



St. Xenia Parish News

170 North Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844

May-June 2011

Celebration of Feasts

An Excerpt from *With Pain and Love for Contemporary Man*

by Elder Paisios+

To live through Christ's feasts in a spiritual way, we must keep our minds focused on the holy days themselves and not on the work that we have to do to prepare for them. We should think about the events of each holy day (Christmas, Theophany, Pascha and so on) and say the Jesus Prayer glorifying God in our heart. This way we will celebrate with reverence every feast day of the Church. For most people, who live in the world, Christmas is the time to eat pork, Pascha to eat lamb and the Carnival at the beginning of Lent, the time to throw confetti. But for the true monks, every week is Holy Week. Every Wednesday, Thursday and Friday they experience Holy and Great Wednesday, Holy and Great Thursday, and Holy and Great Friday, that is, the days of the Passion of Christ, and every Sunday is for them Pascha, the Day of the Resurrection. Why must we wait until Holy Week to remember the Passion of Christ? Why should we be like people who live in the world? Can't we realize what Christ is risen means, without eating lamb? You see, Christ said, Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh. He did not say, "Get ready right now!" From the moment Christ said, "Be ready!" we must all, but especially monks and nuns, be constantly vigilant and ready.

We must study and live through these divine events all the time. When someone studies the events of each feast day, he will be naturally moved to pray with particular reverence. Then, during liturgical services, our mind will be absorbed by the events we are celebrating and we will follow with great reverence the chanting of hymns. When our mind thinks divine thoughts, we get to live through these holy events, and in this manner we are transformed. We think of a Saint for whom we have a special devotion, or of the Saint whose feast day we are celebrating, and our mind rises higher toward Heaven. And when we keep the Saints in mind, they keep us in mind too, and they

come to our assistance. This is how we can start a friendship with them one that will last forever. And so, even though we may live alone, we will actually share our lives with everybody: with the Saints, the Angels, the whole world. Imagine, being alone, and feeling their company! This is the living presence of the Saints who are God's children and will reach out to help us, their poor brothers and sisters.

Our Saints have shed blood, sweat and tears for the love of Christ. We should always celebrate them with reverence, and they will be there to help us. Every time we hear their Synaxarion "On this same day, we commemorate Saint ...," we must rise to our feet, like soldiers standing at attention when the names of their fallen comrades who died heroically are being read. "On this day of the month soldier so and so ... fell in action heroically defending the country in such and such a front."

If we want to really feel the significance of a feast day, we must abstain from all work. On Holy and Great Friday, for instance, the only thing we should be doing is praying. For people who live in the world, Holy Week is full of chores and obligations. On Holy and Great Friday, they will exchange good wishes "Happy Easter! May you live a long life! May your son find a good bride!" This is so wrong! On Holy and Great Friday, I will lock myself in my Kalyvi. Silence will be of great help to the soul during feast days. It's very much like the time that follows the reception of the Great Schema, when a monk or nun will spend a whole week in silence to allow divine Grace to fill the soul and to appreciate what has actually taken place. In silence, we get the opportunity to rest a little, to study and pray. When a good thought crosses our mind, when we examine ourselves, or say the Jesus Prayer, we will really come to feel something of the divine event celebrated on that day.

St. Xenia of Petersburg Orthodox Church is a parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, under the omophorion of Met. HILARION of Eastern America & New York. 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) 948-1619, e-mail: woolfolk3@gmail.com, or to Father Michael at frmichael@stxenia.org. Thank you.

Rector:

Rev. Michael Crowley
 34 Elm Street
 North Andover, MA 01845
 (978) 204-0428

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

Parish Council

President: Rev. Michael Crowley	(978) 204-0428
Fr. Constantine Desrosiers	(603) 775-0320
Dcn. Alexander Doohovskoy	(978) 369-4486
Starosta: Anthony Sarantakis	(978) 263-2016
Secretary: Maria Kasarda	(978) 356-2180
Treasurer: Reader Joseph Nucci	(617) 522-0256
Sisterhood: Mireille Lang	(603) 465-9754
Peter Danas	(978) 459-9541
John Danas	(978) 454-0315
Laryssa Doohovskoy	(978) 841-5960
Roberto Gonzalez	(978) 692-1229
Peter Reed	(781) 643-0070
John Kekis	(978) 456-9865
Choir Director: Michael Lang	(603) 465-9754
Building Expansion: Aquila Choi	(603) 548-9456
Cemetery: Natalie Pishenin	(978) 658-5564

Trapeza Schedule

* = strict fast

Trapeza can be whatever you would like to prepare. Some parishioners prefer to make a big lunch, but this isn't necessary, especially during the summer. As long as there is enough food for about 100 people, anything is appreciated. Donuts, fruit and pastries are as acceptable as soup and sandwiches. **Note: If you are preparing anything containing nuts or other allergens, please put a small label to that effect in front of your dish. Nut allergies are especially fatal to small children.** If you have any questions, please contact Karen Schidlovsky at (603) 868-6410.

Please note that beginning on June 12, Trapeza will be potluck, as it is every summer.

May

1 Lidia and Daryl Lynch, Kot Engalichev
 8 Nick Kronauer, Vera Sarantakis, Priscilla Choi
 15 Chaplain Family
 22 Maria Kasarda, Nina Yakuboff, Natalie Villahermosa

29 Matushka Helena, Marianne DiMatteo

June

5 Amy McLellan, Anna Johnson, Mireille Lang
 12 POT LUCK

Sisterhood News:

- Save the date for Lilac Nights, which will take place on Friday, June 17, 2011. This year's event will be the platform for a fundraiser for St. Seraphim Camp. Come and share a wonderful evening and swing to the tunes of the White Heat Swing Orchestra. Please see page 5 in this newsletter for more details.

- We are also collecting quality items for a Spring yard sale. The items should be in good, sellable and working condition. Please bring your items to church and place them in the Yolka area in the basement. The yard sale will take place on May 21, with a rain date of June 2.

Thank You... to all who turned out for the cleanup day on April 16 to help prepare our church for the glorious Feast of Pascha.

... to all who donated red eggs for our festal Trapeza.

... to all who helped decorate the Tomb. The flowers were spectacular!

... to Choir Director Michael Lang and the St. Xenia Choir, for the hard work they put into preparing for our Paschal Liturgy and celebration. As always, it was inspiring and uplifting!

... to Nina Lang (mother of our choir director, Michael Lang), for offering to give our first "How-To" class. Everyone who participated mentioned how much fun it was, and the eggs painted were just beautiful.

... to all who donated earrings for women undergoing cancer therapy. It makes all the difference to these ladies to be able to feel feminine while being treated for this hideous disease.

Special Lilac Nights thanks:

... to the Sisterhood for coordinating the publicity, decorating and cleanup.

... to the committee of young men who have come forward to handle the cleanup.

... to all the ladies who have volunteered to make desserts for the event.

Please remember in your prayers... Nicholas, Lilly, Nina, Josephine, David, Lilly Anne, Margaret, John (Gil), the soldier Michael, the soldier Andrei, the sailor Daniel. Please remember to inform the Myrrhbearers Sisterhood if someone is in the hospital or shut in at home.

Financial Update: As of April 30, 2011, the balance on the church mortgage stands at approximately \$13,750. If you have any questions, or would like to know the exact amount, please see Fr. Constantine Desrosiers.

St. John of Damascus Church School News: Mark your calendars! Save the Date! The Second Annual Vacation Church School will take place July 12 -15 (Tuesday, 7/12, after Divine Liturgy until 3:00 pm and Wednesday-Friday, 7/13-15, from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm). Students will

make a presentation to the parish on Sunday, July 17. This year's theme: "Stepping Stones in the Divine Liturgy." We will have an informational meeting on Sunday, May 15 after Trapeza. Anyone interested in learning more about the program, and those interested in volunteering, should attend this meeting. We had an extremely successful VCS last year and hope that, with your help, we will create another fabulous learning experience for our youngsters.

As in recent years, church school instruction will continue through the summer months. Class reassignments, for those moving on to the next group level, will take place in September.

A special Yahoo Group exists for the church school. If you would like to join, please visit:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/stxeniachurchschool/>

and click on the "Join this Group" button.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please contact Fr. Michael, or Laryssa Doohovskoy (978-841-5960, or LaryssaL@aol.com).

Notice concerning the newsletter: Recently, Fr. Michael was informed that the company that has donated the printing and handling services for our newsletter could no longer afford to do so. If we wished to continue our current format, it would cost \$325 per issue, plus the postage (which is already paid for the year). This is more than we have budgeted for, so we need suggestions on how to proceed. The current proposals are:

- 1) direct people to our web site to download the newsletter
- 2) email an attached newsletter to our email mailing list
- 3) change the schedule of the newsletter from bi-monthly to quarterly or semi-annually.

Since we already post the newsletter to our parish website, non-parish members can access it that way, and we can email it to the parish at large. We can still print 50 or so copies a month for people who don't have computers, as well as for visitors at the candle counter. If you need a hard copy of the newsletter, please let us know.

Our thanks to Ambit Press of Cambridge for donating the newsletter for the past nine years.

Summer School of Liturgical Music: The dates for this year's session are July 3-16. As always, our parish has a scholarship available, so please see Fr. Michael or Choir Director Michael Lang if you would like to attend.

Building Committee Update: The committee jointly met with the Church Council members on March 6 and discuss the following:

Trapeza Hall/Kitchen needs:

- 6 burner stove top
- double wall ovens
- larger dishwasher

- cabinet storage with pantry
- deeper double sink
- double doors to close off kitchen
- solid counter top (not laminate)
- buffet style serving with people lined on both sides
- round tables
- bathrooms more private than the location in the present hall
- playroom area (part of Sunday school)

Fundraising Plan: Fr. Michael appointed Tony Sarantakis as a Building Expansion Financial Subcommittee Chair to lead the fundraising effort. The Building Committee decided to invite Mr. David James to the next meeting. Mr. James with his experience would be a good advisor to plan and execute fundraising campaign.

Church Hall Roof Repairs: The Parish Council recently decided to reinforce the Church Hall roof structure installing a ridge beam and supporting column. The repair design, permit, and construction will be done within three months, completing the repairs towards the end of the July. We are considering having a contingency Trapeza plan for about 3-6 weeks because we are not allowed to use the Church Hall space while the roof is under repair construction.

The next meeting of the Building Committee will take place May 1 following Trapeza.

Thoughts on the Holy Spirit

By Bishop Alexander Mileant

In the Orthodox Church it is customary to begin all private prayers as well as church services by first addressing the Holy Spirit in a special prayer and asking Him to renew His grace within us. This prayer, which starts with the words "O Heavenly King," is remarkable in that it consists of the words said by our Lord Jesus Christ and it guides a Christian toward what is important to ask from God.

O Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere present and fillest all things, Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life, come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

Here we address the Holy Spirit as "Heavenly King" because He is the third Person of the Holy Trinity, equal to the Father and His Son. He is called the Comforter because He consoles the believers and gives them joy in time of grief. He is called the Spirit of Truth as He reveals to the faithful the realities of spiritual life and helps them to love the truth. He is omnipresent because the divine nature has no bounds or obstacles. He is called the treasury of

blessings and the giver of Life as He is the ultimate source of everything that is of value. He gave life to all of nature and, in particular, higher spiritual life to human beings and angels.

Addressing the Holy Spirit in this way, we ask Him, the Almighty, to cleanse us from every passion which originates within us or attaches to us in dealing with sinful people. We ask Him to stay within us and guide us to eternal salvation. When praying to the Holy Spirit and asking for different spiritual gifts, one should preserve a humble attitude and recognize his unworthiness because "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

The feast of Pentecost is aimed at shaking up a Christian and setting his foot on the road to spiritual life. Pentecost is a meeting of the Holy Comforter with the human soul. On this holiday we drink once more from the fountain of life and fill ourselves with the most elevated and righteous feelings. On this day the grace of the Spirit, like fire, incinerates our sins; like a balm softens our hearts; like light illuminates our whole inner being. This is a grace gives us spiritual strength to live righteously, be good to everyone, love God and help our neighbors. It removes our previous disarray and bitterness and gives us peace and joy. The monk Silouan witnesses about this, saying: "With God's help it is easy to live, all becomes good, all is kindness and joy, the soul is at peace with God, walking as if in a beautiful garden where the Lord lives."

Since the day of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, everyone newly baptized **is linked to the miracle of Pentecost** through the sacrament of Chrismation. In this Sacrament, which usually is performed right after Baptism, the newly baptized is favored with the same gifts of the Holy Spirit which the Apostles received 2000 years ago. The power of this sacrament is so great and everlasting that it, like Baptism, is never repeated. Subsequent sacraments such as Confession and Eucharist, church services, private prayers, fasting, acts of mercy and a virtuous life are aimed at **strengthening** in a Christian the divine gift he has already received in Chrismation.

God's grace renews our soul, purifies our conscience, enlightens our mind, strengthens in us the faith, directs our will to goodness, warms our heart with genuine love, elevates our thoughts, and revives our whole nature. As witnessed by many holy men and women, God's grace brings so much peace and joy into the human soul that all earthly advantages and pleasures seem to be negligible in comparison with it.



The parishioners of
St. Xenia Orthodox Church invite you to

Lilac Nights



A semi-formal evening of dinner & dancing
for the entire family

Friday June 17, 2011

Doors open at 7pm, Dinner 8pm and dancing until Midnight

Hellenic Cultural Center

25 Bigelow Avenue

Watertown, MA

Live Big Band Music by White Heat Swing

Tickets: Adults \$60* Student (H.S./College) \$40*

Children (5-12) \$20* under age 5 – free

Discounts do apply!! Including a family cap of \$200 and 15% off for groups

Please send inquiries to lilacnights@gmail.com

Visit the Event Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=149818968410108>

*Prices are based on advanced purchasing and will increase by 10% at the door.

All proceeds go to St. Seraphim Russian Orthodox Youth Camp!



ST. XENIA ORTHODOX CHURCH
 P.O. Box 147 - Methuen, MA 01844
 (phone) Fr. Michael Crowley cell (978) 204-0428 -- Church (978)
 688-1211



MAY 2011						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 (Apr 18) 2nd Sunday of Pascha: Antipascha, St. Thomas Sunday 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	2 (Apr 19) Ven John of the Ancient Caves in Palestine	3 (Apr 20) Ven Theodore Trichinas	4 (Apr 21) HM Januarius, bp of Benevento & comp. Fast: wine & oil	5 (Apr 22) Ven Theodore the Sykeote	6 (Apr 23) Holy GM and Wonderworker George Fast: fish, wine & oil	7 (Apr 24) M Sabbas Stratelates 5:30 All-Night Vigil
8 (Apr 25) 3rd Sunday of Pascha: The Myrrh-bearing Women. Tone 2 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	9 (Apr 26) HM Basil, bp of Amasea	10 (Apr 27) HM Symeon the Kinsman of the Lord	11 (Apr 28) App Jason and Sosipater of the 70 & comp. Fast: wine & oil	12 (Apr 29) 9 Martyrs at Cyzicus	13 (Apr 30) Ap James, brother of St. John the Theologian Fast: fish, wine & oil	14 (May 1) Pr Jeremiah 5:30 All-Night Vigil
15 (May 2) 4th Sunday of Pascha: The Paralyzed Man. Tone 3 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	16 (May 3) MM Timothy the Reader and his wife Maura of Antioe in Egypt	17 (May 4) VM Pelagia of Tarsus	18 (May 5) GM Irene of Thessalonica Fast: fish, wine & oil	19 (May 6) R Job the Long-suffering	20 (May 7) M Acacius the Centurion at Byzantium Fast: wine & oil	21 (May 8) St. John the Theologian 9:00 Church Yard Sale 5:30 All-Night Vigil
22 (May 9) 5th Sunday of Pascha: The Samaritan Woman. Tone 4 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	23 (May 10) Ap Simon the Zealot	24 (May 11) Ss. Cyril and Methodius	25 (May 12) St. Epiphanius, bp of Cyprus Fast: fish, wine & oil	26 (May 13) VM Glyceria at Heraclea	27 (May 14) M Isidore of Chios Fast: wine & oil	28 (May 15) Ven Pachomius the Great 5:30 All-Night Vigil
29 (May 16) 6th Sunday of Pascha: The Blind Man. Tone 5 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	30 (May 17) Ap Andronicus of the 70	31 (May 18) Holy Fathers of 7 Ecumenical Councils	Jun 1 (May 19) HM Patrick, bp of Prusa 6:30 Vigil of the Ascension Fast: fish, wine & oil	Jun 2 (May 20) ASCENSION OF THE LORD 9:30 Hours & Divine Liturgy	Jun 3 (May 21) Ss. Constantine & Helen Fast: fish, wine, & oil	Jun 4 (May 22) HM Basiliscus, bp of Comana 5:30 All-Night Vigil



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JUNE 2011						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
May 29 (May 16) 6th Sunday of Pascha: The Blind Man. Tone 5 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	May 30 (May 17) Ap Andronicus of the 70	May 31 (May 18) Holy Fathers of 7 Ecumenical Councils	1 (May 19) HM Patrick, bp of Prusa 6:30 Vigil of the Ascension Fast: fish, wine & oil	2 (May 20) ASCENSION OF THE LORD 9:30 Hours & Divine Liturgy	3 (May 21) Ss. Constantine & Helen Fast: fish, wine, & oil	4 (May 22) HM Basiliscus, bp of Comana 5:30 All-Night Vigil
5 (May 23) 7th Sunday of Pascha: The Fathers of the 1st Ecumenical Council. Tone 6 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	6 (May 24) Ven Symeon Stylites	7 (May 25) 3rd Finding of the Head of St. John the Baptist	8 (May 26) App Carpus of the 70 and Alphaeus Fast: wine & oil	9 (May 27) HM Therapon, bp of Sardis	10 (May 28) Ven Nicetas, bp of Chalcedon Fast: fish, wine & oil	11 (May 29) VM Theodosia of Tyre 5:30 All-Night Vigil
12 (May 30) PENTECOST 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy followed by Vespers w/the kneeling prayers	13 (May 31) Ap Hermes of the 70 Fast free	14 (Jun 1) M Justin the Philosopher Fast free	15 (Jun 2) St. Nicephorus the Confessor Fast free	16 (Jun 3) M Lucillian and those with him at Byzantium Fast free	17 (Jun 4) St. Metrophanes, first patriarch of Constantinople 7:00 Lilac Nights Dinner Dance Fast free	18 (Jun 5) HM Dorotheos, bp of Tyre 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast free
19 (Jun 6) 1st Sunday after Pentecost. All Saints. Tone 8 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	20 (Jun 7) M Theodotus of Ancyra Fast	21 (Jun 8) St. Theodore, bp of Rostov and Suzdal Fast: wine & oil	22 (Jun 9) St. Cyril, abp of Alexandria Fast	23 (Jun 10) HM Timothy, bp of Prusa Fast: wine & oil	24 (Jun 11) "Kursk-Root" Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos Fast: fish, wine & oil	25 (Jun 12) Ven Onuphrius the Great 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: fish, wine & oil
26 (Jun 13) 2nd Sunday after Pentecost. All Russian Saints. Tone 1 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Fast: fish, wine & oil	27 (Jun 14) Pr Elisha Fast	28 (Jun 15) St. Jonah, met of Moscow Fast: fish, wine & oil	29 (Jun 16) St. Tychon, bp of Amathus in Cyprus Fast	30 (Jun 17) MM Manuel, Sabel, and Ismael of Persia Fast: wine & oil	Jul 1 (Jun 18) Fast	Jul 2 (Jun 19) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: wine & oil

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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.