

BEFORE THY  
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## CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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orthodoxdelmarva.org / frjohn@orthodoxdelmarva.org

### BULLETIN OF MARCH 30, 2008

#### Please Remember in Prayer

Carole Boris, who is in PRMC, and Lambert Weber, who is undergoing treatment. If you have a prayer request, please tell Fr. John.

#### Kielbasa Fundraiser – Sunday, March 30<sup>th</sup>

Those making kielbasa for our fundraiser will be meeting today. If you would like to help work or if you would like to place an order, please see either Kathy Parrish, Bob Dodge, or Diane Evanusa.

#### Orthodox Movie Night – Monday, March 31<sup>st</sup>

This week's movie will be "The Return of the Icon." This film covers the return to Russia of the miraculous Tikhvin Icon.

#### SUNDAY, MARCH 30<sup>TH</sup>

##### 3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT

##### *Veneration of the Holy Cross*

8:40a.m. Hours

9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy  
Coffee Hour

#### MONDAY, MARCH 31<sup>ST</sup>

7:00p.m. Movie: Return of Icon

#### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2<sup>ND</sup>

7:00p.m. Pre-Sanctified Liturgy

#### SATURDAY, APRIL 5<sup>TH</sup>

##### MEMORIAL SATURDAY

9:00a.m. Memorial Service

6:00p.m. Great Vespers

#### SUNDAY, APRIL 6<sup>TH</sup>

##### 4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT

##### *Saint John of the Ladder*

8:40a.m. Hours

9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy  
Coffee Hour

**Note:** If you have any items from the old church at home in storage, please speak with Fr. John.

#### READER SCHEDULE

Sunday, Mar. 30<sup>th</sup>

Jen Alexion

Sunday, Apr. 6<sup>th</sup>

Sandy St. Germain



#### Pre-Sanctified Liturgy – Wednesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>

The Pre-Sanctified Liturgy will be served this Wednesday at 7:00pm. Those wishing to receive Holy Communion should prepare themselves as always by fasting and reading the appointed prayers from the prayer book. If you cannot keep a total fast from midnight the night before and you would still like to receive Holy Communion, you may eat a light lenten meal in the early morning, or by 12 noon at the latest, except if a medical condition necessitates food or water. Should you have any questions about fasting or anything else regarding this special service, please speak with Fr. John. There will be a lenten meal offered after the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy for those who are able to attend.

#### Memorial Service – Time Changed – Saturday, April 5<sup>th</sup>

The Memorial Service this Saturday will be offered at 9:00am in the morning, instead of 5:30pm as posted in the monthly calendar. This is the last scheduled Memorial Service for this Great Lent.

#### The Parish Council Installation – Sunday, April 6<sup>th</sup>

will meet next on Sunday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, following the coffee hour. The new Council for 2008 will be installed with the blessing of His Beatitude Metropolitan Herman at the end of the Divine Liturgy on that day. As part of preparation for service on the Parish Council, all members are reminded to read (or reread) the oath of office in advance, make a confession (if one has not done so recently), and approach this ministry with prayer, asking God's help.



#### Choir Practice – Sunday, April 13<sup>th</sup>

will be held after coffee hour to prepare for Holy Week / Pascha.



#### The Mysteries of Confession and Communion

should be received by all Orthodox Christians on a regular basis and at the very least during the Great Fast and Pascha. If you have not availed yourself of these life-giving sacraments, please be sure to do so. Likewise, frequent communicants should make a confession during this and every lenten period, as well as whenever the conscience is burdened.

## AN EXPLANATION OF THE ORTHODOX THREE-BAR CROSS

By Fr. Theodore Jurewicz

### The Top Bar - The Explanation:

The top bar is the title-board, which Pilate ordered to be hung in mockery over Christ's head on the Cross. On this board was inscribed: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin (abbreviated to the Greek initials 'INBI' or the Latin initials 'INRI' in the Western tradition). This is replaced with the Christian inscription: "King of Glory" – below the knees of the angels. On the title-board is inscribed the initials 'IC XC', being the first and last letters of Christ's name in Greek. In addition, just above Christ's arms we see the inscription: 'NIKA', which in Greek means: "He conquers" or "He is victorious." Frequently, we see these last two inscriptions together: 'IC XC NIKA', meaning: "Jesus Christ is victorious" (over death and sin).



### The Middle Bar - The Explanation:

The middle bar is that on which the Lord's hands were nailed. On either top corner we see the depiction of the sun (left) and the moon (right), for "The sun hid its light, and the moon turned to blood." (Joel 2:31) The inscription: "Son of God" is placed on both sides of Christ's head, and below His arms we read the inscription: "Before Thy Cross we bow down, O Master, and Thy holy Resurrection, we glorify". The halo of Christ is inscribed with three Greek letters meaning "The Being" or "He Who Is", to remind us that Christ is the same God Who identified Himself with those words to Moses in the Old Law.



### The Bottom Bar - The Explanation:

The slanted bottom bar is the footrest. There is some question of whether it was actually on the Cross of Christ, but it is acknowledged to be a necessary attribute of the Cross, worthy of veneration and prophetically alluded to in the words [Let us] worship the footstool of His feet... (Ps. 98:5). In prayers for the Ninth Hour, the Church likens the Cross to a type of balance of righteousness: "Between two thieves Thy Cross did prove to be a balance of righteousness: wherefore one of them was dragged down to Hades by the weight of his blasphemy whereas the other was lightened of his transgressions unto the comprehension of theology. O Christ God, glory to Thee." The meaning of this prayer is as follows: the Cross of Christ stood for a scale of justice between the two thieves: for one of them sank in to hell, dragged down by his blasphemous words; and the other, the wise thief, ascended into heaven, because of his repentance. The church fathers attempted to render tangible the thought of the unfaithful thief going to hell for his blasphemy through the just judgment of God (the lower end of the bar), and of the wise thief going to heaven for his repentance and his praise of God (the upper end).



### The Images - The Explanation:

On the Cross is our Savior, Jesus Christ. Note that He does not wear a crown of thorns, and that His feet are nailed with two nails. Behind the body of Christ, on either side, are a lance (which pierced Him) and a sponge (which was soaked with gall and offered to Christ to drink) on a pole made of reed or cane. On the body of Christ is depicted blood and water flowing forth from His side. Below the feet of Christ is four Slavonic letters meaning: "The place of the skull became Paradise". Hidden in a cave under the earth is 'the skull of Adam'. We are thus reminded that Adam our forefather lost Paradise through the tree from which he wrongly partook; Christ is the new Adam, bringing us Salvation and Paradise through the tree of the Cross. The city of Jerusalem is depicted in the background, for He was crucified outside the city walls.

## WHY NOT A UNITED AMERICAN ORTHODOX CHURCH?

George Patsourakos

Can you picture America being comprised of 50 states with no federal government and no president? This is a frightening thought, isn't it?

Nonetheless, a similar situation exists in which nine Eastern Orthodox ethnic jurisdictions have been functioning independently in America for several decades with no American administrative leader.

Eight of these jurisdictions are of the following ethnicities: Albanian, Antiochian, Bulgarian, Carpatho-Russian, Greek, Romanian, Serbian, and Ukrainian. The ninth one is the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) which is "autocephalous" or self-headed.

The OCA began in 1970 as an offshoot of the Russian Orthodox jurisdiction in America and has remained independent from the Patriarch of Moscow. The OCA, which conducts all of its church services in English, now includes the Albanian, the Bulgarian, and the Romanian Orthodox jurisdictions besides its original Russian.

The Antiochian Archdiocese in America was granted autonomy in 2003 by the Holy Synod of Antioch. It is self-governed; it is authorized to nominate, elect, and consecrate its bishops; and it can nominate three candidates for primate and request the mother church to elect one of the three. Like the OCA, church services are in English in American Antiochian Churches.

In an effort to bring some unity to these multiple Orthodox jurisdictions, the late Archbishop Iakovos established SCOBA (the Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops in America) in 1960. The canonical hierarchs of all the Orthodox jurisdictions in America conduct a SCOBA meeting every six months. The hierarchs usually discuss inter-Orthodox and ecumenical concerns at their semi-annual meetings.

Although SCOBA could vote to unite all nine Orthodox jurisdictions and establish a united American Orthodox Church, it has not done so. I believe there are two major reasons for SCOBA's inaction.

First, the hierarchs of SCOBA have a deep sense of ethnic pride. Most feel that "Americanizing" the

Orthodox jurisdictions may have a negative effect in maintaining traditions from the homeland.

Second, SCOBA hierarchs have a loyalty for the patriarchs of their motherland and especially the Patriarch of Constantinople, who has the status of "first among equals" in relation to the world's Orthodox bishops. In fact, some SCOBA bishops believe that authorizing Orthodox unity in America comes under the purview of the motherland patriarchs.

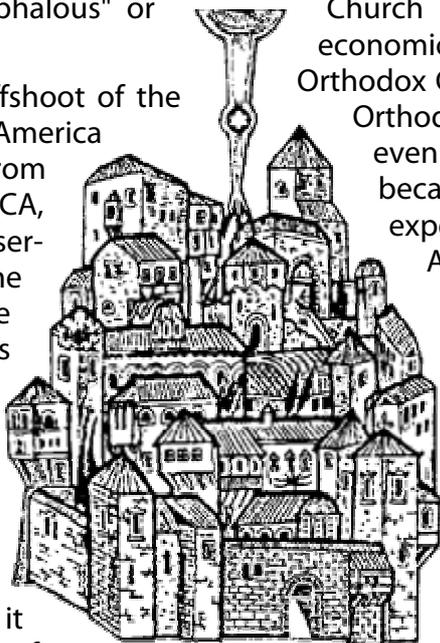
Although it might diminish the identity of some ethnic groups, a united American Orthodox Church would have many advantages -- economic, political, social, etc.-- for all Orthodox Christians. At the same time, a united Orthodox Church could be advantageous even from a cultural perspective. I say this because I gained a positive multicultural experience by attending St. Michael the Archangel Antiochian Orthodox Church in Cotuit, Massachusetts on Cape Cod almost every Sunday last summer.

At this Pan-Orthodox Christian Church, a multitude of ethnic features are gracefully integrated into a divine synergy: The jurisdiction is Antiochian; the pastor is Greek; the service is in English; the predominant membership is Russian; and there are a half-dozen other Orthodox ethnic groups worshiping, in addition to several Catholic and Protestant converts.

After the service, I found the parishioners to be friendly during coffee fellowship, as a multicultural atmosphere of genuine love and brotherhood pervaded the gathering. In short, there was a cosmopolitan euphoria among the churchgoers which just cannot occur in a single-ethnic assembly.

I look forward to the united American Orthodox Church blossoming to fruition in the near future. I have come to this optimistic -- but also realistic-- conclusion because the groundwork for such a Church is already in order and is about to expand. All things considered, the autocephalous Orthodox Church in America will most likely serve as the foundation for a united Orthodox Church.

*Continued on page 4...*



## Why Not a United American Orthodox Church? *continued from page 3...*

Moreover, recent ecclesiastical events indicate that the autonomous American Antiochian jurisdiction, as well as the OCA-affiliated Albanian, Bulgarian, and Romanian jurisdictions, may soon qazzqazz merge with the OCA. This being the case, the OCA will be comprised of a majority of five American Orthodox jurisdictions, which will lead to its establishment of a united American Orthodox Church.

The four remaining Orthodox jurisdictions in America would be able to join this united Church when or if they felt it was time to do so. Needless to say, spiritual love and cooperation with the motherland patriarchs would continue to prevail.

As a closing thought, I would like to make an analogy between human development and church development. A mother must end her adult child's dependence upon her, so her child can grow intellectually and spiritually to meet the challenges in today's world; the motherland patriarchs need to grant autonomy to their well-established American Orthodox jurisdictions, so they can flourish to their full potential, as they build up the Body of Christ.

*George Patsourakos of Billerica, MA retired as an education specialist for the federal government. He received a BA in political science and a MA in education, both from Northeastern University.*



### ON CONFESSION – “DO NOT LOOK BACK”

Through the forgiveness of sins in confession, the past is no longer an intolerable burden but rather an encouragement for what lies ahead. Life acquires an attitude of expectation, not of despondency; and confession becomes the way out of the impasse caused by sin. In this respect, repentance is also an eschatological act, realizing in our very midst, here and now, the promises of the age to come.

Looking backwards would seem to imply the fate of Lot's wife (Genesis 19:26); “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62). God Himself is revealed *before* us and walks *in front* of us. “One thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead” (Phil. 3:13).

### EVERYTHING, BUT THE ANGEL

*Adapted from Parish Publishing*

It is said that long ago a great sculptor unveiled his latest work to a large crowd. With a flourish he swept off the cover, revealing an angel, which would be one of many in the church where it was to be placed. But what an angel! There was no wind in the sculptor's shop, yet this angel's wings seemed to be spreading to take flight. Marble can neither speak nor move, yet this angel's mouth appeared to bless, its hands to fold in prayer.



The audience burst into applause. One person dared to ask, “How did you do it?” The sculptor said, “I simply carved away everything except the angel.”

“Everything except the angel” ... it seems like a joke, but it's not. Great sculptors have this gift, to see the figure that already exists within the material, and then use tools to remove what is extra, freeing the masterpiece.

As the Creator, God is the great Artist. Also, God sees all the art that has ever been, and ever will be. By commanding us to be stewards, God tells us to become artists too, of our own souls.

Instead of a hammer and chisel, our tool is giving. Every time we strive to practice God's commandments, it's like carving away a bit of “marble” to reveal Christ within us. Every hour helping in a food pantry, singing in a choir, studying the Scriptures, attending services at church, praying at home, visiting the sick, and so on, does the same.

Our hands may lack the sculptor's skill, but through Christian living, we can become more beautiful than any statue.