan Theological Academy.

The saint arrived in Kazan at the beginning of the school year of 1895-96. Within two months, the new rector had transformed the spirit and atmosphere of the school from that of a reformatory to an exciting and dynamic place of learning. Because of his natural humility and lovingkindness, the saint quickly bonded with the faculty and the student body. The professors trusted him and the students loved him. In the memoirs of one of these students, Metropolitan Melety of Harbin, we read a brief note about the early days of Saint Antony's tenure at the Kazan Academy:

"In his conversations with the students, the rector often expressed the conviction that the spiritual life of the academy should be the preeminent preparation for those who were to serve Christ's Church, especially for the monastics who could dedicate themselves entirely to this service. The rector expounded the loftiness of such service to the Church with such beauty and power of conviction that soon, that is, by the following year, the opinion about monastic students changed dramatically. Previously, they had been looked on merely as careerists, but now a monastic brotherhood began to grow and a significant increase in enrollment by widowed priests and deacons occurred...The exceptional gifts of the rector made it possible for him to change the system of education which existed at that time. He saw that a direct and constant contact with the students, which had been nonexistent, would have beneficial results, and he accomplished this task by instituting evening gatherings for tea...At these evenings, students were encouraged to touch on any subject and to express themselves freely. Among the subjects raised was the question of the reestablishment of the patriarchate, the necessity of which was expounded [by Saint Antony]. Our rector told us that the question of why we did not have a patriarch when other autocephalous churches do, had interested him since the age of ten. Only toward the end of his life did he see the fulfilment of his life-long struggle, when the Lord granted him to be a candidate for the patriarchal throne.

"Our rector was distinguished by an extraordinary memory. He once said that he remembered everything he had read since the age of twelve. He especially astonished everyone with his remarkable memory at the Moscow Sobor of 1917 when he cited from memory entire pages of the Apostolic Canons."

(Continued)

FRANKLY SPEAKING

with Meredith Franck

Dear Frankly Speaking:

I missed your column in the Missionary and was glad to hear you are back giving communication advice to the readers of the Canadian Orthodox Missionary.

I have a problem understanding how a few certain people in our church can continually criticize others behind their back and then be friendly with them at church. We are a small parish and this behaviour is so obvious. I am beginning to have ill feelings when I come to church. When I talk about this to my priest, I can't understand why he keeps giving me the same advice. Please advise me, I am afraid I am losing my faith.

Sincerely,
Upset in Washington.

Dear Upset in Washington,

Thank you for the compliment. I am glad to be back.

First, I want to address the use of the word "understand" vs. "accept". There is a vast difference between these two words. Understanding takes into account the meaning of the words. Many of my students use the words, "I do not understand..." rather than being open and honest with themselves by saying, "I don't accept..." It is right that you do not accept gossip. Gossip is an example of passive-aggressive communication. Passive-aggressive communication is the communication style the Evil-one uses.

I define communication as **what I hear and see in others**. Treating communication and behaviour as the same thing helps remind me that what others hear and see from me is who I am as a person. Therefore, I aim to communicate assertively with compassion.

It is wrong for me to be so focused on what others say and do that I lose my focus on what church is really about. I remind myself that church is my spiritual hospital. It does not matter whether it is a small or large hospital; our faith has effective medicine.

The advice that the priest gave is not mentioned so I won't comment except to point out that the word "understand" is used again. Consider that you don't accept his advice, which is a different matter. When I do not accept what my priest advises, it is because I have too much pride to admit he is right. Pride has two faces, like most feelings. It can be a sin when it keeps me away from what God teaches. Pride in the talents God gave me to promote goodness is a good thing.

Last, please consider that losing one's faith in God is spiritual death. What a high price to pay for "a few certain people" who communicate with the tongue of the Evil-one.

Yours in Christ,
Meredith Franck.

Dear Frankly Speaking,

I have a problem with anger. I have gone to therapy for it because I was ordered by the court to do so after a domestic violence charge. After six months of therapy, I still can't get rid of anger in my life. I even started going back to church faithfully and praying

for God to rid me of anger. My wife made reference to the material you teach and I think it would be a good recourse for someone like me who doesn't want anger in their life. I want to live an Orthodox life and be back with my wife and children.

Need help in Salt Lake.

Dear Help in Salt Lake:

First of all, anger has two faces: violations over another individual; physical, physiological, spiritual and/or mental. Anger can also be a good thing. Without anger, I would turn into a mushroom after a while. I would lack the feeling to respond to the sight of a starving child or the injustices in the world. Anger can ignite "candles" that illumine our compassion.

Unfortunately, most anger management courses lack the Orthodox Christian influence that is necessary. The object is NOT to get rid of anger but to use it for a good purpose. Orthodox Christians get angry; they do not aim to act out their anger and violate others with it. I would love to conduct an "Anger Management Course" at the Monastery of All Saints. Vladika Lazar, are you reading this indirect request?

Yours in Christ,
Meredith Franck.

Dear Franckly Speaking,

I am writing because I can't seem to find happiness in my parish. I am in my mid-twenties. I need to find the right person to marry and find true happiness with. I want to marry an Orthodox Christian girl but all the ones I meet are too involved in church and the university and in going to parties. I feel my life is lacking the excitement for someone my age. I am supposed to be having great times but when I look within the church, I find that most activities are not youth oriented. I even thought about going outside my faith in search of happiness. I hate to say this but church life has nothing to offer a young man my age.

Restless in Stockton, California.

Dear Restless,

I learned to look at happiness differently after listening to Vladika Lazar speak. Read what he has to say about the "Happiness Seeking Disease". I think what he has to say on the subject will inspire you as he did me. In summary, our faith teaches us to seek happiness that will lead to peace of mind and spirit—to God. Many people seek happiness that leads to guilt, depression, resentment or anger and which violates others. Aim for happiness that strengthens your faith in God. There is man's definition of happiness which is focused on the material and there is the happiness that brings us joy—the joy of knowing what God intends for us to know. The Evil-one tricks us, Orthodox Christians, into confusing the two.

I've known individuals who buy things that they cannot afford because initially they experience "happiness" for having those things but later feel depressed and angry because they could not afford those things. The Evil-one loves tricks. Others search for physical outer beauty which in time fades away in all of us. I feel sad to read that you are seeking happiness that will only lead to unhappiness if you leave your faith.

My advice to you is to take a closer look at those young women in your church who find beauty in the faith and in being educated. I would rather grow old with a loved

one in the beauty of our faith and having something interesting to say about life as we have lived it.

Yours in Christ,
Meredith A. Franck



The Canadian Orthodox Reader **by Fr Moses Armstrong**

THE HOLY GOSPELS

Olga and I had been up for some time and were at the table having breakfast. As always, we stood and sang the "Our Father" and asked God to bless our food before we sat down to eat. While eating, we started to talk about the icon corner and the book of the Holy Gospels that mom and dad have there. Our Gospel Book is very old and also covered with metal icons, in fact, it looks a lot like the one that is on the Holy Table in church. Mom and dad read it every day in the icon corner and kiss it and bless themselves when they have finished. Olga and I can't read it since it is in Slavonic but we have small Gospel books of our own, in English, which we also read every day, just like mom and dad. They are both careful to bless themselves before they begin reading and after they have finished; from watching them, we learned to do the same thing when we read our little Gospel books in English.

When breakfast was finished, we asked mom and dad if we could visit Grandma and they were happy to say yes to us. Olga and I wanted to take a closer look at the Gospel Book that Grandma has in her icon corner and ask her to tell us about it. She is always pleased to teach us new things, especially when they have to do with our Orthodox Christian Faith.

Grandma was awake and doing her Saturday house cleaning. We helped her dust the floors and polish the furniture and then she asked us to stop and have tea with her. We were hot and tired from working and so were glad to take a break. We went into the room where Grandma has her big icon corner and stood with Grandma to pray and bless our snack. Grandma had made a pitcher of cider and had a big tray of oatmeal cookies as well as cheese sandwiches and big, crunchy pickles that she had made during the week.

"Grandma, could we see the Holy Gospel book that you have in your icon corner? Mom and dad have one a lot like yours but we never got to look at yours and really see what it is like."

"Of course, children. I would be happy to show it to you. Before we look at it, I do want to make sure you know how to show proper respect to it. Before even touching it, you should bless yourself with the sign of the cross and ask God to bless and save you. Then you can open the Gospel. When you have finished looking at it, then you should bless

yourself again with the sign of the cross and thank God for allowing you to read the Holy Gospel. Is that clear children?"

"Yes, Grandma."

Grandma then went with us to her icon corner and made the sign of the cross on herself before taking the Gospel Book from the little reading stand she had at the icon corner. Olga and I had already cleared and wiped the table clean and had placed one of Grandma's best cushions on the table where we were going to look at the Gospel Book. We both blessed ourselves and asked God to bless and save us. Then Grandma opened the Gospel Book to the first page of St Matthew.



Grandma's Gospel Book was really old. The writing was huge and we could not read any of it. It was in Slavonic, just like the one mom and dad have in their icon corner. It looked so different from our other books.

"Grandma, could you read some of the Gospel to us? We can't read it because it is not in English."

"Surely, dear. I would be pleased to read it to you. Before we do this, Olga must cover her head and John, you must stand up with us while I read. This shows that we are paying attention to something holy and that we have respect and love for it."

We all stood as Grandma again made the sign of the cross on herself and we did the same thing. She read in Slavonic, slowly and respectfully, just like Father John does in church. When Grandma was finished, she again blessed herself and kissed the Gospel Book and put it back on the little reading stand in her icon corner.

"Gosh, Grandma. Why do we have to do so many things just to look at a book?"

"Now John, you are asking this because you don't understand how important the Holy Gospels are to us. We show love and respect for the reading of the Holy Gospel Book because it is the words that Jesus Christ spoke to all of us. In the Gospels, we hear Christ telling us to be merciful and loving. We also hear Christ telling us how to be merciful and loving. When we hear the priest or anyone reading the Gospels, we are hearing the voice of Jesus speaking to us.



The Holy Gospels are an icon in words, just as the icon of Christ on the iconostas is an icon in wood and paint. The icons speak to our hearts and souls and make us Orthodox Christians. Just as we love the painted icons and show respect to them, we also love the written icon of the Holy Gospel, and show respect to it. When we show love to the book of the Holy Gospels, we are showing love to Jesus Christ. This is why so much time and

work are put into making our Gospel Books as beautiful as possible. We do this to thank God, to honour Him and to help people have respect and love for the sacred teachings that we find in the Holy Gospels. This is why the Gospel Book is covered in gold and enthroned like a king on the Holy Table in every Orthodox Church sanctuary. When we have a procession, we take the Gospel Book with us because it is holy. When we have a marriage or a funeral, the Gospel Book is an important part of blessing the day. We also read the Holy Gospel every day, to bless our time on this earth."



READINGS WITH READER NICHOLAS

by Reader Nicholas Franck

Elements of Faith, by Christos Yannaras; trans. Fr Keith Schram, 164 pgs. publisher T & T Clark.

Following the review some several issues past of Christos Yannaras' monumental treatment of Christian ethos, *The Freedom of Morality*, readers began drawing my attention to the author's other works. Most frequently mentioned of these was Yannaras' *Elements of Faith*. Described by those who recommended it as curiously, 'densely opaque', though simultaneously, 'a fundamental catechism', the Reader's curiosity was, to say the least, provoked. Due to various distractions and competitive perusals, it was only recently that these complex characterisations could be reconciled.

Unlike *The Freedom of Morality*, which doubtless serves as a text for gifted seminarians, *Elements of Faith* is intended as a brief introduction of core dogmas and doctrines of the Orthodox Christian Faith, and a catechism in this sense. *The Freedom of Morality* is, of course an exhaustive discourse of the nature of existential morality set against the backdrop of Orthodox doctrine, requiring a grounding in these areas for full appreciation, though much of this background could be acquired in its study by those so inclined. As mentioned in its review, that work is so rich that any chapter is adequate for a dissertation topic and the author is charitable in providing us such a repast. *Elements of Faith* can be similarly dense in that Yannaras sets for himself a considerable task in presenting such a thorough exposition of critical concepts with such brevity. The text is thus, predictably dense and at times Yannaras expects as much of his audience as he demands of himself. In under two hundred pages such issues as the roles of apophatic theology, Trinitarian dogma, Christology, faith, anthropology, and ecclesiology are all given a comprehensive explanation as relative to an essential knowledge of the Faith.

Yannaras' gifts as a writer are much evidenced in the text not only in his encyclopedic erudition, but in the manner in which the reader is engaged through illustration and anecdote. This reviewer was particularly intrigued by one such observation presented in one of the introductory passages. It had seemed perplexing in reading and recounting many profound theological pieces that such complex and intricate concepts could have such powerful appeal beyond seemingly narrow confines of academia. Yannaras reminds us that, in the Byzantine East and elsewhere in late ancient times, philosophic and theological controversies were as common topics of conversation in centres of civilisation

as politics are to us moderns. The nature of the Paraclete or the flaws of Gnosticism were as familiar conversational matter to these ancients as pronouncements upon social democracy, free trade agreements or the goings-on in Ottawa or Washington are to ordinary folk today. Indeed, the journalistic remarks of the Fathers confirm this view. Yannaras' rehabilitation of theologising is tempered by a careful distinction between scholasticism and revealed theology, however. Similarly, the author deftly defuses the dilemma of faith through another sensible analogy. Though often presented as a dangerous leap in which recourse to reason is foolhardily discarded, Yannaras describes faith as a routine social behaviour. The investment of trust and faith in others in an ongoing and daily fashion is a virtual societal requisite in which we normally engage without comment. We regularly advance others inordinate amounts of faith, without benefit of any investigation, and this is necessary, otherwise our human institutions would collapse. Though great risks are involved, we are compelled to place great trust in complete strangers constantly, yet many find faith in God extraordinary. This commentary, while not wholly original, is well put and subtly suggests that a meaningful relationship with Divinity has grown rare, and it is this, above all, which Yannaras encourages.

Despite Yannaras' gifted catechising and engaging style, the work's lessons are sometimes truncated, leaving room for confusion in the mind of the uninitiated. Perhaps the Reader admits his own shortcomings, but the discussion of the Trinitarian dogma, to take the catechumen's position, seemed incomplete though convoluted. This is perhaps to be expected, taking into account the limits of such a brief text. As the work of such as Haralambos Anstall and Vladimir Lossky manifest, however, it is the inculcation of this very dogma which remains crucial. Upon this knowledge rests the believer's capacity to probe the sacred mystery as well as to articulate some semblance of it to another.

Elements of Faith remains deserved of its reputation and wide popularity despite the Reader's obligatory scrutiny. It is consistently true to its intent of thoroughly orienting the catechumen as well as furthering the spiritual insight of the baptised. Key precepts are generally afforded adequate attention and essential theological language is undiluted rather than rephrased. The intellectual integrity of adult readers at all levels is respected while an unpretentious effort is made to enhance the spiritual vocabulary. One of the book's more memorable teachings is perhaps on the nature and origin of dogma itself. Yannaras relates the move toward clarification of Christian dogma not as a concerted exclusionary effort, but as a response to heresy. Dogma is not a movement designed to stigmatise those outside the Faith, but to reaffirm core beliefs through determining their boundaries. The Faith is both eternal and alive, not to be conflated with a moral conservatism which mounts its sanctimonious self-satisfaction upon the condemnation of others. This edition of *Elements of Faith* is further endorsed by the excellent translation of a Canadian cleric. Adaptation in this tongue should heighten the book's appeal for subscribers, while not unduly penalising those conversant in other English vernaculars.

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