



✝ THE SPIRITUAL WATCH

“Stand fast on spiritual watch...”
-St. John Maximovitch

Come, O Ye People...

“Not only the soul, but also man's body is sanctified and communes with God by partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, through which he is united with the entire Holy Trinity...”

Official publication of the
Genuine Orthodox Church
of America

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About The Spiritual Watch

The *Spiritual Watch* is published bimonthly, with the blessing of his Eminence, Metropolitan Demetrius of America.

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



God is a holy Trinity. A Trinity consubstantial and indivisible. Consubstantial, that is, one essence, one nature. A Trinity indivisible: the Son has never been divided from the Father, nor the Holy Spirit from the Father or the Son, and never will be divided.

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not three gods, but one God, since They have one nature. But not only because of this. People also have one nature, one essence. But with people one cannot say that two or three persons are one person, no matter how close and amicable they may be. People not only have separate bodies, but each one also has his own will, his own tastes, his own moods. No matter how similar people may be in body and character, it still never happens that everything is in common or that everything is the same.

With the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity everything is in common. The boundless love of the Father for the Son, of the Son for the Father, and the same love between them and the Holy Spirit make Their will and all of Their actions to be com-

Cont'd on p. 2

Saint Xenia Camp

With the blessing of Metropolitan Demetrius, the launch of St. Xenia Camp 2017 is coming right up! This year's camp is scheduled for August 13-19, (with August 12 slated as a training day for counselors). Our staff is working very hard to gather the resources necessary to manage the many great activities that our camp has to offer. These include: swimming, canoeing, hiking, volleyball, gagaball (a big hit!), various fun-filled camp games, arts and crafts, clergy talks, talent show night and many others! A multitude of zealous volunteers return year after year. We are so grateful for their selfless efforts and may God bless them for their sacrifice for the youth of the Church. As more campers come to camp each year, more staff members are required to meet the camp's expanding needs. Kitchen, administrative, life-guards, arts and crafts and support help are all welcome. Of particular importance is the role of a camp counselor, which cannot be overempha-



sized as a centerpiece of camp life for our campers. Our camp planning staff makes every effort to keep our cabins down to a reasonable size so our counselors could best use their skills as role models, leaders and mentors. We urge anyone who is caring, enthusiastic, diligent and understands the importance of good counseling on the minds and hearts of our Orthodox youth to seriously consider availing them-

Cont'd on p.2

Come, O Ye People... Cont'd from cover

mon. They have one will, and everything is performed by Them together. Whatever pleases the Father also pleases the Son and the Holy Spirit. Whatever displeases the Holy Spirit also displeases the Father. Whatever the Son loves, the Father and the Holy Spirit love also.

Everything is accomplished jointly by the Holy Trinity. At the creation of the world it says in the Bible: And God said, Let there be light: and there was light (Gen. 1:3). What does "said" mean? It means that God the Father created by His Word, by that Word of which the Gospel says, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1) and which is the Only-begotten Son of God.

God the Father created everything by His Word; in other words, He accomplished everything through His Son. The Father does not create anything without the Son, just as the Son does not create anything without the Father, and the Holy Spirit always assists the Father and the Son. It is said in the Bible about the creation of the world: And the Spirit of God moved over the waters (Gen. 1:2). It "moved" over creation, but did not merely move over it — the word in the Hebrew original, which lacks an exact equivalent in Slavonic, signifies "to cover," "to warm," just as a brood-hen sitting on her eggs gives life to them by her warmth, and from them come forth living creatures.

By the Word of the Lord were the heavens established, and all the might of them by the Spirit of His mouth (Ps. 32:6). All that exists was created by God the Father through the Son and was brought to life by the Holy Spirit. In other words, everything the Father wanted or wants, immediately was or is fulfilled by the Son and is animated by the Holy



Spirit. Thus was the world created, thus was all accomplished by the providence of God concerning the world and mankind.

In order to save man, who through sin had fallen away from God and became mortal, the Son of God, in accordance with the pre-eternal counsel of the Holy Trinity, obeying the will of the Father, came down to earth, was born of the Ever-Virgin Mary through the action of the Holy Spirit, proclaimed to the people the True God the Father and His Divine will, and taught the true worship of God. Having suffered for our sins, He descended in soul into hades, and, having freed the souls of the dead, He rose from the dead.

Even before His sufferings, Christ prom-

ised His Apostles, chosen by Him from among His disciples, to give them the power to loose and to bind — to remit people's sins or to leave them in their sins. After His Resurrection the Lord bestowed this gift of Grace not on any of the Apostles separately, but on all of them together: He established His Church, the repository of that Grace, and united in Her all those who believe in Him and love Him.

Having promised His Apostles that He would invest them with power from on high, having sent them the Holy Spirit, and having accomplished all for which He came to earth, the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven, receiving in His humanity that glory and honor which He had as the Son of God since before the creation of the world.

In descending upon the disciples of Christ, according to the promise, the Holy Spirit confirmed them in the faith of Christ and through His Grace poured out upon them the gifts of God. He strengthened them for the preaching and fulfilment in life of Christ's teachings, for the building up of the Church established by Christ and put into action by the Holy Spirit.

The Church, standing on her foundation on earth and headed by the Son of God seated at the right hand of the Father, is mysteriously guided by the Holy Spirit. She inwardly links together all of her children and unites them with God. Through the Church, God's gifts of Grace are poured out on those striving to follow the way of Christ; they sanctify and fortify all

St. Xenia Camp

Cont'd from cover

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selves and apply for this very important position. Please give some serious thought to applying if you believe you have what it takes to be a good counselor! Training and ongoing support is provided. If you cannot volunteer this camp year, please consider contributing (in the spirit of almsgiving), by offering a donation that could help a family send their son or daughter to camp. Some families may not

be able to afford the tuition and some parishes cannot provide assistance to



these families.

Any general camp questions, you can contact Vlad at 203-586-6166

Any Counselor recruitment questions, you can contact Panayioti at 617 331-7098

Any other staff volunteer questions, you can contact Jason at 413 277-9797.

Any additional information, please go to saintxeniacamp.com

Through your prayers, we hope to realize another successful St. Xenia Camp year!

-The St. Xenia Camp
Planning Committee



Q: I often find myself worrying that I do not truly love God. How can I know for sure that I truly love God and that I am on the right track for my salvation?

Orthodox Teen, age 14

A: God is love, as St. John the Theologian tells us, and God's love is like an abyss—it is endless. This means that we can never truly love God the way that we should love Him. St. Paul the Apostle tells us that we progress from glory to glory, which basically means that even though we may progress to higher and higher stages in our love for God, we never reach the top, that is, perfect love for God. There is no end to the wondrous process of growing in our love for God, not even in the next life. It continues to increase for eternity: Grace increases, love increases, as does everything good that comes with this jubilant, everlasting growth.

So, first we should admit the reality that we do not love God the way that we should love



God. If we are commanded to love God the way that He loves us, then we clearly see that we fall short. There is just no comparison. However, at the same time, we should never despair, because despair is the joy of the devil. We should put all of

our hope in God.

We start showing our love for God in actions first and foremost. We can talk about how we love God until we are blue in the face, but we actually express our love with actions; as the saying goes, "actions speak louder than words." What are actions? Following His holy commandments and living a Christian life with humility and charity. When we fail at that, we should have a spiritual sensitivity and should be ready to repent. As the Saints have taught us, to fall is human, but to remain fallen is demonic. Repentance is also an expression of our love for God.

As I said, there are different stages of love for God. We must always look at ourselves as beginners because if we think that we are advanced, or if we expect that we are very progressed, then pride has entered in. This is why despair often follows: despair is an offshoot of pride.

Prayer is the key. St. John of Kronstadt teaches us that there are three attributes of true prayer: humility, simplicity, and love for God. We should always pray to increase our love for God, and we should pray that our Lord teaches us to love Him the way that we should love Him.

How do we know if we are on the right track? If you have developed, in your conscience, love for the services of the Church, a wanting to go to the services, as well as saying your prayers and remembering our Lord throughout the day, this is a positive sign that you may be on the right track;



St. John the Theologian, Evangelist, and beloved Apostle of Christ our God, the youngest of the 12 Apostles and the only to repose of old age, not martyrdom. As an aged Elder of 100 years, when unable to say much due to frailty, St. John would just repeat, "Τεκνία, αγαπάτε ἀλλήλους..." "Little children, love one another..." When asked why he kept repeating this phrase, he replied, "...Because it is God's command, and when it is done, it suffices."

but put all of your hope in God. The prerequisite for all this, of course, is being in the Church, having the True Faith. Your spiritual father should be your guide on this journey; he can help you gauge your spiritual direction.

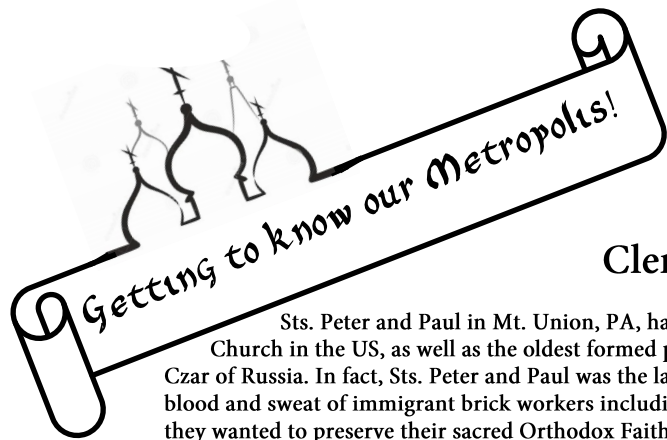
Do you have a question for his Eminence, Metropolitan Demetrius of America, that you would like to ask through this column? Questions may be sent to *The Spiritual Watch*, c/o St. John's Monastery, 151 Heron Road Cobleskill, NY 12043, or email it to: KeepSpiritualWatch@gmail.com

Feast Day of St. John of San Francisco Monastery



The Feast of St. John of San Francisco Monastery, in Cobleskill, NY, will take place on July 1st, 2017. The Vigil service will begin at 6:30 on Friday, June 30th. Faithful who are interested in participating in the grace-filled celebration of our Patron, St. John the Wonderworker, should make lodging reservations soon, as hotels in the area fill up quickly during the 4th of July time frame. More detailed information and a schedule will be posted on the Monastery's website: www.saintjohnsmonastery.org
151 Heron Rd, Cobleskill, NY 12043





PARISH OF THE MONTH

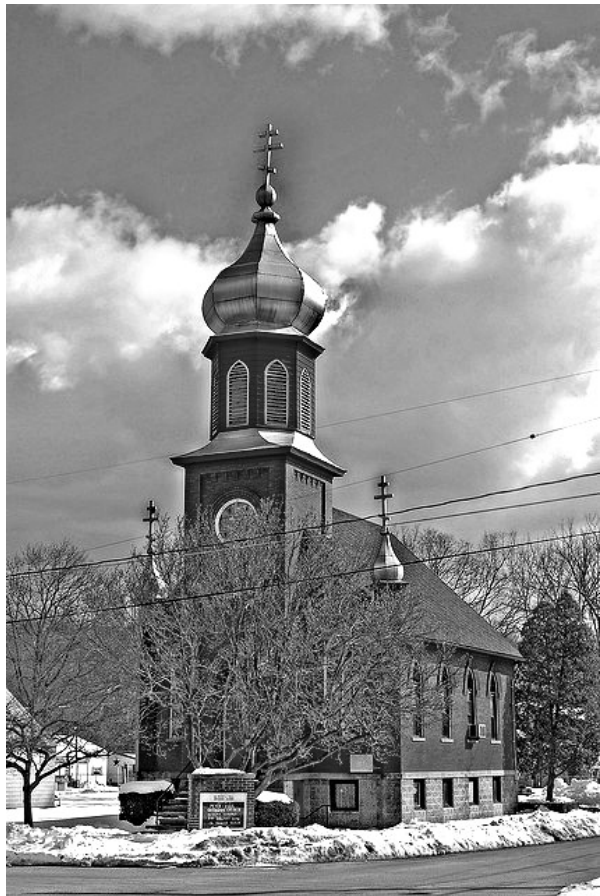
Featured in this issue:

Sts. Peter and Paul

Mt. Union, Pennsylvania

Clergy: Fr. Christos Patitsas, Presbyter

Sts. Peter and Paul in Mt. Union, PA, has the amazing distinction of being the oldest Church building within the Genuine Orthodox Church in the US, as well as the oldest formed parish, consecrated in 1916 with the help of funds from the Holy Martyr, St. Nicholas II, last Czar of Russia. In fact, Sts. Peter and Paul was the last church to be funded in part by a Czar of Russia. Sts. Peter and Paul was built with the blood and sweat of immigrant brick workers including Russians, Greeks, Slavs, and other Orthodox Christians who had one thing in common: they wanted to preserve their sacred Orthodox Faith in the New Land. For more information on this historic, grace-filled Orthodox Church, please see the documentary created by His Grace, Bishop Christodoulos entitled "Czar Nicholas and the Orthodox Church of Pennsylvania." Fr. Christos's talk near the end of the documentary is also very moving. It can be found at: www.YouTube.com/watch?v=WSue11_O7-4



and church furnishings and liturgical items were imported from Russia. Parish historian Georgianna Abrashoff remarks that the chandelier, banners, and Bible remain to this day. Some of the funds for the Church came directly from Tsar Nicholas II, who was later glorified as a saint in the Orthodox Church due in part to such philanthropic activities, and also for suffering exile and death at the hands of the Communists in 1917.

As with many parishes built by hard-working Eastern European immigrants in the early 20th century, the parish faced many challenges over the decades as demographic changes, Orthodox jurisdictional disputes, and natural disasters took their toll. After Hurricane Agnes in 1972, the Church, which was closed at the time, was almost given over by the Redevelopment Authority to a non-Orthodox group whose parish was slated for demolition. This led to parishioners rallying together, and the Church flourished for twenty years after.

However, Mount Union, once a prosperous silica brickyard town, fell into decline, and as older parishioners reposed and younger ones

Meanwhile, Fr. Christos Patitsas was looking to the next chapter of his priestly ministry. Formerly a priest in another Orthodox jurisdiction, the eruption of a doctrinal disagreement there led to him and several other clergy, parishes, and faithful leaving and aligning themselves with the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians (GOC), an Old Calendar Orthodox Church headquartered in New York City. Unfortunately for Fr. Christos, the other priests at the local Pennsylvania parish where he served did not join the GOC, leaving him without a local community in which to serve. His intention was to serve in his home chapel, while discerning God's will for the future.

Then came the doctor's appointment.

Orthodox priests often have to have a second job, as the small number of parishioners in any given area does not allow for a sufficient salary to support a priest and a family (Orthodox priests who serve parishes are generally married, although some are unmarried

Cont'd on next page

It's not every day that one goes to the doctor, and ends up finding a priest to serve at his or her local Orthodox parish, but that is exactly what happened when Donald and Susan Dimoff went to an appointment with physician Dr. Patitsas, also known as Fr. Christos Patitsas.

On the one hand, Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church was searching for a way forward after years of challenges and difficulties, being served during this time by visiting clergy, who, while dedicated, could not provide a permanent solution to the parish's pastoral needs.

The plans for this historic church were finalized in 1916, with members pledging two dollars a month for the treasury.

Two lots were purchased at the corner of North Jefferson and Sherman Streets,

moved away, the parish numbers again dwindled. These last ten years, there were only twice-monthly Divine Liturgies, celebrated on Saturday evenings, but parishioners were aware that this situation was not tenable over the long run. Remaining parishioners, many on fixed incomes, rented out the parish rectory to make money, and stopped using the parish hall to save on heating costs.



Parish of the Month: Sts. Peter & Paul, cont'd from previous page

monks). Fr. Christos happens to serve as a doctor, and on the appointed day, the Dimoffs came to his office, and upon entering, noticed the icons there. They asked Fr. Christos if he was Orthodox, and he replied that not only was he so, but that he was also a priest. Susan Dimoff asked Fr. Christos if he would like to come to their Church, and he replied, "I'd love to."

Within two weeks, a priest without a parish was joined to a parish in need of a fresh start. Parishioners were overjoyed to find the GOC, where they could live their Orthodox faith to the fullest, without the compromises present in many other modern, ecumenistic jurisdictions. Bishop Demetrius came to the parish immediately, welcoming them with love and respect. After so many years of struggle, the Church has grown, with existing parishioners being joined by those who came with Fr. Christos to the GOC. Bishop Demetrius remarked, "and now your reward has come." Asked what she would say to others considering following Sts. Peter and Paul on this course, Georgianna Abrashoff remarked, "fear not! We are now a real Orthodox Church celebrating our faith in beauty and harmony."

Assisting Fr. Christos in his ministry are his wife, Presbyteria Katina, who leads the Byzantine chanting in the English language, and their five sons George, Demetri, Peter, Paul, and John Auxentios, who help serve. On the Feast of Theophany (Epiphany), the parish made a procession with the cross and icon banners to the Juniata River, to perform the Great Blessing of Water there for the first time in 70 years.

GOT NEWS?? *The Spiritual Watch* is looking for articles on Metropolis parishes for this column! Please send in clergy name(s), website, contact information, and a brief history of your parish, parish news, and/or interesting facts to: KeepSpiritualWatch@gmail.com



Orthodox Youth Conference 2017



The Dormition of the Theotokos parish in Concord, NH, will be hosting the 2017 Youth and Family Conference the weekend of October 20-22. The theme of the conference will be "Reverence and the fear of God" and topics will include reverence in church, at home, and in the world. There will be a chance to ask ques-

tions of His Eminence, Metropolitan Demetrius. Services will include Saturday Vespers and a Hierarchical Divine

Liturgy Sunday morning. The schedule will also allow plenty of time for fellowship. Activities will be provided for children ages 6 and up, and their parents. More information will be available soon, including lodging, price, and a detailed schedule. If you have any questions, please contact Fr. Andrew Snogren, pastor, at frasnogren@gmail.com



THANK YOU for Supporting *The Spiritual Watch*

We thank our Savior, the Theotokos, St. John the Wonderworker who is the Patron of *The SW*, and all the Saints, for blessing this effort. We ask for the prayers of the Faithful for this and all blessed endeavors of the Sacred Metropolis.

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

(Please note: Those making a monthly pledge to support the Sacred Metropolis will automatically also receive the *Spiritual Watch* at their homes—see pledge form on back cover).

To request *The SW* be mailed to your home, please send a note with your name and the address to which you would like us to mail the publication, indicating how many copies of each issue you would like, along with your donation (you may request up to 8 copies of each issue per donation) and mail to:

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

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

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

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

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

Kid Corner

Think about your Faith

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

QUESTIONS

- After reading what St. John of San Francisco says about the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, beginning on p.1, discuss at least three reasons why the Holy Trinity is One God, not three.
- After reading the "Ask His Eminence" response on p. 3, reflect on what you think might happen to your love for God in the future, and why? (p.3)
- Discuss the meaning of our motto: "Stand fast on spiritual watch..." Why is this important? How does it relate to the Parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13)?

Pious Puzzle Answers

Vol. 1, Issue 2

ACROSS:

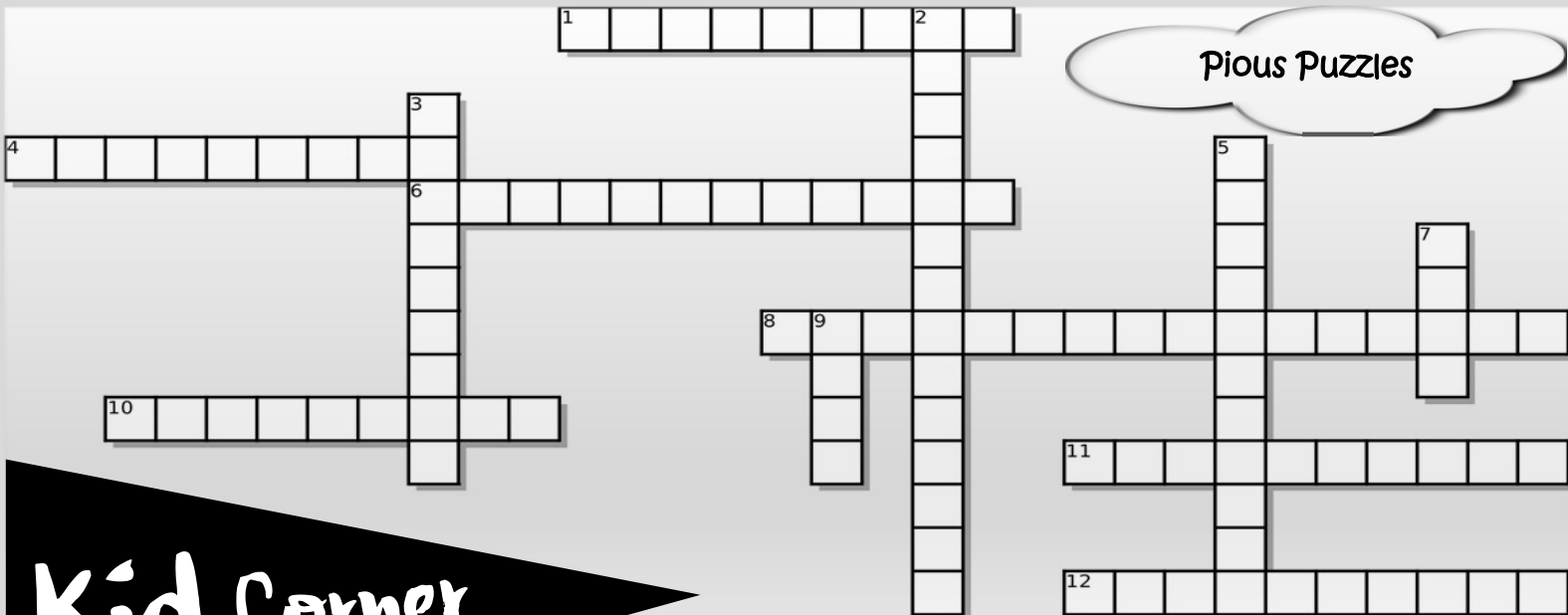
- Judas
- Resurrection
- Thief
- Pontius Pilate

DOWN:

- Holy Sepulchre
- Crucifixion
- Salvation
- Pascha



Pious Puzzles

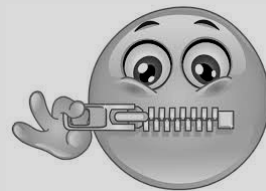


ACROSS

- Meaning "50th," Feast considered the "birthday" of the New Testament Priesthood; (hint: 50th day after Pascha)
- After the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles in the form of Tongues of fire, they suddenly knew many
- The Faith of the One True God that Saint Constantine made legal in the year 313 with the Edict of Milan;
- Son of St. Helen and Equal-to-the-Apostles;
- The most precious of the treasures found by St. Helen, the Emblem of our victory;
- The Holy and right-believing Empress, equal to the Apostles;
- The Comforter whom is known as the third Person of The Holy Trinity co-equal with The Father and Son.

DOWN

- Orthodox village where children have fun and fellowship each August;
- Feast greatly honoring the human race, when our Flesh sat at the right hand of the Father in Heaven;
- Three Persons, One Essence, One God;
- Through disobedience and pride before God, he murdered his younger brother in a jealous rage;
- Second son of Adam and Eve, murdered by his older brother.



ZZZZZip it??

If you guard your tongue, my brother,

God will give you the gift

of compunction of heart, so that you may see your soul and thereby you will enter into spiritual joy.

But

if your tongue defeats you—believe me in what I say to you—you will never be able to escape from darkness.

If you do not have a pure heart at least

have a pure mouth, as the blessed John said.

By St. Isaac the Syrian

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

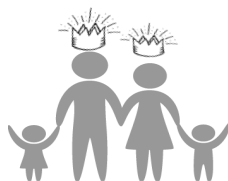
✂ History is His story...

✂ Can't sleep? Don't count sheep... Talk to the Shepherd.

✂ Word re-mix: "What on earth are you doing for Heaven's sake?" (What are you doing on earth for the sake of Heaven??)

MANY THANKS to MJP who contributed this issue's puzzle. If you have a pious puzzle for the Spiritual Watch, please share it.

Orthodox Family Life: A Spiritual Watch Series



Installment II

The Atmosphere of the Orthodox Home

by Fr. Nicodemos Gayle, *Presbyter*



In order to be effective in our spiritual life, we must make sure that we are fully immersed in the life of the Church. And, as mentioned in an earlier article, we must pray, think deeply, plan, and be sure that we are moving in the right direction, making sure that we begin with the end in mind. As we proceed, we begin to understand and acquire "the mind of the Church". Having "the mind of the Church" means that we begin to see as the Church sees, think as the Church thinks, and value what the Church values.

Once we begin to pursue the Orthodox spiritual life, we realize that our lives must be different and consistent. Our Faith is not a once a week thing. It is not a Faith that we practice only when we are "feeling in a spiritual mood". Rather, it is a way of life that guides everything else – our marriages, our families, our jobs, our friendships, and how we spend our time. Once we are truly com-

"Angels are a light to monks, and the monastic life is a light to laymen."

-St. John Climacus

mitted to leading a truly Christian life, we want all of our life to help in the journey. Daily distractions and sinful passions lead us away from where we want to go...away from God. Recognizing this fact helps us to order our lives in such a way that we stay involved in spiritual struggle more of the time thus minimizing the tendency to drift away for long periods of time. One of the most important ways to aid those of us leading the Christian family life is to order our home life so that it is a source of strength, a resource in our daily struggle.

Thus, it is imperative that we pay close attention to the atmosphere of our home and make sure that it is an aid rather and a hindrance to leading the spiritual life. But what is the proper atmosphere? What are the



characteristics of a Christian atmosphere in the home? Sometimes it is helpful to consider the characteristics of the monastic life – not that we would turn our homes into little monasteries or convents, but that we would see, feel, and value that monastic atmosphere which is constructed for no other purpose than to lead souls to God. As St. John of Climacus wrote:

"Angels are a light to monks, and the monastic life is a light to laymen." I am often struck by how frequently our pilgrims to our monastic houses return speaking of what it felt like to be there. "There was a grace-filled closeness with our Savior." "It was orderly." "It was quiet." "There was a sense of both discipline and joy." "We were touched by the level of commitment."

"There was an atmosphere of prayer everywhere." In other words, there is an atmosphere at a monastic house that is designed by the monastic fathers and mothers of the Church for providing the best environment for those who wish to draw near to God both in this life and the next. Is it not possible that we lay people living in the world could use the same thinking as we create a Christian home? Could not the same characteristics come together in a slightly differ-

ent way to create a dwelling for Christians that constantly fortifies them in their spiritual life? Would it not be possible to have a schedule in our homes that unfailingly provides a time for prayer? A time for reading? A time for discussion? Would it not be helpful to have family guidelines that provide for a peaceful and nurturing environment that promotes reflection and repentance? Would it not be possible to have house rules that promote values that encourage self-control and confront self-centeredness? The answers to these questions can guide us toward homes that have a more peaceful and Christian atmosphere.

The father and the mother, the king and the queen of the home, are responsible for this atmosphere. With prayer, and God's help, they create this soul-saving atmosphere for themselves and for their subjects, the children. This is one of a father's and mother's most important duties. They must rule the home and lead in a Christian manner because this is their job...a job for which they will answer before our Savior. Not every home will be the same, because the personalities of each parent and couple are different, but the atmosphere and characteristics of each home should be similar, because the ultimate goal is the same: the eternal salvation of those in our household. The Christian home provides the best atmosphere for the salvation of all the family members, parents and children.

In future articles, positive characteristics that aid in the formation of the Christian home will be explored as well as some characteristics that can detract from that goal.

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

The time is coming when people will be insane, and when they see someone who is not insane, they will attack him saying: "You are insane because you are not like us."

- St. Anthony the Great

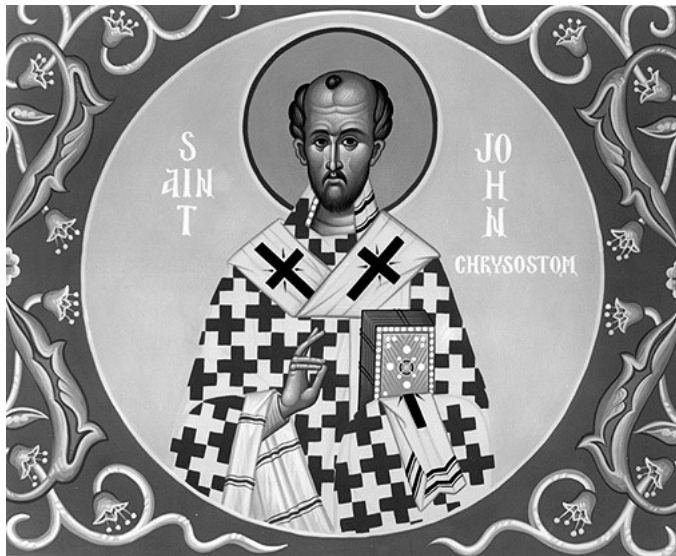


Monastic tactics

Out of the Spiritual Battlefield of Monasticism...



Slippery Slope: From Thoughts to Actions...



Do you have wicked thoughts? Do not verbalize them; let them deflate within you and quickly disappear. We are human and many times we have many wicked, inappropriate, and indecent thoughts. But let us not allow the thoughts to become words, so that, pressed down by being held in, the thoughts will weaken and perish. Because, it is just as if one were to trap various wild beasts into a deep pit and then seal the pit from above, the wild beasts would suffocate. Whereas if an opening is left so that they can breathe a little, then they experience great relief which does not allow them to perish, but instead makes them more enraged and wild. So it is also with evil thoughts. When they are born inside of us, if we seal their road to the outside, we will get rid of them quickly. If, however, we allow them to exit with words, we make the thoughts more powerful, since we have allowed them to breathe with the tongue, and then we quickly fall from the habit of indecent words into the abyss of senseless actions.

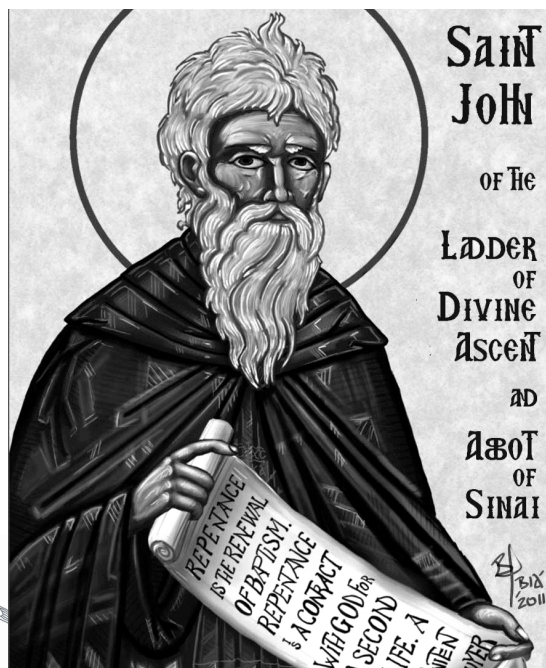
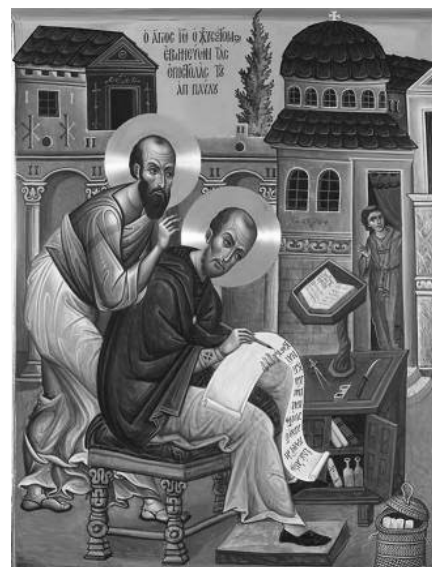
- by St. John Chrysostom

Ολισθηρός Γκρεμός:

Από τις Σκέψεις στις Πράξεις...

Εχεις πονηρές σκέψεις; Μην τις προφέρεις με λόγια· αφήσέ τες να ησυχάζουν μέσα σου και γρήγορα εξαφανίζονται. Είμαστε άνθρωποι και πολλές φορές κάνουμε πολλές πονηρές, απρεπείς και αισχρές σκέψεις. Αλλά ας μην αφήνουμε να γίνονται οι σκέψεις λόγια, ώστε, πιεζόμενες προς τα κάτω, να εξασθενίζουν και να χάνονται. Γιατί, όπως ακριβώς όταν ρίξει κανείς μέσα σε λάκκο διάφορα άγρια θηρία και τον φράζει από πάνω, τα πνίγει εύκολα, ενώ αν αφήσει κάποιο άνοιγμα, για να αναπνέουν λίγο, τα ανακουφίζει πολύ και δεν τα αφήνει να χαθούν, αλλ' αντίθετα τα εξαγριώνει περισσότερο, έτσι γίνεται και με τις πονηρές σκέψεις. Όταν γεννηθούν μέσα μας, αν φράξουμε το δρόμο τους προς τα έξω, τις εξαφανίζουμε γρήγορα. Αν όμως τις εξωτερικεύσουμε με λόγια, και αυτές τις κάνουμε πιο δυνατές, αφού επιτρέψαμε να αναπνεύσουν με τη γλώσσα, και γρήγορα πέφτουμε από τη συνήθεια των αισχρών λόγων στα βάραθρα των παράλογων πράξεων.

-Αγιος Ιωάννης Χρυσόστομος



Deadening of the Soul: "A Sure Sign"

They say that if a frog hops into a pot of hot water, he quickly jumps back out to save himself. If, however, the frog jumps into a pot of cool water, and the pot heats very slowly and gradually, then the frog will likely die, not realizing the danger until it is too late. Are we like that frog? How are we to know if we have jumped into a pot of secular thinking that is being heated gradually by the enemy? St. Barsanuphius of Optina writes:

St. John Climacus was asked if there are reliable signs by which it is possible to know whether a soul is drawing near to

God or moving away from Him. After all, regarding ordinary things, there are clear signs as to whether they are good or not. When, for instance, cabbage, meat or fish begins to rot, it is easy to notice it, since the rotting object begins to give off a foul odor, the color and taste change, and its external appearance witnesses to its deterioration. Well, and what about the soul? After all, it is bodiless and cannot give off a bad smell or change its appearance. To this question the Holy Father replied, "A sure sign of the deadening of the soul is the avoidance of church services."

Feast of Saint Isidoros

Once again this year, the grace-filled Feast of Saint Isidoros took place with reverence in Bethpage, Long Island. His Eminence, Metropolitan Demetrius of America, with Hieromonk Maximus, Deacon Evangelos from Cuba, and Hierodeacon Methodios from Mt. Athos, brightened the Feast of our church with the Hierarchical Vespers and the jubilant Hierarchical Divine Liturgy on Sunday. A large crowd of faithful attended the Feast to honor Saint Isidoros



and receive his blessing.

After Divine Liturgy and the Metropolitan's sermon, the traditional procession of the Saint's icon took place, followed by the Artoklasia.

At the end, the faithful venerated the relic of Saint Isidoros and received the blessing of Metropolitan Demetrius.

Afterwards everyone enjoyed Greek food and desserts in the courtyard of the church.

Glory to God for all things!

Τελέστηκε και φέτος με τάνυξη η Πανήγυρης του Αγίου Ισιδώρου στο Bethpage του Long Island.

Ο Μητροπολίτης Δημήτριος μαζί με τον Ιερομόναχο Μάξιμο, τον Διάκονο Ευάγγελο που κατάγετε από την Κούβα, και τον Ιεροδιάκονο Μεθόδιο τον Αγιορείτη, λάμπρυναν την πανήγυρη της εκκλησίας μας με Αρχιερατικό Εσπερινό, την παραμονή, και πανηγυρική Αρχιερατική Θεία Λειτουργία την Κυριακή. Πλήθος κόσμου



Πανήγυρης Αγίου Ισιδώρου

παρευρέθηκε να τιμήσει τον Άγιο Ισίδωρο και να λάβει την ευλογία του.

Μετά την Θεία Λειτουργία και το κήρυγμα του Μητροπολίτη Δημητρίου, έγινε η καθιερωμένη λιτάνευση της εικόνας του Αγίου, και αμέσως μετά η Αρτοκλασία.

Στο τέλος οι πιστοί προσκύνησαν το λείψανο του Αγίου Ισιδώρου και έλαβαν την ευχή και ευλογία του Μητροπολίτη Δημητρίου.

Κατόπιν όλοι απόλαυσαν ελληνικά φαγητά και γλυκά στην αυλή της εκκλησίας. Δόξα τω Θεώ πάντων ένεκεν!

Saint Constantine, Equal to the Apostles

Who was the greatest emperor ever to rule the world? St. Constantine the Great and Equal to the Apostles brought his subjects and mankind the greatest legislative gift it has ever received: the legalization of Christianity through the Edict of Milan over 300 years after our Savior's glorious Ascension. St. Constantine was at the center of many of the greatest events that ever took place, including the establishment of one of the longest-standing empires in human history, the founding of Constantinople and the building of the legendary Cathedral of St. Sophia, the assembly of the First Ecumenical Council wherein the Creed was written by the Holy Fathers, the first two appearances of the Holy Cross in the sky, and, through his holy mother Helen, the discovery of the actual Holy Cross on which our Savior was nailed for our salvation.

By the year 293 AD, the massive Roman Empire had become too large for one ruler to manage, so the Christ-hating emperor Diocletian divided it into the Eastern and Western Zones. Diocletian and Maximian ruled the Eastern Zone, and Galerius with Caesar Constantius ruled the Western Zone. This system of four rulers was called the Tetrarchy, and in order to ensure its stability, Diocletian ordered that Constantius's son, Constantine, be moved to Nicomedia to be raised in Diocletian's palace,

as a sort of collateral. Through God's mercy, however, it was too late: the seeds of the True Faith of the Christians had already been planted in young Constantine's heart by his pious mother, Helen. These seeds would grow into the force that brought Christianity to be legalized in the vast expanses of the Roman Empire, including Europe, Asia minor, the Middle East, and other parts of Asia and Northern Africa.

Thus, the young boy, Constantine, was separated from his parents and raised within the walls of Diocletian's palace. In this regard, the Saint is compared to the holy Prophet Moses, who was taken as a babe to be raised in Pharaoh's palace. Like Moses, young Constantine would also grow up to deliver his people from the cruel oppression of falsehood. Young Constantine observed many things at Diocletian's palace. Once he was present when Diocletian was working with his demonic oracles, making evil sacrifices in order to foretell the future. Among the crowd present, there were secret Christians who were protecting themselves from the demons by discretely making the sign of the Cross. As a result of this, however, the pagans' sacrifices failed to bring the desired results. The pagan priests reported to Diocletian that Christians must have been present, as nothing else could overpower their

spells. Young Constantine marveled at this, and wondered at the power of the Christian God, that the mere signing of the Cross could defeat all the powers of the Emperor's oracles.

When Constantius reposed, on July 25, 306, his son, Constantine, took his throne as Caesar of the Western Zone. Constantine's co-ruler in the Western Zone was a fanatic pagan named Maxentius who declared war on him in 312 AD. Maxentius's demonic oracles foretold to him that "the enemy of Rome would perish on October 28" and thus assumed that Constantine would perish. However, that is not how things turned out. As Constantine's army waited at a point outside of Rome, the young Caesar reflected on the size of his enemy's army which greatly outnumbered his own. Constantine then prayed that the One, True God would reveal Himself to him. And his prayer was answered. The his-



Cont'd on p.11



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

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

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

-Proverbs 3:9-10

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

-Παροιμία Σολομώντος 3:9-10



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The SW thanks everyone involved with its production for their contributions and hard work, including the chief grammar proofreader, KP.

Come, O Ye People... Cont'd from p.2

good in them, and cleanse them from sin and every defilement, making them able to become receptacles of the radiance of the glory and power of God.

Through the Church man is made a partaker of the Divine nature, and he enters into the closest relationship with the Holy Trinity.

Not only the soul, but also man's body is sanctified and communes with God by partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, through which he is united with the entire Holy Trinity.

Through Divine Grace, with the participation of his own will and effort, man becomes a new creature, a participant in the eternal Kingdom of God.

Nature, too, is being prepared for the coming Kingdom of God, for the coming purification by fire of the consequences of man's sin and the curse that lies on her. She receives the first fruits of sanctification through the descent of the Holy Spirit on her at Theophany in the blessing of the waters and in many other Church rites, so that she may later become a new earth and a new heaven.



St. John Maximovitch (3rd from left) standing in front of the Cathedral of St. Markella, in Astoria, NY. To the right of the Saint is Metropolitan Petros of blessed memory.

This will be accomplished at the time appointed by God the Father, and the Son of God will come in glory to pronounce judgment on the world.

Then those who have loved God and have been united with Him will shine with the rays of Divine light and will eternally delight in the uncreated light of the Triune Godhead of the Consubstantial, Life-creating, and Indivisible Trinity.

To God, our Creator and Saviour, be glory, honor, and worship unto everlasting ages:

"Come, O ye people, let us worship the Godhead in Three Hypostases: the Son in the Father, with the Holy Spirit... In worshipping Whom let us all say: O Holy God, Who madest all things by the Son, through the cooperation of the Holy Spirit; Holy Mighty, through Whom we have known the Father, and through Whom the Holy Spirit came into the world; Holy Immortal, the Comforting Spirit, Who proceedest from the Father, and restest in the Son: O Holy Trinity, glory be to Thee"

Homily by St. John Maximovitch, on Pentecost

Saint Constantine, Equal to the Apostles Cont'd from p.9

torian Eusebius records:

"While Constantine was thus praying, a marvelous sign appeared to him from Heaven... about noon, just as the day was beginning to decline, he saw with his own eyes the Trophy of a Cross of light in the heavens above the sun, bearing the inscription 'Ev Tούτο Νικά' or 'By This Sign Conquer.'"

Constantine had the Cross painted on the armor of his soldiers, and he ordered them to carry it before them on a standard. Likewise, he had this Sign painted on his helmet, as well as on a banner which he carried. With the mighty Sign of the Cross on his side, Constantine overcame the odds and crushed Maxentius's army, much of which drowned in the Tiber River while retreating. The Church Fathers once again compare the Saint to Moses in this, comparing this event to the drowning of Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea, leading to the freedom of God's people. This miraculous victory made St. Constantine sole emperor of the Western Zone. It was the first time in human history that a leader who worshipped the True God ruled over such a large portion of the planet... But St. Constantine's dominion was preordained by God to grow even larger, doubling in size, eventually stretching from Britain to Persia, encompassing all of Europe, Asia Minor and North Africa!

After his shocking victory over Maxentius, St. Constantine contacted the ruler of the Eastern Zone of the Roman Empire, Licinius, and per-



sued him to end the persecution of Christians and sign the Edict of Milan; this took place in February of 313, and legalized Christianity for the first time. However, Licinius broke the agreement, initiating vicious persecutions in the Eastern Zone which caused the martyrdom of many Christians, including the Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebastia. St. Constantine entrusted himself to the aid of Heaven, and the Sign of the Holy Cross, which once again led him to an extraordinary, world-shaping victory, and made him sole and supreme ruler of the entire Roman Empire, both Eastern and Western Zones. The joy of the Christians was unspeakable. After centuries of persecution, the Lord granted them a Christian Emperor who put to shame the idols and erected magnificent Churches. St. Constantine outlawed the brutal Roman practice of crucifixion, he made Sunday an official day of rest in honor of the Resurrection, and he freed the Church from the burden of taxation. Many of these and other blessed reforms established by this holy emperor remain in place today, as we still enjoy remnants of the Christian society which St. Constantine estab-

lished. With his own feet, he paced out the perimeter boundaries of the new capital that he established, Constantinople (meaning Constantine's city) in 330 AD, in order to create a mighty new Christian capital, not bound up in Rome's pagan history.

In the year 325, Constantine called a large meeting of Bishops and clergy from all over the world to Nicea and thus held the 1st Ecumenical Council, where the Creed was written. Among the 318 leaders of the Church gathered at this meeting were St. Nicholas of Myra, St. Spyridon of Trimythus, St. Athanasius of Alexandria, and many, many more. Many of these holy men were missing limbs or bore scars from the persecutions against the Christians that St. Constantine brought to an end. It is recorded that, as the Emperor Constantine entered the church where they were assembled, he was overcome with awe upon seeing these Confessors of Christ. Approaching St. Paphnutius of Egypt, the mighty emperor of the East and West bent over and kissed the empty sockets of the eyes that Paphnutius had lost during his tortures by the persecutors. Out of veneration for the Holy Fathers, he remained standing until the Fathers beckoned him to sit. The wondrous Christian Empire which St. Constantine established stood for over 1,000 years, until its fall on May 29, 1453, at the hands of the Muslim armies of the Ottoman Turks.

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

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



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

-St. John Maximovitch, the Wonderworker

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

-Άγιος Ιωάννης Μαξίμωβιτς, ο Θαυματουργός



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