

St. Michael's Herald

FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN

Welcome back to the new and improved St. Michael Herald. It has been several years since we produced a monthly news letter and I thought this would be a good time to bring it back. My hope is to bring you news from around the Church as well as news from around the Orthodox world.

This month the Eastern Deanery of our Archdiocese will hold the Deanery Assembly at the Holy Trinity Romanian Orthodox Church in Rochester, New York. The Deanery Assembly is a time for Clergy and Lay People from all of the parishes of the Eastern Deanery to gather and hear reports and conduct the business of the Deanery. This year we will have presentations on the theology of Baptism and Marriage. His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel has declared 2011 the year of Baptism and Marriage. New service books are being prepared and will be released soon. Along with these presentations we will hear presentations by the Archbishop and the Dean regarding the life of our Archdiocese as well as plans for the Archdiocese Congress in 2012.

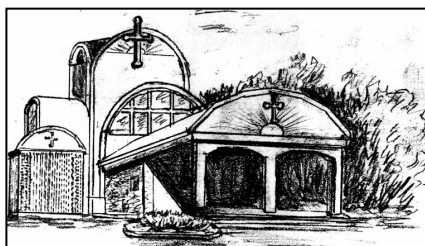
We have been working for the last few months on the replacement of the floor in the Parish Hall. As you know

the floor was damaged by water that entered the hall due to a leak in the roof caused by ice dams this past winter. The roof has been repaired and a new floor will be installed very soon. It will be up to all of us to keep this floor clean so if you notice a spill, please take a moment to clean it up.

For the past two years we have been serving a meal to members of our Community at large. We started with a once a month offering and in January we expanded the meal to twice a month. This was necessary due to the need of the people in the community. The meal is a great outreach of our Parish to those in our community that have found themselves in a difficult situation. If you would like to assist in the meal, please let me know. We serve the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month.

Blessings,

Fr. Peter



ST. MICHAEL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Southbridge, Massachusetts

Volume VII ~ Number 50

October 2011

www.stmichaelorth.org

SAINT OF THE MONTH

ST. INNOCENT OF ALASKA



St. Innocent, né Ivan (John) Evseyevich Popov-Veniaminov, was born on August 26, 1797, into the family of a church server in the village of Anginskoye, Verkholsk District, Irkutsk province, in Russia. His father died when John was six.

In 1807, John entered the Irkutsk Theological Seminary. In 1817 he married, and on May 18, 1817 he was ordained deacon of the Church of the Annunciation in Irkutsk. He completed his studies in 1818. He was appointed a teacher in a parish school, and on May 18, 1821 he was ordained priest to serve in the Church of the Annunciation.

At the beginning of 1823, Bishop Michael of Irkutsk received instructions to send a priest to the island of Unalaska in the Aleutian Islands of Alaska. Father John Veniaminov volunteered to go, and on May 7, 1823, he departed from Irkutsk, accompanied by his aging mother, his wife, his infant son Innocent, and his brother Stefan. After a difficult one-year journey, they arrived at Unalaska on July 29, 1824.

After John and his family built and moved into an earthen hut, he undertook the construction of a church on the island and set about studying the local languages and dialects. He trained some of his parishioners in construction techniques and with them undertook the construction of a church, which was finished the following July.

Father John's parish included the island of Unalaska and the neighboring Fox Islands and Pribilof Islands, whose inhabitants had been converted to Christianity before his arrival, but retained many of their pagan ways and customs. Father John often traveled between the islands in a canoe, battling the stormy Gulf of Alaska.

His travels over the islands greatly enhanced Father John Veniaminov's familiarity with the local dialects. In a short time he mastered six of the dialects. He devised an alphabet of Cyrillic letters for the most widespread dialect, the Unagan dialect of Aleut and, in 1828, translated the Holy Gospel of St. Matthew and other church materials into that dialect, which were eventually published in 1840 with the blessing of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church. In 1829, he journeyed to the Bering Sea coast of the Alaskan mainland and preached to the people there. In 1836, his travels even extended to the south, to the Ross Colony north of San Francisco and to the Spanish missions of northern California. At Ross Colony he conducted services at its small, wooden chapel.

In 1834, Father John was transferred to Sitka Island, to the town of Novoarkhangelsk, later called Sitka. He devoted himself to the Tlingit people and studied their language and customs. His studies there produced the scholarly works *Notes on the Kolushchan and Kodiak Tongues and Other Dialects of the Russo-American Territories*, with a *Russian-Kolushchan Glossary*.

Innokentii (Innocent), Metropolitan of Moscow (1797-1879), called the "Apostle of Alaska" In 1838, Father John journeyed to St. Petersburg and Moscow, Russia, and Kiev, Ukraine, to report on his activities and request an expansion of the Church's activities in Russian America. While he was there, he received notice that his wife had died. He requested permission to return to Sitka. Instead, it was suggested that he take vows as a monk. Father John at first ignored these suggestions, but, on November 29, 1840, made his vows. He chose the name Innocent in honor of Bishop Innocent of Irkutsk.

On December 15, 1840, Archimandrite Innocent Veniaminov was consecrated Bishop of Kamchatka and Kuril Islands in Russia and the Aleutian Islands in Russian America. His see was located in Novoarkhangelsk, which he returned to in September 1841. He spent the next nine years in the administration of his see as well as on several long missionary journeys to its remote areas. books into the Yakut (Sakha) language.

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On April 21, 1850, Bishop Innocent was elevated to Archbishop. In 1852, the Yakut area was admitted to the Kamchatka Diocese, and in September 1853, Archbishop Innocent took up permanent residence in the town of Yakutsk. Innocent took frequent trips throughout his enlarged diocese. He devoted much energy to the translation of the scriptures and service

In April 1865, Archbishop Innocent was appointed a member of the Holy Governing Synod of the Church.

On November 19, 1867, he was appointed the Metropolitan of Moscow, replacing his friend and mentor, Filaret, who had died. While there, he undertook revisions of many Church texts that contained errors, raised funds to improve the living conditions of priests and established a retirement home for priests.

~~Innocent died on March 31, 1879. He was buried on April 5, 1879, at Troitse-Sergiyeva Lavra.~~

SALVATION IS INDEED BY GRACE

Fr. John Breck

At a recent, post-liturgical coffee hour, a catechumen raised a question that has troubled many people who were brought up in a Protestant environment and at some point found themselves drawn to Orthodoxy. "If we are saved by grace, and not by works," he asked, "why does the Orthodox Church put so much stress on ascetic practice? Why should it be necessary, or even useful, to fast as we do, to make countless prostrations during Great Lent, to stand for hours through long services, and even to give so much money to the Church?" (He was preparing to enter a parish in the Southern Diocese, where tithing is usually considered an important part of personal spiritual discipline.) Then he added, "Aren't all these things works? And what happens if I don't do them? Am I cast out of the Kingdom and basically condemned to hell?"

The discussion went on for some time, until the coffee ran out and most people went home. He stayed, though, and continued his questioning with the priest, who later admitted he had the feeling that on some level this catechumen was getting the better of him.

Finally the man pulled out a pocket Bible and opened to Colossians 3. Selecting a few verses to make his point, he read: "Why do you submit to regulations, 'Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch' (referring to things that all perish as they

are used), according to human precepts and doctrines? These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting rigor of devotion and self-abasement and severity to the body, but they are of no value in checking the indulgences of the flesh."

"Why, then," he asked, "do the Orthodox submit to such regulations: 'Do not eat (this or that),' or 'Do this, that, and the other thing,' in order to be a 'good Christian'? Isn't it enough to 'love God and my neighbor as myself'?"

It was a good question. While there's a perfectly reasonable and satisfactory answer to his objection, it seems worthwhile for all of us to think about these things, in an effort to understand just why ascetic practice and spiritual discipline in general are so important in Christian life.

Our rebellion against God and his will touches every aspect of our existence. "Sin" or "sinfulness" is not just an accumulation of specific acts of disobedience or willfulness that in some way violate the commandments. It is more than the sum total of our individual sins. Those sins are symptomatic of something broader and deeper that virtually defines us, that characterizes our every act and attitude. Sin is a state of being that permeates all aspects of our life, conscious and unconscious, physical as well as spiritual. In fact, the distinction we usually make between what is physical and what is spiritual is artificial and misleading. The human person can only be understood holistically. Our bodily gestures affect our psycho-spiritual disposition, just as our spiritual state can affect our body. Nothing attests to this fact more eloquently than the Orthodox service of Holy Unction, with its emphasis on the forgiveness of sins as integral to the quest for healing.

This point brings us back to the question of ascetic discipline and the place of "works" in our salvation. First of all, it is important to recognize that the apostle Paul is speaking to the Colossians about performing religious rituals prescribed either by the Torah, Hebrew law, or by pagan forms of worship. The admonition, "Don't handle, taste or touch," has to do with various religious practices that were considered by many as necessary to enter into the sacred realm of divinity. Repeatedly (especially in his letters to the Romans and Galatians), Paul insists that our salvation is accomplished wholly and uniquely by Christ: by his voluntary death on the Cross, by which he descended into the realm of death (Sheol), in order to defeat the powers of death and corruption. This is a work of pure grace that only God can accomplish. And this is why it is so essential to recognize and accept the fact that Jesus of Nazareth is truly the incarnate, eternal Son of God. Our salvation is made possible precisely by the "work" of the Holy Trinity, a work no created being can accomplish.

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So we, as Orthodox Christians, affirm as clearly and unambiguously as any Lutheran, for example, that “salvation is by grace” and not by our works. Unlike medieval Catholicism, Orthodoxy does not hold that a person can build up a “treasury of merits” that will count in our favor at the Judgment Seat of Christ. What will matter then is our having surrendered our sin to God through confession, and our gestures of love (Mt. 25), together with the unshakable conviction that “Jesus Christ is Lord,” and the unique Way to eternal life.

Orthodoxy does recognize, however, the importance of our “cooperation” with God, what we term “synergy.” “Salvation,” as we usually understand the word, is only the beginning of a pilgrimage that leads us through this life, through our physical death, and into life beyond. Salvation, accomplished by the death and resurrection of Christ, means freedom from the consequences of our sinfulness: separation from the holiness and love of the God who desires only that we be saved and enter into eternal and joyful communion with himself. If we were not continually tempted to fall back into sin, there would be no need for such a “synergy.” Then we could declare, with absolute confidence, “once saved, always saved!” Temptation and spiritual struggle, however, mark every day of our life. And the way we face and, by the grace of God, overcome those forces (demonic powers), is precisely through the “spiritual warfare,” the ascetic struggle that enables us to confront those forces day by day and overcome their destructive influence.

This is why, in the same letter to the Colossians, the apostle can declare: “I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, the Church” (1:24). We may not suffer as Paul did, risking our very life for the gospel, enduring torture, hardship, hunger and rejection by one’s own people. Nevertheless, our small efforts, of fasting, prostrations, intense participation in long liturgical services—like almsgiving and other acts of love offered to those in need—enable us also to share in Christ’s own sufferings, which he will endure in us and for us until he comes again in glory. That participation is essential; yet it is not the means by which we are saved.

The final word, as so often, comes from our Lord himself. Condemning the Pharisees for their hypocritical observance of empty ritual, he accuses them of performing small religious acts while “neglecting the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith.” And he concludes, “These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others” (Mt 23:23). Those “others”

include precisely the sorts of ascetic practices Orthodox tradition calls us and invites us to assume—not to achieve salvation,



but to bring heart, soul, mind and body into harmony with the ineffable gift of salvation that Christ has already offered to us.

Help Orthodox Clergy in the Mission Field by Supporting OCMC's SAMP Program

The light of Orthodoxy shines around the world and is often embodied in priests that minister to diverse cultures in some of the poorest countries. Priests serving in these parts of the world strive to establish vibrant ministries and address the physical and spiritual needs of people who may have never before heard Christ’s life-saving message of hope and salvation. Show your love and support of these dedicated priests by making a gift to the Orthodox Christian Mission Center’s (OCMC) Support a Mission Priest (SAMP) program. Your prayerful contribution will help make their vital work and witness possible. For more information or to become a SAMP supporter visit <http://samp.ocmc.org>

“Acquire a Spirit of Peace and a thousand souls will be converted around you.”

~ St. Seraphim of Sarov

samp.ocmc.org, or contact Michelle DeAngelis by phone at 1-877-463-6784 or by e-mail at samp@ocmc.org.



SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR OCTOBER

October 2nd

19th Sunday after Pentecost
2 Corinthians 11:31-33; 12:1-9
Luke 6:31-36

October 9th

St. Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow
20th Sunday after Pentecost
Galatians 1:11-19
Luke 7:11-16

October 16th

Fathers of the 7th Ecumenical Council
21st Sunday after Pentecost
Galatians 2:16-20
Luke 8:5-15

October 23rd

23rd Sunday after Pentecost
Ephesians 2:4-10
Luke 8:26-39

October 30th

22nd Sunday after Pentecost
Galatians 6:11-18
Luke 16:19-31

DATES TO REMEMBER

OCTOBER

October 1st ~ Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos

October 2nd ~ 19th Sunday after Pentecost

October 6th ~ St. Innocent of Moscow: Great Vespers
Oct 5th 6:00 pm

October 6th ~ Community Meal 4:30 pm

October 9th ~ St. Tikhon of Moscow, 20th Sunday af-
ter Pentecost

October 16th ~ Father of the 7th Ecumenical Council,
21st Sunday after Pentecost

October 18th ~ Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke:
Great Vespers Oct 17th 6:00 pm

October 23rd ~ Holy Apostle James, Brother of Our
Lord, 23rd Sunday after Pentecost

October 26th ~ Great Martyr & Myrrhgusher De-
metrius: Great Vespers Oct 25th 6:00 pm

October 28th ~ Turkey Party 5:00 pm Spaghetti &
Meatball Supper, 7:00 pm Turkey Party

October 29th ~ Consecration of St. Demitri Church,
Bridgeport, CT

October 30th ~ 22nd Sunday after Pentecost

*Other events listed on the calendar page of the
Church website. www.stmichaelorth.org*

Come to Church next Sunday!

We need you!

Christ's Powerful Silence says:

Everyone Counts!

**EXCUSES AGAINST
STEWARDSHIP**

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

My giving is a private matter between God and me, no one else.

In many cultures, a person's checkbook is considered no one else's business. In a similar way, some Christians say that their giving is a private matter, information to which only God is privy. They point to Jesus' admonition in Matthew 6: "When you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing." But Jesus' words have to do with inner motives for giving, not with a privilege of privacy. Give to please God, not man. The Church never tells one how much they must give. Giving and Stewardship is free will offering. At the same time, though, we all should learn and understand what our Lord Jesus and Holy Scriptures teach about giving and generosity of our time, talents, and treasure.

The Bible is about religious and moral issues, and not about money at all, let alone charitable giving.

People sometimes believe that the Bible has only to do with "religious Matters," that is, church attendance, individual conversion, and personal piety, when in fact, the Bible deals with all topics. The Bible covers the waterfront of human life because the Gospel of God's redemption extends across all aspects of human life. The Scriptures say, God reconciles all things to Himself through Christ (Colossians 1:20). "All things" certainly includes money and material possessions so it is no surprise to find that the Bible speaks plainly and frequently about these topics. Christianity does not separate reality into "spiritual" and "material" spheres. IN the Bible, all of life (including the use of money) is spiritual because God is involved in it. The Bible has much to say about giving and on money, and stewardship offer and excellent place to start.

2011 Pledge Total	\$20,554.00
2011 Pledge Received	\$13,396.00
2011 Outstanding Balance	\$7,158.00

Peter Pan at the Hanover Theater

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in Shrewsbury invites you to support their fall fundraiser, a night at the

Hanover Theater

Featuring former Olympic star Kathy Rigby in the magical story,

Peter Pan

Sunday, October 30th

Pre-Show Reception at 5:00 pm and
Performance at 6:30 pm

Tickets are \$95 per person seating is on the main floor.

For more information call St. Nicholas Church at 508-845-0088 or email:
info@stnicholaschurch.org