



St. Xenia Parish News

170 North Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844

July-August 2005

On Knowledge

By St. Justin Popovich

It is very difficult, and often impossible, to express in words the mystery and nature of knowledge. In the realm of human thought, there is no ready definition that can explain it completely. St. Isaac therefore gives many different definitions of knowledge. He is continually exercised in this matter, and the problem stands like a burning question mark before the eyes of this holy ascetic. The saint presents answers from his rich and blessed experience, achieved through long and hard asceticism. But the most profound, and to my mind the most exhaustive answer that man can give to this question is that given by St. Isaac in the form of a dialogue: Question: "What is knowledge?" Answer: "The perception of eternal life." Question: "And what is eternal life?" Answer: "To perceive all things in God. For love comes through understanding, and the knowledge of God is ruler over all desires. To the heart that receives this knowledge every delight that exists on earth is superfluous, for there is nothing that can compare with the delight of the knowledge of God."

Knowledge is therefore victory over death, the linking of this life with immortal life and the uniting of man with God. The very act of knowledge touches on the immortal, for it is by knowledge that man passes beyond the limits of the subjective and enters the realm of the trans-subjective. And when the trans-subjective object is God, then the mystery of knowledge becomes the mystery of mysteries and the enigma of enigmas. Such knowledge is a mystical fabric woven on the loom of the soul by the man who is united with God.

For human knowledge the most vital problem is that of truth. Knowledge bears within itself an irresistible pull towards the infinite mystery, and this hunger for truth that is instinctive to human knowledge is never satisfied until eternal and absolute Truth itself becomes the substance of human knowledge until knowledge, in its own self-perception, acquires the perception of God, and in its own self-knowledge comes to the knowledge of God. But this is given to man only by Christ, the God-Man, he who is the only incarnation and personification of eternal truth in the world of human realities. When a man has received the God-Man into himself, as the soul of his soul and the life

of his life, then that man is constantly filled with the knowledge of eternal truth.

It is the man who restores and transforms his organs of knowledge by the practice of the virtues that comes to the perception and knowledge of the truth. For him faith and knowledge, and all that goes with them, are one indivisible and organic whole. They fulfill and are fulfilled by one another, and each confirms and supports the other. "The light of the mind gives birth to faith," says St. Isaac, "and faith gives birth to the consolation of hope, while hope fortifies the heart. Faith is the enlightenment of the understanding. Faith, which bathes the understanding in light, frees man from pride and doubt, and is known as the knowledge and manifestation of the truth."

Holy knowledge comes from a holy life, but pride darkens that holy knowledge. The light of truth increases and decreases according to a man's way of life. Terrible temptations fall upon those who seek to live a spiritual life. The ascetic of faith must therefore pass through great sufferings and misfortunes in order to come to knowledge of the truth.

A troubled mind and chaotic thoughts are the fruit of a disordered life, and these darken the soul. When the passions are driven from the soul with the help of the virtues, when "the curtain of the passions is drawn back from the eyes of the mind," then the intellect can perceive the glory of the other world. The soul grows by means of the virtues, the mind is confirmed in the truth and becomes unshakable, "girded for encountering and slaying every passion." Freedom from the passions is brought about by crucifying of both the intellect and the flesh. This makes a man capable of contemplating God. The intellect is crucified when unclean thoughts are driven out of it, and the body when the passions are up-rooted. "A body given over to pleasure cannot be the abode of the knowledge of God."

True knowledge "the revelation of the mysteries"—is attained by means of the virtues, and this is "the knowledge that saves."

An excerpt from the chapter, "The Theory of Knowledge of Saint Isaac the Syrian," in *Orthodox Faith and Life in Christ* by Archimandrite Justin Popovich

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@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
Roberto Gonzalez (978) 692-1229
Michael Johnson (978) 691-0045
Anna Johnson (978) 691-0045
John Kekis (978) 456-9865
Choir Director: Michael Lang (603) 465-9754

Trapeza Schedule

During July and August, all our Trapeza meals are potluck. Please consider which dates would be convenient for you to host, and contact Karen Schidlovsky at (603) 868-6410 with your choice. Thank you.

Sisterhood News:

On June 11, the Sisterhood held a successful garage sale. We made over \$350 on a very warm day! We will hopefully be doing this again next year, so we should all keep this in mind when we are cleaning out. The young people sold coffees, pastries, hot dogs and sodas to raise money for Project Mexico.

Our second Lilac Nights dinner-dance was likewise a great success. We look forward to many more of these, especially since we are able to enjoy the fellowship of our old friends from Holy Nativity, and a contingent of friends from neighboring states and around the country.

Please see Mireille Lang for an update on the "Bednets for Africa Campaign." She indicated that the initial kick-off was very positive.

The Sisterhood also donated \$400 towards the fresco, and \$400 towards the proposed bell tower.

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

Thank You...

...to all who contributed time, talent and treasure to our Second Annual Lilac Nights Festival. This event would not be the success it is, without your help.

...to all who have contributed to the Bednets Campaign, and to Mireille Lang, who coordinated this effort and recently gave us an update on its success.

Please remember in your prayers... Nicholas, Paul, Nina, David, Basil, Vassilisa, Seraphim, Lily, Genevieve, Anne, Andrew and Mary Klinoff and their family, Fr. Roman Lukianov and his family, 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.

Financial Update: As of June 30, 2005 the balance on the church mortgage stands at \$68,092.64. If you have any questions, please see Reader Constantine Desrosiers.

Donations towards the fresco have reached over \$5,000.00 – the total needed is \$10,000.00.

Sunday School News: Alexander Doohovskoi has completed another very successful year with the young children, covering subjects relevant to the current week's Gospel reading, or the current holiday. Thank you to John Danas, for assisting with the teaching.

This year has been very successful for our teens, too. Robert Stauffer completed his Sunday School work on Order of Services. We have a very talented and intelligent group of young people who participated enthusiastically. More importantly, we've made some first steps in creating the next generation of choir directors for the future.

We will resume our studies in the fall with Laryssa Doohovskoi teaching the young adults about singing in the church choir, and the Spring semester will be studies in church history given by Daniel McLellan.

Bible Study has ended for the summer, and will resume on the first Wednesday in October. Our thanks to all who participated.

Choir News: As you may have noticed, the choir has begun to sing a new Hymn to the Theotokos following the Epiclesis. This "It is Truly Meet" is Bulgarian Tone 1, arranged by renowned Orthodox composer Boris Ledkovsky. Our next project will be a second "Mercy of Peace" (Milost' mira).

Upcoming Events

Bishop Gabriel is planning to pay us a pastoral visit on September 23rd/24th for our altar Feast of St. Xenia. We will serve the Vigil on Friday evening, and the Divine Liturgy on Saturday morning at 10:00 A.M. followed by a solemn procession around the temple. A festive reception is being planned for Vladyka, visiting clergy, and all who attend.

Please mark your calendar now so that you will be able to be free for the festivities.



Our iconographer Fr. Yakov Ferens sent the pictures above to us. As you can see, the proposed fresco is a very beautiful rendering of the Hospitality of Abraham icon. If you wish to view this in color you can on our web site <http://www.stxenia.org>. The newsletters are in the "Our Church" section.

Fr. Yakov will begin the actual work on the icon during the last week of July.

Thus far, we have received over \$5,000 towards the \$10,000 cost of the fresco that will include some further decoration of the ceiling of the altar so that the overall effect will be consistent.

We are in need of further donations towards this project so please keep it in mind as we move forward and the work begins.

The spiritual life and vitality of our parish finds expression in this beautiful enhancement of our temple.

The Russian Corner

Summer

Nikolai Mikhailovich Karamzin (1766-1826) cultivated an elegant and noble style of writing, and he introduced interest in landscape and tenderness in personal relations. Here is an excerpt from his "Letters of a Russian Traveler."

Spring was gone, every day moved differently. The light blue sky gently beams. White clouds are drifting. The feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul began. Toward the evening the sky was turning deep blue. The stars were blazing. Through the open windows the smell of garden flowers was pouring in, beautifully smelling calendula with the evening violet foliage. It was lovely to hear the soft rustle of the foliage. Pleasant was the faint rustling of the leaves. And I did not dream that there would be a time when all of us will understand the meaning of life. The last thing that I was aware of, as I was falling asleep, was the starlight, the choir of the grasshoppers which was singing praises to God, and the amazingly pleasant scent of the night violet. The shadows were moving in the corners of the room, then a sudden flash of the new moon through the lampada chains which reflected in the riza of the icon of the Kazan Mother of God and which touched the dried bunch of hyssop, left by the icon.

The cocks crowed for the last time and grew silent. There was no sound, with only the soft tranquil night drifting on.



From the Pastor's Desk

Summer has been a flurry of activity again this year. And even now we are beginning some new projects that will extend into the Fall.

Fr. Deacon Yakov is beginning our new fresco, and while we have staging available in the church we intend to take care of some "high level" maintenance—beginning with servicing the exhaust fan on the ceiling, replacing some light bulbs above the main chandelier, and, hopefully, cleaning away some the soot accumulation and repainting the ceiling and walls. We will keep you posted as we proceed.

We also hope to begin renovation of our basement that is slated to be finished to make a more appealing multi-use room—with a dropped acoustic ceiling, some built-in storage, and a partition to separate the liturgical storage area. We have been offered a very generous donation from a parishioner for this project.

We have been blessed with many visitors at Liturgy on Sundays. This week we had a man visiting from one of our ROCOR parishes in Germany. Our visitors always comment to me on the beauty of our Temple and even more so on the welcome the feel from our parish members.

Our Bishop Gabriel will be here for an Episcopal visit for the Feast of St. Xenia on September 24th. We will, of course, have a Vigil of the Feast on Friday evening the 23rd at 6:30 P.M., and will have Divine Liturgy on Saturday morning beginning with the Meeting of the Bishop at 9:30 A.M. Since the Feast falls on a Saturday this year we intend to invite area clergy and parishes to celebrate with us. There will be a festive banquet on the church grounds (outside weather permitting) following the services. Please mark your calendars and make arrangements to be present on this joyous occasion.

We will resume our class schedule in October. With our altar feast and the other major feasts in September we will be too busy to do anything else. We will have both our Bible study and our Principles of Orthodoxy class once a month during the Fall.

We also have our Parish Annual Meeting date set for October 17th—you will be hearing more about this and receiving a separate mailing in the coming weeks.

I again thank God for all of you, and for the many blessing and grace given to me as I minister to you in His Name.

—Fr. Michael

July 2005

St. Xenia Orthodox Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 (18 June) MM Leontius & comp <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">Apostle's Fast</div>	2 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (19 June) Ap. Jude; St. John of San Francisco Fish, wine & oil allowed
3 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM All Saints of Russia Divine Liturgy Tone 1 Fish, wine & oil allowed	4 (21 June) M Julian of Tarsus	5 (22 June) HM Eusebius Wine & oil allowed	6 (23 June) M Agrippina	7 (24 June) Nativity of St. John the Baptist Fish, wine & oil allowed	8 (25 June) VM Febronia	9 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (26 June) St David of Thessalonica Fish, wine & oil allowed
Apostle's Fast						
10 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Pentecost 3 Divine Liturgy Tone 2 Fish, wine & oil allowed	11 6:30 PM Vigil of App Peter & Paul (28 June) SS Cyrus & John <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">Apostle's Fast</div>	12 9:00 AM (29 June) App Peter & Paul Divine Liturgy	13 (30 June) Synaxis of the 12 Apostles Fish, wine & oil allowed	14 (1 July) MM Cosmas & Damian	15 (2 July) Deposition of the Robe of the Theotokos Wine & oil allowed	16 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (3 July) M Hyacinth
17 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Pentecost 4 Divine Liturgy Tone 3	18 (5 July) St Athanasius of Athos; St Sergius Radonezh	19 (6 July) St Sisoës the Great	20 (7 July) St Thomas; St Acacius	21 (8 July) GM Procopius	22 (9 July) HM Pancratius	23 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (10 July) 45 MM at Nicopolis
24 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Pentecost 5 Divine Liturgy Tone 4	25 (12 July) MM Proclus & Hilary; St Michael	26 (13 July) Synaxis of Archangel Gabriel	27 (14 July) Ap Aquila; St Priscilla Wine & oil allowed	28 (15 July) St Vladimir the Enlightener	29 (16 July) HM Athenogenes	30 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (17 July) GM Marina
31 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Pentecost 6 Divine Liturgy Tone 5						

August 2005

St. Xenia Orthodox Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 (19 July) St Macrina; St Seraphim of Sarov	2 (20 July) Pr Elijah	3 (21 July) St Symeon of Emessa	4 (22 July) St Mary Magdalen	5 (23 July) MM Trophimus & comp	6 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (24 July) M Christina of Tyre
7 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Pentecost 7 Divine Liturgy Tone 6	8 (26 July) HM Hermolaus	9 (27 July) GM Panteleimon	10 (28 July) Ap Prochorus & comp	11 (29 July) M Callistus of Gangra	12 (30 July) App Silas & Silvanus	13 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (31 July) R Eudocimus
14 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Procession of the Cross Divine Liturgy Tone 7 Wine & oil allowed	15 (2 Aug) Protomartyr Stephen	16 (3 Aug) St Isaacius & comp	17 (4 Aug) 7 Youths of Ephesus	18 6:30 PM Vigil of the Transfiguration (5 Aug) M Eusygnius	19 9:00 AM (6 Aug) Transfiguration of the Lord Divine Liturgy Fish, wine & oil allowed	20 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (7 Aug) M Dometius & comp Wine & oil allowed
Dormition Fast						
21 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Pentecost 9 Divine Liturgy Tone 8 Wine & oil allowed	22 (9 Aug) Ap Matthias Wine & oil allowed	23 (10 Aug) M Laurence	24 (11 Aug) M Euplus	25 (12 Aug) MM Photius & Anicetas	26 (13 Aug) ST Tikhon	27 6:30 PM Vigil of the Dormition (14 Aug) Pr Micah Wine & oil allowed
Dormition Fast						
28 9:30 AM Hours 10:00 AM Dormition of the Theotokos Divine Liturgy Tone 1	29 (15 Aug) Holy Napkin	30 (17 Aug) M Myron of Cyzicus	31 (18 Aug) MM Florus & Laurus			

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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.