



St. Xenia Parish News

170 North Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844

September-October 2004

Thoughts on Education of Children

The beginning of the new liturgical year, and concurrently the new academic year, prompts thoughts concerning the education of our young people. We are a wonderfully diverse community with children spanning all age groups. As parents, we are all no doubt concerned for the education of our children. We have children in various situations of education—public, private, home. And yet, as pastor I have a concern that we parents are not fully aware of what is necessary in the education of our children. Attendance, or more succinctly the lack of attendance, at Divine Services and Church School prompts this concern in me.

There have been innumerable articles written over the past ten years regarding the education crisis that exists in our country. Various authors point to their pet scapegoats to assign blame, usually government agencies and/or teachers and/or societal problems. It is not my point to delineate these arguments. I am only concerned here with what you as a parent can do.

Without reservation, you have to take full responsibility for the education of your children. You have to know who the teachers of your children are and what they are being taught. This takes a daily, active participation on your part. You have to talk to your children about their lessons, freely review the books and other materials they are given to study, go to parent-teacher conferences, etc. Education is not solely the responsibility of the state—parents cannot leave it all in the hands of the “professionals.” I fully realize that there are many evenings when you, after a full day of work, are weary and would rather not have to be an active participant in the learning process. You cannot falter, though, in your commitment, when there is so much at stake.

Even more importantly, you must bring your children to Divine Services and to Church School. The Services should include the Saturday evening Vigil. No matter how good your children’s teacher(s) may be, no matter how good the curriculum, they are not being presented with the

Orthodox perspective on their subjects. What this means is that they are not being taught the whole Truth. It does not matter which subject you speak about—math, science, literature, history—what they are being taught is partial at best, and sometimes not true at all. I know, you may think that I am being judgmental or paranoid or fanatical in saying this, but my contention is that when God is removed from the story or equation or formulation or whatever, the Truth is not present. Immersion in the “mind of the Church” represented in the Divine Services, and particular instruction in Church School, will at the very least teach your child the necessity of discernment. It will teach them to think as Orthodox. They will then, hopefully, be willing to question the assumptions and formulations of the “mind of this world” and to seek real Christian understanding—understanding which springs forth from the Truth.

It is not our intent, or that of the Church, to somehow inject didactic materials into children so that they can give simplistic answers to complex situations and problems, or so that we can exert control over their behavior. The goal is to provide them with tools for critical and moral/ethical reasoning. Only our Lord Jesus Christ will free them from the errors and misassumptions of the day so that this can occur, and it is our responsibility to ensure that they are exposed to Him completely.

I would be remiss not to point to sports participation as a major impediment to Church attendance. As parents, we must be sober and clear about what we will allow in this realm. Certainly a fit body and a team spirit are not bad things in themselves, but they will never be able to replace the subtle development of the soul of a person. All sports participation has to be subordinate to Church participation. Otherwise, the prospect of our children maturing as Orthodox Christians and remaining in the salvific community of the Church is severely endangered.

—Fr. Michael

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 bimonthly 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@ttlc.net, or to Father Michael at tcrowley@maine.rr.com. Thank you.

Rector:

Rev. Michael Crowley
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(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
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Non-Council Ministries:

Sunday School: Michael Lang (603) 465-9754
Choir Director: Michael Lang (603) 465-9754

Trapeza Schedule

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. Doughnuts, fruit and pastries are as acceptable as soup and sandwiches. Thank you in advance for your contribution.

September

5 Karen Schidlovsky, Nancy Harris

12 Anna Johnson, Masha Harris

19 Carolyn Sarantakis, Pamela Reed

26 Tanya Sciaudone, Mireille Lang

October

3 Nicholas Kronauer, Vera Sarantakis

10 Matushka Nancy Crowley, Anna Kekis

17 Helena Doohovskoy, Marianne DiMatteo

24 Amy McLellan, Margaret Lark

31 Mariana Haven, Josephine Kniaziuk, Irene LaPage

Sisterhood News: Saturday, Sept. 18 is the date set for a Yard Sale at church (9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.). Bring your good “junk” to sell to benefit the church. The Sisterhood hopes to attract lots of outside interest. If you have anything to donate, we would PREFER you bring items that morning, with prices already on them. If you can't get to church that day, you may drop items off in the church basement, the weekend before. **If you can stay and help with the yard sale, please let Vera Sarantakis know.**

To make it simpler, we have established the following guidelines:

1. Anything not sold will be immediately taken to charities, unless you come and reclaim your items at the end of the sale.
2. Adult clothes don't sell well, and are hard to display.
3. If it's a very rainy day, we will postpone until Saturday, October 2.

Sisterhood dues are \$5 per year, and membership is open to all women of the parish. Our next meetings will take place on September 26 and October 31.

Thank You...

...to Anna Johnson and her helpers for all the work they put into moving the lending library into the church basement. It makes the bookstore so much easier to access.

...to Fr. Roman Lukianov, of Holy Epiphany parish, for donating a large number of English-language spiritual material from the library of the late Reader Seraphim (Charlie) Conway. May his memory be eternal!

...to Stephen Foss for his donation to our parish of a handwritten icon of St. Stephen.

Please remember in your prayers... Nicholas, Paul, Nina, David, Basil, Vassilisa, Seraphim, Lily, Genevieve, and Anne. Please remember to inform the Myrrh-bearers Sisterhood if someone is in the hospital or shut in at home.

Financial Update: As of August 31, 2004, the balance on the church mortgage stands at \$78,092.64. If you have any questions, please see Reader Constantine Desrosiers.

Choir: Over the summer, members of the choir have worked hard to learn the rudiments of conducting, and Michael Lang informs us that they have also been working on a number of new pieces. Voices, particularly altos and tenors, are always welcome, so if you like to sing, come join us! Rehearsals are held Sundays after Trapeza.

Sunday School: The academic year will be upon us shortly, so it's a good time to give everyone an update on what our plans are for this upcoming fall.

On August 22, Father Michael chaired a meeting to discuss the upcoming school year. It was decided that there would be two groups for Sunday School starting this fall. The first group will be the ongoing elementary school group, which was so successful last year. It will continue to be very ably led by Subdeacon Alexander Dookhovskoy. We are looking forward to another great year for our younger students. These classes will continue to be held immediately after Communion, in the Trapeza balcony.

The second group will consist of our junior high and high school students, and will follow a new three-part curriculum. The first part, taught by Michael Lang, will be Choir Directing. The second part, taught by Robert Stauffer, will be Order of Services. One objective is to start to create the next generation of choir directors for our parish, by giving our youth (many of whom are accomplished musicians) a comprehensive, hands-on understanding of what is going on when someone is conducting. The other objective is to give our youth a deeper understanding of Orthodox singing, explaining in depth how and why things are the way they are in our services. As Father rightly said, understanding Orthodox singing better helps us to understand Orthodoxy better. The third part will be a discussion type of session focusing on life topics that are pertinent to this age group. Danny McLellan has agreed to lead this section, though Fr. Michael will also be present to help answer questions. These classes will be held immediately after Liturgy, during Trapeza, in the basement.

Finally, it was decided that an educational track on Church history will be taught by Reader Constantine Desrosiers and Robert Stauffer. The goal is to provide an historical framework for better understanding Scripture. This will be held one Sunday each month at 2:00 P.M. and will be open to both teenagers and adults. We plan to spread the word so that non-parishioners can also attend.

The school year will begin on October 3, since we have such a busy schedule in September.

—*M Lang*

A Request from our Maintenance Committee: Could parents please help to clean up after the kids in the loft area after Trapeza? Leftover food attracts ants, and the uncollected toys and crafts make it difficult for the hall cleaner to do his job thoroughly. Thank you!

Upcoming Events:

Saturday, September 18, 2004: Grounds Maintenance and Outdoor Cleanup Day. Don't have “junk” to sell? Come help clean up outside around the church, grounds and cemetery. See John Kekis for details

Sunday, September 26, 2004: St. Xenia Altar Feast and Celebration. A traditional family-oriented celebration will follow Divine Liturgy. See Amy McLellan for details.

Sunday, October 17, 2004: St. Xenia Annual Parish Meeting. All voting members are asked to attend.

From *The Lawrence Eagle Tribune*, Thursday, July 15, 2004:

Men admit to 'path of destruction'

By Mark E. Vogler
Staff Writer

On a somber September night two years ago, while Americans marked the first anniversary of the attack on the World Trade Center, three Methuen men "glorified Osama bin Laden" with a drunken vandalism spree that left a cemetery, church and golf course in shambles, a county prosecutor said.

Yesterday, one of those involved -- Gregory Loosigian -- was sent to jail and ordered to write more than 100 letters to apologize for the pain he caused. He will also perform a day of work in the community for each headstone that was toppled -- 142 in all. The other two defendants -- Mark D. Russo and Todd LaBrecque -- will be sentenced next month. All three pleaded guilty yesterday in Lawrence District Court to participating in the vandalism rampage, which they blamed on heavy drinking and drug abuse.

"These defendants decided to write in the sand for other people to see: 'Osama bin Laden for president'; '(expletive) the World Trade Center'; 'al-Qaida'; 'Get Over It,'" Essex County Assistant District Attorney Maureen Wilson Leal said, describing the sand trap graffiti from the Sept. 11, 2002, rampage that began at Hickory Hill Golf Course in Methuen and spilled over to the graveyard and church next door.

"You're talking about the one-year anniversary of one of the most tragic events in American history. And these defendants decided that they were going to on that day make a joke of it," Leal said. She asked that the men be sent to jail for damaging the Route 113 golf course, toppling headstones in Sts. Peter and Paul Cemetery, and ransacking and desecrating St. Xenia Orthodox Church.

Judge Barbara Pearson sentenced Loosigian to 30 days in the Essex County House of Corrections followed by three years of probation. "If you violate probation, you could find yourself going to jail for 21/2 years," Pearson told Loosigian, who must also serve 142 days of community service -- "one day for each family, one day for each gravestone," Pearson said.

Loosigian also must spend 200 hours "in some humane way," such as working in a soup kitchen or homeless shelter, Pearson said, and write letters of apology to each family affected by the toppling of gravestones as well as one to members of the church and the golf course owner. He must pay restitution -- \$2,500 to the golf course and \$642 to the church, she said. He may not drink alcohol and will be subject to drug testing, the judge added.

Pearson postponed sentencing Russo and LaBrecque after both admitted they would test positive if checked for drugs. They are being held in jail until sentencing Aug. 18. "What am I supposed to do?" the seemingly annoyed Pearson remarked as both men were led from the courtroom in handcuffs. She said both may face probation violations for criminal matters pending in other courts.

At the outset of the sentencing hearing, Leal read a signed confession given by Loosigian shortly after his arrest. In it he detailed how he and the others -- armed with a 20-pack of beer, three nips of vodka and a 40-ounce bottle of malt liquor -- decided to drink at the golf course sometime after 11:30 p.m. He admitted to defecating in the sixth hole of the golf course, participating in the vandalism at the cemetery, and later going into the church. He also admitted to break-ins at the church and golf course on July 2, 2002.

Loosigian's lawyer, Mary McCabe, asked for her client's case to be continued without a finding. She argued for leniency, saying Loosigian had no prior criminal record and no further trouble with the law in the two years since his arrest. McCabe asked the judge to consider family troubles and other factors that may have contributed to her client's "binge of crime." "There was a great deal of turmoil going on in this household for Gregory," McCabe said, referring to Loosigian's parents' marital and financial troubles that led to the family's plant nursery going into foreclosure and bankruptcy.

Loosigian was not a good student and dropped out of Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School in Haverhill as an 18-year-old sophomore. "He suffered considerable learning dysfunctions," McCabe said, noting he was diagnosed as having attention deficit hyperactive disorder.

But Loosigian has tried to turn his life around, earning his GED and staying out of further trouble with police, McCabe said. "He has removed himself from bad influences and is no longer spending time with co-defendants," she said. Loosigian's parents sat in the courtroom for the entire hearing, which lasted for three hours and was spread out over much of the day.

"Thankfully, there was no physical harm brought to any individuals," said Russo's lawyer, David Timmons, who blamed his client's problems on alcohol and drug abuse compounded by "a chaotic life." Timmons noted that Russo has remained estranged from his family for many years. He recently lived in Brockton with friends.

John Andrews, the lawyer for LaBrecque, said his client suffered from mood and thought disorders, and suggested he "would do a lot better on medication." Andrews denied his client wrote anything on the golf course sand traps about Sept. 11 or bin Laden. "This was an incident that involved a lot of alcohol and drugs," he said.

Leal said Russo and LaBrecque should serve longer jail sentences than Loosigian because both had recent criminal problems: Russo, for assaulting his grandfather, and LaBrecque for a civil rights violation.

Since the publishing of this article, the other two young men have received sentencing with 9 months actual jail time and other details similar to that of Mr. Loosigian.

We should all remember to pray for the conversion of these wayward young men.

The Russian Corner

Autumn



Autumn Evening, Domotcanovo 1886, Valentin Serov (1865 – 1911)

Valentin Aleksandrovich Serov began his art training by studying with K. Koepping in 1873 and later with I.E. Repin. He is considered the greatest portraitist of his time, painting in realist style. He produced landscape paintings as well as historical compositions and genre scenes.

The following passage is reminiscent of Serov's love of nature...

There are no more birds, but a few white or blue butterflies are left. Flowers are becoming rare – a few daisies in the fields, some blue or yellow chicories and colchiums, some wild geraniums growing among fragments of old walls, and the brown berries of the privet.

In the fields they are digging potatoes, beating down the nuts, and beginning apple harvest. The leaves are thinning and changing color; I watch them turning red on the pear trees, gray on the plums, yellow on the walnut trees, and tingeing the thickly-strewn turf with shades of reddish-brown.

We are nearing the end of the fine weather; the coloring is the coloring of late autumn; there is no need now to keep out of the sun. Everything is soberer, more measured, more fugitive, less emphatic. Energy is gone, youth is past, prodigality at an end, and the summer over.

—Anonymous

The Aim of a Christian Upbringing

A Christian upbringing aims to give children proper spiritual direction, so that they will be able to withstand temptations and become good and religious people. For this, they should not only learn rules of behavior but also develop **integrity** and a clear distinction between **right and wrong**. This goal of Christian upbringing is revealed in the prayers of the sacrament of Baptism. The priest reads the following words, among others: "O Master, Lord our God, call Thy servant (name) to Thy Holy illumination ... Put off from him the *old man*, and renew him unto life everlasting ... That he may be no more a child of the body, but a child of Thy Kingdom." During Baptism, a person undergoes an important and substantial inner transformation: he dies to sin and is reborn spiritually. Here he receives all the tools for inner growth – the power to love God and to love everything that is good. These qualities liken him to the Incarnate Son of God Himself, as is sung during the procession around the baptismal font: "As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ" (from the epistle to the Galatians). The seed of the Holy Spirit is implanted; from now on, the responsibility for strengthening it and making it grow passes to the parents and godparents.

Since our nature is two-fold, consisting of body and soul, every child needs not only physical but also **spiritual nurturing**. If the parents only nurture the child physically, while neglecting him spiritually, he will grow up a "child of nature" and a slave of carnal desires. St. John Chrysostom says the following about this: "To educate the hearts of children in goodness and virtuousness is the sacred duty of parents. The violation of this duty makes them guilty of spiritual infanticide ... There are parents who spare no efforts to make their children happy and wealthy; but for their children to be good Christians – for such matters the parents have little need. This is a terrible shortsightedness! This is the very reason for the problems from which society groans ... If the fathers strove to give their children a good upbringing, there would be no need for laws, or courts, or punishments. Prisons and executioners are necessary due to the lack of morality."

The Gospel teaches that the principal thing in a man's life is the **proper state of his heart**. One should understand "heart" as the center of one's spiritual life, wherein all the feelings and desires are concentrated. Here is the location of the origin of a person's behavior and moral attitude. If, according to the Savior's words, "*out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries...*" (Matt. 15:19), then it should become evident that the main task of rearing a child is to give a proper direction to his heart. Because temptations are unavoidable, it is important to educate a child to distinguish unambiguously between right and wrong, to choose virtue and to despise immorality. Parents should nurture in their child a deep love of God from a very early age, before he loses his sensitivity and receptiveness.

—Various Russian Clergy

September 2004

St. Xenia Orthodox Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 (Aug 19) M Andrew the Gen- eral & comp	2 (Aug 20) Pr. Samuel	3 (Aug 21) Ap. Thaddeus	4 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (Aug 22) M Agathonicus
5 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Pente- cost 14 Divine Liturgy Tone 5	6 (Aug 24) HM Eutyches	7 (Aug 25) App Bartholomew & Titus	8 (Aug 26) MM Adrian & Natalia	9 (Aug 27) St Poemen	10 (Aug 10) St Moses the Black	11 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (Aug 11) Behead- ing of St John the Baptist Wine & oil allowed
12 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Pente- cost 15 Divine Liturgy Tone 6	13 (Aug 31) Deposi- tion of the Cinc- ture of the Theotokos	14 (Sept 1) Church New Year; St Symeon Stylite	15 (Sept 2) M Mamas of Caesarea	16 (Sept 3) HM Anth- imus bp of Nicomedia	17 (Sept 4) HM Baby- las; Pr Moses	18 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM Church Yard Sale 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (Sept 5) Pr Zachar- ias & R Elizabeth
19 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Pente- cost 16 Divine Liturgy Tone 7	20 6:30 PM Vigil of the Nativity of the Theotokos (Sept 7) M Sozon	21 8:30 AM Hours 9:00 AM (Sept 8) Nativity of the Theotokos Divine Liturgy	22 (Sept 9) Righteous Ancestors Joac- him & Anna Wine & oil allowed	23 7:30 PM Great Vespers for St. Xenia (Sept 10) MM Menodora, Metr- odora & Nymphodora	24 10:00 AM Glorifi- cation of St Xenia of Peters- burg Canon & Akathist	25 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (Sept 12) HM Autonomus
26 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Pente- cost 17 Divine Liturgy Tone 8 12:00 PM Church Feast Celebration 6:30 PM Vigil of the Exaltation of the Cross	27 8:30 AM Hours 9:00 AM (Sept 14) Exaltation of the Cross Divine Liturgy Wine & oil allowed	28 (Sept 15) GM Nicetas	29 (Sept 16) GM Euphemia	30 (Sept 17) M Sophia & daugh- ters Faith, Hope & Love		

October 2004

St. Xenia Orthodox Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 (18 Sept) St Eumenius	2 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (19 Sept) MM Trophimus & comp
3 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Pentecost 18 Divine Liturgy Tone 1 12:00 PM Church School Begins	4 (21 Sept) Ap Codratus; St Demetrius of Rostov	5 (22 Sept) HM Phocas	6 (23 Sept) Conception of St John the Baptist	7 (24 Sept) M Thecla	8 (25 Sept) St Euphrasyne; St Sergius of Radonezh	9 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (26 Sept) Ap John the Theologian
10 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Pentecost 19 Divine Liturgy Tone 2 2:00 PM Church History Lecture by Rdr. Constantine Desrosiers	11 (28 Sept) St Chariton	12 (29 Sept) St Cyriacus	13 7:30 PM Bible Study (30 Sept) HM Gregory of Armenia	14 (1 Oct) Protection of the Theotokos	15 (2 Oct) MM Cyprian & Justina	16 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (3 Oct) HM Dionysius the Areopagite
17 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Pentecost 20 Divine Liturgy Tone 3	18 (5 Oct) M Charitina; Hierarchs of Moscow	19 (6 Oct) Ap Thomas	20 (7 Oct) MM Sergius & Bacchus	21 (8 Oct) St Pelegia the Penitent	22 (9 Oct) Ap James of Alphaeus	23 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (10 Oct) MM Eulampius & Eulampia
24 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Pentecost 21 Divine Liturgy Tone 4	25 (12 Oct) MM Probus & comp	26 (13 Oct) MM Carpus & comp	27 (14 Oct) MM Nazarius & comp	28 (15 Oct) St Euthymius the New	29 (16 Oct) M Longinus	30 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (17 Oct) Pr Hosea
31 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Pentecost 22 Divine Liturgy Tone 5						

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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.