



“GOOD NEWS”

*Glory to Jesus Christ!
Glory Forever!*

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*I am the Resurrection and the Life.
Whoever believes in me shall not die,
But shall have life everlasting.
John 11:25*

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Growth in the Lord Jesus Christ, growth of the Parish and the Nativity of our Lord

You have heard me many times saying that salvation is putting on Christ, becoming more and more like Christ, becoming Christ. And also that, since the Church is the body of Christ, salvation not only happens in the Church but also, salvation is the Church.

Growing in Christ is also growing in the Church, and I firmly believe that it is by growing in Christ ourselves that our church (our Parish) will also grow. My growth in the Church and the Church's growth are necessarily interdependent.

Now, it is essential to know that the growth is God-given and it's right here, that God gives it always, and for us this is a matter of trust/faith, of believing His promise: *"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gives the increase."* (1Co 3:6).

"Thus is the kingdom of God as if a man should cast the seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and should grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth produces fruit of itself: first a shoot, then a head of grain, then full wheat in the head of grain." (Mk 4:26-28)

At the recent All American Council, I attended an excellent workshop on "Parish revitalization"; here are a couple of quite hard hitting points I heard there: "Maybe we're asking the wrong questions? Is it: *"How can we get more people to come to church?"*, or, *"What can we do to make our church grow?"* What's the right question? Is it, *"What are we doing that's preventing our church from growing?"*

It seems that the real question is not: "what else/more to do (committees, bake sales, etc.)?" According to the workshop's expression, this would be *"Doing the same things and expecting different results"*, which is sheer insanity. We may all have all kinds of good intentions and plans, all ending in fatigue or worse ... but, really: What are we doing/not doing that is an obstacle ... that prevents growth?

- Looking backward can be an obstacle
- Ignoring our "parish age" can be an obstacle
- Denying the problems is an obstacle
- Having preconceived ideas on how a Parish should look like can be an obstacle
- But trying to control/organize everything is also an obstacle

We should look hard at these and other questions, and also look inside ourselves without negativism: *Lord, what do you want me/us to stop, to change?, then, "Lord what do You want me/us to do?"*

At the same time without forgetting (and this is the message of the Nativity of Christ) that all is already given. The Archangel Gabriel announces *"behold, you shall conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS."* (Lu 1:31), *for He shall save His people from their sins.*" (Mt 1:21). And Mary becomes the Mother of God by answering, *"Behold the maidservant of the Lord! May it be to me according to your word."* (Lu 1:38). You see how all begins at the Incarnation.

In this same way, Christ must be born and grow in us when we accept to let Him in. *"Behold, I stand at the door and I am knocking. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, then I will come in to him and I will dine with him, and he with Me."* (Re 3:20)

This may be only a little seed of the Kingdom, but it is given to us and is present in our Church, *"for His body, which is the church, to fulfill the word of God, the mystery which has been hidden from the ages and from generations, but now was revealed to His saints. To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the nations, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory"* Col 1:24-27.

There is no need to be anxious and try to give things we may not have: Enthusiasm and youthful energy, lots of groups and activities, programs to help the needy, mind-boggling beautiful liturgies, etc. Why should we? These things are obviously excellent, but they are effects, by-products, not goals in themselves, sometimes granted by God.

Only one thing is needful and required, our beautiful and pure ORTHODOX FAITH. That's everything we or the world needs. Only that will attract people to the Church and keep them in. And we have that seed, the real thing; no need to look to any other direction, but make it grow and give fruit. We must trust in God and love unselfishly, sacrificially", *seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*" (Mt 6:33)

If it's clear that our faith is the reason why we are here, if we believe that it is the only needful thing, then no need to merchandise or to beat around the bush. What else should or could we give to anyone?

So stop, be still, look and listen. Human wisdom says that we cannot erase the past, that we depend on what we have done before and that we will continue with it, stuck in the same old rut.

The Kingdom's wisdom is different: "*Behold, I make all things new.*" (Rev. 21:5). No preconditions.

But, what does all that have to do with Christmas? ¹

Well, as always, that in order to get somewhere one must take the right path or at least the right direction. Preconceived worldly ideas about the great mystery of the Nativity of our Lord will keep us in the deep old rut, not facing in the direction of "*the Orient from on high*". They will prevent us to see the real light of our Orthodox faith ("*I make all things new*"; "*All things are possible to God, to the one who believes/trusts.*").

In the same way that, according to our Lord, we cannot serve both God and Mammon, we cannot walk in two directions at once - Secular Christmas and the Incarnation of the Living God.

Christmas has been a perfectly secular holiday since the 1800's. We Christians have diminished the meaning of the Feast. We have made it the birthday of baby Jesus instead of the Incarnation of the Living God. This is a big problem, short of baking birthday cakes for baby Jesus (and some do!), we make mangers, etc., and finally it's all baby business. We have introduced the pagan Norse god of winter (Santa Claus) and the decorated Yule tree (also of Scandinavian pagan mythology: celebration of the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year, after which the days begin growing longer), then the whole thing has become strictly commercial.

Even the word "Christmas" is no more connected with Christ than the names Christine or Christopher, and the holiday has not been a "Holy Day" in our societies for centuries.

"Orthodoxy" literally means, "right belief." Right belief is necessary for salvation because what we believe about God will determine how we relate to Him. If we have a false conception of Christ, then we will not be able to relate to Him properly and receive His healing. The goal of salvation is perfect God likeness. But this is unattainable unless we have a right conception of God. ²

Look at the Orthodox icon of the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord. There is no baby; Christ is represented as a (small) adult wrapped in clothes as for burial, thus revealing

¹ For what follows I depend directly, and sometimes literally, on some of Archbishop Lazar Puhalo's talks.

² Clark Carlton, *The Life: The Orthodox Doctrine of Salvation*, p.75

the purpose of Incarnation. (You will not find this in any other settings, religious, so called, or profane). We prepare for and we celebrate the Feast of the Nativity as the Incarnation of the Living God, for the transformation and redemption of the fallen Human nature, the recreation of the world in Christ (*Behold, I make all things new ...*), the greatest event of human history that made the universe tremble.

*"When one follows the heretical atonement doctrine of salvation, the Incarnation of God is not nearly so important. What is focused on is the creation of a fit human sacrifice that can satisfy the perverted justice of an offended and malicious deity of some kind."*³

In the above quotation, Vladika Lazar does not mean that whole societies have consciously made abstract theological decisions. It is a fact, though, that Western Christendom has generally followed that "heretical doctrine" and that beliefs determine behaviour. So, instead of celebrating the beginning of our salvation, we have reduced it to the miraculous birth of a helpless baby 2000 years ago, which has no spiritual quality or value. And after the diminishing and perverting of the meaning of the Incarnation, little wonder if it has become a secular holiday.

Many Orthodox have also contributed by adopting Protestant terminology and practices. For example, today "Advent" means next to nothing to anyone. When we refer to the "Advent fast" rather than to the "Nativity of Christ Fast", there is one more removal of real focus in the meaning of the event. When we refer to "Christmas" rather than to the "Nativity of Christ", this is another enormous closing of the door on the actual meaning of the event.

Few Christians celebrate the Feast Day with the solemnity and majesty due to the celebration of the Incarnation of the Living God. The focus has shifted towards the baby Jesus idea, and is overwhelmed by the giving of presents, roasting turkeys, etc.

... who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. (Rm 1:25)

The Christmas season has very many marvelous and positive sides, but they are not necessarily connected with religion. People tend to be more generous, charitable, giving, caring, during the "Holiday Season", but that could have happened in past pagan times and does happen in present pagan times, with the same winter solstice celebration, the same grandfather frost and the same decorated tree.

³ Vl. Lazar

So let us put to rest Santa, Dickens and tutti quanti. Let us keep the JOY of the Feast and forget the “magic of the season”. The Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ is the source of all our joy and of all we believe - The only source of the Revelation of God and all the mysteries of the co-suffering and healing love of God for us.

Let us make of our heart the manger where Christ can be born and grow on us and make us grow. Let us contemplate the icon of the Nativity: Out of the cave, out of the darkness and the despair of the old fallen world, a great light shines. Let us also recognize and discern this light inside each of us and in our Parish. Let us allow it to shine and grow because our Lord Jesus Christ has promised that He is with us until the end of the age!

Behold, I make all things new! Amen.

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

Fr. Pau

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Christ is born! Let us Glorify Him!

Orthodox Christians around the world shout this wonderful praise to God for the birth of His begotten Son...our God. Whether it be on December 25 or January 7, we all stand in awe of this miraculous event. This harmony we share is very apparent on the two most recognizable feast days, Pascha and the Nativity of our Lord. However I wonder if we feel this harmony throughout the whole of the year? The greater Orthodox community rarely communicates except for the odd meeting between priests and parishioner acquaintances. We also share a common Communion Cup (and sometimes this is even not the case). We see the emergence of ethnic Orthodox Churches in Saskatoon that will sadly fall the way of many other ethnic churches after 2 or 3 generations. Unfortunately although these churches were organized for what are honorable reasons, in truth they fracture the church even more. This commentary is not meant to “dis” our Sister Churches but because of this acute fact, it is imperative for our larger church community to act as one. To do this we need to officially take the first steps. This does mean that this should be left to the clergy. Although they are important elements in this process, the laity must take an important role. Things like designating delegates to promote and organize common projects, special Church Council meetings or meeting agendas that are devoted assembling with our Sister Churches to develop common approaches with regard to outreach, charity and mission work. It is initiatives such as these that show relevance of the Orthodox Church to the

community, to its parishioners and to its future generations. But most importantly it reflects **ONE** Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church reflect Glory and Grace of God to all!

May the Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ inspire all of us to give birth to a renewal of the Orthodox faith in our community. May He give us the wisdom to do His will and to understand our role in His Kingdom!

Please enjoy the wonders of The Nativity and I pray for many blessings for all in the New Year!

*Greg Rychlo
Parish Council President
Holy Resurrection Orthodox Sabor*

Food Bank Requests

As you know, the food bank for our parish is now downstairs. We have more room than ever so you know what that means - we want more food! We like to thank those that continue to bring regular food items for the food bank. If possible please include canned milk, fruits, meats, and vegetables in your contributions. As well pastas in any form are always welcome. Contact Greg Rychlo or Sub Deacon James Davis for further information.

If you have someone come to you or you know of in need for assistance other than food, please contact Fr. Pau or Greg Rychlo.

Christmas Basket Program

The Christmas Basket Program was a rousing success. Our parish was able to assist in making Christmas a little brighter for some families within our parish. What a wonderful gift and blessing is it for the Lord to allow us to give! We pray that God Bless those that have accepted the baskets and those that have given to them. Praise God for giving us the gift of giving and allowing that to grow.

Thank you to those who helped with the giving and collection of items for our Christmas baskets. Thanks to God for instilling the ideas that came forth to augment our ability to help those of our parish that we love dearly and consider a great blessing!



INSPIRATIONAL READING

Reflection on Prayer for OCF on campus Saskatoon, SK. – Sub-deacon James Nicholas

Give ear to my words, O Lord, Consider my meditation.
Give heed to the voice of my cry, My King and my God, for unto you will I pray.
My voice You shall hear in the morning, O Lord; In the morning I will direct it to You,
And I will look up. **Psalm 51:1-3 (NKJ)**

What is Prayer?

What is prayer to the Orthodox Christian?

It has been said that Orthodox says a prayer before they pray! We certainly have a lot of prayers and they are rich and full!

There is a saint whose name slips my mind who said “One who does not pray does not breathe!” In other words prayer for the Christian is as essential as breathing and in order to get the breath of the Spirit we need to avail oneself to God. Prayer is the breath of the soul.

As Orthodox Christians we have a lot of formal and ritualistic prayers. Prayer for the Orthodox is attitude. The church teaches us how to pray and approach God with humility.

As a western Christian who now has embraced Eastern Orthodoxy, the first thing I noticed about the Orthodox was the reverence for God, in their prayers with bowing, prostrations, and veneration of the Icons.

The Orthodox Church has learned to pray from the scriptures, the examples of prayer and faith of the Old Testament Patriarchs and Prophets, ultimately the Lord Jesus Christ Himself when His disciples said “Lord teach us to pray”.

The Lord Jesus taught them the Our Father, which is a mainstay in our liturgical prayers. A study on Lord's Prayer is a whole study in itself and I would just like to touch on a few aspects of the prayer. Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your Name". When we pray we should know who we are praying to and in this day of new age and paganism, even Christians can get sucked into some of the bunk that is out there.

Our Lord Jesus when talking to the Samaritan women said "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." **John 4:21-24**

Jesus said : Give this day our daily bread". The Lord promised that He would feed us both physically and spiritually, when we pray we should pray unhindered by worry and in peace knowing that our God has everything under His control.

Psalms 37:4 says, Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.

Brothers and Sisters in the Lord, it's all about delighting ourselves in the Lord and the acquisition of the Holy Spirit as St. Seraphim of Sarov says in his writings. We are on a journey to receive the Holy Spirit, the divine grace of God into our hearts, the illumination of our souls.

Matt 6:33 Jesus says, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you."

Where is the kingdom of God? His reign in our hearts, inside of me and you. **Luke 17:20, 21**

The kingdom of God is not meat nor drink but righteousness, peace and joy.

Romans 14:17. In thy presence is fullness of joy, at Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore, show me the path of life. **Psalms 16:11.**

St. Seraphim says; "Prayer is about joy". Prayer is not what we can get from God; prayer is how we can receive more of God as we commune with Him in prayer.

Health, hope, prosperity and fellowship are the by-products of this living relationship with God, this connection with the Lord of Glory!

It says in the book of **Revelation 3:20** Jesus says, “Behold I stand at the Door and knock. If any man hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and dine with him and he with Me”.

I like this verse in regards to prayer because God is always waiting for us to initiate the first move, He calls us to prayer, He knocks on our door, but we have open the door in cooperation in synergy with Him as an open door.

In my past experience as a Christian, someone said to me that the Holy Spirit is a gentleman who does not intrude on or enter unless He has an invitation.

In some of the Protestant paintings of Jesus there is one where it shows Christ holding a lamp standing at the door knocking and there is no door knob or latch for Him to open.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is just waiting for us on the other side of the door knocking for us to open the door and let Him in! It is no mistake that church invites us at the beginning of the Trisagion Prayers to pray to receive the Holy Spirit.

“O Heavenly King the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, come and abide in us and cleanse from every impurity and save our souls O Good One!”. It’s an invitation to receive the Lord into our hearts!

How did Elijah hear the Lord? It was not in the great wind, not when the rocks fell apart or after an earthquake when the Lord passed by, but in a still small voice.

Prayer is watching, waiting on God, being still and contemplating the goodness of God in His Holy presence. Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon me a sinner.

Glory to God in all things!

Submitted by Sub Deacon James Nicholas



THE MISSION OF ORTHODOXY

by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann

Submitted by Father Pau – Article 1

What is the role and task of Orthodox Christians in America? Too often we want solutions to problems which we have not formulated, progress toward a point which we have not yet defined, victories in battles in which we don't know who is fighting whom.

The time has come to clarify the issues, to formulate the problems we face together, to discuss the solutions and the priorities in our existence as Orthodox in a Western country which is *our* country. Are we a group of exiles? Are we a spiritual and cultural ghetto, to be perpetuated against all odds? Are we to dissolve ourselves here in what is called "the American way of life"? What is this American way of life? It is my purpose to deal with the fundamental framework of these questions. In my first lecture to freshmen at Saint Vladimir's Seminary, I always use the same symbol - If you have a big library and move into a new house, you can't use that library unless you build shelves. While it is still in boxes, you own that library, but it is of no use to you. My purpose, then, is to build the shelves and then to try to see what are the priorities of our Orthodox situation today.

It is impossible to speak about our situation in America unless we refer it to our normal and essential term of reference, the Orthodox Church. The Orthodox Church - whether Greek, Syrian, Serbian, Romanian, or Bulgarian - has always been both the heart and the form of an Orthodox world. Only here in the West, and for the first time in the history of Orthodoxy, do we think of the Church in terms only of a religious institution such as diocese, parish, and so on. No one in organically Orthodox countries has ever thought of the Church as being distinct from the totality of life. Since the conversion of Constantine, the Church was organically related to society, culture, education, family, etc. There was no separation, no dichotomy. The Russian word for peasant is simply *christianin*, which at the beginning obviously meant Christian.

Here, then, we find the first radical difference which we have to face in America: We belong to the Orthodox *Church*, but we do not belong to an Orthodox *culture*. This is the first and most important change, and unless we understand that this is not an academic proposition, but the real framework of our existence, we will not see clearly through our situation. For everything in the Orthodox Church points toward a way of life; the Church is connected to all aspects of life. Yet we are deprived of this

connection because, upon leaving our churches on Sunday morning, we return to a culture which was not produced, shaped, or inspired by the Orthodox Church and which, therefore, in a way is deeply alien to Orthodoxy.

Cultures in Collision

The first Orthodox immigrants in America never thought about all this, for in many ways they continued to live within an organic Orthodox "culture." They were still living within that type of unity because they belonged to what in American sociology is known as a "subculture." After the liturgy, Russians or Greeks would meet in the church hall, and they would meet not only as Orthodox but as Russians or Greeks or Bukovenians or Carpatho-Russians - and they would meet precisely in order to breathe their native culture.

At the beginning, all this was completely normal. Even today you can live in certain places as if you were not living in America. You can live there without knowing very much English, without any real contact with American culture. But whether we like it or not, that "immigrant" chapter of our history is coming to an end, and this is where the younger generation comes in.

Today's Orthodox young people do not have that immigrant mentality. Orthodoxy for them is not primarily the remembrance of childhood abroad. They will not keep Orthodoxy simply because it is "the faith of their fathers." Suppose we apply this principle to others: Then the Lutherans should keep the Lutheran faith, the Jews the Jewish faith, and finally, the son of an atheist should keep atheism because it was the "faith of his father". If this is the criterion, religion becomes a mere cultural continuity.

But our claim is that our Church is Orthodox, or more simply, *the* Church, and this is a frightening claim. It implies that it is the faith for all men, for all countries, for all cultures. And unless this implication is kept in mind and heart, our claim to be the true or Orthodox Church becomes hypocrisy, and it would be more honest to call ourselves a society for the perpetuation of the cultural values of a particular geographic region.

Our faith cannot be reduced to religious practices and customs alone. It claims the entire life of man. But the culture in which we live, the "American way of life," is something which already existed when we came here. Thus we find ourselves an Eastern Church with a total claim on our life, yet living within a Western society and a Western way of life.

The first problem can, then, be formulated very simply, although its solution is extremely difficult: How are we to combine these things? How can we live our Orthodox faith which claims the totality of our existence within a culture which also claims to shape our existence?

This is the antinomy of our situation; this is where all our difficulties are rooted. Yet unless we understand it, we will always have wrong solutions. These wrong solutions - quite popular today - follow two basic patterns.

I will call one pattern a "neurotic" Orthodoxy. It is the attitude of those who, whether they are native Orthodox or converts, decide they cannot be Orthodox unless they simply reject American culture, who build their spiritual home in some romantic and idealized Byzantium or Russia, and who constantly curse America and decadent Western society. To them, "Western" and "American" are synonymous with "evil" and "demonic". This extreme position gives a semblance of security. Ultimately, however, it is self-destructive. It is certainly not the attitude of Saint John, who, in the midst of a violent persecution, said so simply, "And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith" (1 John 5:4). And further, he said, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment" (1 John 4:18). In the attitude of some, however, Orthodoxy is transformed into an apocalyptic fear which has always led to sectarianism, hatred, and spiritual death.

The other dangerous pattern is that of an almost pathological "Americanism". There are people who, when they hear in church one word in Russian or Greek, react as if it were a betrayal of Christ. It is the opposite neurosis, the neurosis of those who want Orthodoxy to become American immediately.

In the first neurosis, Orthodoxy is reduced to a fanatical and negativistic sect; in the second one, "American" is falsified, for America is not at all a country which requires surrender, conformity, and the acceptance of the mainstream mentality as the "American way of life". What makes this country great and indeed unique is precisely the openness of its culture to change.

A Message Unchanged

And who knows whether it may not be the real mission of Orthodoxy in America to change the American culture which has never really been challenged by a different set of values? No doubt Orthodoxy has an understanding of man, life, world, nature, etc., radically different from those prevailing in American culture, but this difference itself is a challenge for Orthodoxy rather than a justification for withdrawal, negativism, and fear.

To avoid the two extremes, to be truly Orthodox yet fully American, seems to be the only real Orthodox tradition. How and where do we then begin?

I have already said I have no ready-made answers. I do, however, have a few thoughts which I would like to share with you - a few thoughts about the conditions which may set us on the difficult path. One of the great dangers of modern, and especially American, culture is its reduction of man to history and to change. This is the first thing we Orthodox have to denounce and to resist. We must openly confess that there are things which do not change, that human nature does not, in fact, change - that such realities as sin, or righteousness, or holiness do not depend on the changing pattern of culture.

How many times I have heard, for example, that in "our age" the concept of sin must be changed if it is to be relevant to modern man. How many times we have heard that in "our age" we cannot speak of the Devil. Yet I am absolutely convinced that sin is exactly the same for me as it was for Saint Paul, and that if there is no Devil, Christianity is no longer the same religion it was for nearly two thousand years. It is not enough to speak, as some Western theologians do, of the "demonic". It is not enough to identify sin with alienation. And it is at this point that Orthodoxy has a tremendous responsibility, for it is fundamentally the belief in unchanging realities, it is the denunciation of all "reductions" as not only doctrinally wrong, but existentially destructive.

Thus, the first condition for anything else is simply faith. Before anything else is possible, before I can speak of myself as belonging to this or that generation, as immigrant or native, of our age as technological or post-industrial, etc., there is this one fundamental reality: man standing before God and finding that life is communion with Him, knowledge of Him, faith in Him, that we are created literally for God.

Without this experience and affirmation, nothing has meaning. My real life is in God and in heaven. I was created for eternity. These simple affirmations are rejected as naive and irrelevant today, and in spite of all its Christian terminology, Western Christianity becomes more and more a man-centered humanism. At this point, no compromise is possible, and everything depends upon whether Orthodoxy will remain faithful to its God-centeredness, to its orientation toward the Transcendent, the Eternal, the Divine.

We do not deny that men need justice and bread. But before everything else they need God. Thus, we truly can do what we are called to do in spite of all temptations. The seemingly "charitable" character of these temptations misses the unchanging truth that our call is not only to proclaim or to defend, but first of all to live this unchanging,

eternal hierarchy of values in which God and God alone is the beginning, the content, and the end of everything. This is the real content of the Orthodox faith, of our liturgy, of our sacraments. This is what we celebrate on Easter night. This is what is revealed at the Eucharistic Table. It is always the same thing, the same prayer, the same joy: "Thy Kingdom come. . ." It is the understanding of life as indeed preparation, not simply for an eternal rest, but for the life which is more real than anything else - a life of which this life is but a "symbol" and a "sacrament."

I can hear and sense the reaction, "Oh, again paradise and hell; is that Christianity? Can this be preached in the twentieth century?" And I will answer: "Yes, it is. Yes, it can". It is because so many people today have forgotten this, it is because all this has become "irrelevant" for Christians themselves, that so many are in hell already. And Orthodoxy will lose all its salt if each one of us does not strive first of all for this personal faith and for this hunger for salvation, redemption, and deification. Christianity begins only when we take seriously the words of Christ: "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

A Vision for the Future

But now let me share with you my second preliminary thought. Just as each one of us must discover for himself the "unchanging" and take part in the same, never-ending, spiritual fight, we must discover ourselves as belonging to one particular generation of Orthodox Christians living in the twentieth century in America, in a secular and pluralistic culture and in the midst of a great spiritual crisis.

What can we do together? What are the Orthodox imperatives for our common and corporate task? I think that here the priorities are rather clear, especially when one speaks to students and for students, for "student" is today the purest representative of what I call the second Orthodoxy in America. The first one - whether he came from the "old world" or was born here - is still an immigrant in his mentality. He lives within the American culture but is not yet an organic part of it.

A student is by definition someone who can and must reflect. So far Orthodoxy in America has not reflected upon itself and upon its situation here. The Orthodox student is the first Orthodox who is called to reflect on his life as an Orthodox in America. On this reflection depends the future of our Church here, for this reflection will obviously be aimed at the problems which I mentioned earlier. So this is a crucial task. You will say either yes or no for the entire Orthodox Church on this continent.

To say yes, however, means to rediscover the Church as mission, and mission within our present situation means something more than simply converting individuals to Orthodoxy. It means primarily an evaluation of American culture in Orthodox terms, and this is the real mission of the Orthodox "intelligentsia," for no one else can do that.

The Essentials of Encounter

It is here that I must stress again the fundamental quality of American culture: its openness to criticism and change, to challenge and judgment. Throughout the whole of American history, Americans have asked: "What does it mean to be American?", "What is America for?", and they are still asking these questions. Here is our chance, and here is our duty. The evaluation of American culture in Orthodox terms requires first a knowledge of Orthodoxy, and second a knowledge of the true American culture and tradition.

One cannot evaluate that which one does not know, love, and understand. Our mission, therefore, is first of all one of education. We - all of us - must become theologians, not in the technical sense of the word, but in terms of vital interest, concern, care for our faith, and above everything else, in terms of a relationship between faith and life, faith and culture, faith and the "American way of life."

Let me give you one example. We all know that one of the deepest crises of our culture, of the entire modern world, is the crisis of family and the man/woman relationship. I would ask, then: How can this crisis be related to and understood in terms of our belief in the one who is "more honorable than the cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim..." - the Theotokos, the Mother of God, the Virgin?

Where all this will lead us, I do not know. In the words of a hymn of Cardinal Newman: "I do not see the distant scene, one step enough for me". But I know that between the two extremes - of a surrender *to* America, of a surrender *of* America - we must find the narrow and the difficult way of the true Orthodox Tradition. No solution will ever be final, and there is no final solution in "this world."

We shall always live in tension and conflict, in the rhythm of victory and defeat. Yet if the Puritans could have had such a tremendous impact on American culture, if Sigmund Freud could change it so deeply as to send two generations of Americans to the psychoanalytical couch, if Marxism, in spite of all its phenomenal failures, can still inspire presumably intelligent American intellectuals, why can't the faith and the

doctrine which we claim to be the true faith and the true doctrine have its chance? "O ye of little faith...."

Marx and Freud never doubted, and they won their vicious victories. The modern Christian, however, has a built-in inferiority complex. One historical defeat pushes him either into an apocalyptic fear and panicking, or into a "death of God" theology. The time has come, perhaps, simply to recover our faith and apply it with love and humility to the land which has become ours. And who can do that if not those who are given a full share in American culture?

Two things, then, are essential: first, the strengthening of our personal faith and commitment. Whether priest or layman, man or woman, the first thing for an Orthodox is not to speak about Orthodoxy, but to live it to his full capacity; it is prayer, it is standing before God, it is the difficult joy of experiencing "heaven on earth". This is the first thing, and it cannot be reached without effort, fasting, asceticism, sacrifice, or without the discovery of that which in the Gospel is called the "narrow way".

And second, to use a most abused word, there must be a deep and real *dialogue* with America - not accommodation, not a compromise, for a dialogue may be indeed violent. If nothing else, it will achieve two things. It will reveal to us what is real and genuine in our faith and what is mere decoration. We may, indeed, lose all kinds of decorations which we erroneously take for Orthodoxy itself. What will remain is exactly the faith which overcomes the world.

In that dialogue we will also discover the true America, not the America which so many Orthodox curse and so many idolize, but the America of that great hunger for God and His righteousness which has always underlain the genuine American culture. The more I live here, the more I believe that the encounter between Orthodoxy and America is a providential one. And because it is providential, it is being attacked, misunderstood, denied, rejected on both sides. Perhaps it is for us, here, now, today to understand its real meaning and to act accordingly.

The Mission of Orthodoxy

We know that the Orthodox youth of America must have a mission. And the first condition for mission is a spiritual foundation; we simply cannot move anywhere without faith and a personal commitment to Christian life. Further, it seems that we must think of our mission in terms of the particular situation we face in America, in this thoroughly secularized society.

But what is a mission? Mission is one of those words much used and much abused today in America. So we must, first of all, clarify its meaning for us. On the one hand it is clear to all, I hope, that in a sense every Christian is called to be a missionary. Every Christian is sent. When we say, "One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church," the term "apostolic" means not only the continuity of ministry, as so many people seem to think, but also the apostolicity, i.e., the missionary nature of the Church and of each of her members.

My being a missionary can be understood in a threefold way. In the first place, I am sent to myself. This means that the new Adam in me is always ready to challenge and to fight the old Adam—the "I" who is still very much "of this world" and subdued to it. In the second place, I am sent to others. This again is universal, and is not limited to bishops, priests, and missionaries in the strict sense of the word.

And finally, I am sent as a missionary to the world. The scope of our vision and faith is always the salvation of all that for which Christ died, and He died "for the life of the world". Thus, one cannot be saved without giving oneself to this mission. Everyone is a missionary.

Yet, on the other hand, as we begin seeking for concrete applications of these general definitions, the idea of mission becomes confused. It is indeed the eternal problem for each Christian individually and for every Christian generation to find their modality of mission - the way God wants them to fulfill their missionary calling. Just as each man is unique, the way of his fulfillment of his vocation is also unique. And just as each historical situation is unique, the Christian mission of each generation is also in a way unique. This is why there are so many disagreements and controversies among Orthodox today. Everyone admits that something needs to be done, but there is no consensus yet on what exactly is to be done and how. The disagreements concern, indeed, the nature of the Orthodox mission today.

The Past and Our Tradition

In such a situation, we must always begin by looking to the past, by consulting with our tradition - not "archaeologically," with an impossible, unrealistic, and futile desire simply to "restore" the past, but in an effort to discern the mind of the Church. The entire history of the Church is in a way the history of her mission, that is, of her relation to and action in the world. And as we look into that past, we discover there a rhythm, which I think could be defined as the rhythm of crisis and consolidation.

Consider, for example, the Book of Acts, the earliest record of the Church's life. It begins with an almost idyllic description of the first community in Jerusalem. The Church is growing, she is liked by all people, she is at peace. The difficulties - like the one with the couple who tried to lie and cheat - are quickly solved. Then comes the crisis, which is primarily a radical change in the external - cultural and spiritual - context within which she has to live.

Suddenly there are new problems facing the Church and disturbing her initial peace. There is the problem of mission to the non-Jews, the problem of circumcision, the concerns about the Jewish way of life - not even questioned before. It is, in other words, a crisis of growth, which is always painful and bitter. The Apostle Paul - the bearer and the symbol of the crisis - knew that without facing it, the Church would have remained a little Jewish sect and would never have been the universal challenge, the universal "question mark," on everything in this world - all that she actually did become because of that first crisis.

But then a period of consolidation begins. From the midst of the second until the end of the third century, we discern a constant effort to do just that: to consolidate, to organize, to define the life of the Church, to build it on clear and solid principles - the apostolic succession, the apostolic constitutions, the apostolic traditions, the canon of Scripture. On the eve of Constantine's conversion the Church exists as a well-organized institution, "adjusted" to her universal mission, with a well-oiled mechanism for the solution of her daily problems.

There comes, however, a new crisis, provoked this time by the conversion of the Emperor and - in him— of the entire Graeco-Roman society. The Empire, which to the Church was the very symbol of the Antichrist, the Harlot, the new Babylon, becomes Christian. And it becomes Christian by a direct intervention of Christ Himself, who elects Constantine to be a "second Paul". Once more the entire framework of the Church's life is radically altered. There comes not only security and peace, but also wealth and privileges, the splendor of new basilicas, the rain of gold and silver, the political power, the new social status.

The bishops who only yesterday were in prison or in hideouts are invited to come to Nicea at the expense of the State, receive a "red carpet" treatment, and are submerged with gifts and honors. All this is so new, so unheard of! No wonder it provokes a crisis in the very consciousness of the Church.

The best proof of the new crisis is the great monastic exodus of the fourth century. At a time when Christians seem finally to enjoy all power, all possibilities, at this very time the best Christians, in tremendous numbers, leave for the desert. Yet, the important

point here is that this very exodus becomes the starting point of a new consolidation, of the creative adjustment of the Church to her new situation in the world. For without the monastic exodus and challenge, the Church would have been in danger of accepting too easily her new and privileged "status": that of the state religion, of identifying herself with a culture, of losing the intensity of her eschatological prayer: "Thy Kingdom come!"

It was the monk who, by preserving Christian maximalism and forcing it into the very texture of the Empire, laid in fact the foundations of the "Orthodox world" with its inner and creative tension between "heaven" and "earth". What indeed made that Christian world Christian, in spite of its many defects and shortcomings, is the fact that it never reduced man to anything - be it economics, or society, or culture - for it always remembered the eternal and divine vocation of man, always kept the Kingdom of God as its ultimate value. It always knew that man is a sinful creature called to heavenly glory, to the "honor of a high calling".

Post-Christianity

Our situation today is once more that of crisis, and it is the nature of that crisis that is to shape the orientation of our missionary effort. The fundamental meaning of the crisis lies in the fact that the Christian world born out of Constantine's conversion, and the subsequent "symphony" between the Church, on the one hand, and the society, state, and culture, on the other, has ended.

Please do not misunderstand me. The end has come not of Christianity, not of Church or faith, but of a world which referred, however nominally at times, its whole life to Christ and had Christian faith as its ultimate criterion. All dreams about its restoration are doomed. For even if Christians were to recover control of states and societies, that would not automatically make these societies "Christian." What happened occurred on a much deeper level.

The fact is we are no longer living in a Christian world. The world we live in has its own style and culture, its own ethos, and, above everything else, its own world-view. And so far Christians have not found and formulated a consistently Christian attitude towards the world and its worldview and are deeply split in their reaction to it. There are those who simply accept the world's view and surrender to secularism. And there are those whose nervous systems have not withstood the shock of the change and who, faced by the new situation, are panicking.

If the first attitude leads little by little to the evaporation of faith itself, the second threatens us with the transformation of Orthodoxy into a sect. A man who feels

perfectly at home in the secular and non-Christian world has probably ceased to be a Christian, at least in the traditional meaning of that term. But the one who is obsessed with a violent hatred and fear of the modern world has also left the grounds of the genuine Orthodox tradition. He needs the security of a sect, the assurance that he at least is saved in the midst of the universal collapse. There is very little Christianity and Orthodoxy in either view. If some forget that the Kingdom of God is "not of this world," the others do not seem to remember that "perfect love overcomes all fear."

A Twofold Missionary Perspective

If, as I said above, it is the very nature of the present crisis that must shape our missionary perspective, that perspective, in my opinion, consists of two fundamental attitudes, two urgent tasks.

1. We must maintain at all costs that which many people today contemptuously call the Christian institution. It takes some courage in our day to defend the institution against the powerful and anti-institutional trend which exists both on the right and on the left. It is indeed the ironic paradox of our time that the ultraconservatives are at one with the ultra-radicals in undermining the institution.

The ultra-conservatives, by constantly measuring and comparing the "spirituality" or the "orthodoxy" of bishops and jurisdictions, appoint themselves as judges, setting the criteria and deciding charismatically whom they accept and whom they reject. In other words, they take upon themselves the decisions that belong to the Church and end up replacing the Orthodox doctrine of the Church with a new variety of Donatism or Montanism, heresies of misplaced and misdirected maximalism which, just because of their perceived maximalism, were the most difficult to destroy.

The ultra-radicals simply reject the very principle of institution, which to them seems boring and alienating, and are ready to revise and re-evaluate everything in the light of their own supposedly "charismatic" insights. Here and elsewhere we find a common, deep misunderstanding of the Church: the relationship in her between the institutional and the charismatic. And this misunderstanding is rooted, above all, in the lack of the fundamental Christian virtue: humility.

It is difficult, yet necessary, to say to young people who want excitement and maximalism, immediate action and spectacular achievements: "Your first duty, your first spiritual achievement, consists precisely in accepting the institution, and doing so on its own terms, not yours. It consists in becoming—deeply and humbly—part of it."

For what is institution? It is the very fact of the presence and continuity of the Church, always the same, in the world, regardless of all crises, of all changes. It is the guarantee that whether there are prophets or not, whether there are saints and leaders to inspire and lead us, there will be a priest standing at my bed at the hour of my death, pronouncing words of hope, joy, and victory which he did not invent and may even have not felt, but which through him have been preserved by the Church. It is the guarantee that Sunday after Sunday someone—who may be good, bad, or mediocre—will have the right and the duty to offer to God "His own of His own on behalf of all and for all" and thus to make possible all charisms and all inspiration.

2. There must be a faithful remnant which relates to the world as it is today. This is the second task, the one that could be performed beyond the unchanging limits of the institution, and which is determined by the specific situation in which the Church finds herself at any particular period of her history. If the proper function of the institution is to maintain and to make available always and everywhere the unchanging essence of the Christian faith and the Christian life, this mission deals with this or that particular situation, with the world as it is now. Again, this mission is always the task of a remnant.

To me the answer is comprised in one word: *movement*. What the Church needs today, as it has needed it on several occasions in the past, is a dynamic movement of young men and young women, a kind of "order" to fulfill the tasks that institution alone cannot and must not fulfill. If the inner core of such a movement is to consist mainly, if not exclusively, of students, it is because a student is by definition a being whose life is yet open and available.

But the emphasis, of course, is not on "student" but on "movement." The student, as any other member of such a movement, is its subject and agent, not object. The movement is, in other words, to be directed at the tasks to be performed for the Church and not at some specific "student needs."

Vows for Today

I have in mind a kind of spiritual profile of that movement and of those who will take part in it. To me, it looks in some way like a new form of monasticism without celibacy and without the desert, but based upon specific vows. I can think of three such vows.

1. Prayer

The first vow is to keep a certain well-defined spiritual discipline of life, and this means a rule of prayer: an effort to maintain a level of personal contact with God, what the Fathers call the "inner memory of Him." It is very fashionable today to discuss spirituality and to read books about it. But whatever the degree of our theoretical knowledge about spirituality, it must begin with a simple and humble decision, an effort, and—what is the most difficult—regularity. Nothing indeed is more dangerous than pseudo-spirituality whose unmistakable signs are self-righteousness, pride, readiness to measure other people's spirituality, and emotionalism.

What the world needs now is a generation of men and women not only speaking about Christianity, but living it. Early monasticism was, first of all, a rule of prayer. It is precisely a rule we need, one which could be practiced and followed by all and not only by some. For indeed what you say is less and less important today. Men are moved only by what you are, and this means by the total impact of your personality, of your personal experience, commitment, dedication.

2. Obedience

The second vow is the vow of obedience, and this is what present-day Orthodox lack more than anything else. Perhaps without noticing it, we live in a climate of radical individualism. Each one tailors for himself his own kind of "Orthodoxy," his own ideal of the Church, his own style of life. And yet, the whole spiritual literature emphasizes obedience as the condition of all spiritual progress.

What I mean by obedience here, however, is something very practical. It is obedience to the movement itself. The movement must know on whom it can depend. It is the obedience in small things, humble chores, the unromantic routine of work. Obedience here is the antithesis not of disobedience, but of hysterical individualism. "I" feel, "I" don't feel. Stop "feeling" and do. Nothing will be achieved without some degree of organization, strategy, and obedience.

3. Acceptance

The third vow could be described, in terms of one spiritual author, as "digging one's own hole." So many people want to do anything except precisely what God wants them to do, for to accept this and perhaps even to discern it is one of the greatest spiritual difficulties. It is very significant that ascetical literature is full of warnings against changing places, against leaving monasteries for other and "better" ones, against the spirit of unrest, that constant search for the best external conditions. Again, what we need today is to relate to the Church and to Christ our lives, our

professions, the unique combination of factors which God gives us as our examination and which we alone can pass or fail.

The Task Ahead

One might ask, what would a movement of this kind set as its goals? What would be its mission? The first goal would be to help people, and first of all the movement's own members, to experience and to live their Orthodox faith. We all know there exists today a real discrepancy between the Orthodox ideal of the Church—of "sobornost," of liturgical life—and reality. There must be a place, a situation, where this ideal can be tasted, experienced, lived, be it only partially and imperfectly. Here the experience of other Orthodox movements is conclusive. It is because their members experienced—at their conferences, retreats, study groups—the joy and the meaning of Church life that they could witness to it and call to the Church "at large."

Then the second goal of our mission can be termed intellectual. We are living at a time and in a situation in which all, not only professional theologians, are called to know and to be ready to confess. Our time is the time of a gigantic ideological struggle. Without a new concern by the Orthodox about the content of their faith and its implications for their entire life, our Church will lose.

Finally, the movement is to care about those needs of the Church about which a parish or a diocese does not or cannot care: reaching youth, finding the total place and function of the Church in our world, accepting—creatively—the challenges of modern culture. All this is our task because being not of this world we are in it, left in it to witness and to reveal.

All this will take time to build. Yet we must think in terms of a remnant, of a movement, of service. We must begin with ourselves, if we are to be of service to the Church. When God gives something, a talent, He wants us to invest it. He wants us to serve. There is no other way of following Christ.

With the blessing of Mrs. Alexander Schmemmann, The Mission of Orthodoxy was adapted from a lecture given at the 1968 National Conference of Orthodox College Students and printed in Volume III, No. 4 of CONCERN (no longer in publication).

THE MISSION OF ORTHODOXY

by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann

Submitted by Father Pau – Article 2

An extremely important (maybe difficult) text of Vladimir Lossky that I quoted partially in a recent sermon. Maybe some will feel like discussing or learning more about it. A hint: it is useful not only to understand the fall but also conversion, repentance, etc.

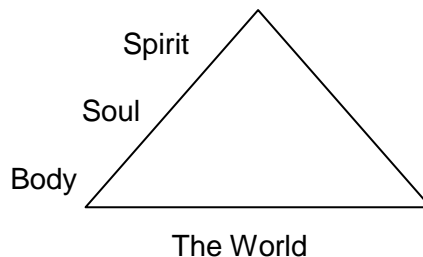
The spirit must find its sustenance in God, must live from God; the soul must feed on the spirit; the body must live on the soul -such was the original order in our immortal nature. But turning back from God, the spirit, instead of providing food for the soul, begins to live at the expense of the soul, feeding itself on its substance (what we usually call "spiritual values"); the soul in turn begins to live with the life of the body, and this is the origin of the passions; finally, the body is forced to seek its nourishment outside, in inanimate matter, and in the end comes on death. The human complex disintegrates.

Vladimir Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, p. 128

In another book he repeats:

The human spirit must find nurture in God, live in God; the soul must nourish the spirit; the body must live on the soul -such was the original design of man's immortal nature. Turning away from God, however, the spirit, instead of giving food for the soul, begins to live at the soul's expense, feeding itself with its substance (this is what are usually called "spiritual values"). The soul, in its turn, begins to live from the life of the body, and this is the origin of the passions. Finally, the body, compelled to seek its food in the external world, in soulless matter, in the end discovers death. Man's structure falls to pieces.

Vladimir Lossky, *Orthodox Theology: An Introduction*, p.131-32
I do not know if it's a different translation of the same original. (Fr.Pau)



GIVING - WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Submitted by David Grier

During the winter of 2004-05 our parish conducted a bible study on the topic of “giving”. The study consisted of reading a number of scriptures addressing four questions about giving and discussing what these quotations from the Bible might mean. The following is a summary of our deliberations which will be a reminder for those of you that were there and perhaps new information to those of you who were not. I am hoping you find this to be an encouragement to live the life God has called us to during this Christmas season for many years to come.

[Quotations in this article are from the New King James version of the Bible.]

1. What has God given to us?

In the first session we looked at 20 scripture quotations (11 from the Old Testament, 9 from the New) that provided answers to the question, “what has God given to us?” The quotations listed a number of physical things such as food, wine, crops, livestock, even the rain to grow the crops and livestock that God has given us. As the psalmist says in Psalms 68:18, “Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits” and again in Psalm 145: 15-16, “The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food in due season. You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.”

God doesn't ignore the fact that our efforts are involved; people plant seeds, care for livestock, and prepare food from those crops and livestock. We may even have used our abilities wisely and acquired much wealth. However, God reminds us not to get proud of our accomplishments, but to remember that it was He who actually gave us the power or ability to acquire physical things. Through Moses God says “...lest when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them; and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God then you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.’ And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth...” (De 8:12-14a, 17-18a).

In fact, the scriptures explicitly tell us that “all things” are from God. And, “all things” include more than physical things like food, drink, and a place to live. God provides us with spiritual food (love, righteousness, the gift of salvation) and eternal life (an everlasting home). To access these gifts, we need only to believe in Him. Believing requires faith, and, guess what? – God gives us that too! Check out what St. Paul says in Ephesians, “For by grace have you been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. (Ep 2:8-9)

So we learned that not only does God give, He has given us all that we have and all that we need. This begs the next question, is He, by His all encompassing acts of giving, setting an example that He would like us to follow? We investigated that idea during the second session.

2. Has God asked us to give?

In the second session we looked at 19 quotations from Scripture, nine from the Old Testament and 10 from the New, that explored the question “Has God asked us to give?” The Old Testament quotations lead us from Abram giving one tenth to Melcheizedek, priest of God Most High long before the Israelites received the Law of Moses; through several quotations from the Law giving explicit instructions to give to God and to the poor; to exhortations to give in the Psalms; to an admonishment from Isaiah about the need to give as a form of fasting. A consistent theme is the idea that part of our worship is to return to God a portion of what he has given us, “...and they shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you (De 16:16b-17).

The 10 New Testament quotations pick up exactly the same themes, but with a difference. The Old Testament presents giving as a requirement and provides a formula for an acceptable amount – the tithe or 10%. The New Testament still stresses the essentialness of giving through the words of Jesus and the Apostles, but does not present a formula. We are asked to give to whoever asks and to respond to any need we see. In fact, we cannot claim to have faith, if our faith is not evidenced by our works of giving to address the needs of friends and enemies alike. As St. James says, “...but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.” (Ja 2:14-17)

Has God asked us to give? The answer in both the Old and New Testaments is undeniably yes. The challenge for us living in our day is to know what, when, and where God is asking us to give.

3. Do we receive any benefits for giving?

This session looked at 25 scriptures, 9 from the Old Testament and 16 from the New. In the Old Testament we are told that he who gives is blessed, he will be rewarded, he will be paid back, he will be delivered in the time of trouble, his barns will be filled with plenty, his vats will overflow, and he will not lack. The Lord promises to guide he who gives and to satisfy his soul. Through the prophet Malachi, God even challenges the people to give to see His response. "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this", says the Lord of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it." (Mal 3:10)

The New Testament quotations are in complete agreement. We are told that if we give in secret, our Father will reward us openly and that if anyone gives anything in God's name, he will receive his reward. In fact, Jesus makes a statement that is reminiscent of Malachi 3:10 when He says in Luke 6:38 that if we give, we will receive "good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over". We are also told that God gives to us in proportion to our generosity, "He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Co 9:6-9)

We will receive more than "things" if we give. We will become perfect as He is perfect (Mt 5:48); we will have treasure in heaven that does not grow old (Lu 12:34), and we will receive eternal life (Jn 3:16, Ro 6:23). The Bible clearly tells us that we receive benefits for giving, both physical and spiritual. God will supply to those who give all they need according to His riches.

4. Are there consequences for not giving?

To address this question we looked at nine quotations. The Old Testament selections were very clear and direct. We are told that withholding more than is right will lead to poverty and hiding our eyes from the poor will result in many curses. And then, in the strongest statement of the three we looked at, we are told that by not giving tithes and offerings we are cursed because we are robbing God. "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, in what way have we robbed You? In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me..." (Mal 3:8-9)

We reviewed the consequences of not giving in four passages spoken by Jesus as recorded in the Gospels. In describing the judgment of our works, Jesus spoke about those that did not give food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothes to the

naked, or their time to those sick or in prison. They would be sent from Him into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Mt 21: 41-45). In the parable of the talents, Jesus tells us that we who do not use the talents that God has given us to do what He has created us to do, will be cast into the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Mt 25:14-30, also Lu 19:12-27). In the parable of the rich man who planned to build more barns to store his surplus, we are told that the man is a fool because the time of his death is upon him when he will lose his earthly wealth and he has no treasure stored with God (Lu 12: 16-21). And finally, in the parable of the Pharisee and Publican, we are told that if we give with a prideful heart we are not justified before God (Lu 18:11-14).

In the epistle portion of the New Testament, we learned that giving sparingly will have the consequence of few benefits (1 Co 9:6) and that he who has wealth and withholds what he has from people in need doesn't have the love of God in him (1Jn 3:17-18).

Are there consequences for not giving? Clearly a consequence for not giving is missing out on the benefits that God has promised when we give. But the scriptures tell us there are more serious consequences than that – not giving shows God's love is not in us and our eternal salvation is at risk.

Conclusion

The evidence in God's Word is overwhelming. The scriptures clearly tell us that God has given us all that we have and all that we need. He has asked us to follow His example by giving a portion of what we have to His work (the Church) and to those in need. He rewards with physical and spiritual benefits if we give and there are serious consequences if we selfishly hoard what He has so freely given to us. In light of this evidence, how can we who are Christians not respond to God's call to give?

Scripture References

Don't just take word of those that participated in the study. Read the references yourself and see what you think God is saying in His Word.

1. What has God given to us? Ge 1:29, Ge 9:3, De 8:11-18, De11:13-15, 1Chr 29:14, Jb 5:8-10, Ps 68:19, Ps 104:24, Ps 145:15-16, Ec 3:9-13 and 5:18-19, Je 9:23-24, Mt 7:11, Jn 3:16, Jn 4:10, Jn 6:32-35, Ro 5:8, Ro 6:23, Ro 8:32, Ep 2:8-9, Ep 5:1-2

2. Has God asked us to give? Ge 14:18-20, Le 27:30-32, De 12:19, De 14:22, De 15:11, De 16:16b-17, De 26:9-11a, 1Chr 16:28-29a and Ps 96:7-8, Is 58:6-7, Mt 5:42-48 and Lu 6:27-36, Lu 6:30-31, Lu 14:12-14, Ac 20:35, Ro 12:10-13, 20, Tit 3:14, He 13:2, He 13:16, Ja 2:14-17, 1Pe:4:10
3. Do we receive any benefits for giving? Ps 41:1, Pr 3:9-10, Pr 19:17, Pr:22:9, Pr 25:21, Pr 28:27, Ec 11:1, Mal 3:10, Is 58:6-12, Mt 6:1-4, Mt 10:42, Mt 19:21-22, Mt 25:34-40, Mk 9:41, Mk 10:21-22, Lu 6:38, Lu 12:22-34, Lu 11:13, Ga 6:9-10, 2Co 9:6-9, Phil 4:16-19, 1Tim 6:17-19, He 6:9-12, He 10:32-36, Rev 22:12
4. Are there consequences for not giving? Pr 11:24-25, Pr 28:27, Mal 3:8-9, Mt 25:41-45, Mt 25:14-30 and Lu 19:12-27, Lu 12:19-21, Lu 18:11-14, 1Co 9:6, 1Jn 3:17-18

AMERICAN CHRISTMAS AND ORTHODOX NATIVITY by Archbishop Seraphim of Chicago († 1987)

Submitted by Greg Rychlo

On American Christmas, some of you more, some of you to a lesser extent, celebrate, have parties, give presents to each other, etc. Alas, American Christmas is acquiring a more and more pagan character: so much time is wasted on shopping, often unnecessarily, for clothing, for everything exterior, while inner spiritual concerns remain almost in oblivion.

The Nativity of the God-Child Christ, the Redeemer of mankind, is hardly given any thought whatsoever. The kind, gentle image of Christ is supplanted by that of jolly old Santa Claus—a distressing, blasphemous caricature of one of God's greatest saints—Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker of Mira, whom the Roman Catholics contrived to exclude from their order of saints some years ago.

The psychology of the masses is infectious. We, the zealots of religious piety, understand this and, in a fatherly way, for the sake of love, look askance, although not without sadness, at this chaotic tribute in the country which gave shelter to our flock. At the same time, we sincerely ask all members of our Russian Church Abroad: having given notice to the secular world, when the embers of the American festival have died, give some attention to your inner self—prepare yourself spiritually, in the Orthodox way, for our Orthodox Feast of the Nativity of Christ. First of all, for at least the remainder of Lent—*fast*. After all, there are not many fast days left. Whoever is able,

prepare yourselves with fasting. On the holy eve of the feast, make certain that you come to church: the Nativity services are so beautiful! On the day of Nativity, try your best to get leave from work or school, even if you must lose a day's wages. Give them to God!

Keep holy, sanctify in a special way, this whole day of the Great Mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God. Do not do anything thoughtless on the Nativity. It is traditional on this day to visit the clergy, family or friends, to somehow reinforce the joy of the Festival. It is not sinful on this day to have guests or go out, within reason of course, so as not to lose the image of God, which we carry. It is certainly blessed for families and those of means [who have more of this world's goods] to invite people who are alone to their Nativity dinner, especially those in poverty, to warm them with kindness and attention. How good this is and pleasing to God!

On this great day we can and must celebrate, especially spiritually. Too often this celebration is substituted with uncontrolled drunken parties. It is not a crime to be merry and celebrate a Festival, but not wildly. Examine the Holy Gospels. There the word *joy* appears nearly twenty times, but the word *gladness* appears only once, and even then in conjunction with the word *joy*. I will introduce the text: *But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth* (Luke I, 13-14).

On the Feast day of the Nativity it has become customary, seemingly from the Three Wise Men, to give each other gifts, especially the poor and needy. This is a good and holy custom! In America, we may divide it into two parts: on American Christmas give gifts to family and friends, and on our Nativity to do good deeds; that is, send care packages to needy people, churches and charitable organizations.

In this way, we can pay tribute to the customary American Christmas as well as to our Great Orthodox Feast of the Nativity of Christ. God grant that this advice would find its way to your hearts!

As pastors, we understand how, when all around people are celebrating, it is difficult not to be caught up in the festivities. However, blessed are those who maintain their fasting and prayer throughout the whole period of the Nativity Fast, leaving aside all celebration until our Orthodox Nativity.

The Global Plan

Many of you have heard announcements and discussions on the “Global Plan” for our parish. Some of you may wonder what it is all about. Hopefully the following two articles will help. The first one is from an “admirer of the plan”. Following that is the plan itself. It is very important for our church. Please read each carefully.

What on Earth is the Global Plan?

IT IS A MAP for our priest, our councils, and for OUR whole community, who participate and work together, to make it all happen. We as individuals cannot be everywhere and do all things...we leave that to our Lord... with His grace, loving mercy, and a plan ...we can be “good stewards”...each do and be our part, with the talent He has given us...and work together as “the body” with Christ as our head.

If we have a map of the WHOLE ... then we can plan prioritize and do what we NEED to do, and WANT to do, with the resources we have available...time, money and energy.

- It is an assessment of our needs and wants in all areas
- It includes our worship and all that relates...
- Clergy’s needs, vestments, preparations for services and events, baking prosphora, buying supplies, music, iconography, layout of space etc...
- It includes everything to do with the building...inside & outside...present and future...
- Maintenance, design, new projects, signage, gardens, shovelling snow, etc...
- It includes all the things we do together...
- Ministry, fundraising, camp, coffee hour, potlucks, food bank etc...
- It includes absolutely everything and anything having to do with Holy Resurrection and how we are as a community...

SO ... take a look at the preliminary outlines on the bulletin, AND on that long piece of paper taped to the wall downstairs, and see what contribution is ‘a fit’ for you...

Submitted by a secret admirer of THE GLOBAL PLAN

HOLY RESURRECTION GLOBAL PLAN –

Worship, Community, Beautification, Building, Maintenance – October 2011

<p>Temple/Liturgy/Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ vestments...sort, edit & store in altar area vestments...PURCHASE altar cloths...RELOCATE TO cupboard in vestment room ▪ RELOCATE food bank ▪ side rooms...reorganize...NEW SHELVING as required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Iconographic Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> painting panels mystical supper ...IN PROCESS alcoves nativity/resurrection royal doors & evangelists saints 2'x 5' west wall...baptism/pantocrator/transfiguration vereneration icons feasts...PURCHASE altar items...PURCHASE west wall...baptism/pantocrator/transfiguration vereneration icons
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ furnishings layout <ul style="list-style-type: none"> chairs throne music director new furnishings ...font/file...ON ORDER lecterns & other furniture
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ altar floor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> touchup paint
<p>Narthex/Entry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ shelving, pamphlets, storage credenza clean out & organize, other children's books...space ▪ paint/cleaning throughout
<p>Office</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ shelf...NEW...for RELOCATED archives

Downstairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ paint throughout ▪ flooring in hall & bathrooms . . . NEW – some tiles in storage
Bathrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ roto-root . . . DONE ▪ new fixtures . . . DONE ▪ partitions . . . partial removal ▪ locks on doors – NEW ▪ accessories as required . . . unisex signs, storage as required
Kitchen Storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ remove 3 cupboards . . . relocate bake sale items to kitchen ▪ repair counters ▪ coffee station – donated credenza to big room . . . relocate coffee supplies ▪ possible shifting around of appliances ▪ open shelving for weekly use . . . NEW
Drinking Fountain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ remove
Water Hose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ remove
Big Room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ remove – piano, pews, mirrors, last supper, writing/presentation wall, rolling panels (2) ▪ relocate – stair climber (to existing piano corner), library corner (to office), children’s table in old library area
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ repair – stage cupboards with additional clips and shelving, add locks to 2 push tables to wall
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ purchase – visible icon corner with lampada, washable stage modular furniture
Office/Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ reorganize – folding table for Sunday school use, file cabinets to remain (reorganize contents)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ relocate – library to office, archives to upstairs office
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ repair – storage cabinet, add shelving & clips
Storage (under west stair) downstairs office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ clean out ▪ room for kitchen storage of food and non-combustible items
Storage (under east stair) alter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ clean out ▪ shelving – new for relocated food bank ▪ organize ▪ small recycle bins – NEW ▪ big recycle bins – relocate to shed
Paint/Cleaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ throughout

Shed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ additional shelving for storage ▪ recycle bins
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ windows – upstairs and downstairs ▪ entry doors ▪ permanent sound and camera downstairs
Maintenance & Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ snow removal ▪ yard care ▪ outdoor sprinklers *** ▪ sewer gas *** ▪ furnace filter *** ▪ furnace inspection ▪ fire extinguisher for alter ▪ furnace room maintained – no storage ▪ maintenance room – organize ▪ purchase tools as required ▪ remove unnecessary and unused items
Functioning as a Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ coming to services ▪ coffee hour ▪ cleaning ▪ volunteering – phoning committee ▪ fellowship & interaction
Legend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ urgent ▪ current ▪ completed

NB: east and west assume altar is in the east & not real direction

THE PARISH SURVEY

The Parish Survey has been an ongoing process for the past three years. It was originally developed in order that council may discover ways to renew the parish. Later it was decided that renewal comes through the Word. But council thought it could have benefits in another ways. The survey would be a valuable in asking parishioners their interests, their likes (and dislikes), ways their talents could help serve God and so on. Here are some of the findings from the surveys received. We ask that those who have not yet filled out a survey to contact Betty Rohr or John Synchronick. Your responses are important to us.

November, 2011 HROC Survey Results

Survey collection began mid-March 2011. Most surveys were conducted by one-on-one interviews but individuals were given the option to fill out the survey on their own. We continue to receive responses – so contact Betty Rohr or John Synchronic if you would like to have an interview by one of our council members or if you would like to fill it out on your own.

As of mid-November 2011, 35 surveys were returned from 32 households. This response represents approximately 35% of expected household response.

The responses to each question are summarized briefly that is followed with a number in brackets to indicate the number of people that provided a similar response (#) if more than 1 person.

1) What do you cherish the most about your church community here at Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church (HROC)? (What do you appreciate?)

- people help; give rides; show support (3)
- friendly (8)
- the cross
- fellowship (3)
- community, follow Christ (10)
- spiritual guidance
- welcoming & accepting of newcomers & accepting in general (15)
- always learning
- hard working members (2)
- diversity with belonging; uniqueness to other orthodox churches (4)
- repetition 3 x
- liturgy/ worship. Temple (8)
- foodbank
- belonging; feel god wants me here (4)
- priest (6)
- ordained clergy
- Father Pau emails
- Chairlift
- potlucks
- everyone allowed to sing; join in when able (3)
- children activities camp Sunday school (4)
- Orthodox way; link to church present past and future (3)
- infrastructure progress

- music (2)
- kiss of peace
- PA System
- safe haven spiritual container in insane world; harbor from storm; solace (5)
- English services
- don't feel pressured can move a own pace
- not rule dominated
- not super ethic
- faithful members (7)

2) Is there something (or some things) in particular about HROC that bother(s) you and that you would like to see changed?

- more focus on evangelism
- more church activity to attract children (3)
- yard and building maintained more regularly
- more people involved/ taking ownership/untidiness uncaring of building (5)
- more connection with others in church; develop welcoming especially with Coptic orthodox that can surpass differences; get to know one another; younger taking on leadership decision making (5)
- why patterns established to accommodate early church can't change to accommodate our times and more Canadian
- new format to Sunday meal and coffee time or eliminate
- miss sharing of paschal baskets
- Cremation?
- people sharing and testimonies just after service
- people to sit or stand at same time in liturgy
- culture to enter church barefoot so sometimes uncomfortable
- transportation to church
- bathrooms need fixing (3)
- Disruptive children
- language translations of announcements, homilies,
- teaching on scriptures and fathers; keep eyes on Christ more books and videos in library and videos for children
- wise to spiritual warfare
- clear direct communication of community issues
- help finding peace in busyness
- policy development for giving, funeral lunches, membership
- for everyone to know the power of the cross
- I get out what I put in
- DVD of church services since unable to come to church
- helping needy with clothing, food, disabled

- speakers with spiritual gifts
- sweep things under the rug and not dealing effectively with some issues
- do not like protestant hymns during communion (3)
- children and parent teachings outside of liturgy
- personal liturgical music (2)
- less pews (2)
- more icons (2)
- hard to adapt to changing priests, hope Fr. Pau stays
- a “how to book” or mentors to help and encourage volunteers

3) What do you need to nourish your spiritual life more adequately?

a. In general

- personal prayer (5)
- good living
- personal scripture; Bible study(4)
- mentorship
- orthodox history; more understanding of what we do (2)
- nourish soul
- oil, holy mysteries
- liturgy in Amharic (sp)
- prayerful activities/ outside of church (4)
- personal icon
- more involved to caring for church (2)
- young adult functions; men's group (3)
- more guest speakers (2)
- to attend more services; more church life (3)
- an adult time; a children time; group interaction (2)
- social activities, confessions more often, make room for God and his peace to follow (2)
- way to be involved from home and have visits
- church offers enough but I am not able to take all I possibly could
- living in a spiritual community
- personal sharing like Walde's
- focus on Christ/God (3)
- retreats
- find illness and obstacle to being faithful

b. Specifically at or from HROC?

- weekly Bible study; prayer meeting (5)
- grow spiritually/to come to church (4)
- confession (2) homilies
- Eucharist (2)

- icons candles incense atmosphere
- encourage prayer
- shorter services so I could participate more; long services keep people away
- children at altar and helping with liturgy (2)
- social activities pancake breakfast, games night, sporting, testimonial
- create climate of openness and support to encourage positive change; rather than punitive (2)
- life skills and communication workshops for church community
- service books for feast days and pamphlets on services, baptism, funerals
- support families in mourning sickness
- read books Christian life, liturgy
- being a reader helps motivate attendance at church
- post communion prayers and silence

4) What talents or gifts do you possess that you would like to share with others at HROC?

- serving others; helping others of my culture (4)
- what I am asked to do
- children activities (3)
- gifts of the Holy Spirit
- baking sewing cooking (8)
- sing spiritual songs in my language like Tigrinia (sp) (5)
- spiritual crafts art poetry, writing, editing (4)
- greet
- sacristini
- candles
- maintenance; cleaning (3)
- reading
- St. Nicholas impersonation
- financial budgeting (2)
- be with
- share testimony
- vessel for Christ
- longevity with HROC (2)
- praying for others
- organizing
- driving
- hospitality
- visiting sick
- handyman

- facilitate a women's group
- library
- setting up for baptisms
- multimedia

5. Which of the following areas of interest might you like to participate in (assuming you have the time)?

<input type="checkbox"/> Coffee hour fellowship	Almost all
<input type="checkbox"/> Potluck meals/other hospitality	23
<input type="checkbox"/> Bible studies	19
<input type="radio"/> Regular basis	7
<input type="radio"/> Intermittent/intensive	11
<input type="checkbox"/> Teachings	20
<input type="radio"/> Topic suggestions:	3 – church ways; saints; prayer
<input type="radio"/> Regular	2
<input type="radio"/> Intermittent and intensive	13
<input type="checkbox"/> Prayer meetings	11
<input type="radio"/> How often	3 - weekly; monthly;
<input type="radio"/> Where	Church; church basement
<input type="checkbox"/> Speaker events	16
<input type="radio"/> Topic suggestions	
<input type="radio"/> Speaker suggestions	
<input type="checkbox"/> Musical evenings	11
<input type="radio"/> Suggestions (i.e. coffee house)	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Liturgical music	17
<input type="radio"/> Singing	12
<input type="radio"/> Chanting	6
<input type="checkbox"/> Reading at services	11
<input type="checkbox"/> Serving in the altar	4
<input type="checkbox"/> Outreach activities	10
<input type="radio"/> Evangelization	2
<input type="radio"/> Community service	7
<input type="radio"/> Both	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Hospital	11
<input type="radio"/> Or shut-in	8
<input type="checkbox"/> Welcoming newcomers	6
<input type="checkbox"/> Writing	8
<input type="radio"/> Good news quarterly	4

<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday school	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Youth activities	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Service on the Parish Council	6
<input type="checkbox"/> Building and property development and maintenance	7
<input type="checkbox"/> Church cleaning	14
<input type="checkbox"/> Beautification of church premises	7
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial planning	3
<input type="radio"/> Accounting	1
<input type="radio"/> Bookkeeping	2
<input type="radio"/> Fund-raising	4
<input type="checkbox"/> Office and secretarial assistance	1

THE PARISHIONERS' PONDERINGS

Lyrical Thanksgivings to God our Saviour # 2

Submitted by Subdeacon James Nicholas

Tropar to Saint Nicholas Wonderworker of Myra in Tone 4

The truth of things revealed you to your flock as a rule of faith, an icon of meekness and a teacher of temperance; therefore, you have achieved the heights by humility, riches by poverty.

O Father and Hierarch Nicholas, intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved !

Holy Father Nicholas (based on the Tropar to Saint Nicholas)

Chorus

Holy Father Nicholas! Ask Christ our God to save our souls!

You gave without receiving you lived the faith believing, that wealth through poverty and greatness through humility, brings us all closer to Jesus Christ, all closer to Jesus.

Put not your trust in princes, in whom there is no salvation.

Their breath departs they return to the earth.

Where is the righteous one who lives second birth!

Chorus

Holy Father Nicholas! Ask Christ our God to save our souls!
You gave without receiving you lived the faith believing,
that wealth through poverty and greatness through humility,
brings us all closer to Jesus Christ, all closer to Jesus.

Man's days on earth are like delicate grass.
It withers and fades and soon is past.
The Saints whose lives have gone on before.
Look to their faithfulness which cannot be ignored

Chorus

Holy Father Nicholas! Ask Christ our God to save our souls!
You gave without receiving you lived the faith believing,
that wealth through poverty and greatness through humility,
brings us all closer to Jesus Christ, all closer to Jesus

You have got to have hope

You. have got to have hope, not in the world , but in things not well defined.
Reality is seen opaquely through those who wish to have life refined.

Chorus

O sweet reality is locked away in shallow dreams. O Lord and in treasures handmade!

We have to know mercy in perfect love, pure harmony from up and above
I hope that I will bring staggered heart and wounded mind to the King!

Chorus

O sweet reality is locked away in shallow dreams. O Lord and in treasures handmade!

We have got to let go our hands unclasp, the things we hold on just will not last.
And when the day is come, the battle is fought and the race has been one.

Chorus

O sweet reality won't slip way in endless dreams. O Lord and day dream holidays!

Lord we just have to have hope!

World without end

Glory to the Father! Glory to the Son! Glory to the Spirit! The three in One!
We are His people and He is our God! Together we will walk the road where Saints
and Angels trod.

Chorus

And He will come with myriads of Angels! He shall reign our Savior Victorious!
The trumpets sound, the end of Ages!
God of our Fathers! World without end!
God of our Fathers! World without end!

Glory in the highest, peace good will toward men!
Jesus our Savior the Father did send!
Born of the Virgin, conceived without sin!
Crucified for the sins of the world.
On the third day He rose again!

Chorus

And He will come with myriads of Angels! He shall reign our Saviour Victorious!
The trumpets sound, the end of Ages!
God of our Fathers! World without end!
God of our Fathers! World without end!

HUMOR

Submitted by our "Punny" Sub Deacon James

Those who jump off a bridge in Paris are in Seine ..

A man's home is his castle, in a manor of speaking.

Dijon vu - the same mustard as before.

Shotgun wedding - A case of wife or death.

A hangover is the wrath of grapes.

Does the name Pavlov ring a bell?

Reading while sunbathing makes you well red.

When two egotists meet, it's an I for an I.

A bicycle can't stand on its own because it is two tired.

What's the definition of a will? (It's a dead give away.)



Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.

In democracy your vote counts. In feudalism your count votes.

She was engaged to a boyfriend with a wooden leg but broke it off.

A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion.

If you don't pay your exorcist, You get repossessed

With her marriage, he got a new name and a dress.

The man who fell into an upholstery machine is fully recovered.

You feel stuck with your debt if you can't budge it.

Local Area Network in Australia - the LAN down under.

Every calendar's days are numbered.

A lot of money is tainted - Taint yours and taint mine.

A boiled egg in the morning is hard to beat.

He had a photographic memory that was never developed.

A midget fortune-teller who escapes from prison is a small medium at large.

Once you've seen one shopping centre, You've seen a mall.

Bakers trade bread recipes on a knead-to-know basis.

Santa's helpers are subordinate clauses.

Acupuncture is a jab well done.

These are some Good News items that we hope interest you. If you have any comments on them or anything else in Parish life, please contact anyone on parish council. On behalf of the Holy Resurrection Church Council and Clergy, please have a blessed Christmas and New Year!
Christ is Born! Let us Glorify Him!



**CHRIST IS BORN!
GLORIFY HIM!**