



St. Xenia Parish News

170 North Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844

September-October 2006

Homily on the Exaltation of the Cross

By St. John of Shanghi & San Francisco

Before The Time of Christ, the cross was an instrument of punishment; it evoked fear and aversion. But after Christ's death on the Cross it became the instrument and sign of our salvation. Through the Cross, Christ destroyed the devil; from the Cross He descended into hades and, having liberated those languishing there, led them into the Kingdom of Heaven. The sign of the Cross is terrifying to demons and, as the sign of Christ, it is honored by Christians. The Lord manifested it in the sky to the Emperor Constantine as he was going to Rome to fight the tyrant who had seized power, and the Emperor, having fashioned a standard in the form of a cross, won a total victory. Having been aided by the Cross of the Lord, the Emperor Constantine asked his mother, the Empress Helen, to find the actual Life-giving Cross, and the devout Helen went to Jerusalem where, after much searching, she found it.

Many healings and other miracles were wrought and continue to be wrought by the Life-giving Cross and also by its depiction. Through it the Lord preserves His people from all enemies visible and invisible. The Orthodox Church solemnly celebrates the finding of the Cross of the Lord, recalling at the same time the appearance of the Cross in the sky to the Emperor Constantine. On that and other days dedicated to the Holy Cross, we beseech God that He grant His mercies not only to individual people, but to all Christendom, to the whole Church. This is well expressed by the Troparion to the Cross of the Lord, composed in the eighth century, when Saint Cosmas, Bishop of Maiuma, a friend of St. John Damascene, wrote the service to the Exaltation of the Cross of the Lord.

"Save, O Lord, Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance, granting victory to (right-believing) kings over adversaries, and by Thy Cross preserving Thy community."

The beginning of this prayer is taken from the twenty-seventh Psalm. In the Old Testament the word "peo-

ple" designated only those who confessed the true faith, people faithful to God. "Inheritance" referred to everything which properly belonged to God, God's property, which in the New Testament is the Church of Christ. In praying for the salvation of God's people (the Christians), both from eternal torments and from earthly calamities, we beseech the Lord to bless, to send down grace, His good gifts upon the whole Church as well, and inwardly strengthen her.

The petition for granting "victory to kings," i.e., to the bearers of supreme authority, has its basis in Psalm 143, verse 10, and recalls the victories King David achieved by God's power, and likewise the victories granted Emperor Constantine through the Cross of the Lord. This appearance of the Cross made emperors who had formerly persecuted Christians into defenders of the Church from her external enemies, into "external bishops," to use the expression of the holy Emperor Constantine.

The Church, inwardly strong by God's grace and protected outwardly, is, for Orthodox Christians, "the city of God," God's community, His commonwealth, where the path to the Heavenly Jerusalem has its beginning. Various calamities have shaken the world, entire peoples have disappeared, cities and states have perished, but the Church, in spite of persecutions and even internal conflicts, stands invincible; for *the gates of hell shall not prevail against her* (Matt. 16:18). Today, when world leaders try in vain to establish order on earth, the only dependable instrument of peace is that about which the Church sings:

The Cross is the guardian of the whole world;
the Cross is the beauty of the Church,
the Cross is the might of kings;
the Cross is the confirmation of the faithful,
the Cross is the glory of angels and the wounding of demons.

(Exapostilarion of the Exaltation of the Cross)

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
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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
 Sisterhood: Matushka Nancy Crowley (207) 767-1889
 Cemetery: Lily Dombrowski (978) 851-2972
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 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.

September

3 POT LUCK
 10 Karen Schidlovsky, Nancy Harris
 17 Masha Harris, Kot Engalichev
 24 Feast Day

October

1 Helena Doohovskoy, Marianne DiMatteo, Laryssa Doohovskoy
 8 Carolyn Sarantakis, Pamela Reed, Diane
 15 Nick Kronauer, Vera Sarantakis
 22 Tanya Sciaudone, Amy McLellan
 29 Anna Kekis, Mireille Lang, Alexandra Gonzalez

Sisterhood News:

The Sisterhood awarded the \$500 scholarship to Johanna Crowley. Johanna wrote a letter to the sisterhood expressing how her Orthodox life will form the foundation for her future endeavors in college. She will be attending Wheelock College in Boston to study elementary education.

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

Thank You...

John Kekis, Roberto Gonzalez, John Danas, John Sarantakis and Peter Reed for restoring the paint on our deck.

Lilly Dombrowski and Natalie Pishenin for all of the work done to beautify and protect our cemetery.

The many people working to organize and execute the banquet at our parish feast.

Please remember in your prayers...Nicholas, Lilly, Nina, Josephine, David, Vassilisa, Anne, Margaret, Fr. Roman Lukianov. Reader Isaac Lambertsen. Stephen Hayes (murdered).

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

Financial Update: As of July 30, 2006 the balance on the church mortgage stands at \$63,335. If you have any questions, please see Reader Constantine Desrosiers.

Classes will resume on October 14th. We will alternate between Bible Study and Catechetical Classes two Saturdays each month. We will continue with both our study of the Gospel of St. Matthew and the book "These Truths We Hold."

Sunday School: We will begin the new school year on the first weekend in October. Efforts are underway to reorganize the youth into three groups: primary, middle and advanced. We will make the curriculum topics for the entire first half of the year available ahead of time to both parents and children so that you can organize yourselves to at least be at the classes that are of most interest to you.

Choir News: Reaction to the new Cherubic Hymn has been most positive, and we thank all for their comments!

Choir members please note: Vladyka Metropolitan Laurus has made plans to visit our parish this fall for our 10th Anniversary. This is a special event in the life of any parish, and we want to make every effort to do honor to Vladyka Metropolitan, so please attend every rehearsal you can! Rehearsals take place after every Divine Liturgy.

Our Gift Wrap Fundraiser Has Started!

Booklets for our annual gift wrap fundraiser are now available at St. Xenia's Rectory Hall. Products include gift items, boxed chocolates and magazine subscriptions. Please participate in any way you can. Feel free to pass them on to friends, neighbors and coworkers. All orders are due by Sunday, October 22nd. Please make checks payable to St. Xenia. Your ordered products will be available by Thanksgiving. Any questions, please contact Nancy Harris at (603)868-1338 or by e-mail: clamnd@comcast.net. Thank you for your support.

From the Treasurer:

Unfortunately, we are falling further behind in our projected budget. I realize that in the summer months people are away, or busy, and may forget their contributions. Since our proposed annual budget mainly depends on the amount our parishioners have promised to pledge, I would like to ask all parishioners to check what your responses were last year, and if you've forgotten your donations, please take the time to make them up. Or, if you wish (as some parishioners have done), you can arrange with your bank for a regular amount to automatically be sent every month to the church.

Also, I would like to remind everyone that we still have two very worthwhile ongoing projects. We hope to finish off our basement for use by our growing Sunday School classes. We are grateful to have a donor who is matching the contributions, so every single one of your dollars toward this effort will be **doubled**. We are also continuing with the St. Xenia Church/Children of St. Nicholas fund. This campaign buys anti-malarial, insecticide-treated bednets for distribution in Mozambique, Africa. For \$10 each (the price of 3 large lattes at Starbucks!), these bednets last for 5 years, and can save the lives of many children. How fortunate we are that we don't have to worry about malaria when we tuck our own children into bed at night. There is no greater bargain for \$10 than the life of someone's child!

Our gifts to God can never repay all the blessings that God has bestowed upon us; but, "he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully." (2 Cor. 9:6).

Fundraising Project: Our Bishop Gabriel commented at our parish feast last September that the finishing of the basement is a worthy and much-needed project since we have such a good space to develop.

We have been utilizing the space more frequently since the addition of the heater last year. Since we are over-crowding our church hall it is a relatively inexpensive addition compared to expanding our upstairs space.

Please, if you are able, contribute towards this project. We have a contribution graph posted on the bulletin board in the hall to show our progress. Hopefully, we will be able to begin the renovation in the not too distant future. It is really a project for the children—the future of the parish!

Address of the Synod of Bishops to the God-loving Flock of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

Dear in the Lord Fathers, Brothers and Sisters!

For 90 years now, the dioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia have existed on all continents, along with monasteries, publishing houses and parishes. Everything that signifies church life: parish councils, sisterhoods, schools, youth groups, general parish meetings, magnificent choirs, altar boys, etc. gathered around them. All this arose as diocesan conferences and Church Councils convened, which regulated all of church life. Thus, through the chaos of the persecution of the Russian Church, the Russian Orthodox people gathered to stand around their Hierarchy, which found itself abroad, and strove to serve towards the emancipation and rebirth of their people on the foundation of the Orthodox Faith.

Within the boundaries of Russia, persecution took the form of the absolute destruction of faith in Christ. Much was destroyed, many suffered. But the Lord did not permit the disappearance of the Church in our Homeland. In those places where ancient churches survived, people are once again gaining spiritual nourishment. That which was destroyed is being rebuilt. Church life is rising from the ashes. Arch-pastors, clergymen and believers are trying to rebuild Orthodox Russia anew. This process of renaissance requires effort and the strength of will, since it is necessary to conduct spiritual educational work with the descendants of the generations of godless violence which touched absolutely every person without exception. Many obstacles remain on this path, but we see that these obstacles, and the remnants of Soviet times, are gradually being overcome.

The day has arrived when we must seek the reestablishment of communion with the wellspring of our own traditions. For there are two wills at work—one being that of those Russians who are children of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, prepared in every way to cooperate in the reestablishment of church life and development of the spirituality of the people, and the other is from our brethren and sisters in Russia, who labor towards her rebirth and extend their hand to us.

Positive changes in the church life of our Homeland spurred the Council of Bishops of October 2000 to establish a Committee on the unity of the Russian Church and to bless the organization of scholarly conferences on church history with the participation of the members of our Church and representatives of the Church in Russia. These conferences were held in 2001 and 2002. Then, in December 2003, a Commission on discussions with the Moscow Patriarchate was formed. At the same time, the Holy Synod of the Moscow Patriarchate decided to create a similar Commission on dialog with our Church. This bore witness to the earnest and good-willed effort of both parts of the Russian Orthodox Church to make sense of the tragedy of our common history, so that we "may discuss peacefully... whatever question there is which separates your communion from us," as we read in Canon 92 (103) of the Council of Carthage, which called upon the flock to trust their Hierarchy, which possessed the right to heal the divisions between the Orthodox and the Donatists.

The "Regulations of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia," the by-laws under which our Church lives, demand that we regularize the situation of the Local Russian Church. It is important to note that a commission to revise the "Regulations of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia" was established before the year 2000.

This shows that even then it was apparent that our "Regulations" are in need of amendment. Since 2000, new possibilities emerged in this regard. Now, in connection with the adoption of the "Act on Canonical Communion," our by-laws can be reexamined, taking into account new possibilities.

Still, it is necessary to point out that we are not discussing the "self-abolishment" of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. Our Church will exist as before, as attested to by the first paragraph of the "Act on Canonical Communion": "The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, conducting its salvific service in the dioceses, parishes, monasteries, brotherhoods and other ecclesiastical bodies that took shape through history, remains an indissoluble part of the Local Russian Orthodox Church." These words in the "Act" attest to the recognition on the part of the Moscow Patriarchate of our historical path and of the living bond between the entire Local Russian Orthodox Church and its part abroad, which always existed and which we never denied. This historical document will reestablish the unity of the Russian Orthodox Church, through this mutual act acknowledging the lawful status of the Russian Church Abroad and the Moscow Patriarchate in Russia. Each side, preserving its identity as a Church, will continue to exist in full legality and independence, but now recognizing the other side and declaring the unity of the Russian Church. For this reason, this means the reconciliation and mutual recognition of each other while yet preserving our administrative self-governance, for we understand the needs of our clergy and of our flock better than they understand them in Moscow.

The IV All-Diaspora Council and the Council of Bishops that followed approved the steps towards reestablishing unity already taken by our Hierarchy, and blessed its continued progress.

The above-mentioned "Act" has been approved and confirmed by the Synod of Bishops, but it will be finally adopted when it is signed by the Primates of the two parts of the Russian Orthodox Church. Working out the details of this signing, and also the Rite of the establishment of canonical communion has been assigned to the Commission on discussions with the Moscow Patriarchate. It is expected that it will embark on this task jointly with the Commission on dialog with the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia at their next meeting. Then, the results of this meeting will be considered at the next session of the Synod of Bishops, which will be held in December of this year.

Dear in the Lord fathers, brothers and sisters! We do not intend to depart from our positions of principle, in particular with regard to the ecumenical movement. We intend to continue to firmly speak out in condemnation of the so-called "branch theory" and of joint prayer with heretics, which is emphasized in our anathema of ecumenism adopted by the Council of Bishops of 1983. This is reflected in the

documents of the church Commissions confirmed by both Holy Synods and published in the official publications of the two parts of the Russian Orthodox Church. From this we see that in the Moscow Patriarchate, our attitude towards the heresy of ecumenism has long ago been absorbed. That is why we are not compromising the inherited principles which have always guided us. Still, we were always open to dialog with everyone, but on the condition that this be done without any hindrance to Orthodox teaching. In the decisions of the Councils of Bishops we always held fast to the ecclesiology of moderation, and never rejected the presence of grace in the Moscow Patriarchate or in other Local Churches.

We will continue to maintain the spirit of our great fathers, the founders of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, following their legacy and the historical path of our Church. To carry this great inheritance to Russia is the mission we strive to fulfill.

We will always remember that only in the Kingdom of Heaven will everything be perfect and good, that in the Church on earth we will perpetually experience difficulties caused by human passions, failings, temptations and sins, which must be overcome by means of beneficial fraternal dialog and cooperation, condensation, understanding and a Christian attitude towards each other, as Apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians: "correct such a one in the spirit of meekness" (Galatians 6:1).

In conclusion, let us remember Schema-Archimandrite Amvrossy (Kurganov) of blessed memory, the Abbot of Vvedensky Milkovo Monastery in Serbia, whence came several bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, since departed. The eminent church figure of the Russian diaspora, P.S. Lopukhin, writing on the Christian death of Fr Amvrossy, said: "I preserve in my memory this image of a man, weeping in joy on his death bed for Divine unity." Blessed Metropolitan Anthony said of Fr Amvrossy that in spirit he was closer to him than anyone.

May God grant all of us to experience this feeling of "spiritual joy in Divine unity," leading us to the successful conclusion of the process of reconciliation of the two parts of the Russian Orthodox Church.

May the Lord help us! Amen.

- + LAURUS, Metropolitan of Eastern America and New York, First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia
- + Mark, Archbishop of Berlin and Germany
- + Kyrill, Archbishop of San Francisco and Western America

- + Michael, Bishop of Geneva and Western Europe
- + Gabriel, Bishop of Manhattan
- + Peter, Bishop of Cleveland

Advanced Sunday Class Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Instructor</u>
October 1	Question & Answer Symposium	Reader Constantine
October 8	Defending the Faith	Reader Robert
October 15	Who is Satan & What is he up to?	John Sarantakis
October 22	Asking for Help	Danny McLellen
October 29	When to Say No	Danny McLellen
November 5	Giving	Danny McLellen
November 12	The All Night Vigil	John Sarantakis
November 19	Question & Answer Symposium	Reader Constantine
November 26		Danny McLellen
December 3	Messianic Prophecies in the Old and New Testaments	Reader Robert
December 10		Danny McLellen

September 2006

St. Xenia Orthodox Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 (19 Aug) M Andrew the Gen- eral & comp	2 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (20 Aug) Pr Samuel
3 9:30 AM Pente- cost 12 Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 3	4 (22 Aug) M Agath- onicus & comp	5 (23 Aug) M Lupus	6 (24 Aug) HM Eutyches	7 (25 Aug) App Bartholomew & Titus	8 (26 Aug) MM Adrian & Natalia	9 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (27 Aug) St Poemen
10 9:30 AM Pente- cost 13 Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 4	11 (29 Aug) Behead- ing of St John the Baptist Wine & oil allowed	12 (30 Aug) SS Alexan- der, John & Paul	13 (31 Aug) Deposi- tion of the Cinc- ture of the Theotokos Wine & oil allowed	14 (1 Sep) Church New Year	15 (2 Sep) M Mamas of Caesaria	16 5:30 PM Molieben for Church New Year 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (3 Sep) HM Anthi- mus & comp
17 9:30 AM Pente- cost 14 Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 5	18 (5 Sept) SS Zacha- riah & Elizabeth	19 (6 Sept) Miracle of Archangel Michael	20 6:30 PM Vigil of the Nativity of the Theotokos (7 Sep) M Sozon	21 9:30 AM Nativity of the Theotokos Hours & Divine Liturgy	22 (9 Sept) SS Joach- im & Anna Wine & oil allowed	23 6:30 PM Hierar- chical Vigil of the Altar Feast of St Xenia (10 Sep) MM Me- nodora & comp
24 9:00 AM Parish Altar Feast of St Xenia Hierar- chical Hours & Divine Liturgy 1:00 PM Banquet with Metropoli- tan Laurus	25 (12 Sep) HM Autonomus	26 6:30 PM Vigil of the Cross (13 Sep) Dedic- ation of Church of the Holy Sepulcher	27 9:30 AM Exal- tation of the Cross Hours & Divine Liturgy Wine & oil allowed	28 (15 Sep) GM Nicet- as the Goth	29 (16 Sep) GM Euphemia	30 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (17 Sep) MM Sophia & daughters

October 2006

St. Xenia Orthodox Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:30 AM Pentecost 16 Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 7 Sunday School Classes Begin Today	2 (19 Sep) MM Trophimus & comp	3 (20 Sep) GM Eustathius & family	4 (21 Sep) Ap Codratus; St Demetrius of Rostov Wine & oil allowed	5 (22 Sep) HM Phocas	6 (23 Sep) Conception of St John the Baptist Wine & oil allowed	7 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (24 Sep) M Thecla
8 9:30 AM Pentecost 17 Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 8	9 (26 Sep) Ap John the Theologian	10 (27 Sep) MM Callistratus & comp	11 (28 Sep) St Chariton Wine & oil allowed	12 (29 Sep) St Cyriacus	13 6:30 PM Vigil of the Protection (30 Sep) HM Gregory of Armenia	14 9:30 AM Protection of the Theotokos Hours & Divine Liturgy 4:00 PM Class -- Bible Study, Gospel of St Matthew 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil
15 9:30 AM Pentecost 18 Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 1 1:00 PM Parish Annual Meeting	16 (3 Oct) HM Dionysius	17 (4 Oct) HM Hierotheus of Athens	18 (5 Oct) M Charitina; Hierarchs of Moscow	19 (6 Oct) Ap Thomas	20 (7 Oct) MM Sergius & Bacchus	21 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (8 Oct) St Pelagia the Penitent
22 9:30 AM Pentecost 19 Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 2	23 (10 Oct) MM Eulampius & Eulampia; Optina Elders	24 (11 Oct) Ap Philip	25 (12 Oct) MM Probus & comp	26 (13 Oct) MM Carpus & comp	27 (14 Oct) MM Nazarius & comp	28 4:00 PM Class -- Principles of Orthodoxy 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (15 Oct) St Euthymius
29 9:30 AM Pentecost 20 Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 3	30 (17 Oct) Pr Hosea	31 (18 Oct) Ap Luke				

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St. Xenia Orthodox Church
170 North Lowell Street
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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.