

The Faithful Steward

A Newsletter of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America

"We are all called to be faithful and wise stewards, ever waiting for the coming of our Lord." LUKE 12:40-46

The History of the Trinity: The Foundation of Orthodoxy

(Adapted from
Christian News, July 31, 2000)

Numerous cults, like the Jehovah's Witnesses and Oneness Sabelians, continue to misrepresent the historical doctrine of the Holy Trinity by stating that the doctrine was formulated at the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325, thereby implying that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity was *not* believed by the early Church. This is a gross historical error. Though we can say in one sense that the full formulation of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity was written down in credal form at Nicea and further clarified by the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381, it would be a total distortion of history to say that the doctrine of the

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The Founding of a Convent in Canada



Holy Dormition of the Theotokos Convent (HTC), located 40 minutes north of Toronto, was founded in April, 2001. For many years the pious faithful of St. Nectarios and St. Joseph of Arimathea parishes made frequent pilgrimages to the Holy Transfiguration Monastery (HTM) and Holy Nativity Convent (HNC) in Brookline, MA offering their love and support, and gaining many blessings in return.

Since this is a 10-hour drive each way, a strong desire grew to establish monastic communities in Canada. In April of 2000, at the request of Metropolitan Makarios and the clergy and faithful with him, Fr. Panteleimon came to Toronto to see a possible property in Coburg, which turned out to be unsuitable. After a second visit and many showings, another piece of property in the town of Whitchurch-Stouffville had just gone on the market.

This property, located in Cedar Valley, had at one time been a Roman Catholic convent and was therefore already zoned for institutional use. It was an ideal setting for the new convent. The house is situated on 15 acres of rolling hills, pastureland and woods, with two spring-fed natural ponds. In the midst of the smaller of the two ponds there is an island with a connecting bridge. The house itself is a split-level home, with a main floor and a lower level that has a walk-out patio. There is a garage to which stables have been built on in the back. On the main floor there is a chapel dedicated to the Dormition of the Theotokos. It has a carved wooden iconostasis from Greece, a gift from a convent on Cyprus, and the hand-painted icons adorning it are from HNC. Off of the chapel there is the main trapeza, a large kitchen, the men's dining room, guestroom, and three cells for nuns. On the lower level there are additional cells, a work/sewing room, living room, laundry, office, bakery and sacristy.

At first it seemed unattainable, due to the asking price of \$850,000 (Cdn). However, with our Saviour all things are possible for those who believe. After many prayers and six months of negotiations, the papers

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Holy Trinity was not believed until Nicea.

So one may ask, “Why did the doctrine of the Holy Trinity need to be explained?” As the first and second century came and went, the revealed biblical doctrine on God came under attack. Most of the time this attack was against the divine nature of the Lord Jesus Christ. This was the reason for the Council at Nicea. The Arians, who got their name from the main proponent of their doctrine, a man called Arius, were teaching that the Lord Jesus Christ was *not* God Himself, but, a created lesser god not equal with the Father. Nicea was not dealing with the Sabellian heresy *per se*. Nicea was not called to *create* the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, but to confirm that the Holy Scriptures taught that Jesus Christ was fully God, a doctrine in which the Sabellians were in agreement with the Orthodox party. Nicea, therefore, was Christological, *not* Trinitarian.

We believe the doctrine of the Holy Trinity because Holy Scripture teaches that there is but one God, and yet there is a person called the Father Who is referred to in personal pronouns and is accredited with personal attributes; there is a person called the Son, Who is referred to with personal pronouns and converses with the person of the Father; and there is a person called the Holy Spirit, Who is referred to with personal pronouns and personal attributes, and yet the Holy Scriptures say that there is only one God.

What follows is a small sampling of the understanding of the revealed God, as understood by the early Church up through the time of Nicea in A.D. 325.

The Didache, which appears to

have been a teaching manual for new converts, and is dated between A.D. 60 to A.D. 80 (the latest date suggested is A.D. 150) states, “But concerning baptism, thus shall ye baptize. Having first recited all these things, baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in living (running) water ... But if thou hast neither, then pour on the head thrice in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (J. B. Lightfoot, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers*, Eerdmans, 1976, p. 126.)

St. Ignatius, writing around A.D. 110-120, in responding against those who denied the eternity of the person of the Son wrote, “We have also as a physician the Lord our God, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son and Word, *before time began*, but Who afterwards became also man, of Mary the Virgin.” (Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Eerdmans, 1975, vol. 1, p. 52.)

Another of the defenders of Orthodoxy, **St. Justin Martyr**, who lived between A.D. 114-168 wrote, “For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they receive that washing with water.” (*First Apol.*, LXI. *Ibid.* vol. 1, p. 183.)

Theophilus, a Greek pagan who was converted to Christianity, was the first to use the word *Trinity* in writing ca. A.D. 170 to describe the relationship among the persons of the Godhead. (E. Calvin Beisner, *God in Three Persons*, Tyndale House, 1984, p. 90.)

St. Irenaeus of Lyons, who lived between A.D. 130-200 and was a disciple of Polycarp, who was in turn a disciple of the Apostle John,

wrote against the Gnostics and stated, “Know thou that every man is either empty or full. For if he has not the Holy Spirit, he has no knowledge of the Creator, he has not received Jesus Christ the life; he knows not the Father Who is in Heaven...” (*Against Heresies* 3:16).

Athenagoras, writing between A.D. 170-180 in response to the Hellenistic thinking that it was absurd for God to have had a Son, stated, “Nor let any one think it ridiculous that God should have a Son. For though the poets [he is referring here to the poetic Greek philosophers], in their fictions, represent the gods as no better than men, our mode of thinking is not the same as theirs, concerning either God the Father or the Son” (Roberts and Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 2, p. 133). It must be noted that in the construction of this statement, “... either God the Father or the Son” that the word “God” proceeded by the word “either” demands that “God” is placed before both “Father” and “Son” so that it is understood, “either God the Father or [God] the Son.”

Athenagoras does not stop with his understanding of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and Christology, but also has a well developed doctrine of the Holy Spirit when he wrote, “The Holy Spirit Himself also, Who operates in the prophets, we assert to be an effluence of God, flowing from Him, and returning back like a beam of the sun. Who, then, would not be astonished to hear men speak of God the Father, and of God the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and who declared both their powers in union and their distinction in order...” (*Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 133).

St. Hippolytus, in his work

Against the Heresy of Noetus, who was the forerunner of Sabellius wrote, “If, then, the Word was with God and was also God, what follows? Would one say that he speaks of two Gods? I shall not indeed speak of two Gods but of one; of two Persons however and of a third economy, *viz.*, the grace of the Holy Spirit. For the Father indeed is One but there is [another] Person because there is also the Son; and there is a third, the Holy Spirit ... The economy of the harmony is led back to one God; for God is One. It is the Father Who commands, and the Son Who obeys, and the Holy Spirit Who gives understanding; the Father is above all, and the Son Who is through all, and the Holy Spirit Who is in all” (*Against the Heresy of Noetus*, chapter 14). St. Hippolytus was born in A.D. 170 and died in A.D. 236. The commentary above was on John 1:1.

Tertullian, writing between A.D. 190 and at the latest A.D. 240, though most scholars say no later than A.D. 220, was the first of the Latin writers to use the word Trinity. He wrote, “The Word, therefore, is both always in the Father, as He says, ‘I am in the Father,’ and is always with God, according to what is written, ‘And the Word was with God;’ and never separate from the Father, since ‘I and my Father, [We] are one’” (*Against Praxeus*, chapter 8). Note: John 10:30, which states, “I and my Father are one.”

Novatian, writing no later than A.D. 250 stated, “He [Jesus] never either compared or opposed Himself to the Father. He remembered throughout His earthly ministry that He was from the Father” (*Ancient Christian Commentary*, InterVarsity Press, 1999, vol. III, p.

241). The word “from” is *ek*, meaning an extension of one from another. Jesus was the one from or out of another. As in Matt. 2:15, “Out of Egypt I called my Son” or it can be understood “from Egypt I called my Son.”

St. Gregory Thaumaturgus of Neo-Caesarea ca. A.D. 270 wrote “... [God is] a perfect Trinity, not divided nor differing in glory and eternity and sovereignty. Neither, indeed, is there any thing created or subservient in the Trinity, not introduced, as though not there before but coming afterwards; nor, indeed, has the Son ever been without the Father, nor the Spirit without the Son, but the Trinity is ever the same, unvarying and unchangeable” (Beisner, *God in Three Persons*, p. 81).

We could continue to cite quotes from the first three centuries of the Church, but the point has been demonstrated. Enemies of the Holy Trinity, who either out of ignorance or deceit maintain that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity was *not* taught by the early Church, have clearly been refuted. Please note that the last quote from St. Gregory Thaumaturgus was sixty-six years before the Council of Nicea and that the first quote from the Didache, which gave the Trinitarian formula for baptism, was 265 years before the Council of Nicea, and was possibly written before the Apostles John, Peter and Paul were martyred!

The Hebrew Bible uses the term Elohim to signify God; yet this word is plural (literally, “Gods”). Despite this, Elohim is always used with a verb in the singular form! For example, in Deut. 6:4: “The Lord our Gods (Elohim) is one Lord.”

The Triune God!

Bitten by Five Cats

The Biography of Father Ignatius Hieromonk of HTM

The first religious experience that Fr. Ignatius had was when he was five or six years old. He ran into his parents’ bedroom to announce that the television channel had a story about a baby that was found alive in a basket on a river. His parents hurried into the room to learn more about the fate of the baby. But it wasn’t the news ... it was a rerun of Cecil B. Demille’s *The Ten Commandments* with Charlton Heston!

Little Guy James Fulton—“Jimmy”—now Fr. Ignatius of Holy Transfiguration Monastery, was born to Jim and Merle Fulton on February 20, 1967 at Homestead Air Force Base near Miami, Florida. His father was in the Air Force, so most of Fr. Ignatius’ youth was spent moving from one base to another, all around the world—Indiana, North Dakota, Tokyo, North Dakota again, Germany, Nebraska, and back to Indiana.

His parents were Protestants, but not church-goers. The first time he actually attended a service was at the age of ten, when an aunt on his mother’s side took him to a Christmas Mass. He embarrassed both his aunt and his mother when, at the end of the Mass, he turned around in the church and said to them in a loud voice heard by all, “Wow, do they do this every year?” One can imagine the looks his mother and aunt got from the rest of the congregation. (“Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings...”)

He did visit other churches from time to time (in Eastern

Europe and the Soviet Union), but purely for historical, *not* religious purposes.

In 1979, in Nebraska, he began attending a Baptist church, and later, in 1983, in Indiana, a Methodist church. together with his parents.

While at Indiana University, he lapsed from whatever “Christian” faith he had espoused earlier. His parents separated and each remarried again. His dad, now retired from the Air Force, lived in Augusta, Georgia, and it was there that Fr. Ignatius began to attend a Pentecostal congregation. The minister wanted him to become a catechist, and so, for this purpose, young James was sent to Beulah Heights Bible College in Atlanta. While attending classes there, he encountered Orthodox Christianity!

There were two Antiochian Orthodox priests teaching at this school. One only taught English, but the other actually taught almost all the theology classes! Fr. Andrew had started teaching at the college when he was a “Spirit-filled” Presbyterian Christian, but during those years he had become Orthodox and had come into the Antiochians. As a very mild man and an excellent teacher, Fr. Andrew was able to grow in his Orthodox theology without offending (for the most part) the Pentecostal establishment at the college. When Jim met him, at first he didn’t like what he was hearing, but couldn’t refute it either. Fr. Andrew stayed after class many times and instructed Jim in Orthodoxy, telling him to read such Fathers as St. Justin, St. Ignatius and St. Irenaeus. One time Jim said, “I’m going to take some of

these beliefs back to the school and teach them there.” Fr. Andrew said, “You either take them *all*, or *none* of them.” Jim was not happy with this answer and questioned him more and more till eventually he saw the truth of the Orthodox Church and was chrismated into the Antiochian Orthodox Church in 1993 with the name James (after St. James the Brother of God).

He had wanted to be baptized by immersion, like the Church Fathers say, but his priest said it wasn’t necessary. James graduated from Beulah Heights in 1994, *Summa Cum Laude*. During his studies he was the secretary for the college president and a member of the travelling Skit Troupe. His conversion, along with those of three other students, rocked the small college. That year they dismissed Fr. Andrew because of these conversions, and tried to talk the converts out of the Orthodox confession, but all four of them stood firm.

For the next three years James tried to figure out his course in life. Each successive year he grew more inclined toward the monastic life—even though his priest was against monasticism. Fr. Andrew would say, “Monasticism is no longer needed.” This didn’t sit well with James. He travelled around and visited a number of monasteries, but none felt right. Also, his Godfather (John Hanson) kept wanting him to read more and more about the growing “Ecumenical problems,” but James didn’t want to get involved with that. “I just want to be a monk,” is what he would respond each time. Eventually it became more clear that if he wanted to find a monastery which held to the faith and felt right, he

would have to become more informed about this “Ecumenical problem.” The more he read, the more he saw that there were many problems within the Antiochian Archdiocese; the Calendar issue, intercommunion with non-Orthodox (Monophysites and Melkites) etc. Finally, he had read enough to see that where he was and what the Church Fathers say were two different places.

He approached his priest, hoping that he would see the problems, and that together they could deal with them. But unfortunately he came against opposition. James exhorted his priest to ask his bishops about these problems. Reluctantly, Fr. Andrew called Bishop Antoun (the most “liberal”) and Bishop Basil (the most “conservative”) to discuss what had been brought to his attention.

In the meantime, James contacted the priest in Atlanta who was under Bishop Ephraim of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America. He asked this priest the same questions and received the type of answers that were consistent with the Church Fathers (*ie.* St. Maximus the Confessor, St. Mark of Ephesus, and others). When James met again with Fr. Andrew, the priest explained that both bishops had given the same answer to his inquiries. “Tell your parishioner to go to church and say his prayers, and let the bishops deal with these problems.”

Well, that was it. He could no longer stay. His priest asked what he was going to do, and James said he was going under the omophorion of Bishop Ephraim of Boston. Fr. Andrew flew into a rage and threw James out of the church so that he would not affect any

other people with these ideas. James felt sad about what had transpired, but knew he had to confess the true faith.

He started going to church at the Atlanta parish, became a catechumen, and was exhorted by the priest to visit Holy Transfiguration Monastery, which he did in February 1996. From the moment he walked into the monastery (till now) he knew this was his home. He returned to Atlanta and continued working on his Master's Degree in Education. On Holy Thursday, 1996, he arrived at the monastery again, and on Holy and Great Saturday he was properly and canonically baptized. His Godparents, Dimitrios and Spyridoula Grillas, along with their children: Vasiliki, Olga, Evangelos and Irene, became his new family.

After his baptism, Fr. Isaac asked why he was still going to school. James responded that he had always been in school, it being the norm. Fr. Isaac told him to go home, pay off his debts as soon as he could, and then fulfill his intention.

On May 19/June 1, 1999, James entered the monastery as a novice. He was given the obedience to make incense. On September 25/October 8, 1999, at the beginning of the vigil for St. John the Theologian—in monastic parlance—"he received his black." For the next three years he learned more and more about the services. His duties included tending the candle stands, being an acolyte,

cleaning the church, and eventually he learned to light lamps. On September 26/October 9, 2002, the feast of St. John the Theologian James was tonsured a rassophor monk and named after St. Ignatius of Antioch. Many of his family attended the service of his tonsure.

His mother remembered some incidents in Fr. Ignatius' life as a child. While travelling around the world he had been bitten by five different cats in five different countries. This is an interesting parallel with the eventual martyrdom of St.



Hierodeacon Aimilianos, Bishop Ephraim and newly ordained priest, Hieromonk Ignatius

Ignatius of Antioch, who was attacked by lions in the Colosseum in Rome (108-110 AD). Just when Fr. Ignatius was getting used to his new life, another event occurred. On the feast of St. Ignatius of Antioch, Dec. 20/Jan. 2, 2003, he was ordained Reader, Subdeacon and Deacon. What a surprise that was! Then on Jan. 27/Feb. 9 he was ordained to the priesthood. May St. Ignatius of Antioch guide and protect Hieromonk Ignatius in his life of service to God at Holy Transfiguration Monastery.

Desert Storm Trooper Occupies California Mountain

Hierodeacon Aimilianos was ordained to the diaconate on October 21/November 3, 2002, at St. Gregory of Sinai Monastery in Lake County, CA. His Eminence Metropolitan Moses and Abbot Sergios officiated. Many of the local Orthodox families who were present to witness the ordination, are blood-relatives of the new hierodeacon.

Emilio dela Cruz was born on June 12, 1971, in San Carlos City, the Philippines. He is the eighth of eleven children. In 1978 he came to the U.S. and lived in San Francisco, where he went to school. His family is of Roman Catholic background, but in his teenage years he and an older sister became evangelical Protestants.

During his high school years, Emilio discovered two special talents: an uncanny ability to repair cars and unusual mechanical abilities in general; and an exceptional gift for gymnastics—he was a member of his public school break-dance team that performed live on a local television station.

After high school he wanted to challenge himself in new ways, so he entered the U.S. Army and served in the 1990-91 Gulf War with Iraq. Reflecting on his wartime experience, he is thankful that God preserved him both during the war and in the period which followed, since so many veterans have had serious health problems

stemming from battle conditions in the Middle East.

In 1992, after finishing his three years of military service, he returned to the Bay Area. As a veteran, he was given a good position with the U.S. Postal Service, and worked there for six years. During this period, the older sister who had introduced him to evangelical Protestantism had begun to discern the limitations of that Christian group, and had joined a conservative Anglican parish. This church was in the midst of coming to an inevitable break with its syncretist Anglican leadership, a break which led it to the Antiochian Archdiocese. Emilio considered the issues that were moving his sister and her family and drew the same conclusions regarding Anglicanism. He was received by a Bay Area Antiochian parish, and given the name John, for St. John of San Francisco (who had spent a short period of time in the Philippines and had stopped a typhoon by his prayers, thereby saving a camp of Russian refugees). Two years later John was ordained to the sub-diaconate.

At this time another gift was revealed, that of iconography, and in 1996 John was sent by his priest to understudy Monk Simon, a member of St. Gregory of Sinai Monastery, then in Richmond, near Berkeley, CA, and an institution of the OCA.

As time went on, John began to sense a monastic vocation and was given a blessing to move into the monastery as a long-term guest. Eventually leaving the Postal Service, he devoted all his energy to iconography, and by God's grace made progress. In 1998 he became a novice at the monastery, and when it left the Bay Area in 1999

for rented quarters in rural Lake County, John was able to make his many skills available to the community in its new rural setting. Here the gifts for gardening and cooking came to the fore.

During this time the community was increasingly troubled by its discovery of the actual terms on which the historic Patriarchates and Metropolias were participating in the ecumenical movement, especially in its chief institutional expressions, the World and regional Councils of Churches. As time went on, it became clear that the authorities leading these bodies were unable to explain how it came to pass that fundamental ecclesiological doctrines and the canons established to protect the Church's structure on earth, and which were meant to serve as the equivalent of an immune system, had been set aside by the contradictory behavior of the members of the episcopate, clergy and theological experts who represented these Patriarchates at ecumenical assemblies. After a lengthy process of study and the verification that these breaches of the Church's historic faith and canons were indeed routine, the monastery decided to leave the jurisdictions which participated in ecumenist activities or were in communion with those episcopal synods that did so participate. Having reviewed alternative possibilities, the community elected to request to be received by the Metropolis of Boston and was so received in September, 2000. Fr. Aimilianos' own sense of things was fully in accord with this pilgrimage and he was instrumental in helping the community clarify the questions and discover the responses that reflected the historic

faith of the Church.

In January, 2000 he was tonsured a rassophor monk, being named Aimilianos for the holy Bishop of Kyzikos who defended the icons. In late 2000 the monastery was given 300 acres on the south flanks of Mount Hannah, not far from its rented quarters, and Fr. Aimilianos was put in charge of managing the new site. For the first year the community lived in large, used army tents and a trailer, all secured and set up by Fr. Aimilianos. Later, generous gifts enabled a building program, and his quickly-acquired abilities in construction ensured that he would co-ordinate the building program, which has resulted in a large, multi-purpose facility adequate for the community at this stage of its life.

In the past year forestry has been added to his growing list of skills. He has learned to mill high-quality lumber, and to work effectively with a bulldozer loaned by a neighbor. When a 10 acre site with two homes on it was recently donated to the monastery for the development of an olive grove, Fr. Aimilianos was given charge of developing the grove—1600 olive trees were planted this past year and almost as many will be planted this coming spring—as well as charge of restoring the main house on the site, built over 100 years ago. He has already learned to cure olives donated to the monastery by a friend. Fr. Aimilianos heads the monastery's left *kliros* using gifts from his teens when he was a member of an evangelical singing group.

May God, through the intercession of the Theotokos and of St. Gregory of Sinai, give strength to those who labour for His Kingdom in the monastic life.

were signed in October of 2000. The closing date for the sale was exactly one year after the property was seen, in April of 2001. The parishioners in Toronto wanted very much the opportunity to contribute to the funding of the convent, so they wished to host a fundraising tea. Fr. Panteleimon was very reluctant to allow the fundraiser to take place, since both monastic houses in Brookline have never made an appeal for funds, following an injunction of the saintly Elder Joseph of the Holy Mountain, who was the spiritual father of Fr. Panteleimon. The clergy and faithful insisted, however, and a fundraising tea was held on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, 2001, at which time \$120,000 was raised for the convent. The outpouring of love and enthusiasm of all those present was very moving. In addition to the tea, HTM which had received an inheritance from the parents of one of its members donated the full sum of \$200,000 (US). The remaining amount of \$350,000 (Cdn) was borrowed from the bank, and a "50-50" club was set up in which 50 families pledged to donate \$50 a month to help with the bi-monthly mortgage payments until the nuns would be able to support themselves by the work of their hands.

On April 20/May 3, after a tearful farewell at HNC, Mother Nectaria, accompanied by Mothers Philothei, Magdalene and Sister Maria (now Mother Mariam) all former parishioners of St. Nectarios, were escorted to HTC by Fr. Panagiotis and Presbyteria Roberta Carras, and Athanasios Mitsilios, the brother of Mother Magdalene, who volunteered to drive the 26-foot U-Haul truck. They arrived in

Stouffville at about 10:30 p.m. and were met by a group of at least 40 parishioners who formed an assembly line to help unload the truck since it had to be returned in the morning. With such enthusiastic helpers, the truck was emptied within an hour; an unbelievably short amount of time.

During Fr. Panteleimon's first visit to the new convent in Bright Week of 2001, he brought a 16th century icon of the Mother of God which was to be the "foundation icon," the cornerstone and support of the small community dedicated to her. The nuns also received a hand-painted icon of the Dormition of the Mother of God, which has a small stone from her holy tomb in Gethsemane. The convent has a portion of the relics of St. John the Russian, its patron saint, as well as relics from the Elder Joseph of the Holy Mountain, Ieronymos of Aegina, and others. The nuns in Brookline made an extensive collection of holy oils and stones from the Holy Land for their sisters in Stouffville. Thus with "sticks and stones and holy bones" a firm spiritual foundation was laid.

By the mercies of God, the intercessions of our Lady, the Most Holy Theotokos, and the indispensable help of Fr. Panteleimon, M. Seraphima and the monastics of HTM and HNC, and the faithful in the Toronto area, much has been accomplished in such a short amount of time. The little chapel received its hand-carved iconostasis, the analogia, and the candle stands from Greece within three months. In the past year and a half the roof has been replaced, rooms have been divided and painted with the help of parishioners, the drive-

way has been repaved, an orchard of fruit trees has been planted along with numerous flowering shrubs and roses, and a large vegetable garden has been planted and enclosed with fencing to keep the local deer from feasting on the vegetables. Young people from the parishes have sacrificed numerous Saturdays to come help with the yard work. Currently the stables behind the garage are being renovated to set up a beeswax candle-making workshop. At the present time there are four monastics. They hope to be able to support themselves by baking whole wheat bread, making candles, icon buttons, witnesses and favors for baptisms and weddings, and sewing church coverings. The convent maintains a daily cycle of monastic services in Greek and English, and Divine Liturgies whenever possible.

An additional five acres with a spacious house bordering the 15 acres of the convent was acquired in December, 2002. The new house will serve as a hospice for pilgrims, and for visiting clergy when they serve at the convent. This was made possible by a generous donation from HTM, an interest-free loan from a local benefactor, and also from the savings of the nuns.

Thus, another seed has been planted; another small community of monastics with the help and nurturing of their spiritual family has been established. As in the words of St. John of the Ladder, "Angels are a light to monastics, and monastics are a light to the world." Prayers are asked that this community may also become a beacon of light and a shining example of the Orthodox Christian way of life for the pious faithful of Canada. For more information: (905)473-9009.

St. Seraphim of Sarov Church Builds New Addition

by David Clements and Anna Winburne

Saint Seraphim of Sarov Orthodox Church had its beginnings in 1991 when Metropolitan Ephraim gave his blessing for this new mission. It began in the home of Fr. Nicodemos and Presbytera Lydia and its only parishioners were the Gayle family. Gradually, others came to the mission and within a couple of years it became necessary to start looking for a building that could be used for worship.

Beginning the search for a building seemed almost silly at this point, as there was no money at all for a down payment. Eventually, an old house on a country road was located in Hanover County, just outside of Richmond, VA. Miraculously, through the help of a few benefactors, just enough money for a down payment was collected. With much hard work and the support of a "church friendly" county, this old house was converted into a peaceful worship space dedicated to St. Seraphim of Sarov. As one would expect, there were many temptations along the way, but through the prayers of St. Seraphim, all of the problems surfaced and were then solved one by one. A simple iconostasis was constructed and a parking lot was developed behind the building. St. Seraphim's held its first Liturgy in its new home in the summer of 1994.

Since that time, the parish has grown to 11 families with many children. The faithful became more and more aware of the need to have more space to accommodate the future needs for weddings and funerals. One anonymous donor

contributed to St. Seraphim's every year and this enabled the parish to establish a building fund, fulfilling the hopes that the community had for developing new space in which to grow. Through God's providence, other monies were added to the building fund and the possibility for a new addition was now within reach.

The parish decided to build a 20 foot addition across the back of the present structure and to raise the roof and vault the ceiling over the temple area. Don Dady, a retired contractor and father to one of our parishioners, generously



The beginning phase of the new cupola

donated his time and talents to develop a set of professional plans to be used for the project. In order to go forward with the project, it was necessary to amend the original site plan. Susan Warren, a local engineer who helped with the original site plan, donated her expertise and spent hours working on a new plan to satisfy the local county government policies. Her generosity has been a true blessing when one considers that all of her work was done in the midst of holding down a demanding full time job and taking care of her own family.

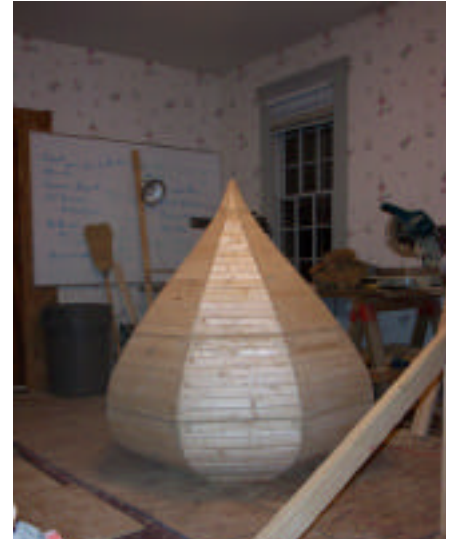
Plans without hands to bring

them into reality would be of little profit, and St. Seraphim's has been blessed again in this area. Dimitri Roby, an Orthodox Christian and head of Chymist Corporation, a construction company, has relocated to Virginia to be the contractor and lead builder of the project. Dimitri's vast experience in historical building restoration and of Orthodox Churches will allow the plans to become a reality and maintain the integrity of the vision. His hard work has already produced changes. Old exterior parts of the building have been removed and preparations for the new addition have begun. While patiently waiting for the proper permits and for the weather to clear, Dimitri went to work on an onion-domed cupola, which will be placed on top of the building once the roof has been reconstructed.

The new temple area will include a new iconostasis with icons painted by nuns at Holy Nativity Convent in Brookline, MA. Some men in the parish, under the guidance of Dimitri Roby, will be building the iconostasis. These additions will promote more meaningful worship and a more traditional representation of the Orthodox Faith. We know that in St. Seraphim's life he had wanted to have a white church constructed for the nuns who were his spiritual children. Although the building of this church never came to fruition during his lifetime, we at St. Seraphim's like to think that in constructing his little white church in the Virginia countryside, we are completing work that he had wanted done.

Holy Tradition teaches us that when we move toward God, the evil one is angered and tries to trip us up. As we build this temple to teach and spread the Gospel in an Orthodox manner, surely there will be temptations and barriers thrown in our way. We ask your prayers that God will help us stay the course as we continue toward the conclusion of this building project. God has provided everything for our needs, and we give thanks to Him and to those who have generously given of their energy and financial resources to establish the Orthodox Tradition

in Central Virginia. God willing, the building will be completed by the summer feast of St. Seraphim on July 19/August 1. Please pray for us, and as we say here in the South, "Y'all come see us!" The church is located at 11009 Old Washington Hwy, Glen Allen, VA. For a service schedule or for more information, please call (804)730-8348.



New cupola without the Terne tin covering



View of St. Seraphim's with the deck removed



View of the back of St. Seraphim's Church

The Abbot's Garlic Treat

This account is from Robert Curzon's Visits to Monasteries in the Levant, published in 1839. An English nobleman, Curzon here describes his first (and probably last) encounter with scordaliá, a garlic sauce popular in Greece and the Mediterranean and prepared especially for him by the kindly Athonite abbot.

I slept well on my divan, and the next morning at sunrise received a visit from the *hegoumenos*, who came to wish me good day. After some conversation on other matters, I inquired about the library, and asked permission to view its contents. The *hegoumenos* declared his willingness to show me everything that the monastery contained. "But first," said he, "I wish to present you with something excellent for your breakfast; and from the special goodwill that I bear towards so distinguished a guest I shall prepare it with my own hands, and will stay to see you eat it; for it is really an admirable dish, and one not presented to all persons." "Well," thought I, "a good breakfast is not a bad thing;" and the fresh mountain air and the good night's rest had given me an appetite; so I expressed my thanks for the kind hospitality of my lord abbot, and he, sitting down opposite to me on the divan, proceeded to prepare the dish. "This," said he, producing a shallow basin half full of a white paste, "is the principal and most savory part of this famous dish; it is composed of gloves of garlic, pounded down, with a certain quantity of sugar. With it I will now mix the oil in just proportions, some shreds of

fine cheese [it seemed to be of the white acid kind, which resembles what is called *caccia cavallo* in the south of Italy, and which almost takes the skin off your fingers, I believe], and sundry other nice little condiments, and now it is completed!" He stirred the savory mess round and round with a large wooden spoon until it sent forth over room and passage and cell, over hill and valley, an aroma which is not to be described. "Now," said the *hegoumenos*, crumbling some bread into it with his large and somewhat dirty hands, "this is a dish for an emperor! Eat, my friend, my much-respected guest; do not be shy. Eat; and when you have finished the bowl you shall go into the library and anywhere else you like; but you shall go nowhere till I have had the pleasure of seeing you do justice to this delicious food, which, I can assure you, you will not meet with everywhere."

I was sorely troubled in spirit. Who could have expected so dreadful a martyrdom as this? The sour apple of the hermit down below was nothing—a trifle in comparison. Was ever an unfortunate bibliomaniac dosed with such a medicine before? It would have been enough to have cured the whole Roxburghe Club from meddling with libraries and books for ever and ever. I made every endeavor to escape this honor. "My Lord," said I, "it is a fast; I cannot this morning do justice to this delicious viand; it is a fast; I am under a vow. Englishmen must not eat that dish in this month. It would be wrong; my conscience won't permit it, though the odor certainly is most

wonderful! Truly an astonishing savor! Let me see you eat it, O *hegoumenos*!" continued I; "for behold, I am unworthy of anything so good." "Excellent and virtuous young man!" said the *hegoumenos*, "no, I will not eat it. I will not deprive you of this treat. Eat it in peace; for know that to travelers all such vows are set aside. On a journey it is permitted to eat all that is set before you, unless it is meat that is offered to idols. I admire your scruples: but be not afraid, it is lawful. Take it, my honoured friend, and eat it: eat it all, and then we will go into the library." He put the bowl into one of my hands and the great wooden spoon into the other: and in desperation I took a gulp, the recollection of which still makes me tremble. What was to be done? Another mouthful was an impossibility; not all my ardor in the pursuit of manuscripts could give me the necessary courage. I was overcome with sorrow and despair. My servant saved me at last; he said that English gentlemen never ate such rich dishes for breakfast, from religious feelings, he believed; but he requested that it might be put by, and he was sure I should like it very much later in the day. The *hegoumenos* looked vexed, but he applauded my principles; and just then the board sounded for church. "I must be off, excellent and worthy English lord," said he; "I will take you to the library and leave you the key. Excuse my attendance on you there, for my presence is required in the church." So I got off better than I expected; but the taste of that ladleful stuck to me for days.

Don't Mess With Mom

From Stephanie Koerner

My son came home from school one day,
With a smirk upon his face.
He'd decided he was smart enough,
To put me in my place.

"Guess what I learned in Civics Two,
That's taught by Mr. Wright?
It's all about the laws today,
The "Children's Bill of Rights."

It says I need not clean my room,
Don't have to cut my hair.
No one can tell me what to think,
Or speak, or what to wear.

I have freedom from religion,
And regardless what you say,
I don't have to bow my head,
And I sure don't have to pray.

I can wear earrings anywhere I want,
And pierce my tongue and nose.
I can read and watch just what I like,
And get tattoos from head to toes.

And if you ever spank me,
I'll charge you with the crime.
I'll back up all my charges,
With the marks on my behind.

Don't you ever touch me,
My body's only for my use,
Not for your hugs and kisses,
That's just more child abuse.

Don't preach about your morals,
Like your mama did to you.
That's nothing more than mind control.
And it's illegal too!

Mom, I have these children's rights,
So you can't influence me,
Or I'll call Children's Service Division,
Better known as C.S.D."

Of course, my first instinct was
To toss him out the door.
But the chance to teach a lesson
Made me think a little more.

I mulled it over carefully,
I couldn't let this go.
A smile crept upon my face,
He's messing with a pro.

The next day I took him shopping
At the local Goodwill Store.
I told him, "Pick out all you want,
There's shirts and pants galore.

I've called and checked with C.S.D.,
Who said they didn't care
If I bought you K-Mart shoes
Instead of those Nike Airs.

And I've canceled that appointment
To take your driver's test.
The C.S.D. is unconcerned
So I'll decide what's best."

I said, "No time to stop and eat,
Or pick up stuff to munch.
And tomorrow you can start to learn
To make your own sack lunch.

Just save that raging appetite,
And wait 'til dinner time.
We're having liver and onions,
A favorite dish of mine."

He asked "Can I please rent a movie,
To watch on my VCR?"
"Sorry, but I sold your TV,
For new tires on my car.

I also rented out your room,
You'll take the couch instead.
The C.S.D. requires just
A roof above your head.

Your clothing won't be trendy now,
And I'll choose what we eat.
That allowance that you used to get,
Will buy me something neat.

I'm selling off your jet ski,
Dirt-bike and roller blades.
Check out the 'Parent's Bill of Rights'
It's in effect today.

Hey hot shot, are you crying,
And why are you on your knees?
Are you asking God to help you out,
Instead of C.S.D???

The Mosaic Authorship Of the Pentateuch

By Stephen Caesar

(*Christian News*, March 27, 2000)

The genuine Mosaic authorship of the first five books of the Bible has been heavily doubted by Bible critics, who claim that they were written by priests during the Jewish exile in Babylon in the sixth century BC, eons after Moses was supposed to have lived. Primary among them was Julius Wellhausen, a German critic who, drawing on the philosophy of Hegel, made the claim in his 1878 book *Prolegomena* that the development of the Israelite religion was a slow, gradual evolution from primitive naturalism to monotheism.¹ His views were based heavily on the now-discredited theory of Auguste Comte that all human religions began with animism (spirit worship), which developed into polytheism, which then evolved upward into monotheism.

Wellhausen notwithstanding, the evidence points in the opposite direction: The *Pentateuch* is indeed a product of the era in which tradition places it. Even the highly skeptical authors and editors of the *Illustrated Dictionary and Concordance of the Bible*, who by no means accept biblical infallibility, concurred. Referring to the various laws of Moses, they admitted:

An early date for this legislation is supported by its archaic vocabulary; its non-monarchic tribal polity; its reference to pastoral-agricultural (non-urban) society; the absence of all laws pertaining to commerce; the lack of any reference to courts and the fact that the civil and criminal laws are addressed to the injured party or the next of kin; the recognition

of self-help; the absence of any reference to Israel as a body politic. All this points to an early pre-monarchial dating.²

A centerpiece of Wellhausen's criticism of the law of Moses was his belief that writing had not yet been invented during the lifetime of Moses. Bible scholars Drs. W.T. Purkiser, C.E. Demaray, D.S. Metz, and M.A. Stunck point out the falseness of this objection:

...[M]odern archaeological discoveries have completely discredited the argument of radical critics that Moses could not have written the *Pentateuch* because writing was unknown in his day. Writing is now known to have been in use as early as 3000 BC, and extremely common by the time of Abraham, who lived six centuries before Moses. Among



The Prophet Moses removing his sandal

the Ras Shamra [Ugarit] tablets, discovered as recently as 1929, and dated from the time of Moses, are some written in an alphabetic language closely akin to Hebrew. The 'Sinai Hebrew Script,' discovered by Sir Flinders Petrie at Serabit on the Peninsula of Sinai in the very locale where Moses was directed to write the law and the work of God (Exod. 17:14 and 34:27), also bears witness to the common use of alphabetic writing in Moses' day.³

Similarly, the great archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon, former director of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem and later a professor at Oxford University, observed:

The event of the Exodus was of such primary importance in Hebrew history, and the divine assistance of which it was held to be evidence was such a basic concept in the development of Yahwehism, that its historical basis must be accepted, particularly in view of recent evidence as to the possibility of written records at a much earlier date than used to be supposed.⁴

One of the top minds in the field of Near Eastern archaeology was in agreement that the books of Moses should not be dated at a much later time than when they claim to have taken place. This was the late Dr. William F Albright, director of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem and professor at Johns Hopkins University. He noted that "the Israelite

traditions belong to a firmly established people, with strong tribal, family, and cultic ties, which require the existence of validating oral documentation.”⁵ As to the skeptics’ theory that the Old Testament books, particularly the books of Moses, are “pious frauds,” he wrote that

biblical scholars have been misled by the analogy of Graeco-Roman antiquity into exaggerating the possibility of “pious fraud” in the fabrication of written records and documents beyond all analogy. Nearly every book and passage of the Old Testament has been stigmatized as a literary forgery by at least one scholar. Now it cannot be emphasized too strongly that there is hardly any evidence at all in the ancient Near East for documentary or literary fabrications.⁶

He further added that

it is absurd to deny that Moses was actually the founder of the Israelite commonwealth and the framer of Israel's religious system. This fact is emphasized so unanimously by tradition that it may be regarded as absolutely certain. Nowhere is there the slightest breath of doubt cast on this irrefragable fact by Israelite tradition. If we regard Zoroaster, Buddha, and Confucius as the founders of nomistic [law-giving] religions we cannot deny this right to Moses.⁷ ...[T]here is not a single passage in the whole *Pentateuch* which can be seriously considered as showing post-exile influence either in form or in content ...⁸

In the light of such statements, it

can reasonably be concluded that Wellhausen's critical theory is of no scholarly value. Archaeology has provided enough objective evidence to discredit the theory that the books of Moses are far too late in real time to have been the product of an actual Moses, who lived nearly a millennium before the Babylonian Exile. One of the strongest arguments against a traditional date and authorship of the *Pentateuch* thus collapses.

Stephen Caesar is a magna cum laude graduate of Tufts University, and is currently pursuing his master's degree in anthropology/archaeology at Harvard.

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¹Albright, William Foxwell, *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Garden City, NY Doubleday Anchor Books, 1957) 88.

²Geoffrey Wigoder, gen. ed., *The Illustrated Dictionary and Concordance of the Bible* (Jerusalem: G.G. The Jerusalem Publishing House Ltd., 1986, published in the United States by The Reader's Digest Association, Inc.) 194.

³Purkiser, WT., ed., *Exploring the Old Testament* (Kansas City, MO; Beacon Hill Press, 1955), 50.

⁴Kenyon, Kathleen M., *Archaeology in the Holy Land*, 3rd ed. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), 207-208.

⁵Albright, *op. cit.*, 75

⁶*Ibid.* 78.

⁷*Ibid.* 258.

⁸*Ibid.* 345.

Update From The Republic of Georgia

Father Zurab Aroshvili of Tbilisi has reported that those who led the pogrom in Guria (see *The Faithful Steward*, no. 14) have come to a bad end.

a) The chief organizer of the pogrom was in an auto accident. He drove his car off a mountain cliff and was smashed to pieces on the rocks below. They couldn't even find all of him.

b) The middle-aged woman who helped organize the pogrom and egged people on died unexpectedly.

c) The police chief who watched and refused to get involved or stop the mob was in a car wreck and is now crippled for life.

All this has people in the Ozurgeti region talking—maybe this is more than just coincidence, maybe they are being punished for destroying the church. Locals are afraid, and, hopefully, will leave our people alone.

Father Gelasius Aroshvili also said that big shakeups are expected this autumn when local elections are held in Georgia. Several political groups have telephoned him with offers of mutual assistance. But Father Gelasius made it clear that they don't get involved in politics.

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 mihailoff@adelphia.net

New Iconostasis in Concord

by Zacchaeus Bishop



Over ten years ago the members of Holy Dormition parish in Concord, NH moved into their new church and asked that I construct an inexpensive, temporary iconostasis. While this was adequate and functional, we always understood that in due time the parish would adorn their church with a more beautiful and permanent iconostasis.

Sometime in 2001 Fr. John Routos and the parish council approached me concerning the design, construction and installation of such an iconostasis. In December 2001 we convened a preliminary design meeting in Concord. Soon after that I presented my initial designs and plans for

their approval. At the same time I submitted plans for a new chanting stand to suit their specifications.

After suggesting several modifications, the rector, parish council and members approved the design. It called for the iconostasis to be made of birch, basswood and other light colored species of wood finished with several coats of clear lacquer. The design was based around modular sections that could easily be transported to Concord, assembled on site and then be affixed to a rigid, solid wood framework. The design also incorporated numerous configurations of decorative moldings from various commercial sources in order to avoid the exorbitant expense and

delay of commissioning hand carved work. On the other hand, the eight prominently featured columns were hand crafted by a master wood turner in Boston, MA.

Work on the iconostasis proceeded throughout April and May 2002 and the installation took place in July, well in time for the parish feast day, August 15/28. Six large icons and two smaller ones for the royal doors are now being painted in Greece. Their addition to the iconostasis will complete the final phase of this project for the beautification of God's temple and the glory of His name.

The Christian's Attitude Towards His Passions

By Bishop Ignaty Brianchaninov
(*Ascetical Essays*, Part II)

Every opposition shown to the demands of a passion weakens it. Continual opposition subdues it. Every occasion of captivity by a passion strengthens it, and continual enticement by a passion increases the passions of him that is drawn away thereby.

The opposition of a Christian to the passions ought to extend even unto *the crucifying of the flesh with its passions and lusts* (Gal. 5:24). In [God's] chosen spiritual warriors it ought to extend to the shedding of blood. Give blood and receive the Spirit (4th dictum of Abba Longinus. *Narrations Worthy of Being Remembered—Dostopamyatniya Skazaniya*). Only he that suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin (I Peter 4:1). This means: Only he that has suffered evil in his body in voluntary or involuntary struggles is capable of opposing the sinful desires of the flesh and of crushing and stifling them in himself. A body that is at ease and pampered by diverse kinds of luxury and the enjoyment thereof is a dwelling-place of passions.

The God-Man Who for our sake suffered and was crucified requires of His disciples and followers that they imitate His sufferings, that they sacrifice everything temporal for that which is eternal, the corruptible for the incorruptible, that they be the disciples and followers of the God-Man by their very way of life.

It is essential for the Christian to struggle. But it is not the struggle that sets the Christian free from the domination of the passions. It is the

Right Hand of the Most-High that liberates him. It is the grace of the Holy Spirit that frees him.

By taming and mortifying the flesh, by the labours of piety together with the diligent keeping of the commandments of the Gospel, the Christian attains to true humility. True humility consists in complete renunciation of oneself, in full submission to God, in unceasing service to God. Such humility attracts Divine grace to

The passions are shameless. Guard yourself vigilantly. Believe the passionlessness of your body only when it is laid to rest in the grave.

the soul. Divine grace, when it overshadows the soul, grants it a spiritual sensitivity, and the passions, those carnal and sinful sensations and enticements, remain idle (St. Isaac the Syrian, *Homily 43*).

The working of the passions, which gives pleasure to the carnal man, is burdensome and torturous for the spiritual man. It arouses in him the strongest revulsion. At the slightest appearance or arising of a passion, he flees from it as from a ravenous and fierce wild beast, as from a murderer. He flees under the protection of prayer, under the shelter of the teaching of the Gospel, under the protection of God.

A soul that is not cultivated by

the commandments of the Gospel and a body uncultivated by the labours of piety are not fit to be the temple of Divine grace, the temple of the Holy Spirit.

He who does not tame his body by labours, fasting, vigil and standing in prayer, and thereby allows his carnal wisdom to gain mastery over him, is unable to become a fulfiller of the commandments.

Death—death alone completely liberates even the Saints of God from the influence of sin upon them. The passions are shameless. They can rise up in a person lying on his death bed. Even on one's death bed one ought not cease to guard oneself vigilantly. Believe the passionlessness of your body only when it is laid to rest in the grave.

The passions which dwell in a Christian, ceaselessly compel him to be on the watch; they continually summon him to battle, thus aiding in his spiritual progress. By the wise dispensation of Divine Providence, evil with its evil intent works for good, as Saint Macarius the Great has said. (*Homily 4*, ch. 6).

The rough and heavy millstone grinds the grains of wheat into flour, making the wheat suitable for the baking of bread. The difficult battle with the passions cleanses the heart of a man, it humbles his haughty spirit and makes him acknowledge his fallen state. Skillfully bringing this state to light, it makes him acknowledge the absolute necessity for redemption. It destroys the hope he has in himself and transfers all his hope to the Redeemer.

Continued in next issue



About Our Logo
A Divine Confirmation

The cross on our masthead commemorates the miraculous appearance of the sign of the Cross near Athens on Sept. 14 (according to the traditional Orthodox calendar) in 1925. Anti-Orthodox and secularist forces in power in Greece, together with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, had forced the changing of the traditional church calendar in 1924 as a first step toward uniting with the heterodox churches of the West. Shining in the evening sky on the traditional feast day of the Exaltation of the Cross, this extraordinary appearance of the Cross is a divine confirmation of Holy Tradition in the Orthodox Church and of the calendar as one facet of Holy Tradition.

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“Every good giving and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights” (James 1:17). The perfect gift is the one that only membership in the Church can give: the knowledge of true worship and the grace of the Holy Mysteries. But our era suffers from a famine of truth and the true worship of God. In our weak way, we try to feed those who hunger for God. Your prayers and your donations help the Church in this awe-inspiring ministry. Another way to help is to make a bequest to the Church in your will. Remember that God loves a cheerful giver. Also remember that *The Faithful Steward*, although delivered free of charge to all members of our Church, is in need of your support.



The Faithful Steward

A Newsletter of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America

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