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Orthodox Canada



A Journal of Orthodox Christianity

Vol.4 No.1
Pascha
2009

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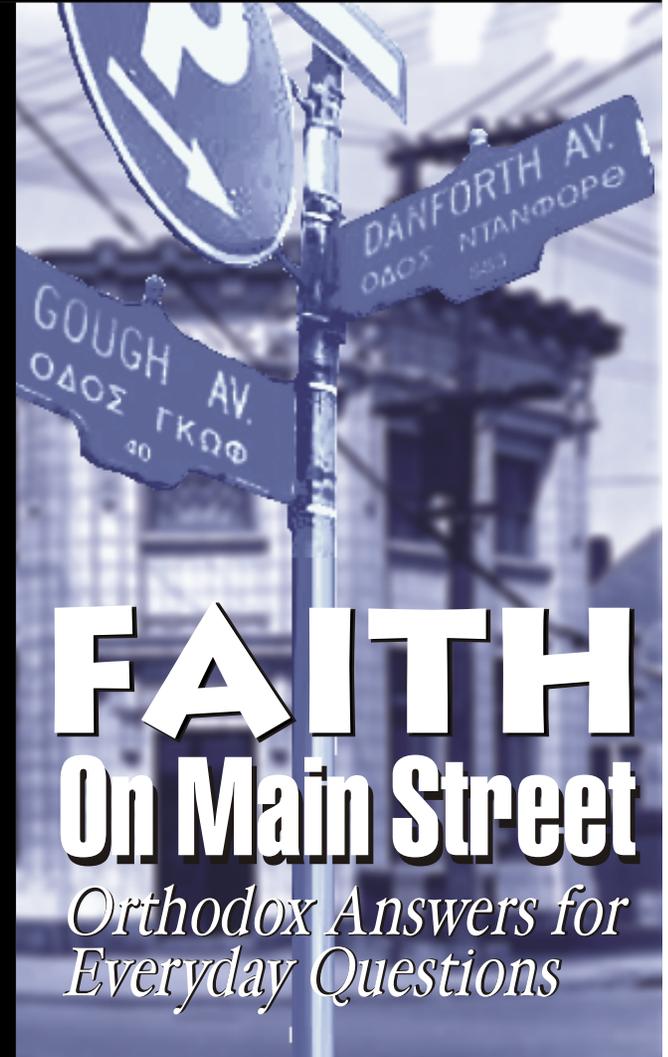
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FAITH On Main Street

*Orthodox Answers for
Everyday Questions*

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FROM THE EDITOR: *Answering Main Street*

Some years ago, I had the pleasure of dining in Toronto's "Greek Town" with a sister in Christ, a Greek grandmother who had been around the Church all her life, and who was a true realist.

As we walked through the warm summer streets, surrounded by mobs of young people – many of them Greek, and presumably Orthodox Christians – my friend let out an audible exclamation.

"Look at them, Father – they don't even know what an Orthodox priest is! Why aren't they at Church?! They should be ashamed of themselves!"

Of course hearing this, all these young people heard the voice of their own *yia-yia*, or grandmother, confronting them with their own lack of piety, spiritual observance, and care for their Faith.

About a year later, a young friend – also Greek – was confessing her frustration that the Church didn't provide answers for her life and the lives of those she knows – answers on questions about marital life, family finances, the news we see on television, and how to answer the pointed questions of her atheist co-workers.

"But the Orthodox Church *does* provide those answers," I protested. "Then why have I never heard them?" she asked, poignantly.

She had an excellent point. Where had the breakdown occurred between the zeal of the grandmother, and the yearning for answers of the young woman?

I should note here, that both women were and are regular churchgoers, and both have family members who all but ignore their Orthodox faith. The two women are not related; I don't believe they have ever met. Yet in a very real way, their questions reflected two sides of the same coin.

Politicians sometimes talk about the divisions that exist between "Bay Street", the centre of economic life, and "Main Street", the centre of *real* life. Perhaps it is a result of a generation gap, or growing secularism, immigration patterns or the popular media, but somewhere in the last

fifty years, Canada's "Main Street" stopped hearing the answers given by the Church. In many cases, Canadians had never heard the eternal answers offered by the Orthodox Church, of course, but they at least had some share of Christian truth from the society around them. Orthodox efforts in this area appeared to be safe to take a generation-long time out.

This is no longer the case. The issues facing "Main Street" Canadians, particularly those under 30 years of age, leave many people spinning in the storm of western relativism: many simply do not know where to find the truth, or even if truth exists.

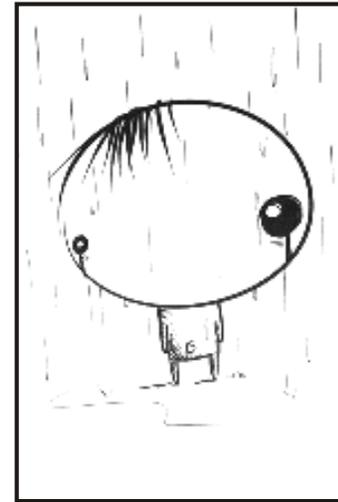
There has never been a time when the hunger for the Truth has been stronger and more needed than it is today. The fact that this Truth is not an idea, but a *Person* – God Himself – makes the answers His Body the Church has to offer so much more fitting to fill the emptiness in the lives of many "Main Street" Canadians, Orthodox ones included.

The same eternal Truth, expressed in the words of the saints and the prayers of the Church, that sustained grandmothers in generations past, can and should sustain the disappointed relativists, truth-searching activists, and recovering Emo kids of our time.

Christ died and conquered Death in order to achieve the salvation of the world, including those on "Main Street". It is to that large segment of our nation's family that this issue, its questions, and the answers it offers, is dedicated.

May God bless us all to carry on God's work in our own hearts, and on Main Street as well.

– *Father Geoffrey Korz+*,
Managing Editor.



EMO SPIRITUALITY

Is Self-Pity a New Religious Movement?

For anyone born outside Canada, our sense of what constitutes "hard times" must seem positively confusing. Those who have lived through wars, exile, starvation, or ethnic cleansing truly have an objective sense of the things that make our country a favourable place to live, and to raise a faithful family in relative security.

The Church Fathers make it clear in countless places that luxury hardens the heart, and that these factors combine to produce depression. It is remarkable to consider the saints of old, and the holy elders of our own day, who often live in relative poverty, but who shine with the joy of Christ, a joy that goes beyond having fun, or even "being happy". Theirs is the joy that is the fruit of repentance and humility, the very joy that the spiritual labours of prayer, fasting, and cutting off our personal appetites will produce whenever we struggle with God's help to do this necessary spiritual work.

Life in North America encourages the opposite kind of effort, however. In a society of big box stores and super-sized food outlets, asceticism seems quaint at best, and at worst an antiquated and unwelcomed challenge to contemporary hedonism. The goals of North

American life might be reduced to the most simple terms: at all costs avoid having *less*, and strive to have *more*.

It is ironic that a society with a penchant for having “more” has produced a youth culture phenomenon noted for its all-encompassing dissatisfaction. While the recent Emo movement is not entirely new (having its roots in the Beatnik movement of the 1960s, the Hippie movement of the 1970s, and the Batcave/Goth movements of the 1980s and 1990s), the Emo kid is something unique. One might go so far as to say that the Emo movement represents the spiritual apex of North American adolescence, the logical consequence of a society that ignores timeless Christian wisdom, and seeks to find peace of heart at the suburban shopping mall.

Yet the “Emo kid” is far more than a subset of teenager: the self-centredness and self-pity for which it is known is abundantly manifested not only on all levels of secular culture, but in spiritual life as well, including spiritual life among Orthodox Christians. This is the perennial desire to “have it my way”, or else “no one cares about me”. We may rightly criticize the Protestant church growth movement for being fuelled by the suburban desire for familiarity (with cafe lattes served in the coffee bar before Sunday afternoon church meetings), Orthodox Christians can be individually just as guilty. For a faith that places spiritual guidance at a central place in the Christian life, an ongoing demand for personal attention can manifest, and where it does exist, it is spiritually damaging. This question is made more difficult where the demand for such attention is explained away as a legitimate request for pastoral care.

The Church Fathers remind us that self-pity and self-congratulation are often flip sides of the same coin: those who are poor tend to fall into pity; those who are more wealthy tend to fall into pride. Yet the “Emo spirituality” that has taken root in much of western culture reveals that self pity is just as prevalent among wealthy suburbanites as it is among those who experience genuine struggle – perhaps even more. The Church Fathers again remind us that it is spiritual struggle which strengthens us to face further trials. As Saint Dorotheus of Gaza explains in his *Discourses*, we have only two options on the battlefield of this life: we can surrender, or we can continue to fight, whether or not we actually seem to have any victories this side of the grave.

For the Canadian victim of Emo-spirituality, surrender provides an easy way out of responsibility. Those who “shop around” for a “more

suitable” church – whether they are heterodox or Orthodox – can easily fall into a desire to focus on themselves and their personal problems, rather than dealing with personal sin. Great Lent provides perhaps the clearest focus on this spiritual goal: one need look no further than the hymns of Holy Week, or the text of the Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete to discover that Emo spirituality found no place in the ancient Church, as it should find no place in it today.

Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos repeatedly describes the Orthodox Church as a spiritual hospital for those who are sick with sin (i.e. everyone). Yet to approach the Church from the perspective of Emo spirituality, the Church is inevitably reduced to a mere repeat experience of self-discovery and false catharsis. To put it in more colloquial terms, the Lord does not heal our sick soul or save us by sending us to Disney Land. For those living in the spiritual decadence of North America, there is a certain seal of approval for us to respond with grumpiness when we do not get our own way. The Russian Saint Ignatius Brianchaninov writes:

“The Cup (of Christ) is accepted when a Christian bears earthly tribulation in the spirit of humility learned from the Gospel. Saint Peter turned swiftly with a naked sword to defend the God-man (Christ), Who was surrounded by evil doers; but the meek Jesus said to Peter: ‘Put up thy sword into the sheath: the Cup My Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?’ (John 18:11) So you too, when disaster surrounds you, should comfort and strengthen your soul, saying: ‘The Cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?’

In the end, the path of self-pity and self-justification – the essence of Emo spirituality – leads inevitably to us taking on the role of our own spiritual director. Saint Dorotheus points out that for those who fall into this trap, they gain a fool for a spiritual father. Self-justification, coupled with self-pity, can even pervert the Holy Mystery of Confession into an exercise in indulging the ego: pulled under by waves of angst, the Emo spiritual child picks and chooses the spiritual advice that suits her, even when such direction was solicited.

Here we must distinguish between Confession (which can be very brief), and spiritual counsel, which can sometimes take hours. As one Canadian bishop points out, for most people, their encounter with a spiritual father may only take place on a few occasions during their

lifetime, with the view that such spiritual guidance is preparation to simply live one's life. While Confession is (or should be) a regular activity of the faithful throughout their lives, in-depth counsel is intended for times that truly require it, for guidance in life decisions, difficulties, and such periodic problems. For those who have deeper emotional, health, or psychiatric problems, ongoing spiritual counsel is not the appropriate place to find a solution to their problems; seeking it may in fact be a means of avoiding the painful process of confronting their own afflictions, under the guise of serious spiritual discipline. It is here that the spiritual consequences of self-pity are sadly manifested.

With the uncertainties of postmodern society, many Orthodox have sought spiritual direction in a form that was in the past only intended for monastics. The emergence of faithful who seek "obediences" and "blessing" on an ongoing basis brings with it the potential for spiritual self-centeredness. Just as the regular approach to the Holy Mystery of Confession can become distorted into a lengthy, ongoing dialogue that passes well beyond the bounds of confession of sins, so too can a normal and healthy approach to a spiritual father become an exercise primarily focussed on a deep and vicarious re-living of personal experiences and sins, and the obediences and *epitemia* that go with them. For most faithful who regularly meet with a spiritual father this is not an issue, but for those who have been spiritually formed by the popular culture outside the Church, the risk is real of spiritual life being used as a cloak for self-centredness.

This norm of Orthodox Christian spiritual counsel is found throughout the history of the Church: among the Fathers of the Egyptian desert, amid the anchorites of northern Russian or the *stylites* (pillar dwellers) of the Middle East, or among the fathers of the Holy Mountain of Athos and other places today. This counsel strengthens the one who is prepared to receive such counsel, to gain freedom from obsessive self-centredness. And it is only here, in the practical Christian life inherited from generations of holy men and women, that we can find our way beyond the influences growing ever more "Emo" with each passing day.

– *Father Geoffrey Korz+*



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BREAD & THE LITURGY

A North American Saint Speaks

Why Orthodox Christians at Divine Liturgy Bring Bread Loaves, and the Particles, which are cut out from them, are offered for the Living and Dead, and the Meaning of this Rite.

In the Orthodox Church there is a religious and salutary custom, which we, unfortunately, seldom see practised in this country. When you go to Holy Liturgy, for instance, in the churches throughout the broad land of Russia, you cannot help observing how the faithful eagerly enter, and there, by the church doors, buy a church loaf, or two, have it (or them), brought into the sanctuary, together with a paper (or a small blank-book) upon which some names are written; then, after particles have been cut out from these breads, they take them again, and on leaving the church, they bring the loaves home with them.

During the great holy days, and on the days when the dead are remembered, also during Lent when a great many people receive the holy sacraments of Christ, a large number of these church breads are brought into the sanctuary. An especially large quantity of loaves are brought during the year by the faithful in those temples to which thousands of pilgrims flock in order to offer their devotion to the holy relics, to the holy icons of the Lord, the Mother of God, and to the saints of God.

Having received back their prosphora, or loaf, after a particle had been taken from it in the sanctuary, the faithful carefully handle it, and, crossing themselves, kiss it; then, after the Liturgy, they carry it to their homes, and here, with all the members of the household, they eat it before they partake of their regular meal, i.e. upon an empty stomach. This custom is hardly ever practised in this country among our Orthodox Christians, and yet this ceremony is an ancient and religious act; it is very important and salutary'. That it is really such, we will now consider.

Let us, first of all, mention the fact that five bread loaves are used in offering the Divine Liturgy in the Orthodox Church. From the first one a conveniently large piece is cut and put on the paten, which at first is a representation of the Lord Jesus Christ; and after, during the hymn, *Thee we sing, Thee we bless*, it is mystically changed into the true Body of Christ. Even so does the wine with water which was poured into the chalice during the offertory or first part of the Liturgy, become at the same time the real and life-giving Blood of the Lord. This larger particle is therefore called the Holy Lamb.

From the second prosphora a particle is taken and put on the paten to the right side of the Holy Lamb, " in honour and in remembrance of the Most Blessed Lady and Mother of God." From out the third loaf nine particles are cut and put to the left of the Holy Lamb on the paten, in honor and in remembrance of the nine orders of saints.

From the fourth one (i.e. prosphora, which is a Greek word, and means offering) several particles are taken and put before the Holy Lamb, for the health and salvation of the living. First of all, the priest makes mention of the Orthodox Patriarchs, the Most Holy Synod, the bishop of his diocese, with all the clergy, and then lays down upon the paten a particle; after this another, when he mentions the name of his sovereign, the whole of the royal house, and finally he names others and all the living, and those by name who asked to be remembered. At each name, the priest takes a small particle and puts it down before the Lamb.

From the fifth loaf particles are cut out and put on the paten in remembrance and for the forgiveness of the sins of all the departed, commencing with the patriarchs and kings. The priest makes mention of each departed one whom he wishes or whom he has been requested to mention by name, and for each he places a bit of the loaf before the Holy Lamb. In this manner parts are taken from the five breads, which are necessary in offering the Divine Liturgy.

What is done with those loaves which the faithful bring, and why are they brought? From these also particles are taken for the living and the dead. Their names are read (from each family's book or list), and the priest cuts out a particle for the health and salvation of each one, if the name be of those among the living, or for the remembrance and forgiveness of the sins of one, if the name be of those among the departed. All these particles must be put on the paten together with those taken from the fourth and fifth loaves. In this manner in the beginning of the Liturgy a great many particles lie upon the paten around the principal part or bread, i.e. the Holy Lamb. These particles represent the souls of the saints and all the Orthodox, in whose name they were put there. When during the singing, Thee we hymn, Thee we bless – the principal part, which was taken from the first bread, becomes transmuted into the Real Body of Christ, and the wine in the cup becomes the Very Blood of Christ; then it is plainly understood, that from that moment the particles lying upon the paten, and the souls of the people whom they represent, do stand before the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, invisibly and mystically present upon the holy table in the holy sacrament. Finally, after the clergy and laity partake of the Holy Communion, all the particles are put from off the paten into the chalice, and they absorb of the Life-giving Blood of Christ; consequently the souls of the living and the dead are brought into a mutual, gracious communion with the Lord Jesus Christ.

To the spiritual view of all standing and praying in the temple at that time, the following should be pictured: Upon the heavenly throne He, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, is seated, our Redeemer and Saviour, and before Him stand: the Most Holy Mother of God, "ever constant in prayer" before Her Son and God for the whole race of mankind; then all the saints, also our intercessors and mediators; and all the living and the departed of the faithful, in whose names parts have been set aside, who are expecting from the Lord for themselves, through the prayers of the Mother of God, all the saints, and all the believing, mercy, forgiveness of sins, and eternal salvation. At that moment to all before the Lamb the saving grace of God is communicated from the throne. When the particles absorb of the Life-giving Blood, at the time the priest prays Wash, Lord, the sins of all those mentioned here by Thy precious Blood, and the prayers of Thy saint of the souls, which are represented by the particles, are brought into a mutual communion with the Lord Redeemer, and thereby the saints of God obtain a greater glory and

happiness in heaven, while the living and the dead, washed in the most Precious Blood of the Son of God, receive the forgiveness of sins and inherit life eternal.

II

The significance of the particle taken out by the priest for some one of our relatives or acquaintance is such. The soul of the one mentioned appears before the throne of God and prays to the Lord in devout fear, and its prayer, strengthened by the intercessions of the prayers of all the blessed in heaven, and the earnest prayer of all the faithful present, especially of those who brought the loaf and asked for the prayers of a priest, and also by the prayers of him who offers the sacrament, i.e. the priest, such a prayer of the soul becomes efficient and powerful. The Lord mercifully accepts such a prayer of the soul. Sinners themselves have appeared from the other world, and revealed to their relatives how great a relief they have experienced in their condition beyond the grave after the Divine Liturgy has been offered upon earth, in which a particle was set aside in remembrance and for the forgiveness of their sins.

And the living? The living also receive forgiveness of sins, and by this all that which is necessary for life and piety. Our offering of loaves in the temple of the Lord, so that particles may be cut from them, is of much importance for ourselves likewise. And for ourselves we must pray and put before the Lamb a particle of the bread. The priest at the offertory must put upon the paten a particle for himself also, at the same time praying in these words : Be mindful, Lord, of me an unworthy one, and forgive me all sins, voluntary and involuntary. We should each one of us put our own names in the "book of remembrance," so that the priest may take out a particle for us also, and thereby move in prayer for us the whole Church, so that, when we stand before the face of the Lord, we may enter into a gracious communion with Him at the time our particle, together with the others, becomes immersed during the Liturgy in the Life-giving Blood of the Son of God. Besides this, a prosphora is brought into the temple as an offering to God. Any gift of ours,

any sacrifice of ours is pleasing to God when it expresses our gratefulness, our love to God, from whom we ourselves receive every good and perfect gift. On coming into the Church we buy and light before holy icons a candle.

This is our offering to God, and it shows that we came into the temple—the place of God's habitation, to pray as constantly and fervently, as brightly and warmly as our candle burns before the holy icons.

The prosphora, which we buy and give into the sanctuary that particles be taken from it, though it is returned to us, yet it is our gift to God also, which testifies to our desire to pray with greater zeal for

ourselves and for those who are dear to our hearts. This little gift of ours reminds us of Christian custom in the early days of Christ's Church. At that time all the faithful, when they came to church for Holy Liturgy, brought bread and wine. From all that was brought, the priest selected what was necessary for the sacrament, and the remaining bread and wine was divided after the Liturgy among all those present. A brotherly table was spread, which showed that the faithful lived in love and close communion. Now we offer only a small loaf in the Church; yet this bread is our gift to God, our offering to the Divine Liturgy, wherefore the very name of it is prosphora, which in the Greek language means offering. From it is taken but a small, necessary particle for our communication with the Grace of God, while nearly the entire loaf is returned to us from the altar, which we for our sanctification eat with thanksgiving. As a gift of God, brought to the holy table, which was used in taking the particles which have such an important signification, then given to us as a blessing and for our sanctification by partaking of it,—the prosphora should be received as a bread blessed, with appropriate religious consideration. Hereby is explained the custom for taking back again the loaf from the sanctuary, making the sign of the cross upon one's self, and kissing it, after the service carefully bringing it home, and dividing it among the members of the family, to be eaten before other food. Below is an incident told in the life of St.

Zosima—the wonder-worker. St. Zosima once gave to a merchant

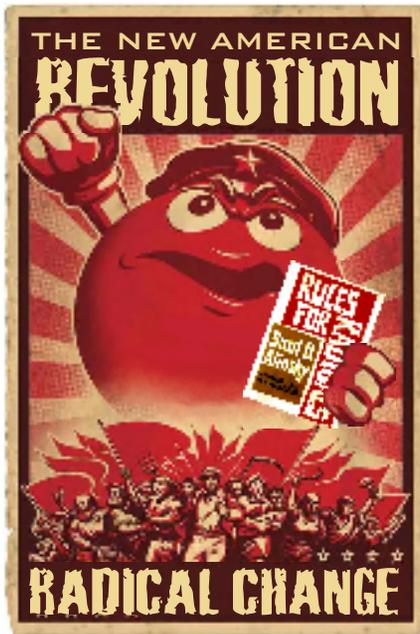


a prosphora as a blessing, but the merchant on his way home carelessly dropped it. A dog running up was about to eat the bread, but each time, when it was about to take it, a flame came forth from out the prosphora and kept it back. A monk of the Solovetsky Monastery saw this (his name was Makarius) ; he drove away the dog; devoutly crossing himself, he took the loaf and brought it to St. Zosima, who recognized the prosphora given by him to the merchant. And so the church loaf is holy bread, and we should handle it carefully and devoutly.

Such, then, is the significance of the prosphora, which we offer in church. Therefore, who desires for self, or one's relatives, and for acquaintance, health and salvation, and for the departed forgiveness of sins and the kingdom of heaven; let such a one earnestly pray to God, especially during the Liturgy, and not neglect, on account of carelessness, to bring into the church a prosphora, let such a one not begrudge a few cents for the loaf. When the priest takes from the loaf particles, for the one who brought it, and for those who are mentioned in the book of remembrance brought with it, and puts the particles on the paten before the face of the Lord, so that they may after absorb the Life-giving Blood of the Lord such a prayer then must be more real and profitable, as for the one who brought the offering, likewise also for those in whose name or memory prayers may be asked for. When this loaf is brought home and eaten, thereby such a person with his or her family partake of the blessing of God.

- Taken from *The Lives of the Saints* by Archimandrite Sebastian Dabovich, Murdock Press, San Francisco, 1898.





SAUL ALINSKY GOES TO WASHINGTON

A Canadian Orthodox perspective on the Obama Nation

“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” – Mark 8:36

The recent election of Barack Obama as leader of Canada’s neighbour to the south is an historic event. Not only has Obama become his nation’s first black president, and the first president of the generation born into the radical changes of the 1960s, he has also become the first president whose background is almost exclusively shaped by his work as an activist leader in central Chicago.

While it is arguably fair to call Obama an “activist” president (only time will tell), the worldview he brings to the presidency of Canada’s most important neighbour is a decidedly new one. For perhaps the first

time since its Revolution, the United States has become no longer a beacon for the establishment, with its own radicals fleeing to places like Canada: the United States is once again, after two hundred years, overseen by an administration that is explicitly dedicated to sweeping aside the existing national culture, and replacing it with something entirely new.

Many supporters of this change point to its evident freshness, a new voice who can shake up the political establishment, and reverse a damaging military policy regarding overseas conflict in Iraq. Political critics of the new administration inevitably focus on questions of experience, and the new administration’s views and record on moral and social issues such as abortion, marriage, freedom of conscience for healthcare workers, and freedom of speech in broadcasting.

Yet for Orthodox Christians, the questions must go much deeper than this, to examine the spiritual backdrop of public life, the unseen realities that underpin the events, the actions and the decisions of public figures and individuals who support or oppose them. In measuring the spiritual backdrop of the new presidency, and Obama’s rise to the highest office in our neighbouring nation, one cannot overlook the central philosophical – and indeed, spiritual – role of Obama’s ideological mentor, Saul Alinsky, whom Obama himself credits as the most important influence in his life.

Alinsky was a University of Chicago trained social scientist and social organizer (the term now replaced by the more euphemistic, “community organizer”) decades before Obama became active in Chicago politics. Yet it was Alinsky’s methodology and goals which shaped Chicago politics and the worldview of his followers for decades to come. At the heart of Alinsky’s approach is the concept of social agitation, the task of “rub(bing) raw the sores of discontent”, as Alinsky described. In essence, his was a political philosophy not simply designed to reach some ideological goal or utopian dream, but to achieve its goals in a short span of time by inflaming the anger of people to such an extent that they are willing to accept leadership that would violently sweep away everything in the existing order, and to replace it with something entirely new.

Alinsky was no stranger to Orthodox thinking, yet he used any insights as supports for his singular philosophy. In his famous book, *Rules for Radicals*, Alinsky writes:

“Dostoevsky said that taking a new step is what people fear most. Any revolutionary change must be preceded by a passive, affirmative, non-challenging attitude toward change among the mass of our people. They must feel so frustrated, so defeated, so lost, so futureless in the prevailing system that they are willing to let go of the past and change the future. This acceptance is the reformation essential to any revolution. To bring on this reformation requires that the organizer work inside the system, among not only the middle class but the 40 per cent of American families - more than seventy million people - whose income range from \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year [in 1971]. They cannot be dismissed by labeling them blue collar or hard hat. They will not continue to be relatively passive and slightly challenging. If we fail to communicate with them, if we don't encourage them to form alliances with us, they will move to the right. Maybe they will anyway, but let's not let it happen by default.”

By the “right”, Alinsky was not simply referring to capitalists: he meant what the French Revolutionaries called the *Ancien Regime* – the Old Order, comprised of the government, the Church, and the traditional nuclear family. The comprehensiveness of his revolution was not new: it was his approach of using public anger and resentment to achieve power for its own sake that set him apart from others in his camp.

Unlike most ideologues on the left or right, religious or secular, Alinsky did not propose a set of ideas, but rather a set of rules to follow to gain power. As one biographer wrote, Alinsky would always ask his new students the reasons they wanted to become social organizers, to which they would respond with declarations of selfless service to those in need. Alinsky would then scream back in response that there was a one-word answer to the question: you want to organize for *power*. The new president has acknowledged the connection on more than one occasion.

Saul Alinsky's son, L. David Alinsky, in a recent Boston.com editorial, praised the extent to which the new president's rise to power embodied not only Alinsky's ideology, but his technique:

"All the elements were present: the individual stories told by real people of their situations and hardships, the packed-to-the rafters crowd, the crowd's chanting of key phrases and names,

the action on the spot of texting and phoning to show instant support and commitment to jump into the political battle, the rallying selections of music, the setting of the agenda by the power people. The Democratic National Convention had all the elements of the perfectly organized event, Saul Alinsky style. Barack Obama's training in Chicago by the great community organizers is showing its effectiveness. It is an amazingly powerful format, and the method of my late father always works to get the message out and get the supporters on board. When executed meticulously and thoughtfully, it is a powerful strategy for initiating change and making it really happen. Obama learned his lesson well... I am proud to see that my father's model for organizing is being applied successfully beyond local community organizing... It is a fine tribute to Saul Alinsky as we approach his 100th birthday.”

In his book "The Obama Nation", Jerome R. Corsi explains, "Make no mistake about it: 'change' was always Alinsky's code word for creating a socialist revolution, even if the methodology meant radicals would cut their hair, put on business suits, and run for political office. Alinsky taught [community] organizers to hide their true intentions in the words they spoke."

Christians have always struggled with the relationship between the Church and the secular state. The Byzantines and their inheritors in numerous other Orthodox Christian kingdoms found the best balance between the two that can be hoped for in our fallen world: a state which endeavours to rule, informed by the mind of the Church, and a Church (i.e. the bishops and faithful) that take seriously their responsibility to call the state to a character that goes beyond earthly goals: a character of leadership that exemplifies the virtues, first in its leaders, and secondly in its people.

The mindset of agitation, of rubbing raw the wounds of discontent, cannot call us to such a character of virtue. Rather, it is a temptation to all of us to take on the character of our fallen nature as a vehicle to gain power for its own sake, and to lose our soul and the souls of our people in the process.

— Father Geoffrey Korz+





LEAVE IT TO GRANDMA

In a Busy World, Is Church for Seniors Only?

It is sometimes said that in faithful nations in the past, grandmothers used to attend Church services regularly – even several times each week – because they were retired and concerned about the nearness of death. Grandma would pray for the dead, because she knew them, while the younger ones would pray for those still alive.

In Orthodox nations (then, as now) churches were and are filled on Sundays. Despite its currency, the idea of religion as a “woman’s thing” is much more a North American Protestant reality, since men have always participated more than women in the life of the Orthodox Church. Even the Soviets who very much desired to wipe out Orthodox spiritual life, were at pains to discourage Church participation by the youth, having to resort to threats of job loss or imposed limits on educational progress to keep younger people out of the holy places. With the end of the Communist empire, churches quickly filled up with younger people, hungry for the spiritual food they barely knew, but for which they yearned anyway.

That which atheistic totalitarianism failed to do, materialistic democracy has managed to accomplish. While many complain about the impact of a recreation-obsessed culture on young people, the multiplicity of recreational options has impacted grandmothers in ways that could hardly be imagined a generation ago. Just at the time that nuclear family life disconnected many grandmothers from their traditional influence on the moral and spiritual upbringing of grandchildren, a host of distractions ranging from sports, to travel, to electronic media, have caught up in tedium these bearers of the Faith. As one Canadian priest lamented in a discussion about the loss of young people from the Church, “It’s grandma, too.”

In Russia, it is said that grandmothers preserved the Church through seven decades of atheism. The loving and faithful influence of an ever-declining number of faithful grandmothers is needed now, more than ever before, not simply within their own families, but among those who labour to recover the Orthodox faith that has been very much lost on North American shores.

For faithful grandmothers, this means seeking out adoptive grandchildren, those who desire to learn their faith, but who have no one to teach it to them: the baking of *prospkhora* bread, the preparation of *kolivo* (boiled wheat) to commemorate departed loved ones, the practices of prayer at home, the lighting of a tiny hand censer before an icon of Christ, and prayers late into the night for many lost souls.

For the young, this requires undertaking an unexpected and unusual task: the search and affectionate capture of faithful grandmothers. This of course takes time together, to share food and memories, and to learn a lived faith by experience, and not through textbooks. It may mean rethinking one’s weekly schedule to allow time with one or two of these dwindling number of living bearers of Holy Tradition, of cutting down work hours, and integrating adopted grandmothers into family time together.

The years are passing quickly for the remnant of holy grandmothers, and for us who would inherit their legacy, and unless we learn it from them while we have the chance, we will be left with the arduous task of rediscovering it for ourselves, a task that cannot be accomplished in our lifetime.

– *Father Geoffrey Korz+*





WHOSE DELUSION?

Orthodoxy's Place in the Contemporary God Debate

Over the past couple of years several texts have appeared in popular film and print which seek to attack the notion of God's existence and paint the role of religion in human society in negative terms. A new wave of modern, non-Marxist atheism has begun to find its feet, and as it shrugs off adolescence, has begun to develop a comprehensive ethical philosophy which seeks to tear down the old power of religion and replace it with a naturalistic humanism. Figures like Christopher Hitchens, Bill Maher, and Sam Harris have plead passionately for a new vision of humanity in which religion is dismantled and swept away to be replaced by stability, rationality, and peace.

Perhaps most articulate of the writers in this new school is Richard Dawkins, one of the United Kingdom's foremost evolutionary biologists. His 2006 landmark publication, *The God Delusion*, has rapidly become a staple of the debate over God's existence in the public sphere¹.

¹Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, Houghton Mifflin, London: 2006.

Dawkins' ideas have been championed by his fellow atheists, and challenged by theists of all types. Regardless of one's perspective, no Westerner interested in religious questions has the luxury of ignoring Dawkins' work.

In a publication such as this one, the reader is likely expecting that this article will dismantle and refute Dawkins' case against God. This is an Orthodox Christian magazine after all, and Orthodox Christians are theists. But it is not my goal to disrupt any of Dawkins' conclusions, and there is a simple reason for this: Dawkins' arguments, and the broader debate in which he is involved, simply do not engage Orthodox theism in any meaningful sense. The reality of Orthodoxy's place in the modern West, we may be shocked to discover, is that we share a great deal more in common with Mr. Dawkins, and a great deal less with his opponents, than we might at first suppose. In reality, Orthodoxy is really not a natural party to the Western discussion of God at all.

But how can this be? To understand Orthodoxy's position in relation to the Western God debate, we need to understand specifically what that debate is about. To do so, we need look no further than Dawkins' book itself, for Dawkins has done an excellent job of compiling and analyzing the basic Western arguments for the existence of God. Dawkins rightly divides these arguments into two groups: *a priori* arguments, and *a posteriori* ones. *A posteriori* arguments are those which seek to prove God by examining the world, and Dawkins holds up the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas as the preeminent example of such arguments. Aquinas' most well remembered proof is his argument from creation: the world is so complex and remarkable that it seems that some brilliant mind must have designed it. *A priori* arguments for God's existence begin in a different place: the mind of the thinker employing them. Dawkins cites the work of Anselm of Canterbury to present such an argument, which is roughly as follows: if one can imagine something perfect, then something even more perfect must exist for one to model that image upon - this most perfect thing is God. Dawkins dismantles these arguments, and various others which essentially flow from them before eventually positing that 'there almost certainly is no God.'² The arguments which Dawkins presents are well selected. These basic

²Dawkins, 2006: 77-151.

defences, rephrased and reworked, when coupled with what Dawkins describes as 'Bayesian' principles (saying that God's existence is highly likely as opposed to certain)³, constitute the sum of Western proofs of God. Dawkins has been diligent in leaving out nothing significant of his opponents' positions.

Each of these traditional proofs, and any of the myriad others which could readily be unearthed, seeks to demonstrate the certain existence of a particular type of being which is God. Arguments from the design of the universe necessitate an understanding of God as a designer. For God to be such a designer, God must have something of a mind, an intelligence, and a host of other characteristics. Those which posit a perfect prototype for humanity's image of perfection (and variations on this theme) demand the existence of such a prototype, one which reflects forward into the created order, and which demonstrates the quality of perfection, beauty, goodness or the like. Such a being amounts to a perfect creator, an 'unmoved mover,' or a universal mind. What is critical here is that in every case, God is an identifiable entity. God's possession of characteristics make traditional proofs function, and therefore would be central to the being of the God to which these proofs refer. In other words, if we prove God's existence from the perfection of God's creation, it is inherent to God's nature that God be a perfect creator, and such a proof cannot possibly refer to a God who does not create or is not perfect. Other arguments can be similarly analyzed.

Such an image of God is ultimately an image of an all-powerful existent creature. The idea of creatures such as this is by no means new to human thinking. The ancient Greek polytheists, for instance, saw gods at every turn. That which controlled the fertility of their fields they labelled 'Demeter.' That which was emblematic of the principle of reason they called 'Athena.' That which controlled the weather, the most powerful force they knew, they called 'Zeus.' Gods, for the Greeks, were defined by certain attributes, and their power was seen in the workings of the principles which they represented - they had no existence beyond this. These categorizations of certain gods with certain characteristics directly mirror the type of figure which traditional God-proofs seek to defend. Indeed, one could easily employ such proofs in the defence of the figure of Zeus. Take a simple a posteriori argument for example:

³Dawkins, 2006: 105-107.

'The weather is controlled by principles which we do not fully understand. However, those principles are evident in the action of the weather. Therefore, we call those principles "Zeus." As such, Zeus exists.'

Christians like Thomas Aquinas and Anselm, or any number of modern writers, have insisted on the existence of a God with characteristics. For Aquinas this made God a creator and 'unmoved mover,' for Anselm a perfect being. But the Orthodox tradition, at its core, knows no such characteristics of God. Instead, Orthodoxy's understanding of God is radically *apophatic*⁴, and God's essence is understood to be completely unknowable - a position expounded by the Dionysian corpus, St. Maximus the confessor, St. Symeon the New Theologian, and most critically, St. Gregory Palamas⁵. Those *kataphatic*⁶ representations of God which Orthodoxy embraces are clearly understood to be necessary, but ultimately secondary. The true experience of God occurs in total silence, away from all thoughts, images, and characteristics of any kind. This is a God who defies even the language of 'perfection' - a God who defies the language of 'defiance' and the word 'God' itself.

This is not, therefore, the God being defended by modern Western theists. It is no accident that the arguments which Richard Dawkins dismantles begin to take firm shape in the West after the Great Schism. Thinkers like Aquinas and Anselm, unchecked by the wisdom of the true Church, easily fell into the error of rationalizing, and therefore of delimiting the concept of God. Such a conceptualized God is merely imaginary, the reification of those *kataphatic* models of God which Orthodoxy places in proper context - a context which has been lost to the heterodox. This reified God is no different in any sense from Zeus or

⁴*Apophatic theology, derived from the word apophasis (Late Latin, repudiation, from Greek apophanai denial, negation, "to say no"), is negative theology; it describes who and what God is not.*

⁵*Modern authors writing in English and French have also affirmed this teaching. See Kallistos Ware. The Orthodox Way, Crestwood: 2001; and Vladimir Lossky. Essai sur la Theologie Mystique de L'Eglise d'Orient, Paris: 1944.*

⁶*Kataphatic (or Cataphatic) theology is positive theology, describing what and who God is.*

Athena, and proofs which apply to this God could just as easily be applied to them. As such, these images are more than a slippery slope to idolatry - they are idolatry itself. To project upon God any fundamental characteristic at all is immediately to worship a creation of the human mind just as imaginary as the Olympians. Though Aquinas' Zeus has been stripped of his beard and lightning, he remains a thing, still a 'creator,' still an 'unmoved mover.' And, if anything, modern Western spirituality has tended even further towards the worship of images in recent years. For many, Zeus' lightning has made its return, as Michael W. Smith's lyrics in a famous Evangelical hymn demonstrate: "When He rolls up His sleeves/ He ain't just puttin' on the ritz/our God is an awesome God/ There is thunder in His footsteps/And lightning in His fist." The remnants of the ancient sky god, a fabrication of the human imagination, remain alive in the Western tradition, and it is ultimately defence of these remnants which constitutes the bulk of God-proofs today.

As such, Orthodoxy has not yet been truly engaged by the modern Western debate. The god being defended and attacked in the West is not our God at all. In a surprising way, Dawkins and other atheists have not only failed to refute the God in which we do believe, but have not even addressed the issue in the first place. And in the same way, Western theists have not put forward any proof at all for our God - indeed, they have not even really considered the question.

Orthodoxy's place in the current God debate is stranger and perhaps more uncomfortable than we would like. We Orthodox Christians stand as believers in the All-Holy Trinity, as practitioners of an organized religion, and as followers of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. As such, Richard Dawkins serves as a harsh critic of our beliefs and way of living. Yet, the God which we worship is not the God under attack in Dawkins' work - indeed, ours is a God who seems forgotten to the West, both by the heterodox and by their atheist opponents. This position is a dangerous one indeed. If we are blinded by the outward similarities, and the millions of honest and loving hearts which constitute the Western heterodox, we may quickly slip into their attempts to defend that which does not exist: a God of attributes and images no more genuine than the Olympian Zeus. Yet we are no atheists, and no allies of the anti-religious movement sweeping the Western world - we cannot throw stones at the heterodox along with Richard Dawkins.

But though we must be wary of the dangers in our situation, we must be equally excited at the opportunity we have been given. In a West whose philosophy has become a broken-record of refutations and defences of idols and lies, Orthodox Christianity has the opportunity to articulate the truth once again to those for whom it has been stolen by schism. Orthodoxy is no party to the Dawkins debate, but we hold the keys to the solution: a genuine faith in the Holy Trinity and the saving power of Jesus Christ who alone can sanctify our souls that we may become, in His Energies, the God Whom both the heterodox and the atheists have forgotten.

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AROUND THE CHURCH IN TWENTY WORDS

Serbian Solutions for the Spiritual Sojourner

In this new regular feature, we will offer a sampling of words and terms that are useful to Orthodox Christians, inquirers, and visitors to Orthodox parishes. Phrases and words from a different language will be offered in each article.

Pomaže Bog! (PO ma zhe BOG) - “God help you”, a traditional greeting among Serbs for centuries. The response is, “*Bog ti pomogao*” – “God help you as well”. The greeting was severely repressed by the post-war communist regime, which tried to replace it with the greeting/response of “*Smrt Fašizmu, Sloboda Narodu*” – Death to Fascism, Freedom to the People. There is an anecdote of one of Tito’s communist partisans greeting an elderly Serbian woman in that manner; she, having never heard the greeting, and unsure of how to understand it and respond, smiled and replied, “*I tebi, sinko*” – And to you too, sonny.

Svetosavlje (SVE to sahv lyeh) A term that is difficult to translate to a single word, it is a hybrid of the name *Sveti Sava* (Saint Sava) and *Pravoslavlje* (Orthodoxy), and it means “The Orthodoxy of Saint Sava”. A term referring to not just the autcephalous Serbian Orthodox Church, or to Orthodoxy with Serbian customs, it is an embodiment of the fact that being Orthodox and being Serbian were to our nation one and the same.

Slava (SLA va) Literally “glory”, it is the patron saint’s day of a family, parish, town, or organization. All Serbs have a family *slava* that commemorates their ancestors’ baptism centuries ago.

Slavski Kolač (SLAV skee KO lahtch) The Slava Bread, an ornately decorated loaf that is blessed in church or at the home by the parish priest. The decorations on the loaf vary, and represent mainly things from nature as well as Christian symbols; most importantly the seal or *poskurica* – the Holy Cross with the Greek initials IC XC NI KA.

Kum, Kuma (KOOM, KOOM ah) Godfather and godmother, the most important people outside of one’s bloodline; they become pseudo-kin. It is a grave insult to refuse to be someone’s kum or kuma, whether for marriage or baptism, and in Serbia, the *kumstvo* (‘godfatherhood’) between two families may last many generations. People seek their kum’s blessing when embarking on major life journeys, and in traditional belief nothing is more powerful than a curse uttered by your kum (*kumova kletva*). Your *kum* and *kuma* are seated in a place of honour at your slava or wedding; as the newlyweds leave the church, those gathered yell, “*Izgore ti, kume, kesa!*” (Kum, your satchel of coins is burning!), which is his signal to toss coins over the heads of the bride and groom, in an act of blessing. It is interesting to note that in past centuries, people tried to avoid the plague (*kuga*) by referring to the disease as *kuma* (godmother); it was believed that by binding the disease in this relationship, she/it would have to spare you.

Ćirilica (chee REE lee tsa) “Cyril’s script”, Cyrillic, the hallmark of an Orthodox Slavic nation. Developed either by, or in honour of, Sts. Cyril & Methodius, Serbs take pride in their script as a gift of the saints; it is considered holy. Many attempts have been made by the Serbs’ oppressors to destroy the use of this script, but today it’s greatest enemy is neglect, through a certain level of diasporan apathy, and EU aspirations in Serbia itself (which is ironic, since the EU considers cyrillic one of three official European scripts). Cyrillic will survive, no doubt. Serbs also like to use the term *ćirilica* when referring to explicitly Serbian things, like music – “*Daj malo ćirilice*” might be heard when someone’s had enough of the pop music on the radio and wants to hear something Serbian.

Badnjak (BAHD nyahk) The Serbian ‘Christmas tree’ or, more appropriately, yule log; a young oak that is cut down and brought to the home on Christmas Eve, blessed with wheat, honey and wine and tended overnight to ensure that it burns until Christmas morning. In Serbian Orthodox parishes, the badnjak is blessed by clergy on Christmas eve, and branches are taken home by the faithful.

Česnica (CHESS nee tsa) A Christmas bread with a coin baked into it; families break the bread at their first meal on Christmas day, and whoever finds the coin is considered to expect many blessings and good fortune throughout the year. The Serbian equivalent of the Greek *vasilopita*, or St. Basil's Bread for the new year.

Hristos se rodi! (HREESS tos se ROH dee) Christ is Born, the Serbian greeting from Nativity to Theophany; the response is *Vaistinu se Rodi* (In truth, He is born!)

Bog se javi! (BOHG se YAH vee) “God is revealed to us”, the traditional greeting on Theophany, with the response *Vaistinu se javi*. The feast of theophany is called *Jordanije* colloquially, from the opening words of the troparion, referencing the Jordan river.

Vodica (VOH dee tsa) Literally ‘little water’, but not in the same sense as how Russians might use that term! (vodka). To Serbs, this is the water blessed at Theophany and taken home by the faithful, who consume it when moved to do so, or in times of need. And besides, who needs vodka when you have *šljivovica* (Serbian plum brandy)?

Savindan (SAH veen dahn) The Feast of St. Sava of Serbia, January 27th. Patron saint of Serbia and of education, it is a day when school children recite poems in his honour. Parishes always host a *Savindan* slava celebration, as it is everyone’s second slava. *Savindan* is never a raucous national party; it has, thankfully, remained a celebration centred around Church and School.

Hristos Voskrese! (HREES tos VOS kreh se) Christ is Risen, with the response *Vaistinu Voskrese* (In truth He is risen). Serbs greet each other with this from Pascha to Ascension, as is the general Orthodox custom.

Also it is said when taking part in egg-cracking contests after the Paschal Liturgy and during a family’s Easter meal.

Venac (VEH nats) Wreath; for several holidays, Serbs make wreaths either at home or in church. For St. George’s day (*Djurdjevdan*), it is a wreath of fresh greenery; for the Nativity of St. John (*Ivanjdan*), it is a wreath of wildflowers and healing herbs. However, the most significant wreath a Serb will make is his/her *Duhovski venac*, the Pentecost wreath. On Pentecost, long blades of grass are mowed in a meadow and brought to church, where they are blessed. Then, during the Prayers to the Holy Spirit offered at the end of the special Pentecost service, they weave small wreaths, which they place on the family icon, on the graves of loved ones, and even in their car.

Pop, Popadija (POHP, poh PAH dee yah) Your priest and his wife. Although the formal word for a priest is *svestenik*, the term *pop* is a short form used out of familiarity and convenience. Serbs will refer to their parish priest as Pop Voja, or Pop Lazo, and his wife as Popadija Ljilja, or Popadija Milica. Serbs generally feel very close to their priest and his entire family; while still maintaining a great deal of respect for them, they also feel at ease confiding in them and, of course, supporting them in any time of need. There is a Serbian saying that nicely sums up the priest’s importance: *Trista, bez popa – ništa*. (Even if three hundred are gathered, without a priest, there is nothing).

Sveta Liturgija, Božanstvena Liturgija (SVE tah / bo ZHANS tve nah lee TOOR gee yah) Holy or Divine Liturgy, the main Sunday and holy day service Serbs will attend.

Naforaši (na for AH shee) “The nafora crew”... latecomers to Liturgy, who arrive basically just in time to get the blessed bread distributed at the end of the service. Closely related to another Serbian sub-species, the *tasičari*, who suddenly need to excuse themselves as the collection plate arrives, and the currently evolving *mobilaši*, who refuse to turn off their cell phones in church because, darn it, they’re just that important.

Zadušnice (ZAH doosh nee tse) The four Memorial Saturdays designated by the Church for remembrance of Christians in repose in the Lord. People bring a booklet or list containing the names of their

departed family members (the *čitulja*), and all of these names are read communally during the memorial service.

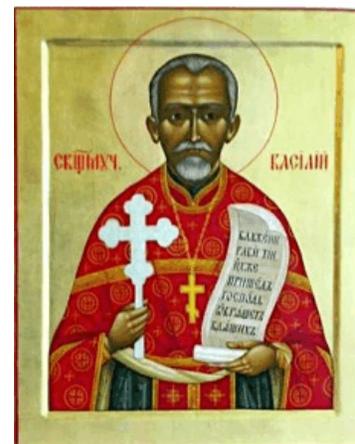
Daća (DAH cha) A memorial meal offered after a funeral or *parastos* (memorial service). It is meant to be an offering in memory of the departed, and while *daće* (pl) on the day of a funeral are full meals, those on subsequent dates (40 day, half year, and year memorials) are simpler. There must be *koljivo* (blessed sweetened wheat), wine and bread, and these are often taken to and consumed at the gravesite. Food and drink consumed at these gatherings is said to be *za pokoj duše* (for the repose of the soul), and shouldn't be refused.

Bog da mu dušu prosti! (masc) **Bog da joj dušu prosti!** (fem) – May God have mercy on his/her soul. A common phrase heard at funerals and memorials, either as a general response at the end of the ritual or an expression of sympathy to family members.

Vječnaja pamjat. (vyehch NAH ya PAHM yaht) Memory Eternal. The refrain sung thrice at a funeral service. This phrase is often carved into gravestones, and even included in published obituaries.

Sveti mučenici (SVEH tee MOO cheh nee tsee) Holy Martyrs; opening words of a troparion hymn sung at wedding ceremonies, ordinations, and during the blessing of Slava bread. Serbia has had its share of martyrs for the Faith, over its long history. Commemorated during the dismissal of every Liturgy are the *Kosovski mučenici*, the Martyrs of the Battle of Kosovo (1389) and the victims of the genocide against the Serbs in World War II, the *Jasnovački mučenici* or Martyrs of Jasenovac, a notorious concentration camp run by Croat fascist Ustashe during that time; its use here is a designation for all the sites of martyrdom.

- Aleks Stošić



SAINT VASILY MARTYSZ

Martyr served on Canada's Prairies

Saint Vasily (Basil) Martysz of Osceola Mills and Old Forge, PA
America, Canada, Martyr of Poland (*May 4th*)

The holy New Martyr Archpriest Vasily Martysz was born on February 20, 1874 in Tertyn, in the Hrubieszow region of southeastern Poland. In 1884, at the age of ten, Vasily made a brief trip to New York with his father. His beautiful singing during a church service attracted the attention of Bishop Vladimir. The hierarch prophesied that young Vasily would become a priest, and promised that he would invite him to his diocese in America once he was ordained. After returning to his country, he remembered the bishop's words, and decided to follow in his father's footsteps and become a priest. He began his theological education at the seminary in Chelm, where the rector was Bishop Tikhon (Belavin), the future Patriarch of Moscow.

Immediately after graduating in July 1899, Vasily married Olga Nowik, and was ordained a deacon. On December 10, 1900 he was ordained a priest. That same month he left Bremen for America. The young couple expected to be assigned to a parish in New York, but instead he was appointed to a parish in Alaska. Together with the newly-appointed Bishop Tikhon, he began his missionary service in the

land of St. Herman.

NORTH AMERICA

Orthodoxy had arrived in Alaska with the coming of the monastic mission from Valaam in 1794. At the start of the twentieth century, climatic and social conditions in this vast territory remained difficult. In his pastoral work, Father Vasily met Russian settlers and indigenous inhabitants of the region, Eskimos and Aleuts. He also encountered gold rush pioneers quite often.

Father Vasily's first parish was extensive. He was headquartered on Afognak, but he was also responsible for the people on Spruce and Woody Islands near Kodiak. There were several small wooden chapels scattered on these islands. In 1901, as a result of his efforts, the church of the Nativity of the Most Holy Virgin was built at Afognak (Although the village was completely destroyed in the earthquake and tidal wave of 1964, the church building survives to this day).

Because of the long distances and severe climate, Father Vasily's priestly work was extremely difficult and required many sacrifices. Often he would leave home for several weeks, in order to celebrate the services, to confess, baptize, marry the living, and to bury the dead, while travelling in a specially constructed kayak. Even when he was at home, Father Vasily had very little time to devote to his dear family. Besides celebrating the services in church and serving the needs of his parishioners, he taught in the parish school and worked in two church homes for the poor. His family bore the arduous conditions, especially the climate, with difficulty. His wife Olga, who had given birth to two daughters, stayed home. The older daughter, Vera, was born at Afognak in 1902. Their second daughter was born two years later, after they had moved to Kodiak.

During his missionary service in Alaska, Father Vasily kept a diary. It has survived to this day as one of the few records of his personal life. Fragments have been translated from Russian and published in Polish. Because of the severe Alaskan climate, which especially affected Matushka Olga, and out of concern for the education of their children, the Martysz family transferred to the continental United States in 1906. As a farewell statement from Alaska that year, Father Vasily wrote an article for the Russian Orthodox American Messenger, "The Voice from Alaska," in which he appealed to Orthodox faithful across the USA to

support the building of Orthodox churches in Alaska.

The family settled in Osceola Mills in central Pennsylvania. Their first son, Vasily, was born that same year, and their youngest child Helen was born in 1908, soon after they moved to Old Forge, PA. Father Vasily's work took him to Waterbury, CT, to West Troy, NY, and finally to Canada. He was assigned to Edmonton and then to Vostok, where he became Dean of the provinces of Alberta and Manitoba. In 1910, he celebrated his tenth anniversary in the priesthood. His prolific and loving pastoral activity endeared him to his flock. Church authorities considered him a very effective, devoted and talented priest, while the faithful loved him sincerely, valuing his modesty and kindness.

Despite their comfortable lifestyle and the relatively large Orthodox community they served in western Canada, the couple longed for their homeland. They feared the loss of their ancestral identity and requested permission to return to Poland. After serving nearly twelve years in America, Father Martysz left the New World and returned to Europe in 1912.

RETURN

Initially, Father Vasily and his family lived with relatives in Sosnowiec, where he eventually became rector of the parish and instructor in Religious Education at the local girls' high school. The peaceful life they enjoyed there lasted barely one year, since the outbreak of the First World war disrupted the lives of thousands. Clergy were considered civil servants who were ordered to evacuate their homes, and move to safety inside Russia. At this critical time, Bishop Vladimir, their Archpastor and friend from Alaska, offered the Martysz family refuge in a small apartment within the St Andronicus Monastery in Moscow. From here, Father Vasily commuted daily to the distant parish at Valdai, where he taught religious education classes. When the Bolsheviks seized power, he lost this job and was forced to earn a living unloading railroad cars. His own life was endangered because Red Army soldiers often treated clergy with distinct brutality.

In 1919, at the end of the war, Polish refugees were granted permission to return to their former residences. Father Vasily and his family took this opportunity to return to Sosnowiec. They moved back into their former apartment, which had survived the devastation of the war. They did not remain long, however, for that September Father Vasily was

assigned to a position in the newly organized Polish Army, in charge of Orthodox Affairs in the Religious Ministry of the War Department. The whole family relocated to Warsaw. Father Vasily started the wearisome but important work of forming an Orthodox military chaplaincy. In 1921, he was promoted to the rank of colonel, and assumed responsibility as the head of the Orthodox military chaplaincy. At this time, the church elevated him to the rank of Archpriest. Father Vasily served as chief of Orthodox chaplains for the next twenty-five years. Within the Ministry of the Interior, he had his own cabinet, and was directly responsible to the Minister himself.

AUTOCEPHALY

Father Vasily was also a chief advisor and close colleague of Metropolitan George (Jaroszewski) of Warsaw and all Poland. He participated in preparing all the meetings of the Holy Synod, and assisted Metropolitan George in his effort to obtain autocephaly for the Polish Orthodox Church. He accompanied the Metropolitan on the tragic day of February 8, 1923, when he was assassinated. The assassin had also planned to kill Father Vasily as well, but he was captured before he could succeed. Father Vasily remained under police protection for some time, but attended to all the details of the Metropolitan's funeral, in which the First Regiment of the Szwoleżers Regiment participated under orders from Marshal Jozef Pilsudski.

Father Vasily zealously participated in the subsequent process of obtaining autocephaly {autonomy} for the Orthodox Church in Poland, which was granted during the tenure of Metropolitan Dionysius (Walednski) in 1925. Father Vasily became the Metropolitan's closest advisor and confidant. He often accompanied the Metropolitan and acted as liaison with the Polish Head of State, Marshal Pilsudski. He was often invited to attend cabinet meetings at Belwedere, the Royal Castle, where he regularly signed the guest book on holidays.

In addition to his work as chief military chaplain, Father Vasily devoted much time to organizing pastoral ministry in the Ukrainian internment camps. In February 1921, Father Vasily appointed Father Peter Biton as chaplain for the camp in Aleksandrow Kujawski. He visited the Ukrainian internees himself and helped arrange camp churches. On July 8, 1921, he celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the

Ukrainian language for over 5,000 prisoners, while visiting this camp. His sermon, delivered in Ukrainian, greatly improved their morale. He also assisted in organizing chaplains' training courses in other Ukrainian army camps.

The Polish Secretary of the Army, Lucjan Zeligowski sent a congratulatory letter to Father Vasily on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of his ordination, December 7, 1925, stating "The virtues of this remarkably talented, conscientious and diligent servant, completely devoted to the Polish nation, expressed in his receiving a high distinction, the Order of Polonia Restituta, which is conferred upon him for his efforts in securing the Autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in Poland."

Father Vasily retired from his government position in 1936. The couple decided to leave Warsaw and return to their home region, Hrubieszowska. They built two houses in Teratyn, one for themselves and another for their widowed mothers. They did not enjoy this peaceful life for very long, because in 1939 the German Army invaded Poland. The village gradually declined. Both of their mothers died. Matushka herself did not live to see the end of the war, but died in 1943. Then Father Vasily's youngest daughter, Helen, moved into his house with her husband and daughter in order to support him.

Father Martysz spent the difficult war years in Teratyn. On May 4, 1945 (Great and Holy Friday), a few days before the surrender of Nazi Germany, his house was attacked. A female acquaintance warned him of the danger, but he replied, "I have done no harm to anyone and I will not run away from anyone. Christ did not run away." Father Vasily did not fear and did not flee from his tormentors. He faced them bravely, in a Christ-like way, accepting the crown of martyrdom. The villains, seeking gold and money, had no respect for his uniform as a colonel in the Polish Army, nor for his priestly vestments.

MARTYRDOM

The bandits broke into the house by breaking a window. With callous cruelty they tortured Father Vasily though his only crime was that he was an Orthodox priest. They beat his pregnant daughter Helen, causing her to miscarry. They beat Father Vasily for four hours, reviving him by throwing water on him when he lost consciousness. Horribly tortured, he

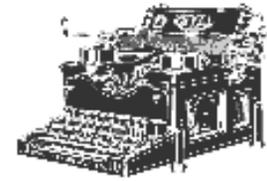
was finally murdered by a gun shot. The criminals threatened to shoot Helen as well, When she knelt before the icon of Christ and began to pray, the executioner's aim and resolve weakened. They left, threatening to return and kill her as well.

On Great and Holy Saturday, Father John Lewczuk celebrated the burial rites for Father Vasily in Chelm. He was buried at the local cemetery in Teratyn.

In October 1963, the earthly remains of Father Vasily Martysz were brought to Warsaw and solemnly reinterred in the Orthodox cemetery in the Wola district, next to his wife and mother-in-law. At the beginning of 2003, his holy relics were uncovered and placed in the church of St John Climacus in Warsaw. The Holy Synod of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Poland promulgated the official Act of Canonization on March 20, 2003, and the rites glorifying St Vasily Martysz were celebrated in Chelm on June 7-8.

Orthodox Christians in the Polish Army have taken St Vasily Martysz as their heavenly patron. They martyrdom of St Vasily was the crowning accomplishment of his pious and dedicated life, a testimony to his amazing courage. He carried his cross to the end without complaint, accepting the crown of martyrdom as he had dedicated his life to Christ and the Holy Orthodox Faith.

– *Jaroslav Charkiewicz*



POETRY

O Champion Leader

To The Most-Holy Theotokos And Ever-virgin Mary
O champion leader of the shining ranks
Of saints which dwell in Paradise, to thee
Do I thy servant pledge with tears of thanks
This humble canticle of victory.
When terrors manifold besiege my soul,
And sorrows numberless upon me fall;
When sufferings exact from me a toll
Of grief and pain, thou hearest when I call.
As thou art one with Saving Might that be
Invincible, Omnipotent and Sure,
From every danger do thou set me free,
O blessed Theotokos, bright and pure,
That I may cry to thee with heart and voice:
Unwedded, virgin bride of God, rejoice!

- *Sara Hillis*





THE CHURCH KITCHEN

POTATO BREAD

A Central Canadian Favourite

4oz cooked potatoes

1 lb white flour

1 tsp salt

1 tbsp or 1 sachet of instant dried yeast

1/2 pint water

Peel cooked potatoes, put potatoes through a sieve.

Measure flour, add yeast, rub in potatoes and add water.

Mix with a wooden spoon. Ensure all the flour is used.

Knead for one minute and transfer to an oiled bowl, cover with cling wrap or a tea towel. Let rise for two hours.

Knock dough back down and knead for a few minutes more.

Place in 2 bread tins, let rise and bake at 450 degrees for about 25 minutes.

For an alternative flavor, add sun dried tomatoes, herbs, or olives.

- Laurie Woods



NORTHERN NOMENCLATURE

EDMONTON (AB) &

EDMUNDSTON (NB) (*Pr. Nouns*)

The New Brunswick city of Edmunston stands as an historical witness to the struggle over the border between Canada and the United States. Despite the settlement of this dispute during the Aroostock War, the local population (largely francophone) on both sides of the border took to referring to the area as the Republic of Madawaska. The local mayor still bears the title of President of the Republic of Madawaska, the only such president in the country.

The area was named for Sir Edmund Walker Head, Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick (1848-1854) and Governor-General of Canada (1854-1861).

Name lends itself to being recognized as “Edmund’s Town”, after Saint Edmund the Orthodox martyr of England.

The city of Edmondton, Alberta, was established as a trading post for the Hudson's Bay company in the 18th century. It was named after Edmonton, London, the home of Sir James Winter Lake, the deputy governor of the company. It is sister city to Harbin, China, the site of the martyrdom of the Orthodox martyrs of China. It has for many years been the seat of the Ukrainian Orthodox Bishop of Edmonton, currently His Grace Bishop Ilarion (Roman Rudnyk).

The original city of Edmonton (Edmund's Town), United Kingdom, appears in the Domesday Book of 1086, where it is recorded as Adelmetone- 'a farmstead or estate of a man called Eadhelm. All the Christian names which gave rise to the names of these towns find their root in the historic English sovereign, Saint Edmund the Martyr. While the exact place of his martyrdom by pagan Danes and the location of his relics in Bury-Saint-Edmunds is not known, the pieces of the tree on which he was martyred still exist, one bearing a nail, which is traditionally thought to have been a tool used in the martyr's torture.

The "curse" of Saint Edmund on the descendent of those who martyred him led these Danes to convert to Orthodox Christianity as an act of repentance for killing the saint – a rich history for all faithful in the three cities of Saint Edmund to commemorate on November 20th, the patronal feast of Saint Edmund.



Q&A

Questions from Readers

Proselytism, Evangelism are different things

A friend just asked me: "The Russian Patriarch called for unity and said the Orthodox faithful must resist Catholic and Protestant proselytizing. Why doesn't the Orthodox church proselytize?" How would you respond? I appreciate your advice, thank you.

- Niko Sotiriopoulos,
Toronto, Ontario

Regarding the question of proselytism, it is fair to say that the experience of the saints revealed that this kind of approach produced a rather shallow and false, outward conversion. The work of God's holy ones moves much more slowly: it must affect the heart of each person, and allow the heart to respond, repeatedly, over a long period of time. Various pagan societies were a long way from Christ; our modern world is ever farther away from Him. Imagine the distance one must travel, spiritually speaking!

Those sects that proselytize certainly achieve quick conversions, and impressive numbers, yet they also see massive apostasy (consider Western Europe, for example). There is a reason the canons call for a three-year catechism: to allow the Orthodox faith to grow roots in the human heart, that it might endure for the long term. The Lord's parable of the sower is our missionary model.

As modern westerners, we naturally hope to see

results more quickly. Yet the mind of the western world is in exact opposition to the Mind of the Church. When anyone (particularly enthusiastic Orthodox Christians) suggest that we should learn from the North American Protestant model, we must keep this in mind.

- FrG+

Marriage Ceremonies

I was wondering if you could please provide some information for me. My fiancée and I will be getting married soon, and have yet to finalize the details of the ceremony. I am baptized Orthodox while she is a baptized Protestant. I have spoken with the parish priest at my church and he has advised me that a mixed marriage is allowed.

Additionally my best man is baptized Orthodox. Originally we desired to have the wedding officiated by priests from both faiths at a local Protestant church, however my priest informed me that he cannot perform ceremonies at the churches of other faiths. He said he can do outdoor weddings, however.

We considered getting married at a local historic site and restaurant; my priest is willing and able to perform the ceremony. The problem is the time of the ceremony. The day we planned is a Memorial Saturday and my priest will be conducting the divine liturgy at our church.

Ideally we would like to get married in a church and have considered a United Church. It is however important to us to incorporate aspects of both of our faiths in the ceremony. As such I have some

questions:

1) Are all Orthodox priests forbidden from performing ceremonies within the church of another faith?

2) Are Memorial Saturdays recognized by all Orthodox churches or is that specific to certain Orthodox?

3) Are there ways to modify the traditional Orthodox wedding without invalidating the sacrament of marriage? (i.e. reduction in the use of incense and candles; several sites we've visited are very hesitant in allowing their use).

– G. B., Ontario

All Orthodox priests are forbidden from performing ceremonies within the church of another faith. This is part of the Canon Law of the Orthodox Church. Memorial Days for the departed are also a universal practice, although a few of them are specially designated local dates. October 10th is one of those dates, which is particular to the Serbian rule of service.

In terms of "modifications" to the Orthodox wedding service, changes such as language, cultural dress, and certain local customs are certainly accepted. Changes such as modesty of dress, the order of service, or other practices which are the norm in an Orthodox Church (such as an absence of candles or an absence of incense or the wedding crowns) are not permitted.

Orthodox priests cannot serve marriages with non-Orthodox clergy. Additionally, Orthodox marriages must take place on the consecrated ground of an Orthodox Church; even the use of an Orthodox chapel or an Orthodox church building which has yet to be consecrated requires the blessing of the local bishop. I have not previously come across a situation where an Orthodox priest has been given a blessing to serve a wedding outdoors.

You should be made aware that if an Orthodox Christian takes the step of having their marriage served outside the Orthodox Church (i.e. by a Protestant or Roman Catholic cleric, or by a justice of the peace, etc.), they effectively put themselves outside Communion with the Orthodox Church, and cannot receive any of the Holy Mysteries, short of a process of repentance. For Orthodox Christians, we recognize that only the Orthodox Church has the grace to serve marriages for us, so this must be taken into consideration.

- FrG+

Working at weddings

A close friend asked me to perform some music for her non-Orthodox wedding ceremony. She is a close friend, and I would like to participate. What are my options – and limits – as an Orthodox Christian?

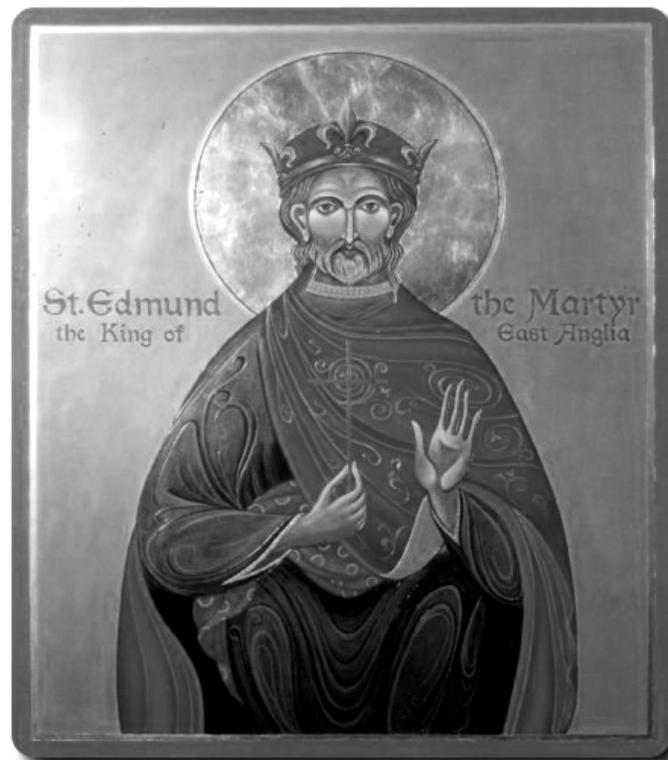
– S.N., Hamilton, Ontario

Orthodox Christians cannot participate in the rites or ceremonies of another religion; this would imply both approval and shared belief.

If one is employed to assist in some way around the ceremony, one must be clear about parameters. Conceivably, one might be able to play music before or after the ceremony (a piper outside the church would be fine, much like gypsy musicians in Serbian tradition). This would assume that any music provided was quite separate from the ceremony. Serving as a paid musician for a wedding celebration dance might be acceptable, although the environment of the party and the type of music would have to be of a sort that would be suitable for an Orthodox Christian to offer.

Can an Orthodox Christian participate as a silent member of a wedding party in a heterodox ceremony? Most bishops and priests would likely say no, and I would have to agree with them for the same reasons given above.

-FrG+



*Saint Edmund, King and Martyr,
Patron of Edmonton, Alberta, and
Edmundston, New Brunswick*