



St. Xenia Parish News

170 North Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844

November-December 2005

How Can We Serve The Church?

by Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky

If we love the Church, if she is dear to us, then how can each of us serve her? And if someone were to ask you: "How have you served her," what activities can you glory in?

When this question was put to the holy Apostle Paul and he had to defend his authority before the Corinthian Christians, he answered in this way: *I glory in it in my infirmities* (II Cor. 11:30). Glory in infirmities? Without question, the humble realization of our infirmities is beneficial for each of us, but how can we serve the Church in this way? At the same time, the holy Apostle insists on his answer and explains: *For when I am weak, then I am strong* (II Cor. 12:10).

Then, this is no paradox, no play on words, no contradiction. The Apostle shows no trace of being "imaginative" or "witty." He writes from the fullness of his heart, from a deep conviction. His meaning is direct. He speaks of the Christian principle of life.

Christianity upset the usual concepts dominant in the world, and in particular the concept of power. In Christianity, power is what seems to the world to be impotence, what appears to its short-sighted view to be a contemptible weakness. Christian power is meekness. Meekness is the law of the new life and action, under whose banner the Gospel declared war on the world: "Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are they that weep. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

And so, two contradictory laws of life stand one against the other, two kingdoms: the kingdom of the meek and the kingdom of power. The kingdom of the meek is forced to wage war against the kingdom of power, while located in its midst and surrounded on all sides by the kingdom of power and force.

The Church is meek. For this reason, she is in need of protection and defense. Only there must be good means for her defense. In the past, both the Byzantine and Russian Churches had external defenders: a government system, the emperors, the tsars.... Times have changed. Now the care of the Church is entrusted by the Lord to the people of the Church herself and so, to each Orthodox Christian. In this regard, we are returning to the times of the first Christians. Our times call us all to a conscious, constant sacrificial stand for the Church, each with his talents and means. However, the principal power of service lies not in this and not in our knowledge, abilities and callings. The principal power is in that infirmity through which the power of Christ comes to abide. It is in our morality, in our living according to the law of the Gospel, according to the law of the Church...

Each of us has a place in the ranks of the soldiers of the Church, and the forms of participation in service to the Church are varied. The Apostle writes: *Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called* (I Cor. 7:20). Translating this quotation into contemporary concepts, we can say that there does not exist a constructive, good profession and a social position where a good person could not at some time or other contribute his good mite to the work of the Church...

One must see the Church as the one body of Christ, a single, organism, a single substance. Each person's individuality is the plot entrusted to him, for him to labor over, clean up, and produce fruit on. In working on ourselves, we work for the whole, for the entire Church, for its Head, the selfless Saviour. In letting one's plot become overgrown, in neglecting it, condemning it, we bring harm not only to ourselves but also to the Church. By not gathering for our own soul, we scatter what belongs to the Church.

Our service to the Church consists in this: that through our personal Christian life, the spirit of the values of the Gospel flow into the life of the world, thus putting the enemies of the Church to shame. In our personal qualities lies the pledge or the internal unity of the Church as a whole and of the parish in particular; it is from this source that there come mutual understanding, obedience, unanimity in goals, friendly labor for the glory of God and the glory of the Church. Thus a completely special Church atmosphere is established. In such an atmosphere, a person feels that he is in a special world which gives rest and joy to the soul, refreshing and renewing it. One strives to come to it as if to a new earth, the earth of the meek. In it one feels the beneficial power of the Church within oneself. It is easier in such circumstances for the soul to open up for the reception of the breath of the grace of God that abides in the Church. But if this spirit is absent, if within the groups of the Church there are divisions, discord, the struggle of ambitions and self-love, then can one, in such circumstances, speak of the power of the Church?

Therefore, to the question of how can we serve the Church, the answer is simple: by active obedience to her. Active obedience to her is a life according to the rules of the Church, with observation of the moral laws, with zealous attendance to the services in church, with prayer at home and a Christian foundation of and direction in home life. We can say, then, in general, that for us it consists in the joy of belonging to the Russian Church Abroad as a true confessor of the Catholic Orthodox faith and a herald of righteousness, and in the peace in our personal life, corresponding with that membership.

St. Xenia of Petersburg Orthodox Church is a parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, under the omophorion of Metropolitan LAURUS, First Hierarch, and Bishop GABRIEL of Manhattan. The parish newsletter is published bi-monthly under the direction of the Rev. Michael Crowley. In order to ensure timely delivery to our far-flung parish, please submit all notices by the 15th of the month prior to publication to Margaret Lark at (603) 332-9613, e-mail: skovranok@verizon.net, or to Father Michael at tcrowley@maine.rr.com. Thank you.

Rector:

Rev. Michael Crowley
 16 Channel Road
 South Portland, ME 04106
 (978) 204-0428 (cell phone with voice mail)

Confessions on Saturday during Vigil, on Sunday during the Hours, and by appointment

Parish Council

President: Rev. Michael Crowley (207) 767-1889
 Starosta: Rdr. Constantine Desrosiers (603) 775-0320
 Secretary: Natalie Pishenin (978) 658-5564
 Treasurer: Tony Sarantakis (978) 263-2016
 Sisterhood: Matushka Nancy Crowley (207) 767-1889
 Cemetery: Lily Dombrowski (978) 851-2972
 Peter Danas (978) 459-9541
 John Danas (978) 454-0315
 Alexei Doohovskoy (978) 897-1734
 Roberto Gonzalez (978) 692-1229
 Michael Johnson (603) 893-4593
 John Kekis (978) 456-9865
 Choir Director: Michael Lang (603) 465-9754

Trapeza Schedule

*** =Strict Fast(no meats, fish or dairy)**

If you cannot be at church on your assigned Sunday please call and switch with someone. If you have any questions contact Karen Schidlovsky at (603) 868-6410. Trapeza can be whatever you would like to prepare on your day. Some parishioners prefer to make a big lunch but this isn't necessary. As long as there is enough food for about 40 people anything is appreciated. Donuts, fruit and pastries are as acceptable as soup and sandwiches. Thank you in advance for your contribution.

November

6 Helena Doohovskoy, Marianne DiMatteo
 13 Karen Schidlovsky, Nancy Harris
 20 Carolyn Sarantakis, Pamela Reed
 27 Tanya Sciaudone, Mireille Lang

December

4 * Nicholas Kronauer, Vera Sarantakis
 11 * Matushka Nancy, Yekaterina Fredette
 18 * Masha Harris, Anna Johnson and Tatiana Pishenina
 25 * Amy McLellan, Anna Kekis and Kasardas Family

Sisterhood News:

Sisterhood dues are \$5 per year, and membership is open to all women of the parish. Our next meetings will take place on November 4th and December 2nd.

Thank You...

...to all who contributed time, talent and treasure to the celebration of our Church Feast in September.

...to Anna Johnson, departing Parish Council member, for her dedication, and for agreeing to continue her involvement in the Bookstore and in the Nativity Yolka pageant.

The Parish of St. Xenia wishes to express its thanks to Vladyka Gabriel and the Synod of Bishops for the presentation of a *Gramata* to our parish. This blessing and honor is one for which we are humbly grateful.

Please remember in your prayers...Nicholas, Svetlana, Nina, Josephine, David, Vassilisa, Anne, Fr. Roman Lukianov, and Abbot George Schaeffer of Holy Trinity Monastery.

Please remember to inform the Myrrh-bearers Sisterhood if someone is in the hospital or shut in at home.

Congratulations... to Robert Stauffer, who was tonsured as a Reader of our parish. We are very pleased about his new role in our church. Many years, Robert!

...to Fr. Michael Crowley and Fr. Brendan Crowley of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in West Springfield, MA, both of whom were bestowed the kamilavka by Bishop Gabriel during his visit to our parish for our Feastday celebration. Many years to both!

Financial Update: As of October 31, 2005 the balance on the church mortgage stands at \$64,092.64. If you have any questions, please see Reader Constantine Desrosiers.

Donations towards the fresco have reached \$7,800.00 – the total needed is \$10,000.00.

Sunday School News: This fall, Laryssa Doohovskoy is teaching the young adults about singing in the church choir, and the Spring semester will offer studies in church history given by Daniel McLellan. Alexander Doohovskoy continues as instructor for the younger Sunday School class.

Bible Study, will re-convene on the second Saturday of each month at 4:00 P.M. Our topic during the upcoming session will be the Gospel of St. Matthew! Our thanks to all who participate.

Principles of Orthodoxy, class has resumed and will be held the first and third Saturdays of each month at 4:00 P.M. in the parish hall. Our text this term is "These Truths We Hold" written by a monk of St. Tikhon's Monastery. There are copies available at no charge in the bookstore.

All are welcome to attend this spirited class that is as valuable to the long-time Orthodox as it is to newcomers.

Choir News: The Choir is learning a new Cherubic Hymn by the composer Lvov.

Upcoming Events: As always at this time of year, the Sunday School is preparing for the Yolka, which will take place on the Sunday after the Nativity. Rehearsals will take place during some of the Sunday class sessions in November and December.

A General Special Meeting of the Parish took place on Sunday, October 2, after Trapeza. Fr. Michael read the Ukaz regarding the All-Diaspora Council and the upcoming Diocesan Assembly, and we discussed the various issues to be presented and addressed questions. Rdr. Constantine Desrosiers was chosen, via written ballot, by a small margin over two of the other three to represent the parish. We have submitted the results to Bishop Gabriel who has since given his blessing to our choice.

If you have any question concerning the parish meeting or the upcoming Diocesan Assembly, please feel free to ask Fr. Michael in person or by email or phone. If you have larger questions and/or concerns regarding the All-Diaspora Council to meet next May, 2006, you should respectfully submit them by mail addressed to:

Synod of Bishops
Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia
75 East 93rd Street
New York, NY 10128

Our Bishop Gabriel, for one, encourages all and anyone to write and let their views be known. As stated in our parish meeting, our only request is that you be respectful of the dignity of our Synod of Bishops and write in a tone which expresses that respect while still putting forth your views/feelings about the issues of the upcoming All-Diaspora Council.

Summary of the Annual Parish Meeting, held October 16th:

The meeting was attended by 33 of 45 eligible voting member families/members. We welcomed two new parish council members: Alexei Doohovskoy and John Danas. The ratified and proposed future budget of \$87,000, compared to the prior year's income of \$80,000, presents us with a likely shortfall. We hope everyone can find it in their hearts to support the efforts and needs of the parish as ratified at our annual meeting.

New Column Soon: Alexandra Gonzalez has volunteered to do a series of interviews with parish members on various topics concerning our parish: Its history, the various committees, and the volunteers without whom no parish can function. We look forward to her submissions

Fresco Update

We are happy to report that our new fresco over the top of the iconostasis, "The Hospitality of Abraham" (Holy Trinity), was completed by our iconographer Fr. Yakov Ferens in the first part of the month of October. It is truly a wonderful addition to our temple.

To date, we have collected approximately \$7,900 towards the \$10,000 total cost for the work. We are very thankful to all who have contributed thus far and hope that we can continue collecting towards the resolution of this debt before the first of the year.

Fr. Yakov was recently ordained to the Holy Priesthood at the Jordanville seminary and is in process of moving himself and his family to his new assignment in San Diego, CA. It certainly would be good for him if we could complete our payment.

From the Pastor

Thank God, we had a very peaceful Annual Parish meeting in October. I gave a short report on what we have accomplished as a parish in the past year, finishing with what I hoped for in the new year. I am going to take the opportunity to expand upon this now.

There are two major items that I would like to make progress on in this new year. One is spiritual, one physical.

The first thing that I have in my prayers is better attendance at the Vigil, for both Sundays and Feastdays. We have a core group of a dozen or so people who come regularly to the Vigil on Saturday evening. I believe this represents somewhat less than 20% of our average Sunday attendance at Divine Liturgy. I realize that for many parishioners the attendance on Saturday is difficult because of driving distance. It is really wonderful that we have so many who are willing to drive a considerable distance on most Sundays! There are, though, others who come rarely who should be able to make it more often. It is not just a matter of needing more numbers at the Vigil, but rather that this presents the fullness of the experience of the liturgical cycle, teaches us Orthodox theology and prepares us for the Divine Liturgy on Sunday. Our whole life should be centered on this cycle, not just Sunday morning.

The second is the development of our basement. We have a lot of activity in our parish centered on Sunday morning and we more frequently need to make use of our basement for meetings, classes, etc. I believe that we should begin raising and setting aside the monies necessary to make the space more finished. We have one plan for putting in a ceiling and new lighting, and closing in some storage space. This would cost in approximately \$14,000. While this is a substantial amount of money, it is very reasonable when compared to what it would cost to expand our upstairs space.

—Fr. Michael

Financial Facts:

At our annual Parish Meeting on October 16, 2005, the parish members overwhelmingly voted in a parish budget for 2005-2006 of \$87,378. During the meeting two important financial questions came up.

"If people ask me what our annual dues are, what do I tell them?"

"How well is the parish doing compared to the previous year?"

I will attempt to answer, according to what Father Michael has recently said.

1. We don't have "dues". Many churches ask for dues, but it is never enough for the needs of the parish, and then we would have to charge for everything (i.e., Trapeza, Sunday School, etc.) and also run frequent (or very grand) fundraisers to supplement our income. Even if we asked for dues of \$400 a member: 400 x 44 parish member families = \$17,600!

Instead, we decided years ago to use "pledges". We strongly encourage a percentage of parishioner's annual income — from 1% up to 10%. The parishioners decide, according to their ability, how much to give annually with a minimum of at least 1% for parish membership. As stewards of Christ's church on earth, we are responsible for its continuation into the next generation. If we do not meet the needs of our church, we have not fulfilled the responsibility given to us. However, this should not be done out of guilt, but it should be freely given out of our love for God and His church, and in thankfulness for the many blessings we continue to receive from God. Truly, in America most of us have been fortunate to have all our material needs met. God, in return, bestows good gifts abundantly upon those who remember Him.

In conclusion, I would like to quote St. Paul's letter (2 Corinthians, 9:6-8) *"But I say this: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work."*

2. For 2004-2005, the parish had a net income of approximately \$81,000 while in the previous fiscal year (2003-2004) we had a net income of approximately \$88,000. This is a decrease of \$7,000 compared to last year. This surprised everyone since the number of people attending Divine Liturgy has increased significantly since 2003-2004. A discussion ensued, trying to understand the significant drop in income while more people are attending church.

Anthony Sarantakis, Treasurer

St. Xenia's Playgroup: A new outreach has begun at our parish: The St. Xenia's playgroup. All are welcome; informal meetings are held about once a month. If interested, contact Alexandra Gonzalez at (978) 692-1229 or alex8665@yahoo.com. (The photograph at right is of some of the members of our latest ministry. Note how happy they look to be introduced to St. Xenia's Parish!)



The Russian Corner

KOKOSHNIK: The Russian Headdress

Historically, the aristocracy's clothes were similar to clothes of ordinary people, the difference being in the quality of fabric and accessories. Brocade, gold and silver embroidery, pearl accessories were usual for the Russian court. The garments of a wealthy Russian woman included a *kokoshnik* (headdress), *sarafan* (gown) with wristbands and necklet and *choboty* (boots made of goatskin, sometimes decorated with gold, silver, pearls).

The *kokoshniki* differed in each region. In the north, they were heavily embroidered with gold thread and river seed pearls, with a pearl net descending over the forehead. In the central regions, they were tall; those from Vladimir and Nizhni Novgorod crescent-shaped, those of Kostroma peaked. In the south, they were the most complicated; those of Ryazan and Tamakov were called *soroki* (magpies), and had horns and long red streamers. In Voronezh and Kursk, they were decorated with strips of multicolored embroidery.

The married woman wore a covered headdress; according to ancient Slavic custom, she had to hide her hair from the eyes of strangers. The maiden wore a hoop which revealed her hair in back, plaited into a single braid. During the wedding, the bride changed headdresses, and this ritual was accompanied by special chants and lamentations. Since weddings are not permitted during fasts, many weddings are celebrated in autumn after the harvest and from Epiphany till Shrovetide. A wedding that is celebrated *in Krasnaya gorka*, during the one week after Easter, is counted as the most happy.



November 2005

St. Xenia Orthodox Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 (19 Oct) Pr Joel; St John of Kronstadt	2 (20 Oct) GM Artemius	3 (21 Oct) St Hilarion the Great	4 (22 Oct) St Abercius; 7 Youths of Ephesus Wine & oil allowed	5 4:00 PM Class -- Principles of Orthodoxy 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (23 Oct) Ap James brother of the Lord
6 9:30 AM Pentecost 20 Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 3 (24 Oct) M Arethas & comp	7 (25 Oct) MM Marcian & Martyrius	8 (26 Oct) GM Demetrius	9 (27 Oct) M Nestor	10 (28 Oct) MM Terence & family	11 (29 Oct) M Anastasia the Roman	12 4:00 PM Bible Study -- Gospel of St Matthew 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (30 Oct) HM Zenobius
13 9:30 AM Pentecost 21 Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 4 1:00 PM Parish Council Meeting (31 Oct) App Stachys & comp	14 (1 Nov) SS Cosmas & Damian	15 (2 Nov) MM Acindynus & comp	16 (3 Nov) M Acep-simus & comp; GM George	17 (4 Nov) St Joannicius the Great	18 (5 Nov) M Galacteon	19 4:00 PM Class -- Principles of Orthodoxy 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (6 Nov) St Paul the Confessor
20 9:30 AM Pentecost 22 Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 5 (7 Nov) 33 MM of Melitene	21 (8 Nov) Syn Archangel Michael & All Angels	22 (9 Nov) MM Onesiphorus & Porphyrius	23 (10 Nov) App Erastus & comp	24 (11 Nov) MM Minas & comp <i>Thanksgiving Day</i>	25 (12 Nov) St John the Merciful Wine & oil allowed	26 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (13 Nov) St John Chrysostom
27 9:30 AM Pentecost 23 Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 6 (14 Nov) Ap Philip	28 (15 Nov) MM Gurias, Samonas & Abibus	29 (16 Nov) Ap Matthew Fish, wine & oil allowed	30 (17 Nov) St Gregory the Wonderworker	Nativity Fast		

December 2005

St. Xenia Orthodox Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 (18 Nov) M Platon Wine & oil allowed	2 (19 Nov) Pr Obadiah	3 4:00 PM Class -- Principles of Orthodoxy 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (20 Nov) St Gregory of Decapolis Fish, wine & oil allowed
				Nativity Fast		
4 9:30 AM Entry of the Theotokos Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 7 Fish, wine & oil allowed	5 (22 Nov) Ap Philemon	6 (23 Nov) St Amphilocius Wine & oil allowed	7 (24 Nov) GM Catherine Wine & oil allowed	8 (25 Nov) HM Clement Fish, wine & oil allowed	9 (26 Nov) St Alypius	10 4:00 PM Bible Study -- Gospel of St Matthew 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (27 Nov) GM James the Persian; Kursk Icon Fish, wine & oil allowed
	Nativity Fast					
11 9:30 AM Pentecost 25 Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 8 (28 Nov) M Stephen the New Fish, wine & oil allowed	12 (29 Nov) MM Paramon & comp	13 (30 Nov) Ap Andrew Fish, wine & oil allowed	14 (1 Dec) Pr Nahum	15 (2 Dec) Pr Habbakuk Wine & oil allowed	16 (3 Dec) Pr Zephaniah	17 4:00 PM Class -- Principles of Orthodoxy 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (4 Dec) GM Barbra; St John Damascene Fish, wine & oil allowed
	Nativity Fast					
18 9:30 AM Pentecost 26 Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 1 (5 Dec) St Sabbas the Sanctified Fish, wine & oil allowed	19 (6 Dec) St Nicholas as the Wonderworker Fish, wine & oil allowed	20 (7 Dec) St Ambrose Wine & oil allowed	21 (8 Dec) St Patapius	22 (9 Dec) Concep- tion of the Theotokos Fish, wine & oil allowed	23 (10 Dec) MM Mennas & comp	24 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (11 Dec) St Daniel the Stylite Fish, wine & oil allowed
	Nativity Fast					
25 9:30 AM Sunday of the Forefathers Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 2 (12 Dec) St Spyridon; St Herman of Alaska Fish, wine & oil allowed	26 (13 Dec) M Eustratius & comp Fish, wine & oil allowed	27 (14 Dec) MM Thyrsus & comp Wine & oil allowed	28 (15 Dec) HM Eleutherius; St Paul	29 (16 Dec) Pr Haggai Wine & oil allowed	30 (17 Dec) Pr Daniel; 3 Youths Wine & oil allowed	31 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (18 Dec) MM Sebastian Fish, wine & oil allowed
	Nativity Fast					

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St. Xenia Orthodox Church
170 North Lowell Street
P.O. Box 147
Methuen, MA 01844

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DIRECTIONS TO ST. XENIA CHURCH:

From I-93 North or South take Exit 46, Routes 110 and 113 Dracut and Lawrence. If you were travelling North on I-93, take the exit and go around the rotary and under the highway. Follow the signs and bear right off the rotary for Route 110/113 Dracut. **If you were travelling South on I-93,** bear right at the bottom of the exit ramp towards Route 110/113 Dracut.

Where Routes 110 and 113 split, bear right onto Route 113 towards Dracut. You will pass several cemeteries on your left, including the Polish National Catholic Cemetery. The very next gate on the left is the entrance to St. Xenia's. Please note that the church is on the left just before the Hickory Hill Golf course, so if you pass the golf course, you will have missed the church. Parking is available on church grounds.