

МАЯК - BEACON

JANUARY 2009

ISSUE 1



Українська Православна Громада Св. Володимира



St. Vladimir's Ukrainian Orthodox Congregation

**Українська Православна Громада
Св. Володимира**

**St. Vladimir's
Ukrainian Orthodox Congregation**

404 Meredith Road N.E., Calgary, Alberta T2E 5A6

www.stvlads.com

**МАЯК
BEACON**

JANUARY 2009

WINTER EDITION

St. Vladimir's Ukrainian Orthodox Congregation

2008 Parish Council

Parish Priest	V. Rev. Fr. Taras Krochak
Associate Priest	Rev. Fr. Tim Chrapko
Past President	Larry Yuzda
President	Lorne Calkin
1st. Vice President	Joan Popowich
2nd Vice President	Shirley Din
Secretary	Lesia Luciuk
Treasurer	Rick Trischuk
Property Manager	Nick Topolnitsky
Member At Large	Janet Godwin
Member At Large	Stephania Luciuk
TYC	Dan Zukiwsky
UWAC	Michele Faryna
Golden Agers	TBA

Beacon Word Processing and Editing: Rev. Fr. Timothy Chrapko, Dbr. Julie Chrapko

FROM FR. TARAS

CHRIST IS BORN! LET US GLORIFY HIM!

This latest edition of our congregation's Newsletter – The Beacon – comes to us as we enter into the celebrations of the glorious Nativity of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ! What a wonderful time of year and what reason for celebration and spiritual rejoicing!

During the Great Compline Service, as we begin to celebrate this great Feast, we proclaim these blessed words: *"God is with us, understand, O you nations, and submit yourselves, for God is with us. For a Child has been born to us, a Son, and He has been given to us. His authority is upon His shoulders."*

We live in a world, which refuses to hear such words of instruction. The contemporary world would rather have everyone and everything submit to its philosophy and desires. Nevertheless, we, who proclaim the Good News of Christ's glorious Nativity, must always remember that we are in the world but not part of the world: *"Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him"* (I Jn. 2:15). We are called to adhere to a completely different philosophy from that of the world around us. We are called to submit ourselves to Someone Who is above this world. We are called to accomplish His will in all that we do. We are called to seek after the things which are above, rather than the things that are below, rather than the things of this world, which promise us great joy and stature, but which the world can never deliver. *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you"* (Mt. 6:33).

Only a few short months ago the world was rejoicing in its greatness. Things could not be better! An abundance of cash and consumer goods were available to all that desired to accumulate these unto themselves. The world economy was *"firing on all cylinders"*! Yet now, only a few brief months later, the promises of the world once again have revealed themselves to be as fickle and as fleeting as ever. The bottom has fallen out of the world economy. More and more economists, in describing the dire situation as it continues to unfold, are now using the frightening word *"depression."* The world is filled with anxiety and apprehension.

The blessed Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ took place at a time of similar worldly unrest and uncertainty. At that time the world found itself in a time of misery from unbelief and a general dissipation of morals, much as it does today, and expected a Deliverer with impatience. Men, having fallen away from God, began to deify earthly good things, wealth and worldly glory. The Son of God rejected these worthless idols as the fruit of sin and human passions and was pleased to come into the world under the most modest of conditions, in order to bring about *"peace on earth and good will toward men"* (Lk. 2:14).

With the Feast of the Nativity of Christ we celebrate the Feast of incomprehensible Divine humility. The Son of God reveals His humility and becomes for our salvation the Son of Man. Such Divine humility calls each and every one of us, who declare that we are His followers, to *"submit yourselves, for God is with us"*. Let us also humble and submit ourselves *under the mighty hand of God* (I Pt. 5, 6), that we may be able to accept for our salvation the most precious gifts of all from our Deliverer and God - eternal life, love and peace, and adoption by God the Father! May the spiritual joy and genuine peace of the Nativity of our Lord be with us always!

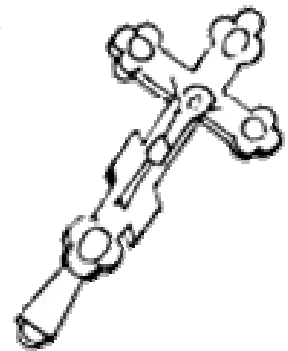
Excerpt from On the Incarnation

By: St. Athanasius

Who save the word of God Himself, Who also in the beginning made all things out of nothing? His part it was, and His alone both to bring again the corruptible to the incorruptible and to maintain for the Father His consistency of Character within all. For He alone being the Word of Father, and above all was in consequence able to recreate all, and was worthy to suffer on behalf of all and to be an ambassador for all with the Father.

For this purpose, then, incorporeal and incorruptible and immaterial Word of God entered our world. In one sense, indeed, He was not far from it before, for no part of creation had ever been without Him Who while ever abiding in union with the Father, yet fills all things that are. But now He entered the world in a new way, stooping to our level in His love and self-revealing to us. He saw the reasonable race, the race of men that, like Himself, expressed the Father's Mind, wasting out of existence, and death reigning over all in corruption. He saw that corruption held us all the closer, because it was the penalty for our Transgressions; He saw, too, how unthinkable it would be for the law to be repealed before it was fulfilled. He saw how unseemly it was that the very thing which He Himself was Artificer should be disappearing. He saw how the surpassing wickedness of men was mounting up against them; He saw also their universal liability to death. All this he saw, and pitying our race, moved with compassion for our limitation, unable to endure that death should have the mastery, rather than that His creatures should perish and the work of His Father for us might come to nought, He took to Himself a body, a human body as our own. Nor did He will to merely become embodied or merely to appear; had that been so, He could not have revealed His divine Majesty in some other and better way. No, He took *our* body, and not only so, but He took it directly from a spotless stainless virgin, without the agency of human father – a pure body, untainted by intercourse with man. He, the Mighty One, the Artificer of all, Himself prepared this body in the virgin as a temple for Himself, and took it for His very own, as the instrument though which he was known and in which he dwelt. Thus taking a body like our own, because all our bodies were liable to corruption and death, He surrendered His body to death in place of all, and offered it to the Father. This he did out of sheer love for us, so that in His death, all might die, and the law of death thereby be abolished because, when He had fulfilled in His body that for which it was appointed, it was thereafter voided of its power for men. This He did that He might turn again to incorruption men who had turned back to corruption, and make them alive through death by appropriation of His body and by the grace of His resurrection. Thus He would make death to disappear from them as utterly as straw from fire.

Submitted By: Fr. Timothy Chrapko





A Message From the Past Parish Council President

Since I become President of our Congregation in May 2007, with the help of many dedicated volunteers, our Congregation has taken steps forward both spiritually and secularly. On the spiritual side, we have re-established the Mission project and for that purpose we have been assigned a new and young Parish Priest, Father Timothy Chrapko. Father Tim has already made his mark on the young people of our Congregation. Secondly, we have completed a new phase of our Icon project. Our Congregation is indebted to the women's organization and to the Icon Committee for funding and seeing to the completion of the project. On the secular side, our Congregation has installed a new heating and air-conditioning system in our Church at the cost exceeding \$165,000.00. Again, our thanks go out to the women's organization for funding the project and to Don Popowich for seeing the project to completion.

In the summer of 2007 we engaged the services of Michele Faryna to act as our administrative officer. Since her appointment, Michele has done a wonderful job of managing the Cultural Centre and performing other administrative duties.

Our Parish Council has also cleared up most if not all of the issues that affected our Congregation because of the condominium construction east of the Cultural Centre. We have also resolved the problem of ownership of mines and minerals that were bequeathed to our Congregation by the late Mr. Palyshniuk. The interest of our Congregation in mines and minerals has been held in trust by Broadview Resources Ltd., a corporation controlled by Mark Baker of our

Parish.

To make progress on the determination of what to do with our Congregation's rental properties, we have appointed a Land Development Committee to report back to Council on how best to deal with the properties. At least two of the properties are in need of substantial repair or must be torn down as an alternative.

This will be my last report to the Beacon as your President. As I have done before, I owe a great deal of thanks to the past and present members of our Parish Council for the fine work that they have done in guiding our Parish. I would also like to thank our Reverend Fathers for their spiritual leadership as well as our Choir Directors, acolytes, cantors, Sunday School teachers, elders, and others who have devoted their time for our religious well being. My thanks also go out to all Committees and volunteers who worked tirelessly in the maintenance of the physical properties of our facilities and who work in organizing special events and feast days for us. I would also like to express our thanks to the men's and women's organization for their financial support of our Congregation and to those who contributed financially to support our Congregation over and above their "Sunday contributions." In closing, I would like to urge our Congregation to engage our youth in participation of religious services and events of our Congregation.

Sincerely,

Larry Yuzda

Friday, November 28 to Tuesday, January 6 - Nativity Fast (St. Philip's Fast)
Saturday, January 3 - No Vesper Service.
Sunday, January 4 - Divine Liturgy - 9:30 AM – Calgary
Sunday, January 4 - Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM – Lethbridge
Tuesday, January 6 - NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
- Great Compline with Litia - 11:00 PM.
Tuesday, January 6 - NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
- Nativity Divine Liturgy - 12:00 Midnight.
Thursday, January 8 - SYNAXIS OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS - Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM.
Thursday, January 8 - STEPHEN THE FIRST & GREAT MARTYR
- Great Vespers with Litia - 6:30 PM.
Friday, January 9 - STEPHEN THE FIRST & GREAT MARTYR - Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM.
Saturday, January 10 - Vespers and Confession - 6:30 PM.
Sunday, January 11 - Divine Liturgy - 9:30 AM. - Calgary
Sunday, January 11 - Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM. – Red Deer
Tuesday, January 6 – CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD - ST. BASIL THE GREAT
- JULIAN NEW YEAR'S DAY – Vespers & Litia & Holy Confession - 6:30 PM.
Wednesday, January 14 - CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD - ST. BASIL THE GREAT
- JULIAN NEW YEAR'S DAY - Divine Liturgy - 10:00 AM.
Saturday, January 17 - Vespers and Confession - 6:30 PM.
Sunday, January 18 - Divine Liturgy - 9:30 AM. - Calgary
Sunday, January 18 - Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM. – Lethbridge
Sunday, January 18 - THEOPHANY EVE - JORDAN FEAST:
Great Blessing of Water - 5:00 PM.
Jordan Feast Supper - 6:30 PM.
Monday, January 19 - THEOPHANY - BAPTISM OF OUR LORD:
Divine Liturgy & Great Blessing of Water 10:00 AM.
Saturday, January 24 - Vespers and Confession - 6:30 PM.
Sunday, January 25 - Divine Liturgy - 9:30 AM. – Calgary
Sunday, January 25 - Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM. – Red Deer
Saturday, January 31 - Vespers and Confession - 6:30 PM.



Order of St. Andrew

Calgary Chapter
404 Meredith Rd. N.E., Calgary, AB. T2E 5A6

Slava Isusu Khrystu!

I am pleased to report on our 2008 activities, another year of accomplishment.

During 2008, we held three executive meetings and four general meetings. Our chapter numbers twenty-eight members. Our finances remain healthy and we continue to enjoy the support of the parish community.

On May 8th 2008, we held our major fundraiser of the year. Over fifty guests enjoyed a wonderful evening at the Newport Grill on Lake Bonavista. Members of our chapter and spouses, as well as other supporters from the community, raised in excess of \$4,000 for the Macenko Chair of Ukrainian Church Music at St. Andrew's College.

In 2008, we continued to organize our traditional activities. On February 3rd, we celebrated our parish Acolytes. They and their families were treated to pizza and pop. On October 5th we served pie and ice cream at coffee hour after church and as in the past, the community showed their appreciation for our efforts by donating very generously to support us. Members of our chapter formed an honour guard for Metropolitan John's parish visitation on November 2nd. As has been the tradition for several years, our chapter organized the observance of Remembrance Day. Our lay organizations and our youth participated with our members and the community in marking this important occasion. Also in November, the Order participated in the 75th anniversary Famine Memorial by laying a wreath and forming an honour guard at the Calgary Holodomor commemoration ceremony. In this past year, our chapter committed to sponsor an icon as part of the parish's beautification project.

Over the past several months, our members have donated over \$1,700 to St. Andrew's College physical plant renewal project. Our chapter has raised approximately \$45,000 for St. Andrew's College projects since our inception. It is the responsibility of each Order member to support the significant role St. Andrew's College plays in our Church and in our community.

This coming year marks the tenth anniversary of the founding of our chapter and so we are planning a celebration – stay tuned.

Finally, we thank the parish Executive and members of the congregation for their support this past year. I am confident we will continue to work collaboratively for the betterment of St. Andrew's College, the parish, and our Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada.

With Christian Greetings,

Paul Amiot,
President





**UKRAINIAN SELF-RELIANCE ASSOCIATION
TYC
ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CONGREGATION**

Слава Ісусу Христу

Over the past year TYC has continued to support many groups and individuals who have requested financial assistance in order to maintain facilities, purchase new equipment and materials , or to provide the financial assistance in order to allow these groups to continue their programs. Included in these groups and individuals are the St. Vladimir's Cultural Center, St. Vladimir's Museum. St. Vladimir's Library, Alberta Adolescent Recovery Center (AARC), Jonathan Silvernagle Fundraiser, Kiev's K Hi Youth Camp, and the Osvita summer program at St. John's Institute, and the St. Andrew's College Bursary fund, to mention a few. To date TYC has made donations to the various groups and individuals to the amount of close to \$80,000.00. The majority of our revenue is generated through casino events held about every eighteen months.

TYC holds a regular monthly dinner meeting every third Monday of the month except for the months of July and August. Our meetings usually begin about 5:00pm with a social gathering, followed by supper at 6:30pm, concluding with a short meeting.

TYC would like to extend an invitation to all men of the parish to consider attending one of our meetings to see what we are all about, and to also consider becoming a member of our association and helps us to continue our work for the parish, and other Orthodox groups and individuals.

Yours in Christ

**Greg Faryna
TYC President**



Keeping Students Connected to the Church

By Fr. Kevin Scherer

From the Summer 2008 issue of The Handmaiden Journal (Vol. 12, No. 3)

“Keeping Our College Students Connected to the Church” is a tagline for Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF). You’ll find it throughout our literature and even on our stationery. It says concisely what we believe to be our primary mission. I’ve spent hours thinking about it, talking about it, and wrestling with it. To be honest, I think it needs some unpacking, some clarification.

When I see the word “keeping,” I wonder whether some people unconsciously expect OCF to handcuff students to the church pew—because we know what’s best for them! The word “keeping” conveys the idea of preservation. The question is: What are we preserving? It’s helpful, I think, to reflect on the why, what, how, and who of keeping students connected to the Church.

If I were to ask you why we should keep our students connected to the Church, you would probably respond by underscoring the importance of community. We want our students to remain connected to the communities we value—our families, ethnic identities, and religious heritage. Deep down inside, all of us know that communion is what life is all about: communion with family, friends, and God. In fact, we know that our fundamental human need is to be in communion with one another.

To many students, however, the idea of “keeping” or “preserving” anything can be interpreted to mean “controlling.” Developmentally, college students are in a stage of personal rediscovery. They need to own things for themselves—they need to challenge what’s been passed down to them. Although we often characterize their behavior as selfish and immature, in reality they are undergoing a deep personal struggle to know and experience what is true. Our mission is to help them discover that it is communion with God, through life in the Church, that gives real meaning and signifi-

cance to life. When they make this realization, they will instinctively “preserve” and remain connected with those persons and communities that value communion with God as the central priority in life.

So, if communion with God is the motivation behind why we should keep students connected to the Church, what does that look like? Attendance is the first thing that pops into most people’s minds. But we all know that just because someone shows up at church, it doesn’t mean they’re connected—you can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink. We must resist the temptation to reduce the idea of communion to attendance—in doing so, we reduce the entire Christian life. Keeping students connected to the Church should not be about forcing, guilt-tripping, or manipulating them into the pews, but about facilitating the kind of exploration that leads to the personal conviction that communion with the Church is life-giving. Why would we want them to have any different kind of connection to the Church?

The hard question is how we do this. How do we help students make these connections and realizations? How do we help them make the kind of personal discoveries that lead to deep moral conviction? To be honest, it’s probably easier and more helpful to identify what doesn’t work. Yelling, nagging, lecturing, and judging will never produce the kind of self-discovery we hope for. Students want us to respect their personal journeys, and we should. They need people and communities that can provide safe places for them to share what they really feel and think, regardless of their maturity level. It is unconditional grace and non-judgmental love that make a community life-giving! When students find these kinds of communities, whether it’s a church, a family, an OCF chapter, or a group of friends, they encounter the very character of Christ.

It should be said here that it's impossible to create this kind of environment where there is a spirit of anxiety. I know—we hear all the time that the world is an increasingly evil and corrupting influence on our students. Our initial reaction is fear. Fear leads to control. Control leads to anxiety. Anxiety can create distance and shame between us and the students we love—it can even break our communion with them. Hopefully, our failed attempts to control lead us to surrender to God's almighty love for them.

All of us—parents, grandparents, godparents, and pastors—need to be reminded that God's parental love for these young souls infinitely surpasses anything we can provide. We can trust that God will never stop loving our students and working powerfully in their lives. From their conception until their last dying breath, God's perfect love is a constant. He pursues them even when we believe they have lost their way. This kind of divine security means that we can focus on the things we can control, like creating safe and loving contexts where students feel comfortable exploring questions about faith, morality, relationships, vocation, and a variety of other topics.

Students want to be able to confess the reality of their lives—their thoughts and actions—and not just to a priest. Confession is a normal part of human development. Students are looking for authentic individuals and communities that can handle the reality of their complex and challenging lives. They want to find safe places where they can test their ideas and questions without being judged. They're looking for contexts that give them permission to mature at an individual pace. They resist, and even resent, individuals and communities who try to control their emotional and spiritual development.

Who is ultimately responsible for keeping our students connected to the Church? All of us are responsible for the next generation, and with some thoughtful reflection, each of us can play an important, even powerful, role in the lives of our students. The best way to effect this is for each of us to understand the responsibilities and limitations of our individual roles. Parents must own up to the

fact that they are the primary nurturers of their children's faith. Parents cannot pass off to the Church what is uniquely theirs.

The Church, on the other hand, must take seriously its role in creating a supportive and resourceful environment. The parish must be a place where it is obvious how every divine service, ritual, and program is connected to the person of Jesus Christ. We cannot assume that families will or can make all of these connections on their own. Grandparents and godparents have an obvious responsibility to our students as well. Their lives and experience are to be living witnesses of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. They must be careful, however, to come alongside parents and not above them. Parents, like students, want the safety to make mistakes and still be respected for their role.

While each of these roles is indispensable, they also face certain limitations. OCF exists to come alongside families and parishes and provide solutions to some of those limits.

For example, because of the lack of finances and program expertise, many families and parishes are not able to provide the kind of large-scale, transformative opportunities that OCF offers annually, such as College Conference or Real Break. Each year at the end of December, over 400 students attend three different College Conferences that are held simultaneously—at the Antiochian Village in Bolivar, Pennsylvania; St. Nicholas Ranch in Dunlap, California; and the Diakonia Center in Salem, South Carolina. These conferences provide students the opportunity to connect with other students from all over the country and from every Orthodox jurisdiction. In addition, they get to hear some of the finest speakers and professors in the Orthodox Church today.

And just a few months later, during their Spring Break, we give them the opportunity to honor Christ by serving the poor and marginalized in a variety of international contexts. In 2009, we will send over 125 students in small teams to serve in places like Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Greece, Constantinople, El Salvador, Romania, Mexico, and the Bahamas. These one week trips

change students' lives.

OCF also recognizes the near-impossibility for the family and parish to be present on the university campus. Currently, we have 260 local college/university chapters in the United States and Canada. While each OCF chapter has its own unique identity and character, most chapters meet once a week for prayer, Bible study, fellowship, and food. These local communities provide a home away from home where students can feel connected to their faith and ask the hard questions in a safe and loving atmosphere. Most of these chapters also have a spiritual advisor and a faculty advisor who oversee the group's activities and provide spiritual and programmatic direction as needed. Together these individual chapters represent the backbone of the OCF ministry and a vital element of the future of the Orthodox Church in North America.

We can keep our students connected to the Church, but only if we respect each student's individual spiritual journey and the different but complementary roles in which each of us can serve. May God grant us the grace to work together toward this end!



The history of the Myrrh-Bearing Women

When the Lord Jesus was going throughout Galilee, many women who had received His beneficence left their own homeland and followed after Him. These women ministered unto Him out of their own possessions, even until his crucifixion and entombment. On the Lord's day, neither losing faith in Him after his death, nor fearing the wrath of the Jewish rulers, they came very early to the tomb to anoint Christ's body with myrrh-oils and spices. Because the women came to anoint Christ's body with myrrh, they are called the Myrrh-Bearing Women.*

The Myrrh Bearing women provided, and still provide, a powerful ideal to which Orthodox women can strive. First, and foremost, they loved Christ. They followed him so that they could minister to him and his disciples. They were courageous, remaining by His side, even when others were afraid. They proclaimed the Good News, and they devoted themselves to prayer.

* Adapted from *The Great Horologion - Book of Hours*; Translated from Greek by the Holy Transfiguration Monastery; Boston, MA, 1997; article taken from <http://www.stjohnnoc.org/myrrh2.html>

At St. Vladimir's Church, we are attempting to found a Myrrh Bearer's program for girls in the parish from the ages of 7-18. The duties of a myrrh bearer include: holding candles during processions, distribution of the antidoron (the liturgical bread) at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, and participating in major Feast Day services, especially Holy Week and Paska. **In the New Year, the first Sunday of every month will become Myrrh-Bearer's Sunday (in combination with the existing practice of Youth Sunday), where we encourage any interested girls to attend the Divine Liturgy and participate as Myrrh-Bearers.** To participate, please arrive at the Church no later than 9:15 and report to the candle room for further instructions. Parents, please encourage your daughters to be a part of this valuable contribution to the Liturgy. It is important that they be a part of the living church, and therefore grow up experiencing the joy of service, similar to the opportunities available to the altar boys. For more information please contact Father Timothy or Dbr. Julie at 403-453-5407.



St. Vladimir's Sr. CYMK – UOY Ivan Bohun Branch

Слава Ісусу Христу! Glory to Jesus Christ!

St. Vlad's Senior CYMK is already well off into another busy and exciting year here in fall 2008. We remain active in both the Ukrainian and Orthodox communities in the city by maintaining our faith and culture, while having a lot of fun doing it!

Our branch held its annual meeting on Sunday, September 14 in our CYMK room where we discussed new and old business, welcomed our church's new associate priest (Fr. Tim Chrapko), welcomed new members, planned some activities for the upcoming year, decided committees and elected an executive. The executive consists of:

President: Katrina Michayluk
Vice President: Andrij Krochak
Secretary: Yaryna Melnychuk
Treasurer: Julianna Michayluk

In addition, our local continues to support World Vision and our sponsored child, supported Socks for Street Souls, and we continue to help in the congregation by serving coffee two times a year, helping for the Remembrance Day program at the church, and for the Holodomor Memorial Service at our Cultural Centre. CYMK also runs "Youth Sunday," where every first Sunday of the month we try to help as much during the service as possible by reading the epistle, holding candles, and doing the collection. We sent members to the Provincial Alberta CYC convention in Edmonton in October (also where a few of our members had the opportunity to meet our new bishop, his Grace Bishop Ilarion), and we take part in the Pan Orthodox group, Koinonia.

Also of note is the fact that our local is hosting another CYMK Jamboree. This year it will take place from February 27, 28, and concludes on March 1st. Again, it will take place with both Alberta and Saskatchewan CYMK attending, and everyone in our local is looking forward to hosting it again!

Wishing you all a blessed Nativity;

Respectively submitted in Christ's Name:
Andrij Krochak

St. Vladimir's Church School Report – December 01, 2008

The current curriculum is for our youth ages 4 – 16 (grades Kindergarten to Grade 9) includes Our Faith levels 1 – 4, scripture reading and custom lessons related to Feast days and Icons. The four main events that Church School host are the St. Nicholas concert, Caroling to the Shut-ins, Lazurus Saturday Youth Confession/Pussy willow hunt and Church wind up picnic. We also collaborate with various Church sponsored Youth programs to include and communicate all age appropriate activities for CYMK and Pan Orthodox Koinonia events.

Activities we participated in last year were:

- St. Nicholas - with Sadochok and Ukrainian School integrated program
- Food Bank collection – for Christmas and Easter
- Christmas Caroling to the Shut-ins – 6 nursing homes over two Saturday visits
- Valentine's Day – baking fundraiser for our World Vision Sponsored Child / Ukrainian Orphanages hosted by Senior CYMK
- Bowness Park Family Day skate and picnic – attended by 20 people with a wiener roast provided by Greg Faryna with TYC
- Egg decorating and Paska – for the Shut-in Easter baskets provided by UWAC
- Youth Confession / Pancake Breakfast – Lazurus Saturday, food provided by Greg Faryna with TYC, followed by Pussy Willow collecting out at Bear's Paw Provincial park for Lazarus Sunday, coordinated by Church School.
- Mothers' Day gift - crafts pot with glitter glue and pipe cleaner flowers
- Wind-Up Picnic and swim – at McKenzie lake venue generously supported by Peter and Mary Charuk. Maria and Michael Stefanyk were also very helpful in preparing and cooking hot dogs and hamburgers for all of us.
- The Car Rally – Pan Orthodox event in October helped the older Church School kids (grades 7-9) work in a team environment with the Senior Youth and Young Adults (grades 10 to University+). Fun was had by all.

Activities we plan for this year:

- We plan to maintain all of the activities from the previous year and expand the Pan Orthodox events to included a play on Doubting Thomas Nov 24, 2008 and Volleyball Jan.24, 2008. This activity is for Grades 7 and up.
- Church School plans to host an Icon seminar during the Easter lent period which will be open to all parishes, ages and families. Dates will be posted in the weekly Church Bulletin.

Teacher, Kathy Kulmacz and assistant, Fabienne Monsaiangeon are the core people carrying out the weekly Sunday lessons in the downstairs Boardroom. I continue to support them, as well, Dobr. Julie Chrapko has offered to get involved. Due to varied attendance, we continue to keep the group together, rather than breakout into smaller groups; however, by keeping the kids together they get to know the group as a whole regardless of age. Everyone is welcome to contribute to the lesson with his or her thoughts and knowledge. Please encourage your children and youth to attend. We start our program at 9:30 every Sunday downstairs in the Boardroom, except for holidays that follow the public Schoolboard calendar, and finish with prayer at around 10:15, then proceed as a Church School Family up to complete the Divine Liturgy with the congregation.

Hope to see everyone participating whenever possible.

Thank you for your interest in our program.

Director, Holly Egan

The following article was published in the October, 2008, issue of TOUCHTONE Magazine. Its author, John Thompson, is a librarian at Waynesburg University in Waynesburg, Pennsylvania, where he also teaches New Testament. He, his wife Nancy, and their three children attend St. Mary's Orthodox Church in Morgantown, West Virginia. It is here as a meditation for the approaching gift giving season of Christmas. As parents, Grandparents, Godparents, Uncles, Aunts and maybe just good friends undoubtedly we will find ourselves bringing gifts to the children in our lives. This article is about more than just "gift giving" and it offers a challenging point of view of what it means to love our children.

Weed Free: on Tending a Child's Garden of Influences

IT IS GOOD TO WANT someone to control the violence, irreverence, and sex that appear in the media, so that children aren't exposed to stories and images that corrupt their desires and dull their consciences. That would be a good thing for society as a whole. But for the sake of my wife and our three children, I have to draw the line at a different place.

The Four Rules

And so my wife and I follow four rules of disengagement. The first one is: *If it is addictive, don't offer it to children.* In our family, that means alcohol, smoking, and drugs. It also means video games, television, Gameboys, and iPods. We play games, but we do it as a family and we promote the games that encourage thought and interaction, not the acuity of the thumbs and fingers. We watch videos, but not television, and we certainly don't watch television "serially."

But the real struggle, the real area where the discipline is needed, is in how we - the parents - live and in the way we spend our money and time. Here is where the most effective teaching takes place, for good or ill, because, as everyone knows, our children pay much more attention to what we do than to what we say.

Hence, the second rule of disengagement: *You should want your children to imitate you.* This is one of the hardest rules to follow. It is annoying beyond words, at times, to see my children copying me. But then I remember that if I want them to remain disengaged from what will harm them, they must be able to attach themselves to a positive influence. Me.

This leads to the third rule of disengagement: *Don't give your children things that will isolate, spoil, or corrupt them.* My childhood preceded the Sony Walkman phenomenon, which is now the iPod phenomenon. The music you can get on them is truly amazing, both in variety and in quality of reproduction. I don't object to persons who use them, unless that person is one of my children.

I am perhaps irrationally afraid that my children will use their iPod or CD player or whatever to escape something unpleasant, whether it is boredom, a sibling, or my discipline. Instead, they should be learning to deal constructively with their boredom, siblings, and parental discipline.

Withdrawing into his own world is an ever-present temptation for a child, as tempting as candy. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that following rule No.2, I don't use these devices myself.

Our fourth rule of disengagement is: *Even when giving the children gifts, teach them about the rewards that they should be working for.* When we give them gifts, we are giving them some clues about what we think will make people happy. That is why I object, in principle, to expensive toys that have no functional use. They imply that happiness comes from being able to afford expensive toys. This is an unfortunate concept for children to have but it is disastrous for adults.

These are not rules for rejecting society or for withdrawing from it. They are rules for equipping my children to *selectively* engage the world when they are mature enough to assess its merits and dangers. One of the most compelling arguments for disengagement is that the attitudes and values that society encourages effectively preclude the values that I want to cultivate.

You can only grow so many plants in your garden. Some of the plants I want to see flourish in my garden - gratitude, reverence, simplicity, and the love of beauty - are relatively fragile and require special attention, and so I must go to what others regard as extreme lengths - a radical weeding policy - to protect them.

Submitted by Fr. Patrick Powalinsky, Kamsack Saskatchewan

Membership Development Committee Annual Report

Slava Isusu Khrystu! Slava Naviki!
Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever!

Again, the first order of the year was the publishing and distributing of the 2008 Pocket Calendar. Peter Charuk was again successful in raising funding to help offset a significant portion of the cost. Our appreciation goes out to Fr. Taras and Peter for their continued efforts in coordinating this calendar for our information and convenience.

Three weekends before Paska, guest speaker of the 2008 Great Lenten Seminar, Right Reverend Fr. Dr. Oleg Krawchenko, whose theme was 'The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada... Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow,' challenged us, as we approached the 90th Anniversary of the establishment of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada to think on 'What have we, as a Church, accomplished in those 90 years? Where are we now? What have we been called to realize in the years to come?' For 2009, God willing, plans are going ahead for the Great Lenten Seminar and Myrna Kostach has been booked for the Fall Lenten Seminar.

In striving towards good stewardship, the Membership Development Committee has spent considerable time and effort towards planning an effective manner to utilize the generous donations towards the Paschal and Christmas Charity Appeals. To that end, we have chosen to partner with *Project "Liubov - Love"*, coordinated by Prof. Roman Yereniuk, that assists the most vulnerable youth in Ukraine, "the poorest of the poor" - those in orphanages, homes for street kids and children in school residences. In addition to a financial gift to repair and re-supply an orphanage ravaged by the flood, every month or two we are featuring the collection of **gently-used** items to be donated, boxed and sent (by using the Charity Appeals funds) to these orphanages, homes or residences. To help the needy of Calgary in our own backyard, plans are in place, in celebration of the feast of St. Nicholas, to sponsor the financial provision,

preparation and serving of the December 19th meal coordinated by the Mustard Seed ministry to street people. Sponsorship of the meals for November 28, December 24 and tentatively January 30 have been booked. In humble appreciation, we commend all those of St. Vladimir's Congregation who again, recognizing the Christian mission to provide assistance to the needy - orphans in our ancestral home-land Ukraine and the street people of Calgary, donated so generously and we look forward to your support of the "gently-used items to Ukraine" drives.

Our annual May Membership Appreciation and Grad Recognition BBQ, with the extraordinary talents of our MC, Greg Syrnick, recognized those of our congregation who succeeded in achieving academic milestones during the year. St. Vladimir's, to honor these achievements, presented these graduates with an Orthodox Study Bible, or in the case of repeat performances - an icon. New members (30 plus in a 2-year period) were also recognized and welcomed.

With September marking the start of our new liturgical year, the Membership Development Committee treated the congregation to our usual Pancake Breakfast to show appreciation of the commitment and participation of our members. Food and Christian fellowship was enjoyed by all.

We extend appreciation to Olga Nikolaeva for sending greeting cards extending congratulations, get well or condolences to our parishioners on behalf of the congregation. Appreciation also goes to those with caring hearts that let Olga know who needs a card. Joanna Calkins has continued to look after the supply of Care Notes that are available in our foyer for the information and care of those in need of spiritual counsel.

Three issues of the Beacon were published this

year and mailed out to all members and adherents. As Editor of the Beacon for the past three years, I thank you for the opportunity to minister in this way to you, the congregation and for the support extended to me. I wish our new Editors, Fr. Tim and Dbr. Julie, success and the well wishes of the congregation.

On behalf of the Membership Development Committee, I would like to take this opportunity to again extend our gratitude and appreciation to the members and adherents of St. Vladimir's for supporting our initiatives for yet another year. You continue to encourage us by your participation and generous support! On behalf of myself, I would like to extend to the members of the Membership Development Committee my appreciation also of their Christian commitment, their efforts, talents and support throughout this past year.

As Chair of a committee who is charged with the developing of opportunities to facilitate further spiritual growth of our membership, I welcome Fr. Tim to our Church community and can only communicate again my appreciation and gratitude to Fr. Taras for his wise and patient guidance and mentoring of us all in our Christian walk. I invite each one of you to participate in the community of St. Vladimir's Services, Bible Studies, seminars, Parish Council, committees and functions as we strive towards our Christian goal of becoming more like Christ.

Respectfully submitted,
Joan Popowich, Chair MDC.

Icon Report December 7, 2008

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ—
Glory Forever!

On behalf of the icon committee, this is to report that the writing of icons in our temple should be completed early 2010.

Presently, with the exception of the Old Testament Trinity, all the icons written are sponsored. Mrs. Vera Senchuk donated the icon of St. Demetrius. The icon—Samaritan Woman at the well will be installed on the ceiling beneath the choir loft early in 2009.

Two large icons will be installed later in 2009, that being Baptism of Kyivan-Rus Ukraine and St. Andrew on the Hills of Kyiv, on the back (slanted) walls. Sincere thanks is extended to the sponsors. Also our appreciation is extended to Sas-Can Masonry Ltd. For providing the scaffolds for the entire installation.

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Din,
Icon Chair

Membership Dues

With the blessing of the Church Council, I will be sending out to each member and member couple a **statement** which will provide each with a balance outstanding for the current year dues (excluding those members who have already paid their dues). For members who choose to pay their dues on an installment basis, this **statement** will provide an up-date for your records.

If any member wishes to learn about the status of their membership dues account, please phone Walter Ozimko at 403-282-4272.

БІБЛІОТЕКА
І АРХІВ
СВ. ВОЛОДИМИРА



ST. VOLODYMYR'S
LIBRARY AND
ARCHIVES

404 MEREDITH ROAD N.E.,
CALGARY, AB, CANADA,
T2E 5A6

Звіт бібліотеки за фінансовий 2008 рік /від 1-XI 07 до 31-X 08/

Оборот за рік: 15,676,17 дол. Розхід за рік: 10,929,25 дол.

Куплено книжок, журналів і газет на суму: 8,365,86 дол.

Подарованих книжок отримано з України, Німеччини, Канади: на 1,091,26 дол.

Вартість бібліотеки не враховуючи меблів: становить 135,225,00 дол.

Інвентар книжок по Іо.14585: всіх книжок маємо 17,855 в те число не входить шедевр української Духовної літератури "Пересопницька Євангелія" факсимільне видання. Періодици 1077 назв, Преса вільної України 334 назв, Відео касет 357, Листівок 1771, Мікро фільмів 2.

Подарували книжки: з України "Музей Гетьманства" дир. Галина Ярова і "Літературний музей Уласа Самчука" дир. Інна Нагорна, А. Глінін Німеччина. О. Скібінський, В. Світик, М. Топольницький, Ф. Малюта, Євгенія Галів, Я. Стех, С. Мельничук, М. Данилюк, НН, Пристаєвський, Маргарет Колей, Колегія Св. Андрія.

Жертводавці: Клуб Українських Бізнесовців і Професіоналістів 5,000,00 дол. Товариство Українців Самостійників 5,000,00 дол. Катя і Василь Лебидович 250,00 дол. Оріся Курчаба 100,00 дол.

Поміч Україні: На видавничий фонд видавництва "Смолоскип" 100,00 дол.

і Володимир Ружу на видання книжки 25,00 дол.

вислано 10 пачок літератури/книжок/і 11 банерів кошт 873,97 дол.

Члени бібліотеки: Проф. Ю. Борис, В. Галюк, М. Ворон, В. Озимко, В. Світик,

Євгенія Галів, Е. Гуменюк, Оріся Курчаба, А. Авраменко, А. Ільницький,

П. Амійот, А. Мекее, Ф. Малюта, Геня Мекитяк, Г. Фарина, В. Семкулей, Л. Юзда,

О. Скібінський, В. Лебидович, Катя Лебидович, М. Топольницький, А. Бойків,

Доріс Мелещак, Мішель Фарина, Лауді Колленс, Світлана Нецько, Дебі Савчин,

І. Браксма, А. Чумак, М. Ганич, Ольга Николаєвна, Б. Романюк, І. Горик,

І. Андрущак, проф. О. Малицький, Н. Папіш. Всіх членів бібліотеки 36.

Передано для КУК: 45 брошур "The Holodomor 1932-1933" для вшанування жертв Голодомору 22 листопада в Калгарі.

Кореспонденція: В протязі року написав 141 листів.

Бібліотека зареєстрована: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies,

American Library Directory RR Bowker Data, Directory of Special Libraries, World Guide to Libraries.

Микола Ворон бібліотекар

St. Vladimir's Ukrainian Orthodox Congregation

....is putting a LIGHTED CANDLE in our window AS THE TIME HONORED TRADITIONAL INVITATION TO
COME IN AND JOIN OUR CHURCH FAMILY IN CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF CHRIST, OUR SAVIOR!

You are Cordially invited to our

Potluck

**Holy
Supper**



**Свята
Вечеря**

6:00 pm, Tuesday, January 6, 2009, Doors open at 5:00 pm

Koliady /Carols at 7:30pm

Great Complines Service 11:00 pm

Divine Liturgy 12 Midnight

Kolochi 3 -

1. Kuzia	_____	_____
2. Borsch	_____ph:_____	_____ph:_____
3. Pickled Herring	_____ph:_____	_____ph:_____
4. Pickled Beets	_____ph:_____	_____ph:_____
5. Fish	_____ph:_____	_____ph:_____
6. Pyrohy	_____ph:_____	_____ph:_____
7. Holobtsi	_____ph:_____	_____ph:_____
8. Vegetables:Bean Dish	_____ph:_____	_____ph:_____
9. Beet Dish	_____ph:_____	_____ph:_____
10. Mushroom Dish	_____ph:_____	_____ph:_____
11. Dessert	_____ph:_____	_____ph:_____
12. Pastries	_____ph:_____	_____ph:_____

**to make reservations and pick your Potluck item please call:
Dobr. Donna @ 403-241-7742 or Dobr. Julie @ 403-453-5407**



How to Avoid Christmas Depression: The Eastern Orthodox Nativity Fast May Prevent Post-Holiday Blues

© [Lisa C. DeLuca](#), [Nov 20, 2008](#)

The ancient, Orthodox Christian religion celebrates the Christmas holiday in a way that helps people cope with depression and experience the true joy of Christmas.

Much of the post-holiday blues and Christmas depression that occur in the United States may have something to do with the way the U.S. culture celebrates the Christmas holiday. People often feel deprived and lonely, in stark contrast to all of the pre-Christmas cheer. Others feel let down and weighed down by food and debt after the Christmas holiday. Changing the way the holiday is celebrated can yield completely different results.

An Orthodox Christmas Can be a Remedy for Christmas Depression and Holiday Blues

"The birth of Christ brought joy and hope to those who had been in darkness and the way the Orthodox celebrate Christmas is designed to let people feel that hope again," states Father Jonathan Ivanoff, an Orthodox Christian Priest and Pastor of St. John the Theologian Orthodox Church in Shirley, New York. The Orthodox Church (known by some in the west as "Eastern Orthodox") teaches that Advent represents the time before Christ's birth, when God's people had become lost and disconnected from Him. Instead of "pre-celebrating" the Christmas holiday during Advent, the Orthodox Christian faithful participate in a solemn, six-week Nativity fast during this time. It is a spiritual practice that helps people grieve their losses, endure their sadness, feed their souls, and, ultimately, experience joy on Christmas day.

The Orthodox Christmas Nativity Fast Can Help Those Who Struggle with Depression

During the fast, all meat, cheese, eggs, fish and wine are avoided on most days and a primarily vegetarian diet is kept. The faithful do not get caught up in the "letter of the law" and do not freak out if they have to have a piece of meat in between. There is no eternal damnation involved. The point is to try to recreate, metaphorically, the famine that existed for peoples' souls before they knew the Savior.

In place of satisfying themselves with food, drink and partying during Advent, the faithful are asked to nourish their souls with prayer, communion with their fellow parishioners, and drawing closer to God. For those who are struggling with personal problems, this period can give them a spiritual boost. This helps Orthodox Christians prepare to receive the joy that Christmas day brings.

According to Ivanoff, Christmas parties are put off until Christmas day. When Christmas comes it is a time of joy, not blues or post-holiday let down, and the faithful are prepared to receive that joy. In fact, the Orthodox continue to celebrate for 10 days after Christmas.

The Orthodox Nativity Fast Helps People Transcend Worldly Problems

The Orthodox Nativity fast helps people tame their worldly appetites. It is an exercise in being able to transcend the body and not be ruled by impulses. The Orthodox church considers fasting a spiritual benefit, that can help people get through tough times. It helps people experience existence on a more spiritual plane, and teaches that regardless of their worldly limitations, people have spiritual substance that can sustain them in difficult times.

In addition to increased prayer, almsgiving is expected to increase during the Nativity fast. This means, specifically, giving money to relieve poverty and material need. Doing this offers a counterbalance to people's urges to overspend and over-indulge in material goods during Christmas. It brings the faithful in contact with others who are far worse off financially, quelling feelings of personal deprivation that tend to arise in this culture where so many have so much.

The Orthodox Christmas Nativity Fast Helps People Feed their Souls

These acts of almsgiving restore Orthodox Christian's connection with humanity. They remind the faithful of Jesus' Great Commandment to love one another, which is the primary act Christians are charged with. It is a reminder that life has more meaning than the consumption of material goods. It helps Orthodox Christians get out of the rut of day to day life and put their spirituality first.

The Orthodox Nativity Fast Provides Physical, Spiritual and Emotional Benefits During the Christmas Holiday

If people stick to the fast they will find themselves in a type of a famine. They may feel more solemn. They certainly will not feel weighed down by food and they may have even shed excess pounds. They will feel much more in control of themselves and their appetites. They may feel closer to God - certainly this is the main goal. They may feel more love and compassion towards self and others.

Orthodox Christmas is the Opposite of Depression

When the holiday arrives, the faithful are prepared to experience true joy. Toward the end of the fast, people tend to feel like they have accomplished something difficult. On Christmas day they break the fast, exit the period of darkness and celebrate the light. The feast is

that much sweeter because of the famine which preceded it. People can feel the joy of Christmas.

Because they have done the work of nourishing the soul they are now free to indulge in the God-given blessings of food, drink, material things, family, friends and fun. Orthodox Christians believe that God wants people to be joyful.

Even those who are lonely or poor, having had their souls filled, may see a path to a more satisfying life, or a way to comfort their pain and experience joy in small things after breaking the fast.

Orthodox Christmas Trees

The Orthodox faithful tend to put up their Christmas trees later – some don't do it until Christmas Eve – and to keep them up longer. Because the faithful took time to connect with God and with humanity during Advent, these connections sustain them, even as the joy of new "toys" wears off and family and friends go home. For the Orthodox faithful, the hard work is behind them and the joy of Christmas lifts them up.

And just as a little baby in a manger offered hope to the world, Christians are called to follow in His footsteps and to be the light of the world. No person is too faulted or too ordinary to make a difference, according to Orthodox teaching. Each person is called by God to do good in the world.



Parish Announcements

CHRISTMAS CHARITY: This year St. Vladimir's Ukrainian Orthodox Congregation will again be assisting the less fortunate of our community and in Ukraine. Our congregation will be providing food for the needy through the Mustard Seed and aid to orphanages in Ukraine through "*Project Liubov Love*". As we enter into the busy pre-Nativity period, let us pause and think about those that are less fortunate than we are. A sincere thank you is extended to all generous donors and supporters of this project!

ORPHANAGES IN UKRAINE: The Membership Development Committee is partnering with "*Project Liubov Love*" to send much needed supplies to the 240 orphans, newborn to 6 years of age, at the Lviv Orphanage on Tadzhytska Street, and the 30 orphans age 6 to 16 at the Home for Street Kids (Prytulokdlia Nepovnolitnykh Detei) in Ivano Frankivsk on Neberezhnsim. Funds that you so generously donated for the Christmas and Paschal Charity Appeals will be used to ship these items to these needy children. The orphans are in need of so much! For the **November/December Orphanage Donation Drive** we are asking you to check your closets for gently used **skates and hobby supplies**. There is also a great need for a supply of **Lego** to help keep the young ones occupied. In October, we appealed for gently used winter **clothing** and we will still be accepting these items. Donations will be accepted at Coffee Hour following Liturgy. We thank you in advance for taking the time to reach out to these children in need.

We are still looking for knitters that are able in their spare time to put together mitten, scarf and hat or tam sets for the children newborn up to 16 years. Wool for these items will be supplied as we have received a donation of wool! If you love to knit and would like to help a little in this way, please contact Joan @ 403-932-7724. Every little bit helps!

SOUTHERN ALBERTA MISSION PROJECT: On Sunday September 14th St. Vladimir's

Ukrainian Orthodox Congregation officially launched our Southern Alberta Mission Project during the pancake breakfast. As mentioned at this launch, your congregation is asking for a voluntary donation of \$75/member towards the important project. If you would like to donate to this project, please indicate on your offering envelope that this is a donation for the Mission Project in order that the congregation may track progress of this program.

SOUTHERN ALBERTA MISSION PROJECT FUNDRAISING UPDATE: As of November 2 we have received \$15,000 in donations to the Southern Alberta Mission Project. Thank you to those who have donated and have yet to do so to this worthy cause!

AUTOMATED FUNDS TRANSFER: St. Vladimir's Congregation now offers Automated Funds Transfer for donations. Forms can be found on the information table in the entrance of the church or on our website by choosing forms on the right side. If you have any questions about the program, please contact James Teterenko or Lorne Calkins, or by emailing preauthorized.payments@stvlads.com.

FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION on Parish Council, Order of St. Andrew, TYC, U.W.A.C. and other events, please visit www.stvlads.com and view the online calendar.

ECHOES OF UKRAINE: You are invited to watch Echoes of Ukraine Television program on Shaw Cable **Channel 89**. Echoes of Ukraine can be seen every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 1:00-1:30 PM on Cable **Channel 89**.

ANCIENT FAITH RADIO: Ancient Faith Radio is an on line radio station found at: <http://ancientfaith.com/> providing audio programming of Orthodox music, prayers, readings, lectures and interviews. Ancient Faith Radio reflects "timeless Christianity 24 hours a day", both the eternity and the daily presence of our Lord Jesus Christ in our midst. Christ is truly in our midst and He truly ever shall be! Enjoy!

Understanding Baptism Part II of IV

By: Fr. Timothy Chrapko

In part one of our discussion on Baptism and its relation to the life of the Church and the Eucharist, we discovered that it is through the sacraments that God is able to sanctify the totality of Human existence. However, this existence is not a solitary state, as we as humans need each other in order to strive toward salvation. It is for this reason that we as the Church must gather as a community to realize the manifestation of the Grace of God. Since the aforementioned Grace of God is only truly realized in and through the gathered community of believers, it stands to reason that the having the sacraments of initiation separated from the Eucharistic gathering separates these all important actions from the very lifeblood of the Church itself, which is the Eucharist. In part two of our discussion, we will begin to examine the current pastoral challenges that face the sacrament of Baptism. Once again, if this discussion provokes any questions or if you require additional readings on the subject, please contact me at chrapkot@hotmail.com, or by telephone (403) 453-5407, or in person at any time.

Baptism and its Current Pastoral Challenges

In order for us as Christians to truly be affected by Baptism, it is essential that we begin by understanding Baptism, not only on a dogmatic and theological level, but also in a historical way. As mentioned above, Baptism has its earliest roots in the Eucharistic Liturgy, and more precisely, in the height of the Eastern Church. Baptism finds its roots in the Paschal Eucharistic celebration. This liturgy in particular to this very day bears the mark of its connection to the mystery of Baptism: "Not many know that the liturgy of Easter is primarily a Baptismal Liturgy; that when on Easter eve they hear the biblical readings about the crossing of the Red Sea, or the three children in the furnace, or Johan in the Whales womb, they listen to the most ancient 'paradigms' and attend the great Baptismal vigil" (Schmemmann-Of Water and the Spirit p. 7).

Knowing and ultimately realizing the importance of the Resurrection and its connection to Baptism is the only true way of knowing the Sacrament of Baptism, and ultimately knowing life in the Church itself. This is the only way to understand true Life in the Church due to the fact that currently in the Eastern Church, Baptism is noticeably absent from the Liturgy, and this may questionably be the cause and/or source of a number of problems in the Church today. The absence of Baptism from the Church is most apparent when we consider that the sacrament is absent from the Liturgy, and as we have stated previously, has become a private family ceremony. This proves to be problematic in that the absence of Baptism from the Liturgy brings with it an absence of Baptismal piety. This is seen in that members are separated from the Sacrament of Baptism, save a few choice occasions in one's life; there is not the element of Baptismal renewal present on a regular basis. The Christians of the "golden age" of the Eastern Church knew that each Lenten period was not only the preparation of the Catechumens for Baptism, but it was a preparation for them to renew and relive their own illumination through Baptism. It must be stated that even before the aforementioned "golden ages" of the Eastern Church, in the earliest days of Christianity, there appears to have been an emphasis on the communal participation in both Baptismal preparation as well as the sacrament itself. For we are able to read in the Apology of St Justin: "As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting for the remission of the sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them" (Osborne p.63).

As a result of the current mindset of Baptismal privacy, to the average believer, the notion of Baptism is no longer a real and present experience, but rather has been equated as an abstract concept.

The ultimate result of the absence of Baptismal piety is that Baptism has lost its effect on the lives of believers, and thus no longer is able to truly be that foundation upon which a believer must stand. Baptism has lost the ability to shape the way in which the illumined person sees the world, for if Baptism is merely an even that we look back upon with the assistance of photographs, then the promises made on behalf of the one being illumined bear no weight in their day-to-day existence and decision making. Baptism has lost the power to shape the moral and ethical outlook of the faithful (Schmemmann-Of Water and the Spirit p. 8). This was not a problem for Christians in the past for they knew precisely that through Baptism, the relationship between them and the world had radically changed forever, for the Christian had entered into the understanding that baptism would serve as the foundation and the guidepost for their entire existence. The fortunate happening is that even though the sacrament of Baptism has been stripped of a great deal of its meaning and importance in the Church, the fact remains that Baptism is still being performed, and within it lies the potential to reintroduce and rediscover the depth that the sacrament of Baptism brings to life in Christ.

It must be stated that from the perception of the canons of the Church, and even from a strictly dogmatic approach, the separation of the sacrament of Baptism from the Liturgy is not of that great a concern, and technically speaking, there is nothing in principle wrong with a fewer number of people in attendance at a Baptism, for neither canon law, nor the dogma of the faith dictate that a specific number of people must be present in order for the Baptism to take place; however, the problem lies in the fact that such a point of view is so prevalent, which conveys the depth of the divorce between the sacrament and the Church itself, and ultimately calls into question if indeed the faith expressed in the sacraments and services of the Church is indeed the same faith that is interpreted and perceived by

those desiring adherence to the rule of the faith. This is to say that the rule, meaning canon law and dogma, is able to justify current practice; however, the tradition of the Church, and also the Spirit of the early Church are disregarded (Schmemmann-For the Life of the World p. 73). It is clear that the narrowing of the scope of understanding on the Eastern practice of Baptism corresponds with the increase of the influence of western scholasticism that forced eastern theology regarding the sacraments into a realm that was and is not conducive to the theology presented by the patristic fathers. This is to say that the patristic approach does not truly lend itself to the framework provided by scholasticism. This framework strives to prove and convey the validity of Baptism; however, in many ways, it is possible to see how these efforts fall short, for all the effort put forth in finding validity has appeared to forget what exactly is being made valid in and through the sacraments. This process has been assisted by the above mentioned aspects of Dogma and Canon Law, which have justified and expedited the process of the sacrament away from the common worship, or liturgy of the Church, and thus made into a private service (Schmemmann-For the Life of the World p. 67).

This once Cosmic act which incorporated the entire Church has now been reduced to a private rite of individual passage, and with it the Church has been reduced to a simple agency for the conveyance of the sacraments. If the fulfillment of the sacrament requires only those things which are essential, then how far are we from taking a minimalistic approach to the entire sacrament, and doing away with the traditions of the Church which are able to instill the faithful with the correct and solid understanding of this sacrament? Fr. Alexander Schmemmann explains this notion well as he states: "...Why not have the water and the oil blessed in advance in order to save our precious time? Why bother with archaic rubrics which prescribe that 'all the candles be lighted' and the priest 'be vested in white

vestments? Why involve the parish, the congregation, the people of God in all of this? Thus today it takes some fifteen minutes to perform in a dark corner of a church, with one 'psaltarist' giving the responses, an act in 'which the fathers saw and acclaimed the greatest solemnity of the Church: a mystery which fills with joy the angels and archangels and all the powers from above and the earthly creatures,' a mystery for which the Church prepared herself by forty days of fasting and which constituted the very essence of her paschal joy" (Schmemmann-Of Water and the Spirit p.11).

Thus we are able to say that the three fundamental pillars that must be upheld if we want the Church to once again become the force of changing and sculpting the life of its faithful are: sound, complete liturgy, and theology, which will ultimately lead to a correct and responsive piety that will reverberate through the entire Church and her sacramental life. Since "[the] sacrament of Baptism is the door into the Church, the Kingdom of grace, and the beginning of Christian life," it is essential that the faithful fully and truly understand it in all its depth and beauty.

It is because of the aforementioned divorce of the sacrament of Baptism from the essential life of the Church that we need to go through a process of Baptismal reclamation, and thusly reintroduce the notion of Baptismal piety into the scope of Christian living and ethics, in the hopes of having this foundational and primordial sacrament once again shape the lives and the world view of the faithful. By this reclamation of the sacrament into the liturgical life of the Church, one may state that the Church will benefit both in the aspects of liturgy, for it will once again find its wholeness through participation and the reliving act of each individual believers Baptism; additionally, Baptismal theology will be restored in that it will once again have a living

experience of illumination theology in action accessible to all believers. As we have just seen in examining the current practice of the sacrament of Baptism, there lies a catastrophic pastoral crisis from which the Church must recover in order to experience the fullness of the faith which she professes. We will now attempt to look at some of the history of the sacrament of Baptism so that we may hope to see the true spirit of the sacrament (which since has been lost) displayed.



Words of wisdom to contemplate this holiday season:

- What one loves in childhood stays in the heart forever. (*Mary Jo Putney*)
- Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted (*Albert Einstein*).
- In charity there is no excess (*Francis Bacon*).
- Love has nothing to do with what you are expecting to get - only with what you are expecting to give - which is everything (*Katherine Hepburn*).

Celebrating the Nativity Orthodox-Style

Eastern Orthodox Christmas, celebrated on January 7th, is less about sensual pleasure than spiritual substance.

BY: Father John Mack

"Christ is born! Glorify Him!" These words express the great joy Orthodox Christians experience each year as they celebrate the Nativity of their Lord.

The wonder of Christmas is more than our minds can comprehend. And thus, for Christmas to be understood, it must be experienced in our hearts. It is in our hearts that we understand, and it is with our hearts that we share the joy of Christ's Incarnation.

In the modern world, Christmas has been reduced to the sensual pleasures of the flesh. Each year, Christmas becomes less and less an event of spiritual substance. The joy of Christmas is now centered on what we eat, what we hang, and what we receive.

How different the spirit of Orthodox Christianity.

St. Gregory the Theologian explains:
"This . . . is this what we are celebrating today: the Coming of God to man, that we might go forth, or rather that we might go back to God, that putting off the old man we might put on the New; and that as we have died in Adam so we might live in Christ, being born with Christ. Therefore, let us keep the feast, not after the manner of a pagan festival, but in a godly way.

"And how shall this be? Let us not decorate our porches, nor arrange dances, nor adorn the streets. . . . These are the ways that lead to evil and are the entrances of sin. Let us leave all these things to the pagans. But let us who are worshipers of the Word of God, if we must in some way have luxury, let us seek it in God's Word and in the law and the scriptural stories . . . " (Oration 38).

This does not mean that the extras associated with Christmas are inappropriate. There is nothing wrong with decorating Christmas trees, hanging Christmas lights and enjoying wonderful Christmas treats.

What is important, however, is that we understand why these activities are associated with Christmas. Orthodox faith is worked out in the fabric of our lives and involves more than our worship in the Temple, extending from there into our homes and other surroundings.

Sadly, in our modern era, many of the connections between Temple and home, between faith and life, have been forgotten. We no longer know why we put lights in our windows. It is no longer obvious to us why we hang ornaments on our trees.

It is this division between "sacred" and "secular" that Orthodox Christians must reject. Satan would like us to leave our worship of the Christ Child in the Temple; he would like us to live disjointed lives. Our struggle must be to bring our worship home with us; it must be to connect every aspect of our lives with the Divine Liturgy and the Holy Altar.

Thankfully, we do not have to figure out how

to do this on our own. Our tradition is full of wonderful customs that already do it for us.

So, for example, in the Russian tradition the fasting meal that is served on Christmas Eve is eaten only after the first star appears in the sky. It is a joyous experience to watch the children peering out the windows into the sky looking for that first star. The anticipation of the centuries finds its counterpoint in the eyes and hearts of the children as they wait.

The fasting Christmas Eve dinner is also served on a table adorned with straw. We eat our dinner with the cattle and the lambs, in the cave eagerly awaiting the coming of the Messiah. The sights and the smells take us back in time to that first nativity.

Many of the more familiar Western traditions also come to us out of the bosom of the Church. The lights that we put in our windows are signs of hospitality for the Christ child. There is room in our homes and our hearts, we say to a watching world, for Christ to be born. The ornaments remind us of the fruits of the Spirit that Christ's incarnation has brought to us. The tree itself, with its evergreen needles, is a testimony to Christ, the life of the world.

Of course, these things get out of hand. Instead of supporting our spiritual celebration, they can divert our attention. Do we really need to put lights everywhere? Does our tree have to be perfectly adorned? Should we spend less on the "extras" so that we might give more to those who are in need? These questions are very much a part of our Christmas celebrations.

Even the tradition of gift-giving has to be considered. Do our children really need to be given things they don't need? Would they not experience more of the Christmas joy if they were taught to give more and receive less? What is important is that everything surrounding Christmas be judged by the spiritual joy it gives us and our loved ones.

It can and should be fun and enjoyable, but that which is lesser must always serve the greater. Let us keep the Feast, not in the way of the pagans, but in a godly way.



The Christmas Silence by Margaret Deland

Hushed are the pigeons cooing low
On dusty rafters of the loft;
And mild-eyed oxen, breathing soft,
Sleep on the fragrant hay below.

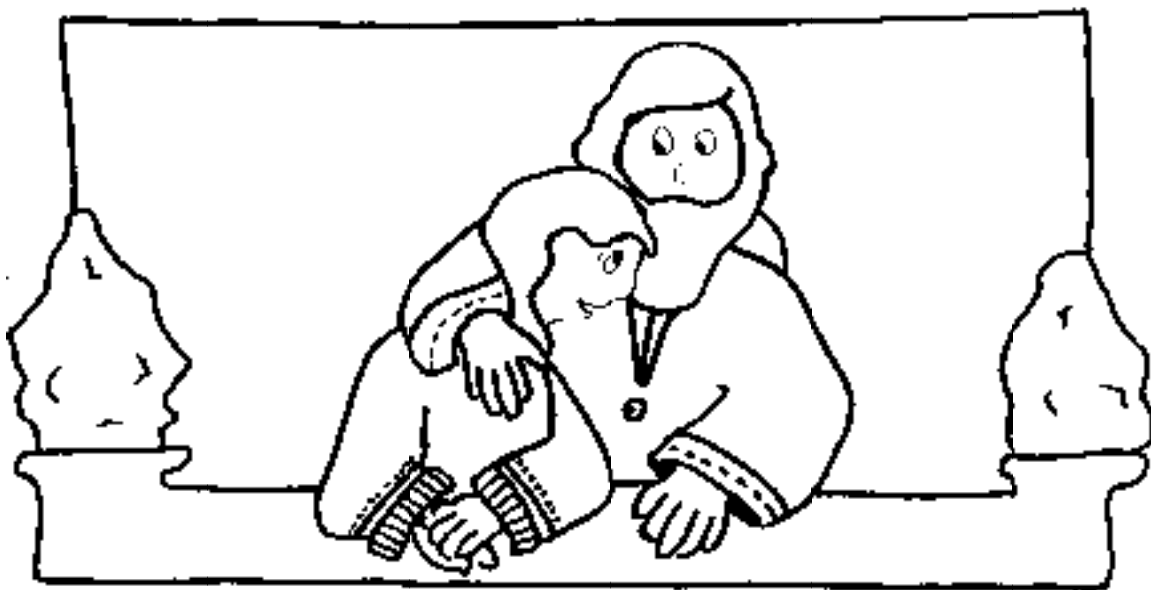
Dim shadows in the corner hide;
The glimmering lantern's rays are shed
Where one young lamb just lifts his head,
Then huddles 'gainst his mother's side.

Strange silence tingles in the air;
Through the half-open door a bar
Of light from one low-hanging star
Touches a baby's radiant hair.

No sound: the mother, kneeling, lays
Her cheek against the little face.
Oh human love! Oh heavenly grace!
'Tis yet in silence that she prays!

Ages of silence end to-night;
Then to the long-expectant earth
Glad angels come to greet His birth
In burst of music, love, and light!

Kids' Corner



The Nativity of Christ

December 25

Christmas is a very special holy day. Christmas is the day we remember the birth of Jesus our Savior. What a special time that was! At first, Joseph was troubled that the woman he was to marry was going to have a baby. They were not married yet! But an angel told Joseph in a dream that the baby was from the Holy Spirit and was the Son of God. Joseph and Mary were married and soon it was time for the baby to be born.

The government rulers said everyone had to return to the town they were from to be counted. They needed to know how many people there were in the country. Mary and Joseph began the long trip to Bethlehem. Mary rode a donkey and Joseph walked beside her. Mary became tired and uncomfortable from the long ride. Finally they came to Bethlehem. But it was late and there were many other people who had also come to town. Joseph went from one inn to another trying to find somewhere to sleep that night. Every inn was full. Mary was very tired now. Joseph tried one more inn. The innkeeper sadly shook his head. He had no more room. But he felt sorry for Mary. He told Joseph they could stay in the cave where his animals slept.

That very night in the cave, Jesus was born. Mary wrapped the baby in cloth and laid Him in a manger which held hay for the cattle to eat. There was nowhere else to lay Him.

We celebrate Jesus' birthday, or the Nativity, on December 25. This day is very joyous and happy, just like our own birthday! Jesus' birthday is extra special because Jesus is God's Son. He was born to save us. We say, "Christ is Born! Glorify Him!"

In the icon, Mother Mary is shown in the center. She is in the cave where Jesus was born. Baby Jesus is next to her, wrapped in cloth. The ox watches over baby Jesus. It seems to know Jesus is special.

In the corner is Joseph. He is thinking about the birth of Jesus and how important it is to everyone on Earth.

Article taken from "A WAY OF LIFE: Introducing your child to the Orthodox Faith" by Ann Marie Gidus-Mecera

Please colour me!



Picture taken from "A WAY OF LIFE: Introducing your child to the Orthodox Faith" by Ann Marie Gidus-Mecera

The Baptism of our Lord

January 6

(Parent's Note: After completing the lesson, you may want to show your child pictures of his/her own baptism.)

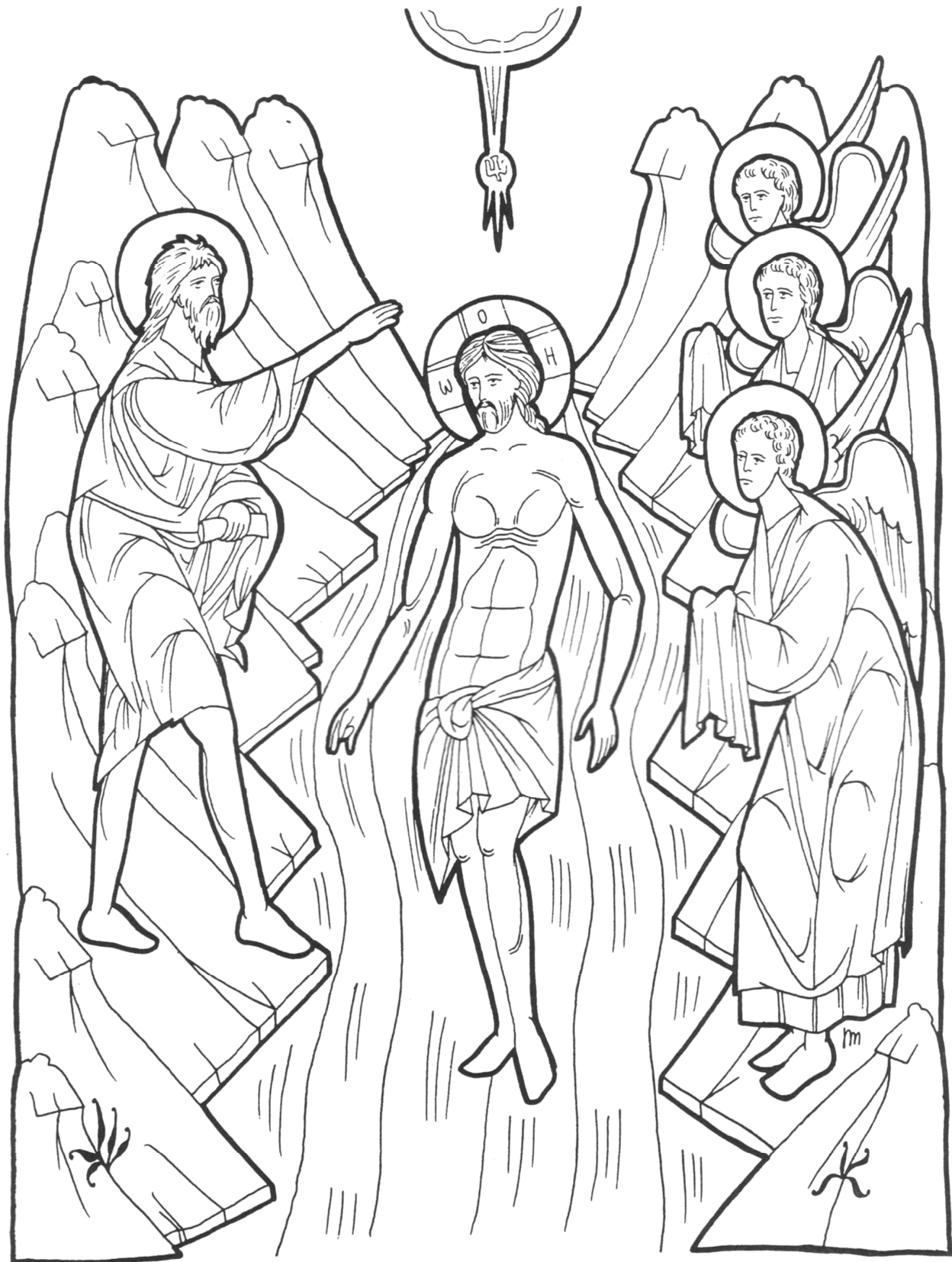
Jesus was baptised and told us we must be baptised, too. We are baptised when we are babies. This makes us part of the Church right away. Can you tell me what happens when we are baptised? If you said that we are put under water or immersed, you are right! Water is important to us. We cannot live without water. God often used water to show Himself to us. Can you think of other Bible stories about water? Did you say Noah's Ark and the flood? Did you remember when Jesus walked on water? How about when the people of Israel crossed the Red Sea? These are all ways God used water to tell us about Himself!

The icon shows John the Baptist baptising Jesus in the Jordan River. Angels are shown on the left of Jesus. The angels' heads are bowed because they know Jesus is the Son of God. They show their respect to Jesus by bowing their heads.

Each of us was baptised by a priest, just like John the Baptist baptised Jesus. We were very small babies, and could not walk into the water like Jesus did. The priest lifted us into a very large bowl of water. This bowl is called the baptismal font.

Article taken from "A WAY OF LIFE: Introducing your child to the Orthodox Faith" by Ann Marie Gidus-Mecera

Please colour me!



Picture taken from "A WAY OF LIFE: Introducing your child to the Orthodox Faith" by Ann Marie Gidus-Mecera

Presentation of Jesus in the Temple

February 2

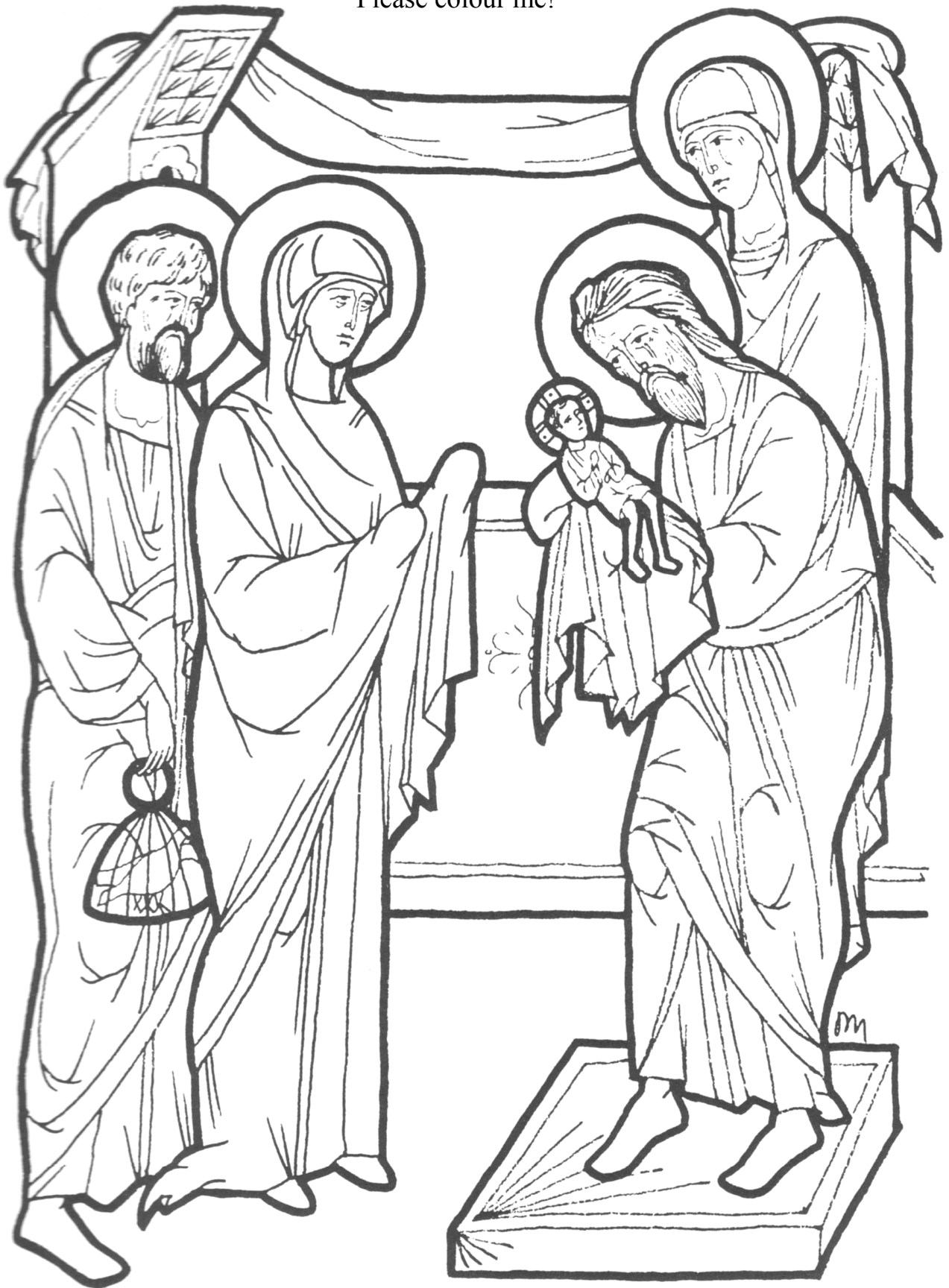
Just like Mother Mary, Jesus was taken to the temple when He was a young boy.

In this icon, Mother Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem for the first time. St. Simeon is shown holding baby Jesus. St. Simeon was a very old man. God told St. Simeon that he would not die before seeing Jesus the Savior. Finally St. Simeon was able to see and hold Jesus, the Son of God. He was full of joy and happiness! He knew how special Jesus was.

Joseph is shown bringing two turtle doves to the temple as gifts. The Prophetess Anna stands behind Simeon. She is telling everyone that the baby is Jesus, the Son of God and Creator of Heaven and Earth.

Article taken from "A WAY OF LIFE: Introducing your child to the Orthodox Faith" by Ann Marie Gidus-Mecera

Please colour me!



Picture taken from "A WAY OF LIFE: Introducing your child to the Orthodox Faith" by Ann Marie Gidus-Mecera