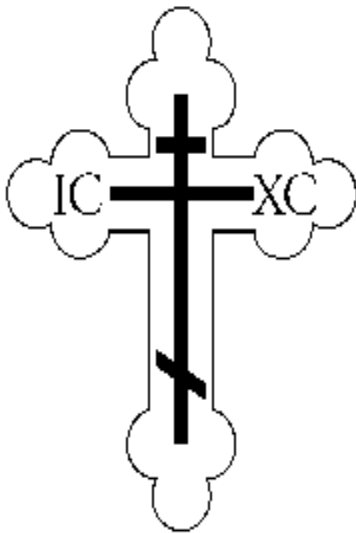


“GOOD NEWS”

Glory To Jesus Christ!
Glory Forever!



Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church

2202 Lorne Avenue Saskatoon, Sask.

PHONE: 665-3155

Rector: Fr. Cyprian Hutchison 931-3903

www.hrochurch.org

I am the Resurrection and the Life.
Whoever believes in me shall not die,
but shall have life everlasting.

~ John 11:25

Volume VII- Winter Edition
Compilation: Greg Ryehlo
Editing and Format: Lorraine Grier

Father's Forum

"In the form of a servant" (Philippians 2:7): Some reflections at Christmas-time

When I first entered the Orthodox Church (almost exactly thirty years ago), one of the many things that struck me as both unusual and wonderful was the way that the priest administered communion by addressing each communicant as 'Servant of God' and using their proper Christian name. It seemed so much more intimate and personal than just having a wafer placed on one's tongue with the cursory words: "Body of Christ."

In fact, in the original Greek of the liturgical texts, the word here translated as 'servant' is *doulos*, whose most accurate meaning is actually 'a slave' rather than the more genteel 'servant.' Furthermore, my Greek lexicon informs me that a *doulos* designated a person who was *born* a slave (a 'slave by nature' if you like) as opposed to someone who became a slave after being captured in wartime. How awesome, then, to contemplate that in the Liturgy, we are being addressed as God's *slaves* – as those who are invited to live in perfect and total obedience to their Lord (albeit in an obedience of love rather than of mere servitude). Our model for what it means *for me* to be really and truly and willingly 'God's slave' is of course our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

In his Letter to the Philippians (who lived in the north-eastern part of what is now Greece), St. Paul transmitted to them (and to us) a beautiful poem (Philippians 2:6-11) which most modern scholars believe was probably a hymn used in the Christians' assemblies for worship (perhaps in Philippi or elsewhere). In it, St. Paul commends Christ to his readers as the one who "being in the form of God, made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a ***doulos*** and coming in the likeness of men," who then "humbled himself and became obedient [to God] to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Phil 2:6-8).

I'm sure that few of us can imagine being so in love with God (as Jesus surely was) as to be "ready, willing and able" to love and serve Him obediently to the point of death. Yet, that is exactly what Jesus did "for us men and for our salvation" (as we say in the Creed). In reflecting on this image of perfect obedience, however, we are reminded by Scripture that the obedience that Christ showed in going to the cross on Golgotha was obedience that he learned gradually in a human manner just as we must learn it. The author of Hebrews (whether Paul or another) tells us: "Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things He suffered, and having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Hebrews 5:8-9).

In this 'Season of Light' in the depths of our prairie winter, as we celebrate at church and with loved ones the glorious Feasts of Nativity and Theophany, we do well to recall that this process of Christ's learning perfect humility and obedience through suffering began long before the events of Gethsemane or Golgotha. The Holy Fathers like to remind us that the very act of Christ's 'agreeing' to be conceived as the man Jesus in the womb of the Holy Virgin

involved, in a manner beyond comprehension, his entering the 'school of obedience.' The human sufferings of the Messiah, which were to reach their climax on Calvary, were initiated surely by his very birth, a transitional event (according to psychologists) that is almost as traumatic for us humans as our eventual dying. Before reaching too advanced an age, Jesus must have begun to realize and accept the fact that he had come into a world where his life was already in danger at the hands of evil tyrants like Herod. As the intuition of his divine vocation and unique relationship to his Heavenly Father dawned on his human consciousness, the Lord may have had to endure misunderstanding and possibly ridicule from those near and dear to him, to the point of being "despised and rejected of men" (Isaiah 53:3) in his hometown of Nazareth. In his Galilean wanderings, he learned the plight of the marginalized and homeless so that he was able to observe plaintively that though "foxes have holes and birds have nests, the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head" (Luke 9:58). Finally, when Jesus comes to John at the Jordan, he insists on receiving baptism in exactly the same fashion as the "brood of vipers" that came out to be baptized by John (Luke 3:7).

If we accept that Christ's incarnation was "really real" and involved his assuming 'real' human nature, we must accept as well that the gradual, undoubtedly painful process of his learning humility and becoming obedient cannot have been easy or in any way 'automatic' for him. For this reason during this Holy Season, let us rejoice as we welcome the Lord Jesus that "we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are" (Hebrews 4:15). Glory to God for all things, and may He send down upon you and your families His abundant blessings at this time and throughout the New Year.

With love in Christ,
Your pastor Father Cyprian

President's Message

Christ is born! Let us Glorify Him! So often we equate part of the Christmas season with "gifts", whether it be with giving or receiving. We are so fortunate to be able to experience both thanks to His Grace. This is especially true with being able to serve this parish. There have been times where I have felt that the task of being Parish Council President has been burdensome and onerous. I think that in some regard this is normal but the feeling has been more prevalent lately. That is until I had a small epiphany. I realized what a wonderful gift I had been given. That gift was the ability to be able to serve God in a very unique way, by serving in his Holy House and His people meaning you the members of Holy Resurrection. By serving on Church Council I had been given a gift and in turn I am able to give a gift. The gift of service! What a wonderful opportunity! One

that should be embraced! I will continue to Glorify God who works in my life in ways that are not always immediately apparent. I hope and pray He continues to work in yours. May He in His Grace give you the gift of service and may you embrace it, nurture it and share it with those who we love in Christ's name.

Christ Is Born! Let us Glorify Him!

Greg Rychlo
Parish Council President

Food Bank Requests

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. Remember that all Church Council members will assist if there are persons that come to you in need. Contact Kim Fast for further information.

If you have someone come to you in for assistance other than food, please contact Fr. Cyprian 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 with in 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 gift to grow.

Youth

The following is a history of one of our magnificent saints, Saint Nicholas of Myra. Please read this as a prelude to pictures of our youngsters in their celebration of the Feast of St. Nicholas.

Saint Nicholas was born around the year 280 AD in the city of Patra, province of Lycia(present day Turkey).

Theophanes and Nonna were his parents they were wealthy and pious Christians. The Lord revealed to them a numerous times by signs that the grace of God was truly upon their child, even at very young age.

Nicholas as a young man that was very virtuous and was inclined towards strict abstinence and a solitary life.

He attended church often and enjoyed studying the scriptures, while being directed by his Uncle, the Bishop of Patra whose name was also Nicholas.

St. Nicholas soon was encouraged by his parents towards the service of the Lord and when he had matured, he was ordained a Priest, after which he entered into a more intense ascetic discipline.

As Nicholas embraced this life of service to the Lord, he attended many vigils and was given to much prayer and fasting, thus perfecting himself in virtue.

St. Nicholas's virtuous life was being recognized by many and was soon elected the Bishop of Myra.

Bishop Nicholas was known for his unwavering faith and zeal, sincere humility, meekness and gentleness, he also gave with compassion and liberality towards the needs of poor and rejected of society.

In the year 325 AD St. Nicholas attended the First Ecumenical Council and defended the Orthodox faith with such fervour as he refuted the false teaching of Arius.

There are many other such stories about this Saint of God Nicholas, he was known as was also know as the Father of Orphans, a comforter of those who suffer, the Patron Saint of Children and those who are lost at sea.

Holy Hierarch Nicholas pray to God for us, that our souls may be saved!

Ask The Clergy

Question #1: “I recently told a man in conversation that, according to the teaching of the Orthodox Church, it is a sin to wish for somebody’s death. He did not believe my statement, and insisted that the only sin would be to actually kill another person. Am I correct in my belief that our Church considers it sinful to wish for the death of another person? Thank you.”

Reply: To the best of my knowledge, there has never been any ‘official’ Church doctrinal statement or specific legislation on this matter. However, based on the clear and quite explicit teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ, I believe that your position is essentially correct.

In his ‘Sermon on the Mount’, Jesus commands us: “Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you” (Matthew 5:44). No doubt recognizing that some of his hearers would object that his standards were impossibly high, Jesus concludes his remarks on this subject by declaring: “You must be perfect just as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5: 48).

A few verses before this teaching on love of enemies, Jesus holds his followers to another very lofty standard when he insists that “whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matthew 5:28). In keeping with the rigorous spirit of this specific teaching, I suspect that Jesus would agree that anyone looking at another person with murderous thoughts “has already committed murder in his heart.”

One of the few situations that I can imagine it being ‘OK’ to wish for the death of another person would be in the case where a loved one is terminally ill and suffering greatly, and we beg God to hasten their death in a “painless, blameless and peaceful” manner. However, even in this special circumstance, it seems to me that the most Christian prayer of all would be to say “Thy will be done.”

I hope that these thoughts may be helpful to you in discussing this most serious matter with your friend.

Question #2: “Why is there an Orthodox Pope (in the Coptic Orthodox Church)? Does he have the same role as a Patriarch?”

Reply: From the very early centuries of Christian church history, it became common to regard (and refer to) the heads of local Christian communities (especially bishops, sometimes presbyters or ‘priests’) as the ‘Fathers’ of their communities. Their church leadership role was supposed to reflect the Fatherhood of God, or the position of a wise and loving father in a human family.

After the Emperor Constantine recognized Christianity as a legal religion within the Roman Empire (in 313 AD), the Church gradually became organized into large regional units (corresponding to the old Roman political divisions called ‘provinces’). It became customary to refer to the chief bishops of certain large or important provinces as the ‘Patriarchs’ of their particular local churches. ‘Patriarch’ is a Greek word that means literally “the chief or head of a family” – in other words, the Patriarch is ‘Father’ to a large ‘church-family’ that is centred in a major city (such as Antioch in Syria, Alexandria in Egypt, or Rome in Italy).

The title of ‘Pope’ is derived from *papa* or *papas*, a Greek word that eventually passed over into Latin, and which is the literal equivalent of ‘daddy’ in English or ‘papa’ in French (and sometimes in English, too). Starting around 250 AD in Alexandria, and about 450 AD in Rome, the bishops of these cities began adding ‘Pope’ to their list of titles. Thus, even today, the head of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt is styled “Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria.” The head of the Roman Catholic Church is usually just referred to as “the Pope of Rome” but, until very recently, one of his other official titles was “Patriarch of the West.”

So ‘Pope’ and ‘Patriarch’ are really just two different ways of saying the same thing: that a ‘chief bishop’ is supposed to be a loving and wise ‘Father-in-God’ for his Church.

Inspirational Reading

Sunday January 3rd, 2010: Reader Michael Luciuk, who is presently working at St. John the Compassionate Mission in Toronto, Ontario spoke to the parish about his experiences. To see the mission on line and learn more, visit stjohnsmisson.org

What is poverty? It is a lack, brokenness, an inwardness focused on oneself. It is not a question of income. A few of the people that are at the mission have more money than I do. You can sometimes wonder who someone is texting on their blackberries. But then there are some living above Jilly's - after rent and utilities - \$68 to pay for everything for the rest of the month (where would you

spend that \$68?). The physical poverty is often a symptom of a deeper emotional and ultimately spiritual poverty that exists. St. John the Compassionate mission is a place meant to combat that. I believe mission is about fulfilling the needs around us. As such it has many elements of this mission children, families (thrift), people from shelters, people on the streets, allowed to share a meal, a moment, given a task or job, a sense of accomplishment, people completely alone, people suffering of traumas early in life, addictions, and general pain.

And we pray: it is centered around prayer, around liturgy. Without the mission, the liturgy would lose some credibility (what is prayer if it does not motivate to act?) and without liturgy the mission would be in danger of becoming like every other social work agency. St John Chrysostom and St Basil both say that every church should have a hospital/hostel as a liturgy after the Liturgy. It is this community, the communion of the Eucharist that allows healing to take place and Gods work to manifest.

Many of you may ask me if I am enjoying myself or if this is fun. I think this is the wrong question to ask. I certainly find it rewarding, and there of moments of rapture, of fellowship and jest. However, this is not glamorous work. My four months have involved long, mundane, unexotic, and arduous errands and tasks such as cleaning a kitchen or trimming a lamp. My first 6 days, I did nothing but sit around and talk with people, feeling completely useless. One is constantly humbled that what they are doing was done fine, if not better, by someone else before I came, that what I am doing is drop in a bucket.

We are open late at night 5pm -9pm until shelters open and early in the morning 7am until 9am after the shelters close. We cook food, clean, organize, fix things, pray and generally just fellowship with people. Playing cards, talking about life, etc.

It is tough: I have people threatening suicide, people crying, or even lashing out at others. ("Don't sing carols") It also means being the only person talking to a fellow dying, and being the only person and I just don't have the energy to help everyone. It means not giving a present to a distraught angry mother because we have ran out and explaining this to them, when you think that it is completely unfair; or wearing your jacket in the mission, because it can't afford to leave heat on during its closed days. Or finding a 19 yr old couple a shelter bed and then being told that you have no money (2 tokens) to get them the 10km to the shelter. It also means being exhausted so much that you don't want to talk to anyone, except perhaps to unload on them.

You feel exhausted and disheartened, because you have given everything you can, and that is not enough. You sometimes feel angry at the world, why is it so unfair. Why do many of these people who are not much different than I have to suffer through such hardship. You don't have enough turkeys to give to

everyone, someone that comes in and cries about losing his family, a homeless man in a wheelchair dying alone because the ground he slept on was poisoned. Why this is wonderful hearted women told she is too stupid to do anything?

Your ideals of what the world is, how the church should act, what does it mean to know Christ, and what mission is are shattered by a cold and harsh reality. But I have to tell you that Christ is there, He who came to the lowest humbling of a cross is also there in the suffering and hells of the people I meet. A women once came into the mission who had a life full of pain, threatening suicide with a knife, Father Roberto, normally wouldn't do this, but said, "___, lets pray". The first words out of her mouth was not "why did you let this happen", nor "why", nor "please" but thanksgiving.

This is a God that people don't want to know, who would rather have thrones and gold cathedrals, but it is the God of the cross, of a homeless family in Palestine whose birth was announced by the slaughter of innocents. One who went to the lowest point, and bore all our brokenness so that no matter where we are we can come to him. (One of resurrection in the deepest darkest places)

This is the God of the mission. Without the incarnation, there is no reason for mission. But rather it is by living out the Gospel (no matter the consequences), and being Christ to a person is what makes this place unique and worth it. Having compassion on a person, literally meaning the wrenching of one's stomach, for someone's need and attempting to fulfill it. I may never see anything the world calls success: most of these people will still be going to the mission 5 yrs from now. Many will never become Orthodox, but I do see Christ. I see people getting out of their inwardness, looking around, and people sharing a meal or story. People who for the first time, are starting to feel that they are valued, that they have a purpose and meaning in their life.

Mission is perhaps more for people who do the mission then for those who receive. In this dialogue to the world your faith is challenged, broken and then rebuilt. It is in this brokenness that you start learning who God is, and who you are not. One learns how hard it is to simply live the gospel call. The poor are there to offer our church an opportunity to live its life in Christ, anything less and we have failed. I feel condemned sometimes, that I have not done enough. To be sure, I have a long way to go and learn, but I hope I can go to asleep knowing I fed the hungry, visited the lonely, and protected the widow.

Christmas Reflection - submitted by Sub Deacon James

This season of the Nativity of Our Lord has special warmth and peace for those who have the opportunity, even for a moment, to pause and shut out the bustle of the world, gather the beauty of the season into the heart and ponder its wonder and mystery!

Make room O Bethlehem! Are we making room for God? Is Jesus knocking at the door of our hearts? Is there room for Him at the Inn of our hearts? May we not turn Him away!

” Lift up your heads, O ye gates and even lift them up ye everlasting doors; so that the King of Glory shall come in”! (Psalms 24:9)

The King of Glory is born today of the Virgin Mary! May God grant us hearts that are open and ears that are of hearing! The Sun of Righteousness has shone forth upon the world! May God grant us His light in this world of darkness! May we see Him more clearly as the precious Pearl of Great Price. The Orient on High is born! In the city of David!

*Thy Nativity O Christ our God had shone to the world the light of wisdom!
For by it, those who worshipped the stars were taught by a star to adore thee, the Sun of righteousness and to know Thee, the Orient from on high, O Lord Glory to Thee!*

The Angels proclaim!
Glory to God in the Highest!
Peace on earth!
Good will towards men!
Emmanuel! God with us! Born today of the Virgin Mary!
The Word of God wraps himself with human flesh for our salvation!

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His Glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1: 14)

“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold a virgin shall will be with child and bear a son, and she will call his name Emmanuel.” (Isaiah 7:14)

The Orthodox Church with its hymnography paints a powerful picture for us. The hymns are inspired by Scripture, written by saints who were illumined by the Holy Spirit!

What can we offer thee O Christ, Who for our sakes has appeared on earth as man? Every creature made by Thee offers Thee thanks. The angels offer Thee a hymn; heaven a star; the Magi gifts, the shepherds, their wonder; the earth it's

cave; the wilderness, the manger; and we offer Thee a Virgin Mother. O Pre-eternal God have mercy on us!

The offering of the Virgin Mother Mary the Theotokos, (God bearer) is especially important to all mankind, in her birth giving of the Saviour, this enables us to bear Christ in our hearts!

St. Cyril of Alexandria says: “she bore Emmanuel, Who is truly God. And the Word was made flesh (John1:14) and was born according to the flesh so that we might be found to be brothers of Him, Who is above all creation.”

What a profound mystery! Joy of Joys! That which was impossible is now possible, for with God all things are possible!

Mary, the Mother of God, is the model of the church. By her example she helps us to be willing to say yes to God, as shown by her humility and her willingness to believe it that which is not seen or possible for man but by God!

“Now faith is the substance of things hope for, the evidence of things not seen. “ (Hebrews 11:1)

St. Joseph the hymnographer chants a most beautiful refrain:

“Like a lily, like a fragrant rose, like a divine scent did the All-Divine Word find thee, O all-pure Bride of God; and He made His abode within thy womb, making fragrant our nature which had been full of ill odor through sin. Thus in the fullness of time, He raised up man who of old had grievously fallen, leading him up to pristine beauty!”

St. Ephraim the Syrian says:

“In the days of the king who enrolled men in the book of the dead, our Redeemer came down and enrolled men in the book of the living. He enrolled, and they were also: on high He enrolled us, on earth they enrolled Him. Glory to His name! “

Saint John of Damascus speaks : of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, the three youths in the Babylonian furnace (Daniel 3), saying; “The children of the Old Covenant who walked in the fire, yet were not burnt, prefigured the womb of the Maiden that remained sealed, when she gave birth in fashion past nature. It was the same grace of God that brought forth these wonders to pass, in a miracle.”

“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he will save his people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:21)

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a saviour which is Christ The Lord.” (Luke 2:11)

May God grant us a heart of praise, adoration and worship to the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords who comes to us this Christmas Day wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

Glory to God for all things!

The following is an excerpt from *Sacred Symbol That Speak* Volume 1 by Anthony M. Coniaris.

----- The Feast of Lights -----

In the early Church, Epiphany --- the day of Christ’s baptism --- became one of the days on which the pagan converts to Christianity were received into the Church through baptism. Each newly-baptized convert held the baptismal candle during the liturgy. In addition to this, Christians who had already been baptized brought their baptismal candles to church on this day to renew their baptismal vows; to renew the commitment to Christ which they had made at baptism. As a result, everyone in the congregation held a lighted candle on the feast on Epiphany. The churches became a sea of lights. Hence, this day came to be called in Greek “ta Fota” or the Feast of Lights.

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Parishioners’ Ponderings

The following is a submission by Vickie Guenther. Please pray for peace, strength and healing for her and her family.

Dear Church Family,

As you know Dave was diagnosed with a tumor about a year ago. We were all in shock then are still struggling trying to get our head around it. This last year has been a very hard year with all the complications that Dave has had, it felt like we never had a break. Through everything that has happened we know and believe that God is in control of our lives, sometimes we’ve wondered and been angry but still knowing he is there.

Some people have said to me (Vickie) I don’t know how you can handle what’s happening in your life I remember feeling like that before when

someone else was going through a hard time, I've found out that God really does give you the grace when you need it.

We want you to know that we couldn't have gone through this last year without you. Your prayers and financial support have been a blessing and a gift to us. Please continue to keep us in your prayers (we need all we can get). Our hope is that someday we may pay forward the kindness that has been shown us in our time of need.

We wish everyone a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Vickie Guenther

Poem by Susan Syrnick

The Word made Flesh

The Word made flesh,
-the word foretold.
The Logos Written,
The Logos sold.

The Alpha-Omega
In Cradle laid,
In manger, in stable,
In poverty paid.
From Glory to Glory,
In beauty bright,
In Body, in Spirit,
In darkness gave Light.
The Alpha-Omega,
In Cradle Laid,
Love's perfect surrender,
In poverty saved.

The Word made Flesh,
The Logos Written,
The word foretold,
The sacrifice given.

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. The members are: Parish Priest: Fr. Cyprian Auxiliary Priest: Father Dan Guenther Council President: Greg Rychlo, Secretary: Becky Machnee, Financial Committee: David Grier, Betty Rohr, Cory Owen, Jan Sedgewick, Maintenance: Subdeacon Neil Sedgewick, , Reader Max Ferguson, Paul Guenther, Events Committee: Aggie Friesen, Lorraine Grier, Chrystal Herrem, Members At Large: Kim Fast, Savelia Curniski.



CHRIST IS BORN!

GLORIFY HIM!

