

Go therefore and make disciples of
all nations . . .
Mt 28:19



Allez, faites de toutes les nations
des disciples . . .
Mt 28:19

CANADIAN ORTHODOX MESSENGER

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Greek Orthodox Enthronement Metropolitan in Canada, Archbishop in America

On Sunday, September 29, thousands of Greek Orthodox faithful and their guests and several dignitaries gathered in the Annunciation to the Theotokos Church in Toronto for the enthronement of His Eminence SOTIRIOS (Athanassoulou) as the first Metropolitan of the new Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto (Canada).

Formerly the Greek Orthodox Diocese of Toronto, with Bishop Sotirios at its helm, the new Metropolis was created in July of this year when BARTHOLOMEW I, Patriarch of Constantinople [Istanbul], and his Holy Synod decided to divide the former Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, founded 75 years ago, into four parts: the Archdiocese of America [made up of all the Greek Orthodox dioceses in the United States] and three metropolitanates—Toronto (Canada), Mexico City (Central America), and Buenos Aires (South America). This move puts the new Metropolis of Toronto in the position of direct responsibility to the Ecumenical Patriarch, and no longer directly under US jurisdiction. The involvement of the new US Archbishop, SPYRIDON, as the Constantinopolitan exarch for North America, however, is as yet unclear. Archbishop Spyridon was enthroned on September 21 in New York City.

Metropolitan Sotirios, 60, was born in Greece and educated at the University of Athens and the University of Montreal. He has been bishop of the Greek Orthodox in Canada since 1974. He has 75 parishes across Canada within his jurisdiction, three monasteries, seven Greek Orthodox day schools, and scores of afternoon Greek Orthodox schools for children.

Representing His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew at the enthronement of Metropolitan Sotirios was His Eminence IOACHIM, Metropolitan of Chalcedon. Also present were His Eminence IAKOVOS, the former Archbishop of North and South America; His Eminence APOSTOLOS, Metropolitan of Milos; His Grace ANTONY, Bishop of San Francisco; and His Grace YURIJ, Bishop of Toronto (Ukrainian Orthodox Church). Our own Bishop SERAPHIM was invited to attend, but it was not possible for him to change his previous



Above, His Eminence SOTIRIOS,
Metropolitan of Toronto (Canada)

Left, His Eminence SPYRIDON,
Archbishop of America

commitments on very short notice. Metropolitan Sotirios and his faithful had only four days' notice and preparation time for this great event, in the course of which, one could say, they truly "moved mountains."

For the sake of clarity, it is useful to explain the meaning of *metropolitan* and *archbishop* as used here, since Constantinopolitan nomenclature is sometimes different from the "Russian." In the use of Constantinople, *metropolitan* is derived from *metropolis*, meaning the principal city of an area. Metropolitan Sotirios is the ruling bishop of the Metropolis of Toronto, a jurisdiction which includes all of Canada. As metropolitan/ruling bishop, it could be possible for him at some point to have one or more auxiliary bishops. In "Russian" terms, the ruling bishop of a diocese is simply called a bishop.

An *archbishop* in Constantinopolitan usage means the senior bishop over several other metropolitans

Continued, next page . . .

Enthronement of Metropolitan, continued:

and/or bishops, as was the case with Archbishop Iakovos and is now the case with Archbishop Spyridon. Or he could be the senior bishop of a partly self-governing [autonomous] or of a completely self-governing [autocephalous] church. Archbishop Spyridon is the senior bishop over the several bishops and dioceses in the United States. Following the "Russian" inheritance, an *archbishop* is most often now simply a senior bishop who is given a title of prestige, whereas a *metropolitan* is usually the senior bishop of a provincial area, or of an area of large responsibility, or of an autonomous or autocephalous church. In both Constantinopolitan and "Russian" usage, the title *patriarch* is normally reserved for the heads of the more senior autocephalous churches.

Our uses of these and other terms have different sources of development and we sometimes need a little clarification, as here, to avoid confusion or misunderstanding.

OCA Parish Group Visits Greek Monastery

On September 21, fourteen parishioners and Fr Omelian Radulovic of Christ the Saviour Sobor in Toronto visited the Holy Monastery of St Kosmos of Aitolos, a women's monastery within the jurisdiction of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto. It is located in the beautiful countryside near Bolton, Ontario, a few minutes north of Toronto, and is one of three monastic communities belonging to the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto.

Mother Aleksia and the sisters warmly welcomed our OCA parish group to St Kosmas. We saw their newly built temple which serves the many hundreds of Greek and other Orthodox faithful who worship at the monastery on Sundays and various feastdays. The sisters described their daily lives and showed us some of the work they do to help support themselves, which includes wonderful icons and crafts. They also provided us with a delightful lunch which we enjoyed in the front yard of the monastery—the weather being superb, as was the lunch itself. At the conclusion of our visit, the monastics joined us in the celebration of Vespers, with Fr Omelian serving.

The pilgrimage provided us with a good opportunity not only to meet with others of the Orthodox faith, but also to get to know each other in our own parish better. Our deepest thanks go to Mother Aleksia and the other monastics of St Kosmas' holy monastery for their warmth and hospitality!—*M.A. Hummel, Toronto*

Pastoral Notes

Effective 17 August 1996, as an outreach of St-Benoît de Nusie in Montréal, Québec, the summer chapel in the name of the Icon of the Saviour Not Made With Hands is blessed in Frost Corners, Waterloo, Québec.

Effective 1 September 1996, **Archpriest John Scratch** is appointed assistant priest of the Bishop's Chapel of St Silouan the Athonite in Johnstown, Ontario.

Effective 1 October 1996, **Priest Philip Speranza**, while retaining his other responsibilities, is relieved of his responsibility of serving St Michael's Church, Peno, Alberta.

Effective 1 October 1996, **Priest Evan Lowig**, in addition to his other provisional responsibilities, is given the responsibility of serving St Michael's Church, Peno, Alberta.

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*Dedicated to the memory of St Tikhon,
Patriarch of Moscow (+1925),
Archbishop Arseny (Chahovtsov),
and other missionary labourers
of the Orthodox Church in America.*

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New Priest Ordained in Saskatoon

On 1 July 1996 Bishop Seraphim ordained Deacon Robert John Polson to the Holy Priesthood in Holy Resurrection Church, Saskatoon. A professional nurse, Fr Bob is on leave of absence from his job in the intensive care unit of the Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon while he completes a second year of studies at St Herman's Orthodox Seminary in Kodiak, Alaska.

The new priest believes that his calling is a missionary one, and thus he plans to continue working as a nurse after he completes seminary and begins his mission work, until such time as there is a congregation able to support him and his family. This missionary emphasis in his life is one of the reasons that he chose to study at the Kodiak seminary. He is one of only two Caucasian students there, the others being indigenous Alaskans. He understands how similar are the problems and challenges for the Church in Alaska and in Canada. Both are vast northern mission fields, and the Church's witness in them has relied greatly on the holy work of many missionaries from the old countries and of many faithful laypeople, beginning with St Herman of Alaska himself, a monk and layman who won so many of the native "Americans" to the Faith by his life of asceticism and loving service.

Fr Bob and Matushka Colleen are a dedicated team. When the Bishop prayed for the coming down of



Fr Robert John Polson, Matushka Colleen, and their children on the day of his ordination to the Holy Priesthood.

the Holy Spirit upon Fr Bob at his ordination, Matushka Colleen knelt on the steps of the solea, her action demonstrating her support and symbolizing her asking God to enable her as well to complement her husband's pastoral ministry. Fr Bob and Matushka Colleen have three children: Benjamin, Joseph, and Miriam.

Newly Elected Archdiocesan Council Holds First Meeting

The first meeting of the new Archdiocesan Council was held in Ottawa 10-11 Nov at Holy Trinity Bukowinian Sobor. An important part of this session was the tying up of loose ends related to last summer's triennial diocesan assembly which was, as Bishop SERAPHIM noted in his lengthy report, very well received by participants. In his report he also announced that for the current triennium he has reappointed to the **Archdiocesan Court** Archpriests John Tkachuk and Nicolas Boldireff, and Rod Tkachuk and Sr Stephanie (Smith); and to the **Auditing Committee** Helene Culhane, Dan Dixon, and Jane Szepesi.

In a report from the **Assembly Planning Committee**, it was noted that despite intentions and great effort, the cost of the Assembly exceeded income for it by \$816, largely because some parishes did not pay their Assembly assessment nor send any delegate(s). It is hoped that

these parishes will remit their fair share so that the Assembly budget can break even. On a happier note, the **Treasurer's Report** indicated that based on 3rd qt standing and expected 4th qt receipts, the diocese should be able to close the year 1996 without a deficit.

Fr Andrew Morbey's **Metropolitan Council Report** included a note encouraging both parishes and individuals in our diocese to join the OCA's Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards (FOS). This is important for two reasons: the first is that FOS is now the source of funding for the "program" work of the Central Church Administration of the Holy Synod, and our diocese benefits by programs such as youth, mission support, and educational resources. The second is that Revenue Canada very much limits our ability as a diocese to contribute to the operation of the Holy Synod of

Continued, back page . . .

Our Keeping of Christmas

By the time this message will be seen by most of our readers, it will be either quite close to or after the Feast of the Birth of Christ our Saviour. It would have been nice to address a little earlier the way we approach and celebrate the Nativity, but that's the way our rhythm of publication works out; that's life.

We live in an ironic time.

About seventeen hundred years ago, it began to be decided that we would celebrate the Birth in the Flesh of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ on 25 December. Until this time there had not been a great emphasis on this celebration as a separate event, perhaps because it seemed even self-evident. But there were temptations by some to down-play or ignore this Incarnation, this taking-flesh of the Word of God, and many were being led astray by inaccurate ideas. This Incarnation of the Word was and is central to our perception of Christ and to our life in Christ as much as it is to our salvation. And so, in order to keep the right focus for the faithful, our Fathers established this separate feast. At that time in December there was a pagan celebration in the Roman Empire of the beginning of the return of the sun. It was a perfect opportunity not only to emphasise the Incarnation, but, as our hymns say, to speak out openly that Christ is the source of that sun, and is Himself the Sun of Righteousness.

The celebration even now proclaims that "those who worshipped the stars were taught by a star to worship the Sun of Righteousness Christ our God." The Word of God took flesh and dwelt among us, He took upon Himself all of our fallenness in order to raise it up with Himself. He who Himself is the instrument of creation became the creature (mankind) that had of itself fallen away and become distorted, and He renewed it. Only He, by this self-emptying, could restore the unity from which we broke. For many centuries, this Birth has been the clear focus of our celebrations.

Now, at the end of the twentieth century, we are again in the midst of a secular culture not concerned with Christ, even though it has taken some elements of our celebration to itself. Only hints of the real point of this festival remain. But it is upside down. Saint Nicholas, who has nothing directly to do with this feast, has been distorted into simply a jolly toy-giver. Gift-giving has become a materialist tit-for-tat mania, a competition to out-do, rather than imitating the Magi. The festal celebrations begin far ahead of the feast itself, and even

end on the eve of the holiday, instead of beginning with the feast itself and lasting several weeks after. And, worst, Christ Himself is not politically correct. To top it all off, among those who still celebrate the real feast, we Orthodox Christians also add the spice of celebrating either on the Julian (old) or the Revised Julian (new) calendar.

This is almost like a re-enactment of the Fall itself. We were restored to full communion with God who out of His merciful compassion healed the wound which killed us. But, out of a combination of fear of the light and pride that we really know better, we revert to diversionary ways.

This atmosphere really makes it a challenge for the Orthodox believer to be a witness to the Truth (please note: for us, Truth = Jesus Christ). There is no way that we can make some lobby-method revolution in the thinking of society. Nevertheless, the changes which happened so long ago can happen again, by the mercy of God. But they require the determined faithfulness of Orthodox Christians, and loving intercession for the world, as St Silouan of Mount Athos encourages us.

And, most particularly at this time of the year, it means that while we need to be sensitive to our need to participate in certain of the secular events because of work, school, or the like, we can do so with a certain restraint that can suggest to anyone who is sensitive that there is another and a better way. The fast before the Nativity of Christ is one of the greatest challenges. True, it is not necessarily so strict a fast until the last two weeks, but it is still a fast. It is possible to attend some of the necessary secular functions and still keep the fast. Here we need to be especially creative! While we must never be triumphal about our observance, we can by understatement convey to those who want to see, our love for Christ and how it affects every aspect of our life.

We can put brakes on our pre-festal celebrations and accent the celebrations after the Nativity itself. Our gift-giving can be restrained and simplified, and we can take care never to give a gift which carries a condition of being equalled in return. We can exercise true loving hospitality at our tables to our friends and co-workers after the Feast itself, and show how Christians really observe the Birth of the Word. In fact, we can do so best by helping the poor and needy at all times, not just at the Nativity. We can remember how to sing those carols which truly reflect Christ's birth, and remember Whom we serve.

We can finally accept that the Life in Christ, especially for an Orthodox Christian, is always a tension: to live in the world but not to be of the world.

It is not easy to follow Christ and to reveal Him in this world. After all, He Himself said, "He who would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." May the Lord who is God and has revealed Himself to us enable us to do just this.

Loose Lips

"Loose lips sink ships," was a war-time saying I heard a lot as a youth. Of course this saying referred to the results of indiscriminate remarks, perhaps at a pub, or at a game of cards, or some other informal setting, which allowed enemy agents to know the movements of merchant or naval fleets, and to attack them. I suppose one could refer to enough film stories on this subject. But ships as such is not my concern here. My concern is persons, and the results of the way we talk.

Christians must always be concerned about how we speak about other persons, and above all about how we speak about the Lord. Not only is this crucial because it is a reflection of our love for Christ and other persons, but it is crucial because as Orthodox Christians we are measured by others, some truly searching for the truth, by our example. And, in the end, we will be measured by the Lord Himself.

The way of the fallen world is, as we are often reminded in Scripture, to praise a person when there is a positive product (and especially when "there's something in it for me"). But if the person should err somehow, then the praise is quickly changed to damning. Even worse, if there should be a person in the way of one's designs, or if envy or jealousy provokes, then there is often a deliberate torpedoing of the obstacle. One of the principal expressions of these evil passions is gossip.

Gossip involves the poisonous process of probing with speculation into a person's motives and character, transforming these speculations into supposed facts, spreading them in a kind of conversation which generally adds creative details, and often results in the demolition of another person's character, reputation, family, career. This process knocks a person down, and then viciously kicks him or her. No wonder gossip has often been compared to murder. The person's life itself may not be taken, but the means of livelihood, or the family context itself may be removed. I don't think any of us has lived past 20 years of age and not seen this in action. And this is all deadly territory for Christians. It is the direct evil opposite of the Christian Way.

The Christian must learn to look for and to see Christ in every other person, without making distinctions as the

world does, and lovingly to serve and nurture that other person, as the good neighbour, the Samaritan, did.

There is yet another sneaky way in which good intentions become slyly perverted. It is, ironically, through prayer requests. We all need to ask each other's prayers for support in our struggle in life to follow Christ. It is right for us to ask for prayer of our brothers and sisters. But we must be on guard when we pray for others. Curiosity about details can lead to our own downfall and bring us all too easily again to the field of gossip. Monastic elders often say that the best prayer is "Kyrie eleison": "Lord, have mercy." This is a complete prayer of intercession. In fact, we don't need to ask too many details when praying, and we don't need to "compare notes" with others who are praying. By following this advice, we keep away from the dark side of curiosity and again avoid this slippery access to the poison of gossip or idle talking. I have heard too many times of examples where sincere believers have slipped from compassion through empathy to curiosity and have inadvertently caused a brother or sister to fall.

I would like everybody to read the General Epistle of St James, but I will quote a little for you from the third chapter. I find it really useful:

Look at the ships also; though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So the tongue is a little member and boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is an unrighteous world among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the wheel of birth, and set on fire by Gehenna. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature can be tamed, and has been tamed by human-kind, but no human being can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brethren, this ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening fresh water and brackish? Can a fig tree, my brethren, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh. Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good life let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This wisdom is not such as comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every

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vile practise. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty or insincerity. And the harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace . . .

In another place, the Lord Himself, addressing the regulations about foods, tells us that it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles, but what comes out of the mouth—from the heart. This is why we need to remember that homespun advice we learn as children if we saw the film *Bambi*. Thumper the rabbit is advised by his mother: "If you can't say something nice, don't say nothing at all."

The grammar needs improvement but the message is accurate. We are not the judges of anyone else, only the Lord is Judge of all. We are all sinners, and none better than the other. So why be an ally of the evil one in attacking and bringing down a brother or sister in a weak moment? Let us rather, following Christ, do the opposite. Let us be bearers and bringers of life, repentance and renewal. Let us build up and encourage. Let us say only what is good, and what is praiseworthy. Let us measure our words, and when we do speak, let our speech be pure and gentle. Let us be merciful, even as our Heavenly Father is merciful!

Travels and Temptations

We live in a time which allows for easy and rapid travel and we tend to make liberal use of these conveniences, but travel as always has its dangers. I am not talking so much about robberies or catastrophic accidents as about the spiritual difficulties that arise every time we change our daily rhythm. Travelling in the way we are able to do these days probably makes much worse the difficulty we seem to have in maintaining even the minimal daily discipline. In this context I have to say that I am glad to see that in more and more parishes people are deliberately asking for prayers before even shorter trips.

One of the big temptations that we constantly face, and one which seems to be accentuated, is that of judgmentalism. It is truly a good thing that we look up one of our churches and go there on Sunday when we are travelling away from home. But when we go to another parish, we need to be prepared. Unless we prepare our hearts beforehand, we can be sitting ducks for the devil's target practice. It is an easy temptation to speak humorously about people who have immigrated from the old country with the attitude that the particular customs

of their village were the absolutely correct Orthodox way of doing things. But criticizing or making fun of other people's ways is not a good thing to do, because when that happens we quickly find those very things we attack showing up in ourselves.

An old monastic piece of wisdom is "Don't bring your typikon to another monastery." The fact is that each monastery has its own way of going about its life, and so does each parish. If we go somewhere else, we have be prepared ahead of time to behave according to the customs of that place whether we "like" particular customs or not, because we are, after all, only visitors, and we must avoid abusing the hospitality of our brothers and sisters. So, for instance, if my parish is one that does not concern itself about informal clothing in church on Sunday, that does not mean I should assume that it would not lead my brothers and sisters into temptation if I appear dressed quite informally in a parish which I visit. The same thing goes for covering heads, and the like. What is important is to appear before the Lord with the best clothing I have, and not to concern myself with others.

Whether travelling or not, living with the variety of customs or not, the main question is what kind of attitude is in my heart toward my brothers and sisters? Do I participate in demonic target practice by looking for weak spots or faults in those around me and then taking aim and verbally shooting, or do I find ways to reinforce, support, nurture, encourage and help my sisters and brothers in repentance in one way or another?

I remember being told as a child that "those who live in glass houses ought not to throw stones." A variation I heard later is that when I point a finger in accusation, there are three fingers on my hand pointing back at myself, the accuser. It is important for us in our Christian life to accept that we are all sinners in a hospital for sinners, sick in sin, and that our proper attitude is to be reflected in what we always say in the prayer before Communion: that I am the *first* among sinners. I am the sinner.

It is the responsibility of each one of us to find healing in Christ, and to help others do so as well, and it is in living this out that we really show ourselves as Orthodox Christians. The practical details of daily life are very important, but they are empty unless they are fed by the principle of repentant love in Christ. So whether we are travelling or not, it is important to be watchful always, and to have our spiritual armour on every day.

Seraphin

Metanoia Conference Is Held in Edmonton, Discusses Future of Orthodoxy in Canada

It has been said that Orthodox Christianity is North America's best kept secret. The newly-formed pan-Orthodox organization Metanoia Ministries, headquartered in Edmonton, is attempting to do something about that. As its pastoral advisor, Fr Andrew Jarmus of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, says, "Over the past decade there has been an increasing interest in Orthodox witness and spiritual growth among the faithful in Canada. Unfortunately, parishes, dioceses and other Church organizations have so many other pressing issues to deal with, administrative, pastoral, pedagogical, that it becomes difficult to give evangelism and spirituality the time they need. Hopefully, Metanoia will be able to help in these areas."

To that end, Metanoia held its first Orthodox Symposium on September 27-28 in Edmonton, attended by participants from many Orthodox jurisdictions, including Antiochian, Greek, Malankara, OCA, Romanian, Russian Synodal, Serbian and Ukrainian. Also present were people from several other Christian traditions, seeking to learn more about Orthodoxy. In total there were 138 people from British Columbia to southern Ontario gathered to discuss the present situation of Orthodoxy in North America, and specifically in Canada.

Keynote speaker for the Symposium was author, film director, essayist and convert to Orthodox Christianity, Frank Schaeffer. Also featured at the Symposium was a panel discussion on the future of Orthodoxy in Canada. On the panel were Archbishop JOHN of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada; Bishop SERAPHIM of the Archdiocese of Canada, OCA; and Fr

Theodore Gove, who represented Metropolitan SOTIRIOS of the Greek Metropolis of Toronto.

In the first session Mr Schaeffer spoke about his ten year journey from evangelical protestantism to his conversion to Orthodoxy, the faith in which he found the spiritual, liturgical and doctrinal grounding for which his soul thirsted. Through his studies of the ancient Church, he discovered that Orthodoxy is, in fact, the true Christian Church. It is a matter of history, he said, "that the Orthodox Church is *the* Church, and I would believe that if I were not even a Christian."

In the second session Mr Schaeffer spoke on the question "Can Orthodoxy Survive in the Modern World?" He highlighted the strengths of the immigrant roots of

Orthodoxy in North America, but added a note of caution about these roots. Because the vast majority of Orthodox came to this country as immigrants and refugees, and not as missionaries, there has not been a conscious recognition of the missionary imperative of the faith.



The Metanoia Ministries Steering Committee is shown with guest speakers Frank Schaeffer (front row, far left) and Bishops John and Seraphim (centre).

This attitude in turn has led to what he identified as the greatest threat to Orthodoxy in the modern world: the erroneous assumption that we live in a society that is friendly to Christianity. Today the enemies of the Church no longer use the weapon of fear against Her, but seduction--the seduction of a relativistic, individualistic philosophy which teaches that one can believe whatever he wants, as long as one feels good about himself.

The fruits of this seduction among the Orthodox are clear in what he distinguished as two Orthodox Churches in America: first, the small group of people who are in church every Sunday, who struggle in prayer,

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Metanoia Conference. *continued:*

fasting and spiritual growth, and who work many long hours to keep their parishes alive; and second, the very large group whose expression of faith is limited to coming to Church with grandmother at Pascha.

Mr Schaeffer said that the only way to counter this cooling off of the Faith is by a personal commitment to it. Spiritual revitalization will come only from each individual Orthodox believer's making a commitment to personal holiness through the participating in the Holy Mysteries, in prayer, in fasting, and in a life suitable for those bearing the name of Christ in their hearts. Orthodoxy's "secret weapon" in this struggle, he stated, is monasticism, which is the foundation of the Church's spiritual life.

In the Symposium's final session, panellists discussed "The Future of Orthodoxy in Canada." Archbishop John stated that the future of Orthodoxy in Canada lies in the groundwork established by our forebears of the ancient Church. The same faith, dedication and love that brought the Church through its first two millennia will guide Her through the future.

Bishop Seraphim spoke of the great turmoil that Orthodoxy has faced in this century in its historic lands, and how this turmoil has to the present time created dissonance among the Orthodox in the new world. It is vital for us here, he said, to seek to heal the old wounds and to avoid creating new wedges between people. The Church will grow in Canada just as it always has everywhere: not by programs, not by agendas, but by each faithful person's ministering the love of Christ to others, on a one-on-one basis.

Before sharing his ideas, Fr Theodore greeted the Symposium participants and organizers on behalf of Metropolitan Sotirios, explaining that he was unable to attend because he was called to New York for the installation of the new Archbishop of America. He then continued with his presentation, focusing on his personal hopes for Orthodoxy in Canada. He addressed such issues as Orthodox unity, liturgical renewal, openness to new Canadian cultural expressions of the Faith, and missions and evangelism.

The panel discussion, ably moderated by Fr Stephen Keaschuk of Edmonton, concluded with a good-natured, high-spirited discussion of the issues brought up by the panel and other raised from the floor.

Metanoia is currently planning several major events of interest to those in western Canada, including a marriage enrichment retreat, marriage preparation workshops, a conference on faith and science, and a Great Lenten retreat. Next year's Symposium, which will

have youth and adult streams running concurrently, will feature noted Orthodox writer and speaker, Fr Anthony Coniaris.

Audiotapes of the 1996 Symposium are already available. For information about them, or about future Metanoia events, telephone: 461-9935 (in Edmonton) or 1-800-856-8936 (elsewhere). —*excerpts from Metanoia Ministries news release 10/96*

Recent Publications of Interest

Are you or someone else you know a lover of Orthodox liturgical music? *Musica Russica's CD Buying Guide*, featuring over 150 CDs of liturgical and folk music, helps you decide what is worth buying and what is not. The guide contains accurate descriptions of contents, expert reviews, and a four-star rating system to help you select your CDs. To be placed on the mailing list and stay informed about the latest Orthodox CDs, please send your mailing address along with US\$2.00 for postage and handling to:

Musica Russica, 27 Willow Lane, Madison, CT 06443, USA.

The catalog is also on the World Wide Web at:
<http://www.musicarussica.com>

Holy Communion and the Orthodox Believer, by our own diocesan ruling hierarch, Bishop SERAPHIM, has recently been published in a very attractive softcover format of 40 pages. It offers an Orthodox theological and historical understanding of this Holy Mystery, emphasizing the loving and personal relationship of the Holy Trinity with the created, and explaining what God seeks of us. Based on the presentation which His Grace made to the "Windows to the East" symposium in Saskatoon in 1995, the book also contains numerous quotations from the Church Fathers, prayers, and a reading list.

It is available in single or multiple copies at \$7.00 each from either the Father Alexander Schmemmann Bookstore or the Alexandre/Alexander Bookstore, both in Montreal (see back page of this newspaper for addresses and phone numbers), or from the publisher:

Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church,
2202 Lorne Avenue, Saskatoon SK S7J 0R5
(Phone 306-665-3155).

The new edition of the *Archdiocese of Canada Parish Directory*, in loose-leaf format which will be updated regularly, is available for \$5.00 from the Father Alexander Schmemmann Bookstore in Montreal (see back page of this newspaper for address and phone number).

Pascha in Copenhagen: a Gathering in the Diaspora

by Professor Charles Lock, University of Copenhagen

[The following article has been submitted also to Sourozh and is published here with permission of the author. It contains a number of reflections about the divisions in Orthodoxy which may be of interest to some of our readers, but the primary reason we print it here is for its concluding remarkable account of a grace-filled personal experience of Orthodox mystical unity.—ed.]

Reading in *Sourozh* (no.63, February 1996) the reprint of Archbishop Paul of Finland's article on the problem of the Orthodox diaspora, one appreciates the abiding urgency of its concern. There must be a continuous lamentation at the lack of progress in solving the jurisdictional problem; now, however, a special poignancy attends one's reflections, after the drastic divisiveness of the events in the week before Forgiveness Sunday in February 1996, when the Patriarch of Moscow announced that the Patriarch of Constantinople would no longer be commemorated in the liturgy, for the very first time since 988.

Although the Estonian crisis may not appear to have been a problem of the diaspora, it involved a dispute between languages and ethnic groups typical of the diaspora. Furthermore, the independent Estonian Church had preserved its identity through the Soviet period—when Estonian Orthodoxy was within the Patriarchate of Moscow—by means of an emigre parish in Stockholm. It is strange that it was the Estonian problem that precipitated the confrontation between the Patriarchs of Constantinople and Moscow: one feels that any number of incidents or tensions might have sufficed. Sensitivities are perhaps most fragile in the “near-abroad.”

That bitter week in February marked the beginning for me of Lent in a new country, Denmark. In the past twenty years I have participated in the Lenten ordeal and in the Paschal celebration in a number of countries in Europe as well as in Canada and the United States. In each country, and not only in Lent, I have witnessed strife over language, ethnicity, calendar: such tensions and dissensions must unhappily be known to every Orthodox church-goer in the “diaspora.”

For the past twelve years I had lived in Toronto, and attended the parish of Christ the Saviour within the Canadian diocese of the Orthodox Church in America. This parish is but one of some thirty or forty Orthodox churches in the Toronto area. Like most OCA parishes, it is ethnically a mixture of those who are Russian, Carpatho-Rusyn, Ukrainian, and Byelorусyn in origin, and it perpetuates the traditions of its founders. For far longer than the years of my residence in Toronto, the parish had been divided over issues of language and

calendar. We, converts, supported by the “progressive, enlightened ones” among the baptised Orthodox, worked hard for the introduction of an English liturgy, and always looked forward to living on the New Calendar, and to the obvious satisfactions of celebrating the great feasts of the Church year in symphony with our official holidays. There was, and tends generally to be, far more success with language than with the calendar.

There may be an opportunity to move the calendar in five years' time, that is at the Nativity in 2001: on the New Calendar that feast will fall not, as it has for the past one hundred years, on January 7, but on January 8: just as between 1801 and 1900 December 25 (Old Style) fell on January 6 (New Style). The Gregorian Calendar was first introduced in the Papal States in 1582. By 1901 a number of states, including Russia, were still officially on the Old or Julian Calendar; Britain had been on that calendar until 1752, when rioters protested against being robbed by the government of eleven days of their lives (by a disconcerting leap from 2nd to 14th of September). Lenin put the Soviet Union on the New Calendar in 1919, with the odd effect that the October Revolution was always commemorated in November. The Tsarist adherence to the Old Calendar is often adduced to suggest that the New Calendar is the Communist Calendar.

[Bp Seraphim adds here: “The Church when it follows the ‘new’ calendar, calls it ‘Revised Julian’ because the time of observing Pascha remains the same as before, not following the current western formula, and the Orthodox generally serve Pascha all together, as is our custom.”—ed.]

As we approach 2001 there is not one state in the world that adheres to the Julian Calendar. In all the reforms and counter-revolutionary movements and debates in Eastern Europe over the past years, we have heard nobody calling for the restoration of the Old Calendar, not even, I think, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. The Orthodox Churches on the Old Calendar will therefore have to make the adjustment to a fourteen day difference without any endorsement or authorization from the state. By now, of course, Orthodox Christians, whether or not they are in “diaspora,” think of the Nativity as taking place on January 7—not on “December 25 Old Style.” I fear that it will be as hard to persuade the faithful to change to January 8 as it has proved to persuade them to move to December 25 (New Style)—and that January 7 will remain in perpetuity the date of (Slavic) “Orthodox Christmas.”

[Bp Seraphim also adds: “Whatever the habitual or sentimental attachments may be to one calendar or another, a

Continued, next page . . .

calendar is just a calendar. It measures the passage of time. We believe in sanctifying time, not in a particular way of measuring it. If one method we use has a fault, we can correct it. After all, the measurement ought to be accurate and harmonious with God's creation." —ed.]

As for language, the pattern is familiar. Either the older generation dies out and there is a gradual shift in favour of English, or, more commonly, the "English" community breaks away to form its own parish. Among the numerous Orthodox parishes in Toronto (representative of any large North American city) one can find parishes with a clear ethnic identity in three or even four varieties: one under the "home" patriarch; one belonging to a hierarchy in exile; sometimes one on each calendar; and a rare fifth variety, the parish which has detached itself in order to be both New Calendar and English. The menu is rich and diverse and one takes one's pick. The meeting of SCOBA—the Standing Committee of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas—at Ligonier, Pennsylvania, in November 1994, made a remarkable resolution: to work together throughout North America to observe the canonical norms of Orthodoxy, most obviously that there should be one church in one place, and one bishop in one area. As is well-known, the proposal was firmly rejected by the Patriarch of Constantinople. A rare episode of Orthodox harmony has, so far, had its consequences stifled.

I left Toronto and the geographical jurisdiction of the OCA at the end of 1995 and I was apprehensive of the sort of Orthodox life that I could expect in Denmark. There is only one Orthodox parish in Copenhagen, and it is in the (non-canonical) jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church outside of Russia. Should I become a communicating member of the parish, I would technically be no longer in communion with all the jurisdictions to which I have previously belonged, in Britain, on the continent of Europe, and in North America. My apprehensions were great—for the ways of the "Synod" are well-known, and need no rehearsing. Nor is it my purpose here to justify the Synodal Church, to apologise for it, nor to confess any jurisdictional shift. I am moved to write, however, by what may be a passage of ecclesiological clarity.

The revelation of this Lent, a revelation that grew and merged into the joy of Pascha itself, was that—as all upholders of canonical rule have been saying throughout our diasporic century—the jurisdiction hardly matters when, and precisely when, there is only one church in one city. I have seen Synodal parishes in North America, many of them sectarian, conspiratorial, ghettos dedicated to a tsarist past, none of them particularly open or welcoming. Yet such littlenesses and wilful limitation cannot survive when, as in Copenhagen, to

that church come the faithful from the entire Orthodox world: Russians and Serbs in greatest numbers, Greeks, Romanians, Bulgarians, Lebanese, a large number of Ethiopians, Japanese Orthodox, and converts from Denmark and elsewhere. The globe seemed represented in each of its quarters, and the church a space of limitless welcome. The paschal greeting was proclaimed in an impressive array of languages, including Ge'ez, the liturgical language of the Ethiopian Church. (Earlier I had asked an Ethiopian whether he had problems with participating in the liturgy in Slavonic: none at all, he replied, Ge'ez is no more nor less comprehensible than Slavonic; we hear one sacred, secret language instead of another.)

The Paschal proclamation had thus a sense of being addressed to the whole world: a microcosm of humankind was gathered to respond, and was gathered in response. The declaration of St John's Gospel was even more astonishing. The last language in which the prologue was read was Danish; before that we heard, in reverse order, Slavonic, Latin, Greek and—at the beginning, in the place of honour—Hebrew. The first word that we heard from the Paschal gospel was thus "B-r-sh-t," that word in the beginning which truly is the beginning—the first of all words, the word that was, before any other word or thing: the word that, breathlessly, preceded creation. In my ignorance I was unaware even that the Gospel had been translated into Hebrew. Not for my ignorance, I trembled. The world, humanity dispersed across the face of the globe, was gathered, in "synaxis," "synagogue"; and in that "B-r-sh-t" time also was gathered in one sacred knot, the axle-tree of the cosmos, the empty tomb as the black hole at the very hub of time and space.

In the face of the Paschal conundrum, nothing should be left to surprise us. But I confess to prejudice, and thus to surprise: throughout this Lent and this Pascha I seldom thought about language, calendar or jurisdiction, or about fair representation for the constituencies of the faithful; instead, for the first time, I felt myself to be just one of the least of the citizens of the world, privileged to be part of the synaxis of the cosmos. In the least likely place—quite as unlikely as an empty tomb—I found realised the vision of all the Orthodox gathered together, even in dispersal: indeed, especially there in a city where the nations of the earth find themselves displaced and mingling. This is the vision towards which synods and councils strive, with little evidence of progress. Here in Copenhagen this Pascha, it was realised, not through design or principle nor by any hierarchical or conciliar decree, but simply because here, in this city, lacking a jurisdictional menu catering to the language and calendar of one's choice, there is only one Orthodox Church.



The following is one of the several excellent "mini-talks" given at the Canadian Archdiocesan Assembly, held last July in Ottawa. It has been somewhat abridged and concentrated by the author, Fr Stephen Keaschuk, the rector of St Herman of Alaska Church in Edmonton, Alberta.

I have come to appreciate that the "good" confession is one that is, first, the result of a believer's earnest desire simply to be forgiven. This may seem to be stating the obvious; however, it is an attitude that is very often lost among the reasons we go to confession. Unless we are deliberately mindful of this purpose each time we confess, I believe that we run the risk of leaving those blessed few minutes without fully benefitting from them.

The purpose of and keen need for us in confession is the part that so often seems like just its ritual conclusion—the Absolution. Christ came to this earth precisely to pronounce the big "I forgive you." In each confession, we should experience the great blessing of these simple words.

So the first quality of a good confession is that we come with no other expectation than to hear the words that Christ entrusted to the Church through his disciples—"you are forgiven." If we come expecting, for example, revelations about the nature of our sinfulness (as a therapy session), we may very likely be led into delusion rather than insight. And if we come waiting for spirit-rending counsel from the priest, the Devil will certainly ensure that we leave disappointed—if not with the Sacrament, then at least with the man around whose neck the stole hangs.

One thing only is necessary: the desire, the urgent need, to be forgiven. Nevertheless, this deceptively simple purpose implies a whole battery of other elements that bear on the quality of our confession.

Among these is the idea that to ask forgiveness is to imply that we are asking it of *someone*, that someone has been offended. Confession therefore is not about admitting to the breaking of a number of divine rules (St. Paul clearly teaches that this idea should be foreign to Christians). Rather, Holy Confession is primarily to be understood as an act undertaken to reconcile a relationship with the One we have offended. It is a *personal* matter, not a legal/judicial event.

This understanding takes us still further into the Mystery of a good confession because it obviously presupposes that we indeed already have a relationship with God. Holy Scripture (see especially Isaiah 6) clearly teaches that genuine repentance comes *after* one has had a glimpse, however simple or limited, of the Divine, the Truth, the Good One. This vision of God and communion with Him is cultivated in prayer, contemplation, fasting, study, and practice of the virtues. But there is no other door to repentance than the good confession. What seem like alternatives are probably the result of vain intellectualisation, or worse, a form of self-abusive condemnation. The latter is, paradoxically yet fundamentally, an act of pride.

If we have this intimate relationship with God, it is impossible to maintain it without being honest in it, without allowing the probing and pure light of the Holy Spirit into our

hearts. He, we are told, will search our hearts and reveal our sins to us. We need only to accept His direction and respond by repenting of the sins He uncovers in us. In this regard, we need to examine the place of the many and varied "examinations of conscience" that are available to Orthodox Christians in books, pamphlets, and prayer books.

Fr Alexander Elchaninov writes that "As long as we lack the closeness to Christ which makes the feeling of repentance our habitual condition, we must prepare for confession by examination of conscience according to the commandments, by certain prayers, by texts from Scripture . . ." From this we may conclude two things. First, we should not let our imperfect faith prevent us from coming to confession. Rather we should fan the flames of repentance by meditating on whatever checklists of sins are available to us, and then simply submit to the grace of Holy Confession.

The second thing that we must accept is that this form of preparation cannot ultimately satisfy us. We need to strive to become familiar with the clear inner voice of the Spirit in our hearts. This is particularly necessary because simply bringing a list of sins to confession may in fact become an obstacle to real progress in the struggle with our sinfulness. We may begin to substitute admission of sins for true repentance. Only the Holy Spirit can lead us to the spiritual point where our confession needs to begin, and only He can gently guide us through each of our sins that they might be cast off.

Perhaps the greatest grace and sign of a good confession is the wonderful relief that accompanies it. In my experience, however, this unburdening occurs only when our hearts are broken to the point that, bluntly, we would be willing to shout our sins from the rooftops. For most of us this is a definite challenge to our pride; so we become adept at finding deliberate and unconscious ways to preserve our dignity and avoid humiliation. We veil our sins in vague language. Or we surround our confession with explanations (read: excuses) to the priest and others by which we attempt to minimize the damage to our pride. In so doing, we prevent ourselves from ever knowing the great blessing and relief of confession, because we have introduced subtle lies and pride into a moment which demands total truthfulness.

When we come to the point where, in order to bring peace to our hearts, we are willing to hold nothing back in order to preserve our dignity, we will have made the good confession. Ultimately, I believe, when we do not care who knows about our secret, dark, dirty, embarrassing selves, we will be free of the hold of sin.

Finally, let us not be discouraged if we fall again into the same sins, even after a confession that arose from a genuinely broken heart. The last virtue that characterises the good confession is a combination of *hope* and *patience*—enough of each to continue without despair to confess the same sins with the humble belief that they are forgiven each time and that, eventually, they will be taken from us. After all, this is why Christ came to the earth—to save us from our sins. He will not fail in His purpose, and surely we cannot go wrong if we trust in that promise.

Council Meeting, *continued from p. 3:*

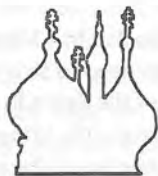
Bishops' Central Administration, and especially on the parish and personal level we have in FOS an allowable expense.

Further deliberations included the distribution of some special appeals funds, the preparation and training of clergy for Canada, the development of youth ministries, the establishment of the **Archbishop Arseny Glorification Commission**, and an overview of the final comments on the Sample Parish By-laws. Bishop Seraphim withdrew his blessing for the amendment to

Archdiocesan By-law 5.4.b, due to lack of clarity and said that we will keep to the spirit of the original by-law until our situation is sufficiently stable in the deaneries to enable a long-term adjustment. Fr Bob Kennaugh and Dn Phillip Eriksson were appointed to the Council. Other directions from the Assembly were also discussed and received their initial organisation.

The next meeting of the Council will be held at Annunciation/St Nicholas Cathedral in Ottawa on 23-24 May 1997.

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