



St. Xenia Parish News

170 North Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844

March-April 2006

Sermon on the All-Joyous Day of Pascha

by St. John of Kronstadt

I congratulate you all on the Bright Resurrection of Christ, and on such a great and holy day I wish to talk to you, dear brothers and sisters, on these words of Holy Scripture; and I call you dear because you are very dear to our Lord Jesus Christ, Who redeemed us at an infinitely precious price--His most pure Blood, poured out on the Cross for our salvation. Remember this and do not forget; do not forget from what you have been redeemed at such a precious price: from sin, the curse, and death, both temporal and eternal. Guard yourselves with all your strength from sin, which has caused such misfortunes in the world, and even now causes every kind of misfortune. And so, I repeat: Christ is risen! In truth He is risen!

I wish to explain to you the words from the Apocalypse of the Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian, which are quoted at the beginning: *I am the first and the last; I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death.* By these mighty words the Lord indicates that He is the Unoriginate and Almighty Creator of everything visible and invisible, or the angelic world; that all creation received its beginning from Him, including Lucifer himself, cast down from heaven and become satan and the devil, the chief of the fallen angels, who dared to oppose God and enter into battle with his Creator and introduce sin and death into God's world. The Lord says: I am the first and the last; from Me all the created spirits received their beginning--the angels and the demons, who before were good and holy spirits; by My word heaven and earth and the whole human race were called into existence and given the laws of existence and life; by Me are accomplished and will be accomplished all births of creatures and, through Me will be the end of heaven and earth and all earthly creatures; through Me will be the universal resurrection and the judgment of all; through Me will be conquered and put under foot all My enemies and the whole kingdom of satan; by Me the final enemy--death, is destroyed and annihilated.

Since the Apocalypse of the Apostle John is the last book of the Holy Scripture and the first book is the Genesis of the world and the human race, written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit by the Prophet Moses, the Lord, indicating this, says that through Him the world and the account of its existence began: through Him also there will follow the end of the visible world, which is declared in special detail

in the Apocalypse, which speaks also of the final battle of the serpent or satan with the Lamb, Who was slaughtered and tasted death for the salvation of the World. Therefore the Lord says to John: I am the first and the last, that is through Me everything received its beginning, through Me it will end; through Me there will be the end of the world, the end of the kingdom of satan and the beginning of his eternal torment, the end of the battle of good with evil--the end of death, the end of dying--and righteousness will reign. From Me good and evil will receive their just reward; unrepentant sinners will go into eternal torment, and the righteous into eternal life. *Behold. I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his word shall be* (Apoc. 22:12), the Lord says many times in the Apocalypse.

Indicating that He endured death for us, and that without doubt the general resurrection will be through Him, the Conqueror of death, He says: I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, amen; and you also will be alive forever. This is the meaning of the words of Him Who arose: *I am the first and the last; I am He that liveth and was dead* for you, for your redemption from death, and I; that is: I conquered your death by My innocent death for your sake, and behold, I am also forever and will sit with My Father on His throne; I was not separated from Him, even though I was on earth accomplishing My great work for you who are subject to sin and death. Therefore, do you also, My followers, work and struggle against sin and do righteous deeds, and where I am, there shall My servant be also--that is, in the eternal Kingdom.

Remarkable also are the Lord's words: *I have the keys of hell and of death;* and, in another place in the same book: these things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth. Just as the conquerors of cities in ancient times, as a sign of their victory, took the keys of the city gates and entered triumphantly into the conquered city, so also our Lord, having conquered hell and death for us by His own death, as Conqueror took from Satan the keys by which he had ruled for whole thousands of years, the keys of hell and death, and destroyed Hell, that eternal place of bonds for the earthborn, and liberated the eternal captives and led them out into the light of the Kingdom of Heaven.

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.

March

5 Mariana Haven, Josephine Kniaziuk, Irene Lapage
Cheese Fare
 *12 Helena Doohovskoy, Marianne Dimatteo
 *19 Karen Schidlovsky, Nancy Harris
 *26 Carolyn Sarantakis, Pamela Reed

April

* 2 Tanya Sciaudone, Mireille Lang
 *9 Nicholas Kronaur, Vera Sarantakis
 *16 Palm Sunday/Pot Luck
 23 Pascha
 30 Masha Harris, Anna Johnson

Sisterhood News:

The Sisterhood is offering scholarship money to college-bound children of parish members graduating this June. \$500 will be available for college-bound high school graduates. For consideration, the graduate should write an essay about how their faith has guided or will guide them to or through college.

Sisterhood dues are \$5 per year, and membership is open to all women of the parish. Our next meetings will take place on April 9th.

Thank You...

...to Laryssa Doohovskoy, for providing voice lessons to our parish, and for her Sunday School lessons on liturgical-singing technique. The difference is noticeable!

Please remember in your prayers...Nicholas, Lilly, Nina, Josephine, David, Vassilisa, Anne, Fr. Roman Lukianov.

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

Congratulations... to Daniel and Amy McLellan, on the baptism of their son, Daniel Daniilovich

...to Anna and John Kekis, on the baptism of their son Demetrios.

Many years to both families!

Financial Update: As of February 28, 2006 the balance on the church mortgage stands at \$69,335. If you have any questions, please see Reader Constantine Desrosiers.

Bible Study will not take place in the month of April because of the many other Lenten services that are on the schedule. We will resume our study of the Gospel of St. Matthew in May.

Principles of Orthodoxy class will be held Saturday, April 15th 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: We are very close to finishing a new Cherubic Hymn as well as the Anaphora we have been working on. We'll be trying them soon! The next thing on the horizon will be to start rehearsing for Pascha.

We have lately been singing a short *Irmos* at the very end of the service just as people come to kiss the cross. The prayer we are singing is, "O Lord, Thou confirmation of those who trust in Thee, make firm the Church which Thou hast acquired with Thy precious blood." This is intended to keep us prayerful as our Synod leadership prepares for the upcoming conference.

Sunday School: Danny McLellan has been conducting a very spirited class during Trapeza for the older children. It is so popular that a number of adults have chosen to participate as well! Stop on next Sunday and find out what is going on.

Upcoming Events: Please keep in mind that the Summer School of Liturgical Music, which is held every year at Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville NY, will shortly be accepting applications. This year's session takes place from July 9-22. As always, our parish has set aside funds for a scholarship, so if you are interested in attending this course, please see Father Michael. Classes *are* conducted in the English language, and college credit is offered upon completion of the course. Don't miss out on this unique and enriching experience!

Donations of Small Paper Icons Needed for Haiti: Paper Icons are needed for the faithful in Haiti. Please consider collecting in your parish small paper icons and good quality icon prints from greeting cards or small calendars. Sizes needed are 8x10 inches and smaller (for ease in transport). Pocket size icons are very useful. We cannot accept at this time framed icons or icons mounted on wood, as Fr. Gregory Williams is limited in the weight that he can carry on the plane for each trip to Haiti. All suitable paper icons will be laminated in plastic so that they will last longer in the tropical climate of Haiti.

Please mail Icons to:

Carol Surgant
9840 Warington Square
Creve Coeur, MO 63141-7909

Please add a piece of stiff cardboard to the envelope so that they will arrive in good condition. Thank you!

Fundraising Project: We are currently in the process of raising money to finish our basement space for use by the Sunday School and other functions.

Our Bishop Gabriel commented at our parish feast in September that this was a worthy and much-needed project since we have such a good space to develop.

Our hopes are modest: we want to put in a dropped ceiling with some better lighting, wall off the storage areas, and perhaps repaint the walls and put something on the floor.

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!

From the Pastor

First of all, I offer my apologies for the lateness of this newsletter. I was a bit overwhelmed with work and Church responsibilities and just could not get to it.

We are fully in the Lenten Season now and looking forward to the joys of Pascha. Our Lord rewards us so abundantly for our small efforts of fasting and prayer! And yet, we so often miss this joy by becoming too enmeshed in the thoughts and cares of this world. Our struggle is real and hard and yet it is what we must do, not only for our own salvation, but the salvation of those who will come after us--our children, and the many seekers of Truth who have not yet been blessed to come to the Holy Church.

Our special thanks should go out to John Kekis, Roberto Gonzalez and Natalie Pishenin for the tremendous effort they put forth to get the interior of our temple painted. It looks so clean and beautiful again with all of the smoke discoloration gone! We will certainly have all of the iconography back in place for Holy Week and Pascha.

We are sending out a reminder letter to parish members regarding pledges. Unfortunately, we are falling short of our budget and need to get back on the right track. Our budget this year did not contain a lot of extras or money for big projects--just essential maintenance and upkeep, heating and electricity, and other necessities. If you are reading this and are not yet a member, please consider joining the parish. If you are for whatever reason unable to join, please consider helping by donating generously. Remember the promise of our Lord: when we give for His Name's sake, we will receive back a hundredfold (Mt. 19:29).

Finally, I urge you not to be hesitant to call me aside or on the phone or whatever if you have a need. I look forward to the day that I will be able to be a "full-time" priest in the parish, but for now I have to make the best of the time that I have to minister. If I miss something or seem pre-occupied please be persistent. I do have "enough" time but am not always able to read subtle signs of need. I pray not to neglect anyone.



Some Pictures from the Parish Yolka



Introducing...!

In our first interview, we explore the life of one of the pillars of our Church, Lilly Dombrowski. Now, let us look to one of the future generation of parish members, Bobby DiMatteo. The interview with Bobby takes place just two days before he embarks on his fourth trip to China.

Bobby is currently a junior at Bowdoin College in Maine where he studies Economics and East Asian Studies, a double major. He also plays for the Bowdoin football team which is a year round and *daily* commitment. "Football has helped me understand the importance of continuous effort and discipline." I asked Bobby how he manages his time with such a busy schedule. Overall, he manages to do well academically and feels he benefits from being so busy. It leaves very little time for hobbies or movies, but that is okay with Bobby. He gets his satisfaction from the results he gets out of sports and school. Bobby is very demanding of himself; the words "goal-oriented" and "results-driven" may be just buzz words on a resume, but they sum up this young man quite well. Upon graduating, Bobby has no illusions of traveling or taking it easy. He wants to be able to support himself, but more importantly to begin a meaningful career in finance; he will consider applying for an analyst training program at an investment bank.

Can you picture Bobby DiMatteo speaking Mandarin Chinese? Well, he does speak it and he speaks more than the local Chinese people expect at first. In fact, oftentimes he needs to assert himself with the local merchants who ignore him at first, assuming that he does not speak the language. Initially, Bobby decided to learn Chinese in high school because he thought it made sense with his interest in business. Then he took his first trip to China during his freshman year in high school where he lived for several weeks with a Chinese family. Sparking a greater interest in Chinese culture and history, Bobby would later visit China three more times and become proficient in the language. Today, there are two principal reasons why China interests Bobby. First, by learning the language and cultural ways Bobby may help to unravel the preconceived notions that Americans may have about the Chinese--and vice-versa. He hopes to be able to put his experience to good use at a local level and perhaps someday at a higher level within the government or private sector.

The second reason has to do with Bobby's core faith and beliefs. He explains that the Chinese have a very conservative culture and there are a lot of aspects that are very similar to Christian beliefs. "I would be remiss to not try in at least small ways to teach them about Christianity." Bobby recalls how Father Michael says we can all be missionaries

just by leading by example. Bobby adds, "Who knows, maybe one day I can go back and help to start an Orthodox Church." Bobby visited two former Orthodox Churches: one in Harbin that was turned into a museum and one in Shanghai that was sadly turned into a nightclub. "It's definitely made me appreciate being able to go to church. Now I try to go to vigil whenever I can."

I asked Bobby what survival items he brought to China, expecting a long list, but there were only two things: first, "Beef Jerky is key. You really can't get a steak or burger. I figured out how to cook burgers on a stove. I would invite Chinese classmates over and cook them burgers and mashed potatoes." And secondly, you need to bring enough deodorant for the entire stay. Were there any funny or odd moments in China? "I got my haircut one time and they picked the hair off the floor and asked 'Do you want to take this with you?'" I guess the Chinese are not accustomed to redheads.

Bobby is very close to his family and misses them a lot when he is away. He credits his parents as his biggest mentors for their infinite support, encouragement and inspiration and his sister, Mary, as his friend and best confidante. But he goes on to express his appreciation for the older people of our parish. "All of the older people at Church--I try to pull a little something from each person. They grew up and they experienced trials and tribulations and they have a lot of wisdom."

Bobby believes that being Orthodox definitely sets him apart from other young people regarding the decisions he makes and the lifestyle he leads. Because of the recent sudden death of a friend, he feels that his faith gives him perspective on death and helps him cope with the loss. "I've realized how much harder the grieving process is for people--I mean it's hard for everyone--but it's even harder for people who don't understand death." In a college setting, moral and philosophical discussions are part of the scene. Bobby thinks it is important to have non-Orthodox friends. "I think they help you grow in your Orthodoxy because they are constantly challenging your beliefs. It's not always like I have the answers but we can reach a mutual understanding--even if it's different." However, in the end, Bobby feels fortunate to have friends from Church. "It was great that I got to grow up with the Doohovskoyes and have Orthodox friends. Just having someone you could play sports with after Church on Sundays was great." Bobby's advice to young people is to stay as busy as you can and always go to church, making Vigil and Divine Liturgy part of your weekly schedule. Lastly, he recommends getting to know your peers at Church so you feel connected to the community.

April 2006

St. Xenia Orthodox Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (19 Mar) MM Chrysanthus & Daria
2 9:30 AM Sunday of St John Climacus Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 8	3 (21 Mar) St James of Catania	4 (22 Mar) HM Basil of Ancyra	5 7:00 PM Great Canon (23 Mar) MM Nicon & comp	6 6:30 PM Vigil of Annunciation (24 Mar) St Zechariah	7 8:30 AM Annunciation Hours & Divine Liturgy	8 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (26 Mar) Archangel Gabriel
9 9:30 AM Sunday of St Mary of Egypt Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 1	10 (28 Mar) St Hilarion the New	11 (29 Mar) HM Mark of Arethusa	12 (30 Mar) St John Climacus	13 (31 Mar) St Hypatius; St Innocent of Alaska	14 (1 Apr) St Mary of Egypt	15 4:00 PM Class -- Principles of Orthodoxy 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (2 Apr) St Titus Lazarus Saturday
16 9:30 AM Palm Sunday Hours & Divine Liturgy	17 7:30 PM Bridegroom Matins	18 7:30 PM Bridegroom Matins	19 7:30 PM Matins & 1st Hour	20 10:00 AM Mystical Supper Divine Liturgy 7:00 PM Reading of the 12 Gospels	21 10:00 AM Royal Hours 4:00 PM Taking Down from the Cross 7:00 PM Lamentations of Holy Saturday	22 10:00 AM Vespertal Divine Liturgy 9:00 PM Acts of the Apostles 11:00 PM Midnight Office
23 12:15 AM Paschal Matins & Divine Liturgy 12:00 PM Agape Vespers Glorious Pascha of the Lord	24 (11 Apr) HM Antypas	25 (12 Apr) St Basil of Parium	26 (13 Apr) HM Artemon	27 (14 Apr) St Martin	28 (15 Apr) Ap Aristarchus & comp	29 6:30 PM Sunday Vigil (16 Apr) VM Agape & comp
30 9:30 AM Thomas Sunday Hours & Divine Liturgy Tone 1 1:30 PM Blessing of Graves in Cemetery						

April						
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Holy & Great Week
April 16 - 22, 2006

Sunday 16	9:30 AM Palm Sunday Hours & Divine Liturgy
Monday 17	7:30 PM Bridegroom Matins
Tuesday 18	7:30 PM Bridegroom Matins
Wednesday 19	7:30 PM Matins & 1st Hour for Holy Thursday
Thursday 20	10:00 AM Mystical Supper Divine Liturgy 7:00 PM Reading of the 12 Gospels
Friday 21	10:00 AM Royal Hours 4:00 PM Taking Down from the Cross 7:00 PM Lamentations of Holy Saturday
Saturday 22	10:00 AM Vesperal Divine Liturgy 9:00 PM Acts of the Apostles 11:00 PM Midnight Office

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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.