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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Home Building Group To Visit Project Mexico This Summer

—by Constantine Somow, Vancouver

This coming summer promises to provide a rewarding and spiritually-growing experience for a group of between 14 and 25 persons from the Archdiocese of Canada who will visit Baja California, Mexico, to build a home for a needy family under the guidance of Project Mexico. The experience, while replicating the successful efforts of numerous groups from the US, will mark the first time that a Canadian group has participated.

Project Mexico has been building homes for homeless families in rural Baja California for several years and, in addition, currently operates St Innocent Orphanage, an Orthodox Christian orphanage for teenage boys. Each year, several homes are built in the outlying regions adjacent to St Innocent Orphanage, radically transforming the living conditions of the recipients and furthering the outreach of this unique Orthodox ministry.

The necessity for home building groups from abroad is ongoing, particularly in the regions closest to the US border. These desert areas serve as a magnet, literally attracting the poorest people from throughout the country in the hope of improving their lives, often intent on crossing into the United States. Entire families migrate, many from Mexico and some from Central American countries like Guatemala and Honduras.

In contrast to the perception that draws them there, those arriving are confronted with the reality of being in an area that is overcrowded, underdeveloped and fenced off from the source of their greatest hope, the United States. Ultimately they settle on a small parcel of land where there is no electricity, water or sewage facility, and lacking employment or building materials, are forced to live in a tent or other makeshift shelter, where they are vulnerable to the elements of crime and nature. In the case of families living in Baja California where Project Mexico operates, with winter conditions consisting of cool weather and frequent rainy periods, many are faced during this season with seeing their infant children succumb from exposure to the cold.

The difference that a ten-by-twenty foot home with solid walls and a foundation makes in these situations is virtually indescribable. A family's life is transformed from the absolute and abject poverty of displaced migrants to the status and stability of homeowners. In the process the lives of the volunteers who participate are also transformed. Coming to serve others, many are surprised by the countless blessings which they themselves receive in the process of giving. This is attested to by the comments received by Project Mexico from some of its past participants:

"Project Mexico was the most spiritually uplifting thing I've ever done."

"How to say 'gracias' for the gift you've provided our daughter? Your work provided God's light to bring fruition to her young soul. She is an inspired young lady, more firmly rooted in her faith."

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Project Mexico, *continued from p.1:*

"My spiritual growth has been immeasurable since I came here last year. It has truly helped me to grow as a person but more importantly, as a Christian."

It was with an aspiration to give to others in need, combined with the knowledge that God will, through His grace, bring the reality of our Orthodox Christian faith to fruition, that a resolution was passed at last summer's Canadian Archdiocesan Assembly to send a group of volunteers to Project Mexico in 1999. The endeavour is currently underway to find and prepare volunteers for this mission work, tentatively scheduled for the week of July 5–12, 1999, as well as to raise funding for construction materials and expenses in the order of $10,000. (The amount is based upon a $275.00 USD fee per participant collected by Project Mexico.) To initiate the fundraising, the Archdiocesan Council has generously committed to paying for the rental of vehicles which will transport volunteers between their point of arrival in San Diego CA and the orphanage in Baja California, Mexico.

Anyone who would like to inquire about volunteering is asked to contact Fr. Lawrence (Larry) Reinheimer of St Peter the Aleut Mission, Calgary, Alberta, at 403-938-6393 (office) or 403-938-4929 (home). Those wishing to make a written inquiry may write to Fr Larry at:

Fr Larry Reinheimer

174 Woodhaven Drive

Okotoks, AB

T0L 1T5

(To make a donation, please complete the inserted pledge form, and mail it with your donation to Fr Larry. Thank you, in advance, for your support.)

Please keep this mission in your prayers that God may uphold all of us spiritually as we prepare to fulfill his calling to *". . . care for orphans and widows in their distress . . ."* (James 1:27).

An Archdiocesan Appeal

On March 28, 1999, the 5th Sunday of Great Lent, at the Bishop's direction there will be a collection taken in the parishes of the Archdiocese of Canada to help defray the costs of the Home Building Mission in Mexico Project to which Mr Somow refers in the article above. Please give generously!

Pastoral Notes

On 1 Aug 98 the name of the Communauté Missionaire de St-Séraphim de Sarov was changed to **Communauté Monastique de St-Séaphim de Sarov.**

On 1 Sep 98 the administration of the **Russian Cemetery of St Seraphim** in Rawdon QC was given, under **Higoumène Irénée,** to the **Communauté Monastique de St-Séraphim de Sarov.**

On 7 Jul 98 **Archpriest John Tkachuk,** retaining all his other duties, was released ("retired") from his responsibility as Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Canada.

On 7 Jul 98 **Priest Dennis Pihach,** in addition to his other responsibilities, was appointed Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Canada.

On 15 Oct 98 **Priest Dennis Pihach,** retaining all his other duties, was released from his responsibility as Dean of Manitoba/Saskatchewan.

On 15 Oct 98, upon election, **Priest Robert Stephen Kennaugh** was appointed Dean of Manitoba/Saskatchewan.

On 1 Dec 98 **Priest Nikolai Kondratyev** was released from his responsibilities as Second Priest for the rural parishes of Alberta, and assigned as Interim Priest of Holy Trinity Sobor, Winnipeg MB.

On 6 Dec 98 **Deacon Miroslaw Wojtiuk** was receved through Metropolitan THEODOSIUS from the Orthodox Church in Poland, and attached to Christ the Savour Sobor in Toronto ON.

On 26 Jan 99 **Priest Leonid Misnik** was suspended from all priestly function.

On 31 Jan 99 **Archpriest John Scratch** was released from his duties as Interim Priest-in-Charge of St Herman of Alaska's Church in Edmonton AB, and returned to his responsibilities as Dean of Ontario and Assistant Priest of St Silouan's Chapel in Johnstown ON, effective 1 Feb 99.

On 31 Jan 99 **Priest Dennis Pihach** was released from his duties as Rector of St Mark's Church in Yorkton SK and as Priest-in-Charge of the Yorkton area churches, chapels and cemeteries, and was assigned Acting Rector of St Herman of Alaska's Church, Edmonton AB, effective 1 Feb 99.

Icon of a life

Our Holy Mother, Equal to the Apostles,

Saint Photini of Samaria

Feb 26 (Greek); Mar 20 (Slav); 5th Sunday of Pascha

It is a powerful and beautiful picture, the conversation of our Lord with St Photini, the Samaritan Woman. She is familiar to us, for she is remembered in our Church calendars. Yet despite the wealth of Biblical history dealing with the plain of Moreh, Sychar (the place of Joseph's tomb), Sichem (where the Lord appeared toAbraham first after he entered Canaan), and despite our desire to know more about the life of this woman the Lord met, our knowledge of the inner person remains stronger than the outer facts known. Thus her life seems almost iconographic in detail, from the meeting of the Lord until her martyrdom.

Tired from His journey from Judaea to Galilee, Jesus stops at Jacob's Well overlooking the grainfields of the plain of Moreh. The well is about three hundred metres south of Joseph's tomb and a kilometre from the settlement of Sychar. Left alone while His disciples go for food, He asks the woman who comes to the well for a drink.

For all appearances, she is a woman alone at a well at what seems to be the wrong time of day. Why had she not gone with the other women to draw water early in the morning? Who is her family? How old is she? What does she look like? We do not know these things. We only know that in the heat of the day she came with her water pot to the Great Well.

It had been dug painstakingly through limestone many hundreds of years earlier by the Patriarch Jacob, probably to be independent of his neighbours, Amorite herdsmen, with whom water could have been shared from the abundant springs in the area. Now the well was in Samaritan country lying between the Jewish provinces, home to a mixed "Jewish" race, contaminated by foreign blood and false worship. The Jews had trade connections with them but no social interaction.

Animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans had existed for centuries. After the return of Judah from captivity, a man of priestly lineage named Manasseh had married a Samaritan and was expelled by Nehemiah for this (Ne 13:28). He went to Samaria and became a high priest of a temple on Mount Gerizim. There the Samaritans offered their sacrifices of the Law until the temple was destroyed in 129 BC, but the mountain remained. In their national zeal they claimed that their "temple" and their copy of the Law were greater than those at Jerusalem. According to the historian Flavius Josephus, the Samaritan Road was an unpopular one for most Jews to use, but Galileans were accustomed to travelling on it to get through Samaria on their way to feasts at Jerusalem.

The Samaritan woman had the rare fortune to speak with Christ lengthily and privately. It is a dignified encounter, unbound by social convention in the spirit of an age shown by a later Rabbinical precept: "let no one talk with a woman in the street, no, not with his own wife." Even though the Lord refers to "five husbands" and "the one whom you now have is not your husband" and her moral condition is known between them, we do not learn the deails. She, in turn, is not offended by what He says; she esteems Him even more, and they continue the honest, fearless and humble exchange that covers so many topics.

If the disciples had not gone away, they might have bargained with the woman for the use of her rope and pitcher. Instead, the Lord asks her for a drink as a favour, a gift. He talks of the exchange of gifts, the "favour of living water," maybe a play on the larger interactive trade between Jews and Samaritans. But the conversation is clearly going somewhere. It is an unfolding and a drawing forth, the meeting of the seeker and the Sought. In the words of St Chrysostom this lengthy passage of Scripture, thirty-eight verses in all, portrays a marvelous evangelisation, a "netting" for the Kingdom, as he puts it. The Lord meets her just where she is, seeing her as fit to receive the very highest of spiritual instruction, and lifting her to a great height in discourse and drawing her to Himself, so that she switches abruptly from *where* one must worship to focusing on *the person* of the Messiah, who will come and "will show us all things" (Jn 4:25b). And the Lord tells her directly, "I Who speak to you am He."

Scripture does not say how she must have looked upon Him at that moment of revelation, but it is clear that the well is now forgotten. She fully believes the words of this lowly One with worn and dusty feet, the long-awaited Messiah sitting on the curbing of the well! Did the prophetic eye of Jacob ever dream of seeing the wearied Christ resting on those stones when he put them in place? How the woman's heart must have been on fire with love and spiritual understanding, as those on the road to Emmaus would marvel, "did not our hearts burn within us while He talked to us on the road . . . ?" (Lk 24:32).

"Photini"(as she is known in Greek, or "Svetlana" in Slavic) the"luminous, bright, shining" one responds.

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St Photini, *continued from p.3:*

and calls the men of Sychar. In his *34th Homily on the Gospel of St John*, St Chrysostom comments on how prudently she speaks to them. She does not say, "Come, see One Who prophesies" but rather, He "told me all things that ever I did." For "when the soul is inflamed with holy fire, it looks then to nothing earthly, neither to glory nor to shame, but belongs to one thing alone, the flame which occupieth it." She simply said "Come see a Man who told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?" (Jn 4:29). Then St John asks us to note

> *. . . her zeal and wisdom. She came to draw water, and when she had lighted upon the true Well, she after that despised the material one; teaching us even by this trifling instance, when we are listening to spiritual matters to overlook the things of this life and make no account of them. For what the Apostles did, that, after her ability, did this woman also—in a higher degree. They, when they were called, left their nets; she of her own accord, without command of any, leaves her waterpot, and winged by grace, performs the office of Evangelist.*

As the crowd of Samaritans move toward the well the Lord comments that "the fields are already white for harvest" (Jn 4:35b). The Lord's own people may have grown selfish from the wealth of revelation and blessing and could not receive as freely, but here walls of racial and sexual prejudice are overcome by grace.The Lord remains in that place for two days, "and many more believed because of His word" (Jn 4:41).

After the Resurrection of our Lord, Photini was baptized and continued in zealous proclamation of the Messiah. She preached in Carthage and Smyrna in Asia Minor, converting many idolaters to the true faith. Her five sisters, Anatolia, Phota, Photida, Paraskeva and Kyriake and a son, Josiah, were with her. During the reign of Nero (54–68 AD) she and her family were imprisoned in Rome, enduring many sufferings for Christ with joy and fortitude. It was during this time that Domnina, Nero's daughter, met St Photini, sent by her father to lure the saint into a luxurious life, and thus to deny her Saviour. Instead, Domnina became a Christian believer!

Photini's other son, Victor, was a Roman soldier raised to the rank of general for his campaigns against the Avars. A secret believer, he was asked by Nero to return to Italy to punish Christians, to which he refused. After he converted the Roman leader Sebastianos, the two of them went to Rome where they were martyred, Victor receiving the name of "Photinos" from the Lord ". . . because through you, I desire that many be enlightened and believe in me."

St Photini's earthly life ended in Rome. According to the *Prologue of Ochrid*, the Samaritan saint "...who first encountered the light of truth by a well, was thrown into a well, where she died and entered into the immortal Kingdom of Christ." She is especially dear to us, for the words spoken by the Lord which so typify the lives of the beloved saints of the Church, including St Photini, were spoken by Him at the well that day: "others have laboured, and you have entered into their labours"(Jn 4:38). Indeed because of the foundational evangelisation of the Samaritans as a result of her encounter with Christ, the field was ripe for the Apostle Philip who later preached in the neighbouring city of Samaria, "and the multitudes with one accord gave heed to what was said by Philip . . . and there was much joy in that city" (Acts 8: 6,8). Because of this harvesting there would also come, from Sichem, Justin Martyr, the great Christian writer of the second century.

The conversation between Christ and the Woman at the Well has been described by the Church Fathers as mystically that of Christ and the soul. Thus, each of us is at the well, and we need not be envious of her wonderful encounter. This drawing of the soul by Love emerges in the hymnography of her remembrance:

> *The Well-spring of the principle of life, Jesus, our Saviour, came to the well of the Patriarch Jacob, and sought water from a Samaritan woman that He might drink. And when she addressed Him and said that the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans, the wise Creator diverted her by the sweetness of His words rather to seek of Him the everlasting water, which, when she received it, she proclaimed to all saying: 'Come and see the Knower of things hidden, God Who is come in the flesh to save man.'*
>
> *(Doxasticon of Vespers, Samaritan Woman)*

Perhaps it is for this reason that it is not given to us to know the technical details—her lineage, what she was wearing, the size of her waterpot, or the volume of production in Jacob's Well at that time. The meeting with the Lord is everything. It is iconographically centre, personal, transcendent, holy, alive and life-changing.

"The rest is history,"as they say: sparse, relevant details that only enhance Life. Post-Resurrection biographical points concerning St Photini are like that, too: precious fragments coming down through the ages, shot through with the gold of the Spirit and the light of Truth.

> *O Lord, You granted knowledge of Your power to the Samaritan woman who asked water of You; wherefore, she who praises You shall not thirst unto the ages of ages.*

Educating our Priests—Whose Responsibility?

As you consider the continuation and growth of our parishes across Canada, pause and consider one key factor—Priesthood. Look at your priest now. How old is he? Who will follow in his footsteps twenty, ten, or even five years from now? We are in great need of more priests right now, as many of our parishes which are not served by a full time priest are painfully aware! Since many of our parishes are experiencing substantial growth, and because we anticipate many searching souls to be coming "home" to the Orthodox Church in the future, we must ask God to raise up priests to serve these new needs.

Look at your parish. Are there young men who are expressing a clear desire to commit their lives to the service of the church? Look at our seminaries. Do you know who is studying now to become priests? What are we in our parishes doing to support these men and their families?

These are sobering questions that must be faced by each of us. But allow me to introduce you to one couple preparing for the priesthood right now.

Seminarian Kevin Miller and his wife Tabatha.

Kevin and Tabatha Miller are from British Columbia.They have started out on a journey which will one day, God grant, end in ordination to the priesthood and service in one of our parishes. Kevin has felt a lifelong tugging towards some type of direct service to God and His Church.

This call was fostered by his parents and family but the "where" never became concrete until he entered the Orthodox Church. This couple from St Herman's parish in Surrey BC have made their way to Winnipeg to begin a four year Bachelor of Theology program of studies at St Andrew's College. So far, Kevin's favourite subjects are Dogmatics (doctrine) and Pastoral Theology.

Before undertaking this leg of the journey, Kevin earned his ticket in the gas fitting trade, fully realizing that even as a priest, a job on the side could be of utmost importance. His trade has also enabled him to work and save money towards his seminary training. Kevin's full time study load leaves no time for him to consider working now, so currently Tabatha works to pay the basic bills. They will remain in Winnipeg throughout this coming summer and hope to obtain work to help cover the costs for the fall of 1999 at the seminary. Kevin and Tabatha feel fortunate that they are able to borrow some money in the form of a student loan. They have sold their vehicle and are using public transport, and are doing all they can to keep their debt load to a minimum.

Costs to study for the priesthood are greatly reduced by being able to study at St Andrew's in Winnipeg as compared to studying in the United States, which was the only option for many in the OCA just a few years ago. Even with this thrifty lifestyle, however, in the best case scenario after four years of schooling, Kevin and Tabatha will be carrying a substantial debt. This fact causes one to pause again and to do some soul-searching.

Do we want to see new priests attempting to begin life in a parish with a large burden of debt? The reality is that many of our parishes are small and supporting a full time priest is difficult, resulting in a priest's having to work part or full time. This is a "catch-22" situation, as a priest with another occupation has limited time, strength and resources to do the necessary work which encourages the growth of a parish. Without growth, a parish continues to struggle to accomplish all the necessary tasks as well as financially support a priest. The added burden on a priest of financial debt can be the factor which makes the situation completely unworkable.

We are all part of the one Body of Christ, and we all have different areas of service. It is the calling of a few to serve as priests "on behalf of all and for all." It is the calling of the rest of us as part of the "all" to support

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Memorial Seminar Honours Fr Schmemann

On Saturday afternoon, December 12, 1998, approximately 65 people gathered at The Sign of the Theotokos Church in Montreal to hear Archpriest Alexis Vinogradov give two informal, affectionate, but well-planned talks remembering his former teacher and

Father Alexis Vinogradov

mentor, Fr Alexander Schmemann, upon the occasion of the renowned Orthodox theologian's 15th anniversary of repose (13 December).

Among the audience of Montrealers were also many people from Ottawa, as well as members of Fr Schmemann's family from New York, including his son Serge who, with the parish priest's and the Bishop's blessing, spoke about his father the next day at the Divine Liturgy at The Sign.

Fr Alexis, a former Montrealer now serving as pastor of St Gregory the Theologian Church in Wappinger Falls NY, in his talks made extensive use of the entries Father Alexander made in a journal/diary which he kept for many years. This journal is currently undergoing the process of editing and translating by Matushka Schmemann and will be published eventually.

The programme for this afternoon of remembrance began with the Sixth Hour at 1:00 pm. After Fr Alexis' talks, refreshments were served, and then there was a period of reminiscence by those who knew him, and relatives. The afternoon closed with the serving of Vespers at 6:00 pm, followed by a Parastas.

Two tapes of Fr Vinogradov's talks are available for $6.00 each from FAS Books.To order, or for more information, phone or fax Sr Stephanie at 514-989-8994.

Educating the priests, *continued from p.5:*

those who are called to serve as priests—with our prayers, our encouragement, and our money. Supporting the men who are pursuing ordination to the priesthood is supporting our own future: we are supporting the life of the Body of Christ and not someone's individual "career," as our secular mindset might have us believe.

Supporting those who have been called to serve Christ and His Body through the priesthood is a privilege and a gift which will bless both the giver and the recipient, and is a valuable and tangible way each of us can participate in advancing the Kingdom of God on earth. Let us encourage those in our parishes whom God is calling to His service through the priesthood. Let us all pause to consider how we can help those who are studying away from home. There are many ways we can help to let them know they are part of us: by sending surprise care packages, cards and letters, pledges for monthly support, establishing scholarships or bursaries, sponsoring a year or more of their education, leaving money for seminary students or a particular seminary in one's will, and in many other ways. Above all, we need to be praying for protection from the inevitable attacks from the evil one. For the sake of Christ and His Body, let us commit to do something individually and as parishes in the next year to help and encourage our future priests. This is our responsibility, our investment opportunity, our future, and our great joy.

Donations for this purpose can be made to the Archdiocese of Canada, with designation to the student or seminary (St Vladimir's, St Tikhon's, St Herman's, St Andrew's) you want to support, or simply designated for seminary education in general.—*Matushka Myra Reinheimer, Calgary AB*

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

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Is Bible Reading, Bible Study, Orthodox?

In these days, in some parts of our Archdiocese at least, we are seeing more often that believers gather together to study the Bible. Some of the groups are large, some are of just a few persons. Sometimes the study is used catechetically, to help prepare those converting, sometimes it is for the deepening of the faith of lifelong believers.

It is not a phenomenon to which our Orthodox world is lately accustomed. Sometimes believers fear what is apparently new. Often enough, simply because protestants are so well known for this exercise, the practise may be accused of not being Orthodox. Some may say that it is dangerous; and that while studying history, theology, Christology, ecclesiology, iconography, Fathers, and so forth is acceptable under certain circumstances, study of the Bible is not.

I have often encountered such controversies. It is usual enough for us to debate matters in this way (we've had almost two millenia of practise). And of course I am writing because I have some comments to make.

If we look at the state of affairs in modern Church life, two words could be used to describe the state of awareness of Sacred Scripture by the vast majority of Orthodox believers: *abysmal ignorance.* Most have only the thinnest awareness of the New Testament, and an almost complete lack of it for the Old Testament. And if it be thin for us, it is the strikingly more the case in the secular world. It used to be that even unbelievers knew a lot about the Bible simply as literature. No more. Our language used to be thoroughly laced with proverbial expressions related to the Bible. No more. And so it seems to be the case in other languages as well nowadays. Everywhere there seems to have been a great emptying of language, in both oral and literary use, of any Christian (and by extension, of course Old Testament) references. What is significant is that there is such a great change in just a generation. In my own childhood many people spoke on a daily basis using these very scriptural quotations, allusions and proverbs. Now it is rare, and where they do exist, they are most often completely lost on the youth.

Our ancestors would also lament the great loss in any language compared to the time of the great Fathers whom we admire whose words we love to study and quote as Orthodox. Their speech and writing was liberally salted with scriptural references, allusions and ancillary proverbs. They "bathed"in Scripture.

Because I am deeply concerned about this slippage, even in myself, I am anxious to encourage the study of the Bible by *all the faithful,* and of the daily reading of it. I believe firmly that it is vital, an absolute necessity of life. This is so, not only for the feeding of the hearts and souls of all believers, but also for forming those entering the Body of Christ. After all, if we don't know Christ thoroughly through His words, if we don't encounter Him in the Gospel and the experience of the Apostles, if we don't know about God's saving acts in human history, how can we call ourselves Christians, let alone call ourselves Orthodox?

Our ancestors, from the earliest times, up to the very recent past, understood the need for daily reading of the Scriptures. And, particularly so with the New Testament, they did read it daily. Some would simply follow the regular course of prescribed Epistle and Gospel readings for every day. Many memorised some of the passages. Not many years ago, I met an old couple who still lived in a pioneer-style house in the country, and they told me it was their favourite evening activity. After all work was done, one would sit or recline, and the other would read aloud the Bible, and they enjoyed it greatly. Clearly, they were reading at least chapters at a time, not just a few paragraphs. And they had done it all their life together, it seems. I knew another pious widow who not only read Scripture of an evening; she would also read the Fathers, their scriptural comments, and their theological works. I am told of our beloved Archimandrite Vasily of blessed memory, of St Tikhon's, that he regularly had the New Testament read to him; and that once, on coming to the end of the Apocalypse, he is said to have remarked that that was very good to hear, and now why not start again.

Paul Evdokimov, in his worthy book *Ages of the Spiritual Life* [SVS Press, Crestwood, NY, 1998], devotes a chapter to this matter. He reminds us of the seriousness of this habit. Not only did Evagrius exhort us to awake, Bible in hand; the Council in Trullo also exhorted priests to cultivate in the faithful the *greatest intimacy* with the Bible. He gives us the following extract from St John Chrysostom, which reveals to me that humans are just the same now as fifteen hundred years ago: "'I am not a monk,' some of you say . . . . But your mistake is in believing that the reading of the Scriptures concerns only monks, because for you it is *even more necessary* since you are in the midst of the world. There is something worse than not reading the Scripture, and that is to believe that this reading is useless . . . a satanic practise." We are told that St John encouraged the home-study of the passages of Scripture to be read in Church, to accustom children to daily reading and discussion of what is the core of their parents' lives. It is this daily exposure that makes the Scripture an organic part of our whole life, that helps to keep Christ in the front of our consciousness, that helps to keep us aware of His presence, that helps us to remember who we are and to whom we belong, and to whom we can turn at all times. It is a saving study, a nourishing study. Evdokimov says that this is because the reading presupposes the state of prayer which is the environment, and which "brings the words to

continued, next page . . .

Is Bible reading Orthodox? *continued from p.7:*

maturity." And so Christ Himself speaks to us as we prayerfully, daily, read and reread the Sacred Scripture. Before reading, we should customarily consciously ask Him to reveal Himself to us, and to lay ourselves open to Him. In this way, like the Fathers, we can come to live the Bible, much as the Bible permeates the words of all our services. The elders among Romanian monks are firm in recommending, to all, the daily reading from the Psalter. They remind us that the devil definitely does not appreciate it, and that this is all the greater reason for us to do it.

Evdokimov adds a warning: that making the Scriptures the object of simple speculative knowledge, simply studying it as mere literature, trying to reduce it only to some sort of science, is to profane the Scriptures, and to profane the Word Himself. That is not to say that there may be no careful analysis of the text. Even the Fathers applied such discernment, and so did they from earliest times. But this process must always be in the context of prayer, of being nourished in the bosom of the Church, in the tradition of the Fathers, in the heritage passed to us from Apostolic times. They and we, says Evdokimov, must see that all of the Scriptures, are "a verbal icon of Christ."

So what about group Bible study?

Well, group study has its own importance, in my opinion, particularly in our unsupportive environment. It certainly has its catechetical application, as I said before, and I have myself seen good effect when participants learn about the links between passages, and between Old and New Testaments. The scriptural texts allow links to patristic comments and even to the Councils, and the whole linkage helps to develop the ecclesial " mind" in a person. This is particularly so, when led by a priest, deacon, or some other person with a theological education.

Sometimes, however, the faithful might gather in groups for studying the scriptures, just for feeding the soul, perhaps even without such leadership. Especially in our environment of personal opinions, variable truths, and so-called individuality, there is great danger in personalising stray ideas. But when a group of faithful gather together, and when all read the complementary literature, and together reflect on the Scriptural passages, the honest mutual reflection on the Bible helps not only to keep any one person from drifting away, but also to nourishes each one with the encouragement of the experience of others. This is particularly so when the passages read lead to talking about how the Lord has blessed each one recently. All of this not only helps one deepen one's understanding of the Bible itself, it helps to keep general consciousness of the presence of the Lord in one's life more active and immediate. The group study supplements the private study, enriches it, deepens it, broadens it. It helps also to check any misinterpretations that tend to insinuate themselves into one's thinking.

I want to repeat a little from Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov,* from the words of the dying Starets Zosima (no doubt based on an Optina father) on the Bible. The Starets has just reflected on his love from childhood for the story of Job, and continues:

> Oh, what a great book it is and how much we learn from it! What a miraculous book is the Holy Bible and what strength it gives to man! It is like a sculpted model of the world, of mankind, and of the characters of men; everything is there and it contains guidance for us for all ages. How many mysteries are solved in it, how many revealed! . . . Every day I bless the rising sun and my heart sings to it as it did before; but now I love the sunset even more, and its long, slanting rays bring back to me quiet, touching, tender memories, dear faces, and images from my long and blessed life. Over everything here hovers the Lord's truth and justice that moves our hearts, reconciles everything, and is all-forgiving!

The elder then exhorts parish priests, no matter how poor, to spend an hour a week reading Bible passages to children and to explain them from the heart. He rightly says, moreover, that when a priest shares from the depths of his heart, with tears even, the stories from the Old and New Testaments, the people, and especially children, will readily understand and receive it all with the same love. What he says is simple and straightforward, and correct. He emphasises the need for this loving sharing of the love of Christ, for, "Only the masses of simple, humble people and their growing spiritual power will be able to convert the atheists, who have been uprooted from our native soil. And what good is the Word of Christ without an example? A nation is lost without the Word of God, for every human soul thirsts for His Word and for the good and the beautiful."

Joining these thoughts with his biblical awareness that God's love permeates all creation, he relates an example he once shared with a youth, similar to those about St Seraphim of Sarov: "'Take, for instance, the fierce, formidable, frightening bear, roaming through the forest . . . .' And I went on to tell him about the bear which once came to the hut of a great saint who was seeking salvation in the forest. The saint, feeling great tenderness for the beast, came out fearlessly, gave it a loaf of bread, and said: 'There, go along now, and may Christ be with you.' And the fierce bear went off obediently and meekly without hurting the saint. The boy was deeply moved by the story, because the beast had not hurt the saint and because Christ was with him, too. ' Ah,' he said, 'how wonderful it is, how everything of God's is good and beautiful!'"

This is what I perceive to be the result of such an immersion in Scripture. Our country, our nations, are lost without it.

Seraphim

Archimandrite Cyril Reposes in Montreal

On 4 December 1998, after a lengthy illness, Archimandrite Cyril (Bulashevich) reposed in the Lord. His funeral was served in Sts Peter and Paul Cathedral, where he had been attached for the last several years and where he was known as a quiet, gentle, self-effacing man, much beloved as a confessor and spiritual guide.

Serving the funeral on December 7 were Bishop SERAPHIM; the rector of the sobor, Archpriest Alexander Janowski; Archpriest John Tkachuk; Priest Nicolai Nicolaev; and Hieromonk Cyrille (Bradette). A large choir, under the direction of Michel Woynowsky-Krieger, sang the service very beautifully and compunctionately. Burial followed the same day in the cemetery in Rawdon QC.

Bishop Seraphim and clergy serving the funeral

Archimandrite Cyril was born on 3 June 1925 in Priepolje, Serbia, the son of Sergei and Milena (Besarevich) Bulashevich, and given the name Konstantin. Shortly thereafter, the family moved to Pozarevac where Konstantin attended the gymnasium. As a result of World War II, he went into a displaced persons' camp near Munich, Germany. In 1951 he was tonsured a monk with the name Cyril, after St Cyril of Alexandria, and ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Archbishop PALADII in Ulm.

Michel Woynowsky-Krieger leading the choir for the funeral Fr Cyril.

In March 1952 Hierodeacon Cyril immigrated to the United States. He entered St Tikhon's Seminary in September of that year and graduated in May 1956. On 3 June 1956 Archbishop DIMITRY ordained him to the Holy Priesthood in Holy Virgin Protection Cathedral in New York City.

After his priestly ordination, Fr Cyril was assigned to St Michael's Cathedral in Sitka, Alaska, under Bishop AMVROSI. Between 1956 and 1976 he served the parishes of St Nicholas in Juneau and Holy Assumption in Kenai, as well as the cathedral in Sitka.

In 1976 Igumen Cyril was called to serve at Holy Resurrection Church, Vancouver BC, under Archbishop SYLVESTER. He also served periodically the small number of parishioners in Victoria.

In 1984, Igumen Cyril was transferred to Montreal and assigned as assistant priest at Sts Peter and Paul Cathedral under Archbishop Sylvester. He served in this capacity until his retirement in January 1995. In 1991 he was elevated to the rank of Archimandrite. In retirement he continued to live in Montreal and to participate regularly, as long as his gradually failing health allowed, in the services of the cathedral.

Memory Eternal!

Fr Hopko to Lead Spring Retreats

OCW Conference :

Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko, Dean of St Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary in New York, will be the featured speaker at two Lenten retreats to be held in the Montreal area this spring.

On Saturday, March 6, Father Tom will be the guest of the Orthodox Christian Women of Montreal annual conference. His topic will be "'. . . as I have loved you': Love according to the Gospel." The morning talk will be on "A Vision of Love," and the afternoon talk on "Love in Practice." Time will also be allotted in the afternoon for open discussion of the retreat theme with Fr Tom.

This day-long conference, which will be held at Montreal's St Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church on Castelnau, begins at 9:30 am with a continental breakfast, includes a lenten luncheon, and ends with Great Vespers at 4:30 pm.

1999 is the eighth year in which Othodox Christian Women of Montreal conference has been held, bringing together women (and some men—all are welcome!) from many Orthodox jurisdictions and from neighbouring provinces and states, to share a day of learning, prayer and fellowship. Cost of the conference is $25. For more information: Tel: 514:481-5093; Fax: 514:481-2256; email: jtkachuk@sprint.ca.

OTI Retreat :

Fr Thomas Hopko will also speak at the 21st annual Lenten retreat of the Orthodox Theological Institute of Montreal. Also sponsored by the Orthodox Clergy Association of Québec, the retreat will be held at Manoir d'Youville in Chateauguay on 1–3 April.

Fr Hopko, an internationally recognized Orthodox theologian and scholar, as well as an exceedingly popular speaker, will give four talks over the three days on the topic of "The Bridegroom Services of Holy Week." He is the author of *All the Fulness of God, The Lenten Spring, The Winter Pascha,* and *The Orthodox Faith: an Elementary Handbook on the Orthodox Church.*

The fee of $100 for the retreat includes room and board. Driving directions will be provided for those who request them. Reservations (with a deductible fee of $20) must be made in advance no later than March 25. For information/reservations, please contact Fr John Tkachuk at Tel: 514-481-5093; Fax: 514-481-2256; or e-mail: jtkachuk@sprint.ca.

2nd Annual St Vladimir's Institute To be Held in Saskatoon

For the second consecutive year, a St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Institute will be held in Saskatoon, offering everyone—priests, parish educators, and all interested laity—a week of education, fellowship, and refreshment. Dates for the sessions are May 24 – 28. Registration must be by May 23 at Holy Resurrection Church, Saskatoon, but Fr Daniel Guenther, who is in charge of organizing the institute from the Canadian end, emphasises that he needs to know as soon as possible how many persons plan to take advantage of this opportunity, so that a lecture hall of suitable size can be booked.

The topic of the institute's sessions is "The Bible, Tradition, and the Articulation of Christian Doctrine." Professors Rev Dr Thomas Hopko and Dr John Behr of St Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary in New York will give the lectures.

Basic tuition cost for the course is Can$295. Credit for it can be arranged from Luther Seminary (University of Saskatchewan) for an additional fee.

For more information, please contact Lorraine Grier at Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church in Saskatoon at (306) 665-3155.

Bishop Seraphim's Visitation Schedule
January — June 1999

17 Jan	Kingston ON: St Gregory of Nyssa
7 Feb	Windsor ON: St John the Divine
8 – 9 Feb	Toronto, CCC
12 Feb	Toronto, Serbian monastery
28 Feb	Montréal, The Sign
9 – 11 Mar	Ligonier PA: SCOBA
12 – 14 Mar	Toronto, Christ the Saviour
15 – 18 Mar	Holy Synod, New York
19 – 21 Mar	St Vladimir's Seminary
25 Mar	Ottawa, Annunciation/St Nicholas
28 Mar	Montréal, Sts Peter and Paul
17 – 25 Apr	Winnipeg and Narol MB
23 – 24 Apr	Archdiocesan Council, Winnipeg
13 – 17 May	Surrey: St Herman's
17 – 31 May	Saskatchewan deanery

Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism: a Look at Differences

Michael Whelton, ***Two Paths: Papal Monarchy – Collegial Tradition.*** Salisbury MA: Regina Orthodox Press, 1998. ISBN 0-9649141-5-8. US$22.95 Available from the publisher (Tel. 978-462-7645).

There are some books that are so timely, so well-written and fill such a niche in the needs of the modern Orthodox apologist that one finishes reading them and exclaims "Why wasn't this book written years ago?" Michael Whelton's *Two Paths* is just such a book.

It is as, as the author says, the fruit of two years of praying, reading and historical research into the areas that divide Roman Caholicism from Orthodoxy. Mr Whelton was a devout Roman Catholic, one who was greatly distressed over the liberalisation of his church in the wake of the Second Vatican Council. This distress was the catalyst for his examining such issues as the Papacy, the Filioque, and the Great Schism of 1054, to see where the truth was to be found. The resultant book was for him "an apologia, a catharsis, a statement that had to be made."

It is also an extremely good read. Mr Whelton has a talent for presenting historical data in a way that makes it engaging and fascinating. This is no dry and dusty tome, but a compelling record of one man's journey of discovery, and a sincere and earnest challenge to his former compatriots in the Roman Church. To any Protestant convert to Orthodoxy like myself, who has ever been asked why he chose Orthodoxy and not Roman Catholicism, this book is an indispensible tool.—*Priest Lawrence Farley, Surrey BC*

A Saint's Life for Children

Stacy Christensen, ***Saint Simeon the Stylite.*** Winnipeg: 2-degrees Studio, 1998. ISBN 0-9683927-0-9. CAN$10.50. Available from the Consistory Bookstore, Winnipeg (1-800-804-6040).

It is not every day that one comes across a saint's life written for children which will actually appeal to children. (Some parents I know read selections from the Mount Athos *Synaxaire* to their children, who find them quite enthralling).

This *Life of Saint Simeon the Stylite,* with clear, simple text and charming, colourful illustrations, is suitable for reading aloud to very little ones, while those up to 8 or older (and their parents!) will enjoy reading it for themselves.

The story explains, in words and pictures, the call to a life of solitude with God; the attraction of the holy person for those in need of healing, comfort, or advice: and the resultant need for escape ("There were so many visitors to see Saint Simeon that he could scarcely finish a prayer"); and the building of the pillar "higher and higher and higher" until "it towered sixty feet above the ground," where the saint spent the rest of his life, served and protected by his disciples. The story ends with the words: "Just as a light shines from a lamp, so Saint Simeon shone the light of God's goodness to places far beyond the pillar."—*Jane Szepesi, Ottawa ON*

Inspiration for Living the Faith

Archimandrite Ioannikios (Kotsonis), ***An Athonite Gerontikon.*** Trans. by Mary Mayson and Sr Theodora (Zion). Kouphalia-Thessaloniki: Holy Monastery of St Gregory Palamas, 1997. CAN$25. Available from Alexander Publishers, Montreal (514-738-4018).

Living in contemporary North America can leave us, as Orthodox Christians, feeling somewhat distanced from the pattern of ascetical life which is normal for us and from our roots in the deserts of Egypt and Palestine. The holy men and women whose lives and words shape and nourish our efforts to live the Gospel seem to be from such a different time and place. Fr Ioannikios Kotsonis' *An Athonite Gerontikon* is, in this light, a joy to encounter.

This collection of sayings of the holy fathers of Mount Athos certainly fulfils the author's own hope that it would be "a connecting link to the chain of our tradition, a tradition which in this world can become a guiding light in the darkness of our times." Certainly, the topics which the 'sayings' deal with are familiar to us (On Simplicity, On the Energies of Divine Grace, On Judging and Criticism, On Humility, to name but a few) but the context is what can be most refreshing ("An elder said: 'Once I was on a bus...'" or "On November 13, 1985..."). The collection does span the thousand-years history of Mount Athos, but somehow it all feels so accessible to those of us living here and now.

The material in this book is, in itself, a treasury of the teaching and experience of our Orthodox Christian Tradition. Its presentation is clear and simple and its arrangement allows us to read by topic, 'graze' from place to place, or read through again and again. It is a collection which is inspiring and instructive, and it reminds us of what our lives are to be grounded in and shaped by as we pursue the Kingdom of God.—*Priest James Griggs, Kingston ON*

Orthodox Supplies

Publishing/Printing: The Wordsmith, Box 424, Westport, ON K0G 1X0; Phone: 613-273-3222.

Electronic Tools for Today's Orthodoxy: Orthodox Information Data Associates, 2 Lakeshore Boulevard, P.O. Box 35, Grand Isle VT 05458-0035; Phone: 802-372-4361; Fax: 802-372-5986.

Books/Icons/Tapes: Father Alexander Schmemann Bookstore, P.O. Box 1390, Place Bonaventure, Montréal QC, H5A 1H3; Phone/Fax: 514-989-8994.

Books/Videos/Icons/Incense: Alexandre-Alexander, 2875 Douglas Ave, Montréal QC H3R 2C7; Phone: 514-738-4018; Fax: 514-738-4718.

Correction

In the last issue of the *Canadian Orthodox Messenger* (Winter/Hiver 1998/99), the headline on p. 11 should have read as follows:

"Pages Orthodoxes La Transfiguration: St-Benoît Parishioners Create Website in French."

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