



✝ THE SPIRITUAL WATCH

"Stand fast on spiritual watch..."
-St. John Maximovitch

Dormition of the Theotokos

By our Father among the Saints, St. John Maximovitch

Official publication of the
Genuine Orthodox Church
of America

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About *The Spiritual Watch*

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The Spiritual Watch is mailed to the homes of faithful *by request only*. Please see request information on p. 5.



The end of the earthly life of the Most Holy Mother of God was the beginning of Her greatness. "Being adorned with Divine glory" (*Irmos of the Canon of the Dormition*), She stands and will stand, both in the day of the Last Judgment and in the future age, at the right hand of the throne of Her Son. She reigns with Him and has boldness towards Him as His Mother according to the flesh and as one in spirit with Him, as one who performed the will of God and instructed others (*Matt. 5:19*). Merciful and full of love, She manifests Her love towards Her Son and God in love for the human race. She intercedes for it before the Merciful One, and going about the earth, She helps men.

Having experienced all the difficulties of earthly life, the Intercessor of the Christian race sees every tear, hears every groan and entreaty directed to Her. Especially near to Her are those who labor in the battle with the passions and are zealous for a God-pleasing life. But even in worldly cares She is an irreplaceable helper. "Joy

Cont'd on p. 2

Acquisition of Metropolis Center

One of the most exciting recent events that took place in the life of the Metropolis was the acquisition of a Metropolis Center! Glory be to God, Who, through the prayers and support of the faithful, has provided for the needs of the Church. The Metropolis purchased a facility in the town of Cobleskill, just 2 miles from the Monastery of St. John Maximovitch.

Like many new parishes and institutions of the Church, it was decided to chose the dedication of the Metropolis Center to a Saint by means of lots. Many Saints' names were put into the lots on the Holy Altar, however, the name selected through God's providence was the New Confessor of Orthodoxy, St. Chrysostomos, formerly of Florina. This was a very meaningful choice because St. Chrysostomos struggled in recent times (1870-1955), and he faced many of the challenges and persecutions that True Orthodox Christians continue to face today. May we continue to have his blessing and protection!

His Eminence, Metropolitan Demetrius of America, pointed out an interesting occurrence concerning the choosing of lots: although many Saints from varying ages within Church history were put into the choice pool, all lots picked were new Saints! For example, St. John Maximovitch was picked for the Monastery, the lots of Sts. Glykery and Philaret were picked for the side chapels, and now St. Chrysostomos was picked as Patron of the Metropo-



Standing at the main entrance of the St. Chrysostomos Metropolis Center (Left to Right): Their Eminences, Metropolitan Auxentios, Metropolitan Photios, Metropolitan Demetrius, His Grace, Bishop Chistodoulos, His Eminence Metropolitan Moses, and Fr. George Kamberidis

Cont'd on p.2

NOTE ABOUT THIS ISSUE: The July-August issue of *The Spiritual Watch*, Issue 4, has suffered a very late publication date, due to multiple unexpected challenges. We apologize for this delay and ask for prayers as we proceed with this effort. *The SW* is a 100% volunteer effort, but continues to face financial constraints primarily regarding printing costs, mailing supplies, and postage expenses. For ways you can help, please see the back cover.

Dormition of the Theotokos

Cont'd from cover



of all who sorrow, and intercessor for the offended, and feeder of the hungry, consolation of travelers, harbor of the storm-tossed, visitation of the sick, protection and intercessor for the infirm, staff of old age, Thou are the Mother of God on high, O Most Pure One" (*Sticheron of the Service to the Odigitria*). "The hope and intercession and refuge of Christians," "The Mother of God unceasing in prayers" (*Theotokion of the Third Tone*). "She day and night doth pray for us and the scepters of kingdoms are con-

firmed by Her prayers" (*Daily Nocturne*).

There is no intellect or words to express the greatness of Her Who was born in the sinful human race but became "more honorable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim." "Seeing the grace of the secret mysteries of God made manifest and clearly fulfilled in the Virgin, I rejoice; and I know not how to understand the strange and secret manner whereby the Undeified has been revealed as alone chosen above all creation, visible and spiritual. Therefore, wishing to praise Her, I am struck dumb with amazement in both mind and speech. Yet still I dare to proclaim and magnify Her: She is indeed the heavenly Tabernacle" (*Ikos of the Entry into the Temple*). "

Every tongue is at a loss to praise Thee as is due; even a spirit from the world above is filled with dizziness, when it seeks to sing Thy praises, O Theotokos. But since Thou art good, accept our faith. Thou knowest well our love inspired by God, for Thou art the Protector of Christians and we magnify Thee" (*Irmos of the 9th Canticle, Service of the Theophany*).



The Tomb of the Mother of God: Located at the bottom of the Mount of Olives is one of the most precious sites in the Holy Land—the Tomb of the Theotokos, where she was reverently laid to rest by the Holy Apostles, when she departed this life and gave up her soul into the Hands of her Son and God. Pilgrims from all over the world come to visit the underground Church of the Assumption, one of the oldest surviving churches in Jerusalem, wherein is also placed the tombs of Her holy parents, Sts. Joachim and Anna, as well as the tomb of St. Joseph. Pilgrims enter the Cave and travel 47 steps down to where the Tomb is located. While the other Apostles, who were preaching throughout the world, were brought mystically by clouds to attend the Dormition and burial of their beloved Mother, the Queen of Heaven, St. Thomas was providentially left out. Therefore, when St. Thomas arrived in Gethsemane three days later, he was grieved and asked to pay his respects to the Holy Virgin. When Her tomb was opened, it was revealed that Her body was no longer there, confirming Her bodily ascent into Heaven. Only Her sash was left, as a consolation and blessing, which has worked miracles throughout the world.



Acquisition of Metropolis Center

Cont'd from cover

lis Center—all Saints from our times. St. Chrysostomos suffered attacks, arrests, exiles, and many afflictions for the sake of his fervent defense of the Holy Church against the innovations of the New Calendarists in Greece.

As His Eminence explained in past issues of *The Spiritual Watch*, a Metropolis Center is crucial for many of the Church's functions, including storing and maintaining extensive files such as Certificates of Baptism, Marriage and Ordination, as well as other Metropolis documents, both historical and contemporary. God willing, at St. Chrysostomos Metropolis Center, the Church will publish periodicals and literature, initiate departments and funds to aid, manage, and organize Metropolis projects in many aspects of Church life, and establish a center of communication to unify and support the Church's scattered communities. With God's help, the Metropolis Center will be a hub for the accomplishment of many blessed objectives, which include cultivating Metropolis-wide, English, Greek, Russian, and Spanish preaching ministries to support missionary work, to expand our prison ministry in order to serve the spiritual needs of souls imprisoned throughout America, and to establish an office of catechism to support current and potential catechumens who seek to be united to the Body of Christ. The continued prayers and support of all of the faithful is needed as the Metropolis proceeds with these and other God-pleasing endeavors in His Name.

The facility was acquired in time to hold the 2017 Clergy Synaxis in July (see p.9). The building has over 9,000 square feet of space, and includes multiple rooms that can house the above initiatives, through the prayers of St. Chrysostomos.

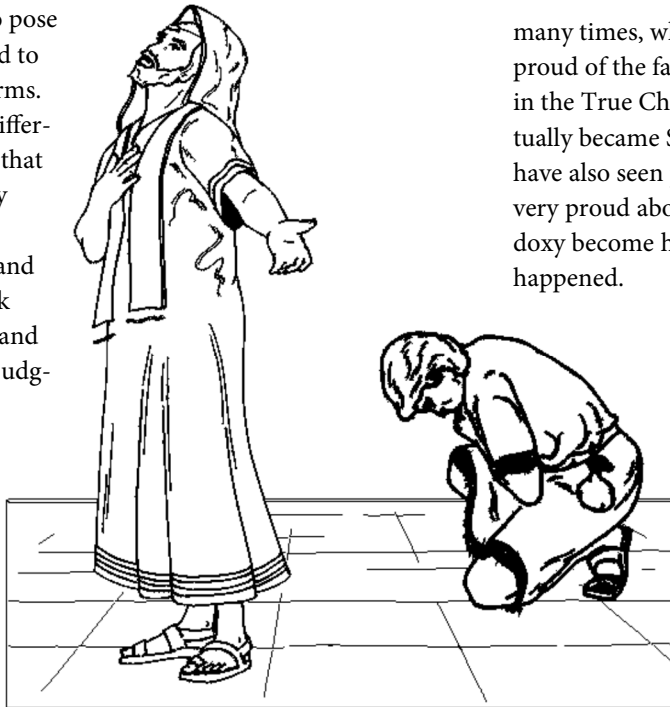
Ask His Eminence

Q: Are we better than everyone else because we are true Orthodox Christians?

-Orthodox Youth

A: That's not really the right way to pose the question. We are never supposed to think of ourselves in competitive terms. This is not a competition between different people. The Holy Fathers tell us that we should not judge. If there are any comparisons to be made, we should make them with the Saints of God, and with our Lord. The Holy Fathers talk about "temptations from the right" and "temptations from the left." Pride, judging, and the passions of the soul are classified as temptations from the right. Whereas, temptations from the left are the passions of the body.

Temptations from the right can be very problematic. The Holy Fathers tell us that these are worse than the temptations from the left, because temptations from the right



many times, who were very proud of the fact that they were in the True Church, who eventually became Schismatics. I have also seen people who were very proud about their Orthodoxy become heretics. It has happened.



In all things, we must have a balance; we must be clear and careful in our thoughts and words. We should not be continuously focused on our enemies or on the spiritual needs of others. We must deal with ourselves, and deal with the pertinent issues of our own salvation. We must understand how, in order for us to achieve our salvation, we must have "Orthodoxia" and "Orthopraxia"—that is, be correct not only in our worship, but in our actions, as well. Certainly, we will fall short, and so God gives us the saving remedies of repentance and confession when we are dealing with the temptations.

However, if we fall into delusion through the temptations from the right, then this is very serious. Therefore, each one of us should ask ourselves if we have fallen into delusion and if we have zeal *not* according to knowledge. And we should be very careful. The temptations from the right can be defeated through humility, confession, acknowledging ourselves as sinners, and seeing God's Hand in things. We must avoid being strong-willed and instead try to submit everything to the Will of God, always humbling ourselves when we have to deal with difficult circumstances. In fact, we must always find occasions to condemn ourselves, but in a healthy way—not in a sick way—not unto despair but unto soul-saving humility. And we must always have a guide—a spiritual father to lead us. If you are left without a guide, and do not go to confession, you are going to fall into delusion; there is no question about it. These are all means by which we can be protected from falling into the temptations from the right.

"Zeal can have hidden pride in it..."

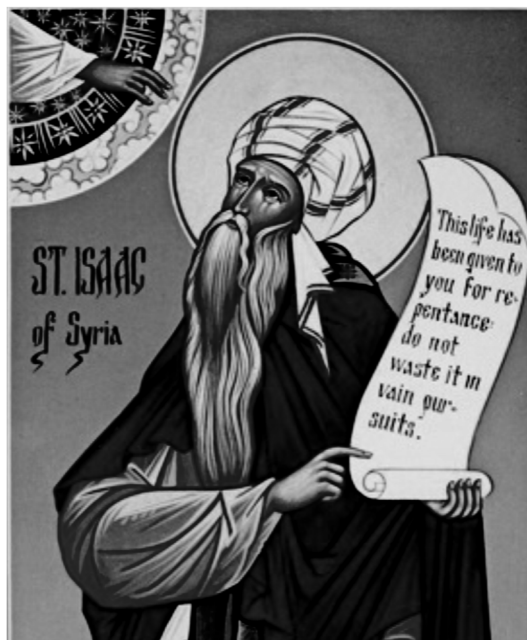
- St. Isaac the Syrian

delude a person. One who falls into temptations from the right begins to think that he is better than everyone else. It is very difficult for the person to detect this condition, because it is deeply entrenched in him. Over time, the person's mind has become darkened and he has been tricked into believing that he is something that he is not. He has become deceived; he has become deluded.

St. Isaac the Syrian says that zeal can have a hidden pride in it. This is why St. Paul tells us that we must have "zeal according to knowledge." The Saint talks about the letter of the law and the spirit of the law. Usually, those who are zealous *not* according to knowledge look toward the letter of the law as opposed to the spirit of the law, because they have not been enlightened.

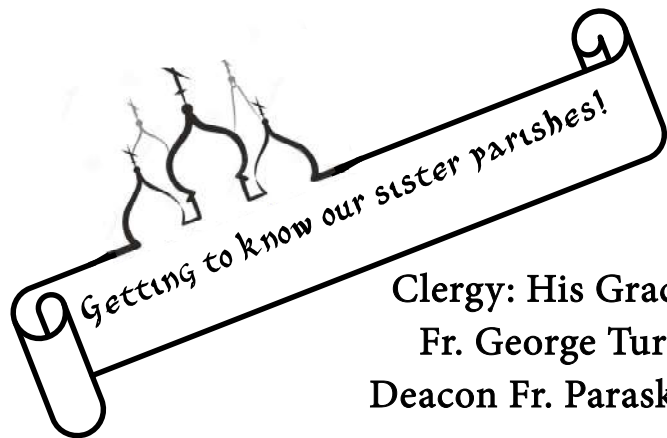
Just because we are true Orthodox Christians does not mean that our struggle stops there, or that we have victory in our contest. In fact, it is very easy for us to fall into the temptations

from the right because we might have certain feelings of us being superior to others. But we are not supposed to think in those terms. We are supposed to thank God that He has deemed us worthy, unworthy as we are, to be members of His Holy Church and we are supposed to deal with those who are outside the Church in a loving manner. And in a cautious manner, "... looking to thyself lest thou also be tempted" as it says in the Epistles of St. Paul. I have seen people,



Do you have a question for His Eminence, Metropolitan Demetrius of America, that you would like to ask through this column? Questions may be sent to *The Spiritual Watch*, c/o St. John's Monastery, 151 Heron Road, Cobleskill, NY 12043, or email it to: KeepSpiritualWatch@gmail.com





PARISH OF THE MONTH

Featured in this issue:

St. Nektarios of Aegina

Greek Orthodox Cathedral, Toronto, Canada

Clergy: His Grace Metropolitan Moses, Fr. Panagiotes Carras, Fr. George Turpa, Fr. Savvas Anastasiou, Fr. David Belden, Deacon Fr. Paraskevas Proskos, Hierodeacon Fr. Luke Klissouris

The Spiritual Watch thanks His Eminence, Metropolitan Moses for his blessing, Fr Panagiotes for his help, and Helen Kazis for providing this article!



St. Nektarios Greek Orthodox Church is located in northwest Toronto in a quiet residential neighbourhood close to the city's downtown core. As the largest parish under the GOC in North America, it is hard to believe that St. Nektarios was found-

ed in 1969 by a handful of young Greek immigrants, who had newly arrived in Canada. Together with their priest, Fr. Panagiotes Carras, they left the Greek Archdiocese in response to the heresy of "Ecumenism" that was being taught and practiced. Their humble and challenging journey has since been blessed with a steadily expanding flock from which five additional churches have sprung, and collectively serve over 730 families.

In 1969, Father Panagiotes and this small group set out to find a place where they could preserve and honour the traditions of the Church. They were accepted by St. Philaret of ROCOR and placed under the omophorion of Archbishop Vitaly of Canada. They were also provided with the use of the Russian's quaint, small, former church called Holy Trinity on Richmond St. East in downtown Toronto. The new parish renamed the church in honor of St. Nektarios and ultimately purchased it. The first liturgy took place on Saturday, November 22,

1969, with approximately 100 people in attendance.

As church attendees grew, Fr. Alexander Dizes joined the parish in 1971, as did Fr. George Turpa in 1976. Soon the small church could no longer accommodate the growing congregation, and the search began for a second church building. In 1976, the parish purchased a much larger church at the corner of Dovercourt Road and Davenport Ave., northwest of the city. The original church was then renamed *Mother of God of Proussa* and the new church took on the



From left to right: Fr. Hierodeacon Luke Klissouris, Fr. Sophrony of St. Michael's Serbian Orthodox Parish, Father Panagiotes Carras, His Eminence, Metropolitan Moses of Toronto, Fr. George Turpa, Fr. David Belden, Fr. Deacon Jeremy Burrows.

church on the property, and it was named *Prophet Elias*. The property hosted summer camping programs for the church's youth over many years, and continues to be a spiritual retreat for its clergy and parishioners. Services at *Prophet Elias* are held about three times a year.

As the parish continued to grow through the 1980s, the need arose for an English-language church to serve a flourishing new group of young and newly converted parishioners. In 1986, Fr. David Belden and a small group of parishioners, converted a room in the basement of St. Nektarios into a chapel, naming it St. Joseph of Arimathea. The small chapel functioned in this small space until they too could no longer accommodate their numbers, and in 1995 they purchased a house in North York, a suburb of Toronto. With the labour and donations of its parishioners, they converted the one and a half-storey house into a church.

Fr. Sergius later took over the expanding flock of St. Joseph's, and, in 2011, they moved to an even bigger church building in Whitevale, Ontario. Fr. David retired



name of St. Nektarios Greek Orthodox Church. That same year, the parish would also purchase a 200 acre property of rolling hills, small lakes and pastures in a rural community near Peterborough, Ontario. In 1995, the parishioners built a small



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St. Nektarios of Aegina Greek Orthodox Cathedral, Toronto

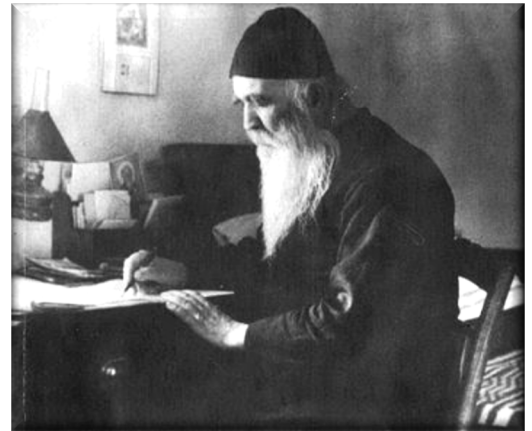
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as the parish priest, and has since returned where *St. Joseph's* began, to the humble room in the basement of *St. Nektarios Church*, to open its daughter parish, *St. Theodore's Mission*.

It is in this same year, the parishes of Toronto joined the Synod of the GOC of Greece. In 2012, His Eminence, Metropolitan Moses was appointed Metropolitan of Toronto, and, in 2014, Metropolitan Demetrius, who was born in Toronto and grew up in *St. Nektarios*, was enthroned as Metropolitan of America. Over the years since its opening, *St. Nektarios* has hosted a number of important community and ecclesiastical events, including Greek language and Sunday School classes, bible study groups and lectures, annual picnics, eight pilgrimages to the Holy Land and Greece, a number of North

American youth conferences, and most recently, in 2011, a conference led by His Eminence, Archbishop Kallinikos. *St. Joseph of Arimathea* also hosts a number of annual events, including *Sts. Peter and Paul Youth Day Camp*. This past June, the camp hosted over 80 children.

It has been almost 50 years since those handful of Orthodox Christians began their quest alongside Fr. Panagiotis. Since its founding in 1969, the parish has witnessed many miracles. But as with any 50-year journey, the road has not always been easy, or without its share of challenges. But the journey has been and continues to be a labour of love and faith, and a commitment to preserve and honour a sacred and blessed inheritance. Glory to God for all things.



"For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe." (1 Timothy 4:10)

Please share your parish's story for this column. You can include parish news, interesting facts, etc. Please send your article, including parish clergy name(s), website, and photos to : KeepSpiritualWatch@gmail.com

✠ Eternal Memory ✠

The Holy Metropolis lost a dedicated and pious member of her parish clergy on Monday, 22 August/4 September, the feast of Panagia Prousiotissa and the Holy Martyr Agathonikos, when the Reverend Presbyter Mark Gilstrap, who had served faithfully as a clergyman in major orders for over 25 years in the Russian Church Abroad and the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians, reposed suddenly and quietly in his home in Owasso, Oklahoma. He was sixty five years of age.

Fr. Mark's survivors include Matushka Tatiana and their children and grandchildren.

His Eminence, Metropolitan Demetrius, requests that the pleroma of our Holy Church continue their divine services, prayers, and sacrifices for the repose of God's servant, the Presbyter Mark, which they commenced upon His Eminence's instruction at the time of Fr. Mark's repose. Orthodox Christians and all those who piously desire to help the Gilstrap family with the unexpected financial burden of Father Mark's burial may send their alms to: *Father Mark Gilstrap Memorial, c/o RCB Bank, 12200 E. 96th St. N., Owasso, Oklahoma 74055*

On behalf of the entirety of our Holy Metropolis, His Eminence Metropolitan Demetrius extends his apostolic blessing and heartfelt gratitude to Subdeacon Peter, Matushka Tatiana, and the entire Gilstrap family, for their longtime sacrificial service to Holy Orthodoxy, with fervent prayer for the continuation of Fr. Mark's God-pleasing labors to proclaim the True Faith in the heart of Protestant America.

May his memory be eternal!

(Please visit HOTCA.org to read Fr. Mark's complete obituary)

HOW TO REQUEST *THE SPIRITUAL WATCH*

Each issue of The Spiritual Watch is mailed to the homes of the faithful by request ONLY. Suggested annual donation: \$100

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***The Spiritual Watch*, c/o St. John's Monastery, 151 Heron Road Cobleskill, NY 12043**

Donations offered from **within the U.S.**, please make checks payable to:
"Metropolis of America" with "*The SW*" on the memo line

Donations offered from **outside the U.S.**, please make checks payable to:
"St. John of San Francisco Orthodox Monastery" with "*The SW*" in the memo



If you would like to receive *The Spiritual Watch*, but are unable to make a donation at this time, please indicate this, and we will mail it to you.

Note: *The SW* is a 100% volunteer effort. The periodical incurs significant expenses primarily with the printing, mailing supplies, and postage for each issue.

Questions? KeepSpiritualWatch@gmail.com

Kid Corner

Spiritual Word Watcher

A G P F F F L K V Z H T A Y M
I B I G W M E M T E A X W O Y
X S T Y T S J C P A T M K L N
A O T J S E T P V L R K D E R
R A I N B W J N W V U I I Q E
P I G G E K I O A M E A O V E
O X T M Z K M J D V F P O Y C
H O A L Z D T G Z B R L N T N
T D M H C V Q A L J E E Z D E
R O J C C R B S R O E A S T I
O H C Q A Q Q L Z I D Z B R D
S T C H R Y S O S T O M O S E
T R U C Y L I M A F M S M E B
N O I T I M R O D O O B H R O
Y C E O Z J H A P P I N E S S

LOVE
ZEAL
ORTHOPRAXIA
ORTHODOXIA
STNEKTARIOS
SERVANTS
DORMITION
OBEDIENCE
TRUEFREEDOM
HAPPINESS
FAMILY
STCHRYSTOMOS

Humble Head-Scratchers & Pious P-U-N-S...

- ✂ God gives and forgives... We get and forget...
- ✂ Life has *many* choices. Choose wisely...
Because eternity has only *two*...
- ✂ *Genuine Orthodox Church: The people don't change the Faith; the Faith changes the people.*

How much does God love us?

God loves us more than a father, mother, friend, or anyone else could love, and even more than we are able to love ourselves.

-St. John Chrysostom



Think about your Faith

Answer one or more of the questions and, with your parent's permission, send your responses, along with your name and age to: The Spiritual Watch, c/o St. John's Monastery, 151 Heron Road Cobleskill, NY 12043 or email them to KeepSpiritualWatch@gmail.com Part or all of the responses may be published in the next issue.

Path to Love: the 6-step program...

- #1- FAITH in God leads to FEAR of God
- #2- FEAR of God leads to SELF-CONTROL
- #3- SELF-CONTROL leads to PATIENCE and LONG-SUFFERING
- #4- PATIENCE and LONG-SUFFERING lead to HOPE in God
- #5- HOPE leads to DISPASSION—not being attached to anything earthly
- #6- DISPASSION leads to LOVE

"LOVE is a holy state of the soul, disposing it to value knowledge of God above all created things."

"If you have faith in the Lord you will fear punishment, and this fear will lead you to control the passions. Once you control the passions you will accept affliction patiently, and through such acceptance you will acquire hope in God. Hope in God separates the intellect from every worldly attachment, and when the intellect is detached in this way it will acquire love for God."

-St. Maximos the Confessor (Philokalia)



The Mother of all Christians with Her own mother: St. Anna with baby Mariam full of grace

QUESTIONS

1. St. John Maximovitch tells us that the Theotokos is given many special names(pp.1-2). What are some of these? Discuss three reasons why she is considered the Mother of all Christians?
2. What is the difference between temptations "from the right" and "from the left?" (p.3) Can you give an example of each?
3. Where is real happiness found, and why is it found there? (p.8)
4. What is true freedom, and *why*? (p.8)



The Orthodox Home: *Who is in charge?*

Any entity or group will have some type of organizational structure which shapes its purpose and its manner of making decisions. Governments, businesses, universities, civic organizations and clubs all have an identity and formula for structuring and managing its affairs. On this issue, the Church is not too different. The Church has a very clear hierarchal structure with canons (guidelines) which spell out how it is organized and how it makes its decisions. Monasteries and convents also have structure and traditions of governing. In general, people who seek or pursue any kind of purpose or goal are more effective when they structure their lives in an atmosphere that is organized and directed around its realization, with clarity, minimizing wasted effort.

ior, exercise their authority knowing that they are accountable before our Lord. Those who serve will endeavor to do so with prayer and with a degree of fear.

Within a family, fathers and mothers must exercise their leadership in the home in a

charge. This is critical: There should be no confusion about who is in charge.

Children who grow up knowing that their parents are solidly in charge are happier and more secure. And, interestingly enough, children who grow up in homes where the parents have not taken charge, will often act out; the behavior problems that frequently arise in such cases stem from these children hoping, deep inside themselves, that their parents would finally step up and take charge. St. John Chrysostom refers to this pattern when he says, "How many parents there are who do not want to take upon themselves this labor of correcting their unsubmitive and unruly children! They are as if afraid to upset their children by reigning in with stern words the vicious tendencies to which they have submitted themselves. What is the outcome? Their disorder increases..." (*The Path to Salvation*, by St. Theophan the Recluse)

Having children is a matter of nature; but raising them and educating them in the virtues is a matter of mind and will.

-St. John Chrysostom

The homes in which we live are no different. In earlier articles, the topics of purpose (*beginning with the end in mind* – the salvation of souls) and atmosphere (prayerful and thoughtful, with minimum chaos) were discussed, in regard to family life. Now we must turn our attention toward the organization of the home, and the very important question of "Who is in charge?" This is no small issue, and needs to be discussed in our times perhaps more than ever before.

We often make the mistake of thinking that the person/persons in charge are the "bigshots" who have all of the privileges... Or that they get more while everyone else is getting less. In the context of the Church and the Christian home, nothing could be further from the truth. In our Orthodox manner of thinking, those in charge are *servants*. "But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever would be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you, let him be your servant..." (Matthew 20: 26-27) In Christianity, those who serve do have authority, but they also are servants who have great responsibility before God. Bishops, priests, abbots, abbesses, fathers and mother—all have authority; but those who truly serve our Sav-



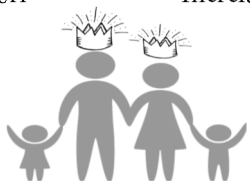
similar way. They must be in charge and lead in a Christian manner, but their authority, which is great, must be exercised in the spirit of serving. This kind of serving is not the kind in which the husband or wife in authority run around serving, while the children lounge around being waited on.

The proper kind of serving is the kind that teaches the children and raises them to eventually be Christian servants themselves. Therefore, this kind of leadership requires thought, insight, and patience, while the child is learning the challenging lesson of being responsible and accountable. To achieve this, the father and mother, who are the king and queen of the home, must be in

Families in which the parents are passive, and leave the children to be in charge, will be shipwrecked.

A ship's crew, when it is not prepared or skilled in sailing the vessel, will put everyone aboard in grave danger. Families in which the parents are passive, and leave the children to be in charge, will be shipwrecked. Parents must have that proverbial backbone, and must be ready to make decisions with which the children will not always agree. Parents must be prepared to say "No," which will inevitably arouse anger in a child who wants his or her own way. There is a helpful saying, handed down from our grandparents, that is applicable here: "I would rather for you to hate me now and love me later, than for you to love me now and hate me later." After a firm "No," an Orthodox mom was heard saying to her unhappy adolescent, "...Part of our job as your parents is to protect the 25-year-old *you* from the 16-year-old *you*." As parents, we should expect that there will be times when our children are angry and unhappy with us. One might even go so far as to say that it is important that children

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Monastic tactics

Out of the Spiritual Battlefield of Monasticism...

True Freedom = Freedom From Sin

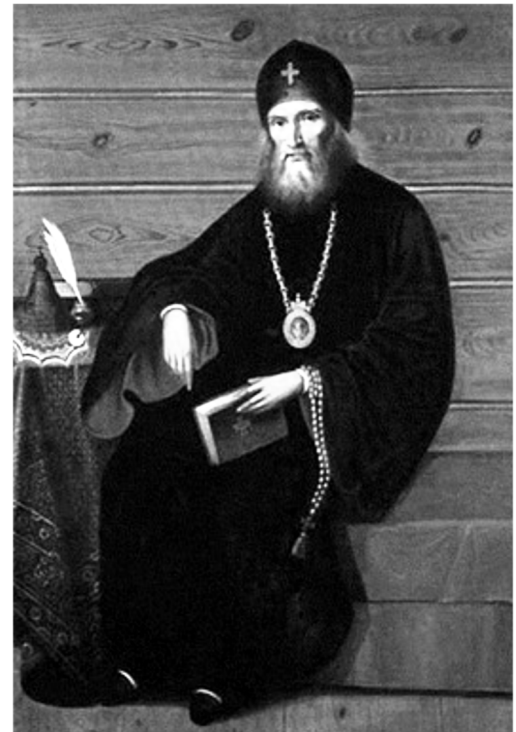
Some people, by the word freedom, understand the ability to do whatever one wants... People who have more such freedom allow themselves to come into slavery to sins, passions, and defilements. More often than others, they appear as zealots of external freedom, wanting to broaden the laws as much as possible. But such a man uses external freedom only to more severely burden himself with inner slavery. True freedom is the active ability of a man, who is not enslaved to sin, and who is not pricked by a condemning conscience, to choose the brighter path in the light of God's truth, having the capability to bring his choice into actuality with the help of the gracious power of God. This is true freedom, which is not restricted, neither in heaven nor on earth.

+St. Philaret of Moscow

Αληθινή Ελευθερία = Ελευθερία από την Αμαρτία

Ορισμένοι άνθρωποι, με την λέξη ελευθερία, αντιλαμβάνονται την δυνατότητα να κάνει ο καθένας ό,τι θέλει... Οι άνθρωποι που έχουν περισσότερη τέτοια ελευθερία, επέτρεψαν στον εαυτό τους να γίνουν δούλοι στις αμαρτίες, στα πάθη και στην ρυπαρότητα. Πιο συχνά από άλλους, εμφανίζονται ως ζηλωτές της εξωτερικής ελευθερίας, θέλοντας να διευρύνουν τους νόμους όσο περισσότερο γίνεται. Όμως ένας τέτοιος άνθρωπος, χρησιμοποιεί την εξωτερική ελευθερία μόνο και μόνο για να επιβαρύνει σοβαρά τον εαυτό του με εσωτερική δουλεία. Αληθινή ελευθερία είναι η ενεργός δυνατότητα ενός ανθρώπου, ο οποίος δεν είναι υποδουλωμένος στην αμαρτία, και που δεν κεντρίζεται από μια καταδικάζουσα συνείδηση, να διαλέγει την φωτεινή οδό στο φως της αλήθειας Του Θεού, έχοντας την ικανότητα να κάνει την επιλογή του πράξη με την βοήθεια της δύναμης της Χάριτος Του Θεού. Αυτή είναι η ελευθερία η οποία δεν περιορίζεται ούτε στον ουρανό ούτε στη γη.

+Άγιος Φιλάρετος της Μόσχας



St. Philaret of Moscow in his cell
Ο Άγιος Φιλάρετος της Μόσχας στο κελί του

HAPPINESS: where do we find it?



How mistaken are those people who seek happiness outside of themselves, in foreign lands and journeys, in riches and glory, in great possessions and pleasures, in diversions and vain things, which have a bitter end! It is the same thing to construct the tower of happiness outside of ourselves as it is to build a house in a place that is consistently shaken by earthquakes. Happiness is found within ourselves, and blessed is the man who has understood this. Happiness is a pure heart, for such a heart becomes the throne of God. Thus says Christ of those who have pure hearts: "I will visit them, and will walk in them, and I will be a God to them, and they will be my people." (II Cor. 6:16) What can be lacking to them? Nothing, nothing at all! For they have the greatest good in their hearts: God Himself!

+St. Nektarios of Aegina

Cleanse your mind from anger, remembrance of evil and shameful thoughts, and then you will find out how Christ dwells in you.



+St. Maximus the Confessor



Fr. Evaggelos Ordained; Missions in Cuba

The ordination of Fr. Evaggelos Garcia Luaces took place on Sunday, June 18. Fr. Evaggelos was ordained to the priesthood at St. Markella Cathedral, Astoria, NY.

Father Evaggelos was born on May 12, 1970, in the City of Havana, Cuba. Later, he moved with his parents, Edel and Maria Salomé, to a city called Bautá, where he studied economics, and specialized in Human Resources. He worked in the latter field until he became acquainted with Orthodoxy, which first came to Cuba in 2002. Father Evaggelos converted from Roman Catholicism (the majority religion in his country), and began to work as vicarial secretary of the Church in Cuba, belonging to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (New Calendar). The following year (2011) he was ordained deacon at the Cathedral of St. Nicholas of Mira, in Havana.

During this time, through his studies of the Faith and pursuit of the truth, he came across references to the Old Calendarists and the Genuine Orthodox Christians. Eventually, he came across the Holy Metropolis of America online. He got into contact with Father Maximus, the Dean of Latin America. At that point, he made the decision to rectify his faith and expressed his desire to join the G.O.C.



For this reason he was immediately suspended from his diaconal duties by his superiors in Cuba, where he had already submitted his resignation.

At this time, he travelled to Greece to learn the Greek Language, and graduated from the Modern Greek school belonging to the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. He then returned to Cuba and received an invitation to travel to the United States from Metropolitan Demetrius. Upon his arrival, he was baptized by Father Maximus at the Holy Ascension Monastery (he had been received from Roman Catholicism into the New Calendar Church by chrismation only.) The next day, he was ordained Deacon by his Eminence, Metropolitan Demetrios, at the Monastery of St. John of San Francisco.

On July 7, 2017, the newly ordained Fr. Evaggelos Garcia Luaces, was sent along with Fr. Maximus Marreta to start a mission for our Church on the island nation of Cuba. They met a group of pilgrims (Jamie Goodman, Paul and Juliana Volkman) from the United States, who had come to serve as Godparents for the new Cuban converts.

In the course of the trip, Fr. Maximus and Fr. Evaggelos established 2 missions, one in the beautiful city of Havana and the other in Santa Clara, approx. 4 hours away. The mission in Havana was named for the Holy Apostle Andrew, and the one in Santa Clara was dedicated to the Holy Spirit. The Fathers also baptized five people and chrismated another 16, who were formerly members of the new-calendar church.

On July 18, Fr. Maximus returned to the United States, while Fr. Evaggelos remained in his home land to minister to the newly established missions. Fervent prayers are requested, for Fr. Evaggelos, his family and flock, and for their establishment and protection in the challenging land of Cuba.



2017 Clergy Synaxis



Hierarchs (left to right): His Grace, Bishop Christodoulos, Their Eminences, Metropolitan Photios, Metropolitan Demetrius, Metropolitan Moses, and Metropolitan Auxentios converse over refreshments.

The 2017 Clergy Synaxis was the first to be held at the new Metropolis Center in Cobleskill, NY. On June 28, Their Eminences, Metropolitan Demetrius, Metropolitan Moses, Metropolitan Photios, Metropolitan Auxentios, His Grace, Bishop Christodoulos, together with Synod clergy from across the Metropolis convened to participate in the annual event. The Synaxis included many important talks, including "Temptation From the Right," by His Eminence, Metropolitan Demetrius wherein he stressed the importance of our confession of faith, void of self-righteousness (which gives birth to schism and heresy); His Eminence, Metropolitan Photios reported on

activities of the Holy Synod in Greece, and His Eminence Metropolitan Moses highlighted the activities of the Metropolis of Toronto, together with Deacon Fr. Paraskevas. His Eminence Bishop Auxentios gave a detailed report on the seminary in Etna, and Heiromonk Maximos gave an informative talk on the missions in Latin America. Fr Panagiotis Carras gave a thorough and articulate talk concerning the false council of Crete.

Based on Fr. Panagiotis Carras's video report of the Clergy Synaxes, which can be viewed at HOTCA.org/videos, and on information from the OrthodoxInfo Yahoo Group. The SW thanks Fr. Panagiotis for these edifying resources.



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The Holy Metropolis needs the support of Her faithful in order to successfully meet Her responsibilities and objectives in the administration of the Genuine Orthodox Church. May our Savior richly bless all who help His Church, as He has said.

Η Ιερά Μητρόπολη χρειάζεται την υποστήριξη των πιστών Της για να ανταποκριθεί επιτυχώς στις ευθύνες και στους στόχους Της στην διοίκηση Της Γνήσιας Ορθοδόξου Εκκλησίας. Είθε ο Σωτήρας μας να ευλογεί πλουσιοπάροχα όλους όσους βοηθούν Την Εκκλησία Του, όπως μας είπε.

"Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first-fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine."
-Proverbs 3:9-10

9 Τίμα τον Κύριο από τα υπάρχοντά σου, και με τους πρώτο-καρπούς όλων των γεννημάτων σου.
10 και θα γεμίσουν οι σιταποθήκες σου από αφθονία, και οι ληνοί σου θα ξεχειλίζουν από νέο κρασί.
-Παροιμίες Σολομώντος 3:9-10

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The Orthodox Home: Who is in charge? *Cont'd from p.7*

experience this anger, as it may be part of the process of learning to cut their own will.

The first relationship in a child's life is with his or her parents. In the course of this life-shaping relationship, the child will develop skills for dealing with all of his or her future relationships. Respect, love, obedience, sacrifice, patience, long suffering, and communication styles and skills, are all first learned by talking to and interacting with parents. And the father or mother must not only teach these things, but they must also be an example, and model these skills. One ex-

"The love of husband and wife is the force that welds society together."

-St. John Chrysostom

ample that comes to mind is the ability to apologize. Most of us have interacted with someone who seems unable to admit wrongdoing and apologize. The sin of pride exhibited in this behavior has a very negative effect on the atmosphere of the home. On the other hand, what could be more edifying for children than to look up and see their parents admitting to someone that they were wrong, and saying that they are sorry? The

example is so much more powerful than the words alone. Are not the actions and example of our Savior, in the Gospels, what



moves us the most, leaving us with a lasting impression?

The very modern notion that a father or a mother can be a "best friend" to a child is very troubling. In a well-run household, the parents are in charge, and there is a clear and intended power differential. Friendship is different. My best friend is my equal. A father or a mother is not equal to a child in authority, and frankly, no child really wants them to be so. When the authority of the parent is established very early on, children can thrive; they are able to have the security of knowing that the parents in the home are in charge, and that they are committed to ruling with love.

The increased incidence of single parent families has made it harder for parents to rule properly. One reason for this is that, in single parent families, the parent is

alone and often depends on the children for companionship and acceptance. This reliance on the children to provide what would normally be provided by a husband or wife compromises the parent's position and weakens it. The Church has always emphasized the sanctity of marriage, and the importance of keeping married couples together, if at all possible. If, however, a marriage fails, after many attempts and hard work to save it, then the custodial parent will need much support and help from others in the family and Church to manage as a single parent. A father cannot teach a daughter how to be a woman and a mother cannot teach a son how to be a man. Because of this important fact, mentors and role models in the family and Church are extremely im-

portant. Men and women in the Church who are single, or whose own children are grown, can be very helpful to children growing up in single parent homes.

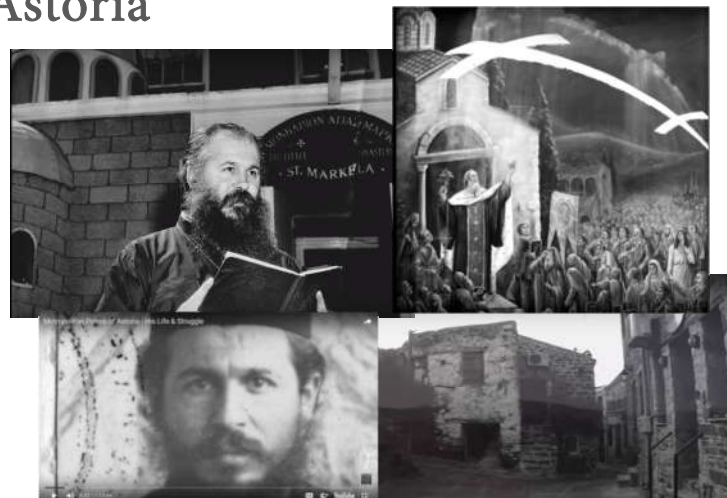
Let not Orthodox parents fear to exercise their important authority as God-ordained leaders of the Christian family. Let us be prayerful, think deeply, and resist the many modern influences in our culture that are leading children to ruin. This is a very important example of "being in the world but not of it". We are all weak and sinful, but if we hold on to our Tradition and work together, we can successfully face, with our children, the troubling challenges in the world around us.



Fr. Nicodemos, the Presbyter of St. Seraphim of Sarov Orthodox Church in Richmond, Virginia, has been an Orthodox Priest for 25 years. In addition to being the father of three, Fr. Nicodemos is a Psychology Professor and has been a leader in the fields of education, health and family counseling for decades. The SW is grateful to Fr. Nicodemos for sharing his wisdom and expertise in this column.

Video: Metropolitan Petros of Astoria

His Grace, Bishop Christodoulos, has shared a very informative and edifying video, entitled *Metropolitan Petros of Astoria—His Life and Struggle*. The video includes captivating narration, a rich selection of historic photographs and documents, and excerpts from a fascinating interview with Their Eminences, Metropolitans Petros and Pavlos. In the course of outlining the life of Metropolitan Petros, the video delves into the 20th century history of the Orthodox Church in Greece, the persecutions, and of Orthodoxy in America. The video also offers a glimpse at the profound struggles faced by novices and young monks, as they endure attacks of the demons and other temptations. The video is produced in such a way that it is very interesting, and holds the viewer's attention. It can be found on the HOTCA.org website, under "videos" (menu on the left), or at the youtube.com channel "Greek Orthodox TV."



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“In order for parishes to function well, the Metropolis must function well. Who will support the Metropolis if not Her faithful?”

« Για να λειτουργούν καλά οι ενορίες, πρέπει να λειτουργεί καλά η Μητρόπολη. Ποιος θα υποστηρίξει την Μητρόπολη αν όχι οι πιστοί Της;»



“Those alms we give in the name of God are received by God Himself. Spiritually, our alms are laid up in the treasuries of heaven, God’s treasuries, from which no one can steal them away.”

-St. John Maximovitch, the Wonderworker

«Οι ελεημοσύνες που δίνουμε στο όνομα του Θεού λαμβάνονται από τον Ίδιο τον Θεό. Πνευματικά, οι ελεημοσύνες μας κλείνονται στα θησαυροφυλάκια του ουρανού, του Θεού τα θησαυροφυλάκια, από όπου δεν είναι δυνατόν να τις κλέψει κανείς.»

-Άγιος Ιωάννης Μαξιμόβιτς, ο Θαυματουργός



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